**Taxation, Revenue, and Utilization**

**of Expenditures (TRUE) Commission**

**Daniel Henry, Chair**

**TRUE COMMISSION**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**December 5, 2019**

**4:00 p.m.**

**City Council Conference Room A**

**Suite 425, City Hall**

**Attendance:** Commissioners Daniel Henry (Chair - arr. 4:05), John Roberts, Jim Mazur, Keshan Chambliss, Mark Merritt

**Also**: Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Heather Reber – Council Auditor’s Office; Velma Rounsville – CPAC commissioner nominee

See sign-in sheet for additional attendees.

The meeting was convened at 4:02 p.m. and the members introduced themselves for the record.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the commission meetings of September 19 and October 10, 2019 were **approved unanimously as distributed**.

Public Comment

None

Auditor’s Report

Heather Reber of the Auditor’s Office reported that two reports have been issued since the last TRUE Commission meeting: #731B - Jacksonville Retirement System Audit Follow-up and #828 - Budget Summary Fiscal Year 2019/20. Those reports will be discussed at the next Audit Committee meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 17, time to be determined based on commissioner, room and staff availability.

Committee Reports

Audit Committee – Commissioner Merritt reported that there had been no meetings the last several months due to no new audits having been issued. The committee will meet on December 17th.

Legislative Tracking Committee

Commissioner Roberts reviewed the bills discussed by the committee at its meeting immediately preceding the full commission meeting, which included appropriations for 2 tree planting funds (one for citizen-initiated requests for 1 or 2 trees on rights-of-way adjacent to their property, and the other for larger scale plantings in parks, street medians and the like) and a discussion of several pending bills relating to food deserts. The City is providing a subsidy to Winn-Dixie to replace the Publix store that will be closing at the Gateway Center on Norwood Avenue in several weeks, and is appropriating funds to “mobile markets” (mini-store towable trailers) and to JTA to pilot a door-to-door transportation service for residents of food desert areas to supermarkets. Commissioner Chambliss asked why Publix was closing its Gateway location when the company is usually such a good steward of the community. The group speculated that there might be something else going on beyond a simple profit consideration.

2019-894 – City Council resolution urging the JEA board to rescind its Invitation to Negotiate: the bill is being requested for first reading emergency approval at next Tuesday’s City Council meeting. Commissioners questioned if the 30 day notice to the Council Auditor required to be given pursuant to the Charter was provided. Staff was asked to pose the question to Council Auditor Kyle Billy if it doesn’t get answered at the noticed meeting being held by several City Council members at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

**Motion** (Merritt): ask Council Auditor Kyle Billy if he received the 30 day written notice required by Art. 21.04(p) of the JEA Charter regarding commencement of sale of 10% or more of the assets of JEA, with a request for a response from Mr. Billy by 5:00 p.m. Monday – **approved 5-0**.

Commissioner Roberts said a decent study should be done to determine the impact of a sale of JEA on the ratepayers; he distributed a suggested methodology and suggested that the City Council commission a study by a large university or a neutral consultant with expertise in this field.

**Motion** (Roberts) – recommend to the City Council that it commission a study by a neutral, expert party to determine the impact of a sale of JEA on the ratepayers – **approved 5-0**.

Chair’s Comment

Chairman Henry congratulated Commissioner Chambliss on her reappointment to the commission. He introduced Velma Rounsville, nominated by the Northwest CPAC to fill its seat, in attendance at the meeting today. Mr. Henry asked staff to reach out to Commissioner Niki Brunson about her desire to either stay on the commission or resign. Staff was also asked to request the Southeast CPAC and Southwest CPAC to appoint replacements to fill their vacancies. He recalled that the TRUE Commission had talked several years ago about asking for an amendment to the TRUE Commission’s authorizing chapter to allow the commission to fill vacancies not filled by the appointing authority in a timely manner, but that never went anywhere.

**Motion** (Merritt) – the Chair is authorized to write a letter to the Mayor’s Office requesting an indication if they intend to fill the Mayor’s 6 current vacancies on the TRUE Commission – **approved 5-0**.

Mr. Henry reported that JEA had responded to the commission’s request for information on how much was spent on advertising and how it was being used via an email from Sherry Hall, Vice President for Government Affairs, to the Chair. He thinks it’s an issue the TRUE Commission could tackle and he wants to explore that in the new year. He doesn’t believe an independent authority should be spending money on advertising for political issues, which the JEA proposed sale is. Commissioner Merritt said the JEA, as an independent authority, is a combination of a corporation and a city department. It is owned by the City and its budget is approved by City Council, but it manages its own finances and operations on a day-to-day basis with a great deal of latitude.

Old Business

Policies and Procedures Manual update: Commissioner Merritt noted that the commission does not have a Communications Committee as currently required by the manual, so needs to deal with that either by creating one or by striking the requirement from the manual. He gave an overview of the changes made in the latest draft. In the Communication to Mayor’s Office, City Council, etc. in Part III of the Communication chapter, the group discussed deleting 3(c) and (d) requiring quarterly reports to the Mayor and City Council President by those commissioners appointed by them. The consensus of the group was to strike IIIc regarding communication with the Council President but leaving IIId regarding reporting to the Mayor. With regard to an Internal Operations Committee, also required by the manual but not currently appointed, the consensus of the group was to keep the committee in the manual and have it review the Policies and Procedures annually and orient new commissioners when they are appointed. Commissioner Mazur noted that the commission doesn’t have any social media presence and said he would send staff a link to the Nextdoor neighborhood communication web site and the group could talk next month about whether TRUE could get a presence there or on some other social media platform.

**Motion** (Roberts): approve the Policies and Procedures Manual for 2019 as amended today – **approved 5-0**.

New Business

Meeting schedule for 2020: the consensus of the group was that the first Thursday of each month still works for the commissioners present. They determined to move the January 2020 meeting to January 9th (second Thursday) rather than January 2nd and agreed that no meeting would be held in July 2020, with the proviso that a July meeting might be scheduled if there is sufficient business to transact.

Office of Economic Development annual report – deferred to January.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

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Posted 1.10.20 4:00 p.m.