



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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**Member to Member Social Justice and Community Investment Committee
Jobs Initiative**

City Hall
117 West Duval Street,
1st Floor Lynwood Roberts Room

Wednesday, December 02, 2020
5:00-7:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Convened: 5:00 pm

Attendance: CMs Priestly Jackson, White, Newby, and Gaffney

Council Member Priestly Jackson welcomed the group and explained the purpose of the meeting, which was to have a discussion about potential innovative job programs to meet needs in the community. CM Priestly Jackson also thanked CM Gaffney for his role in directing funds from the JIA CRA to the Social Justice and Community Investment Committee (SJCIC). CM Priestly Jackson explained the process by which the SJCIC developed priorities and noted the urgent need to assist some neighbors with barriers to employment. CM White said that he looks forward to listening to what the attendees have to say about jobs initiatives. CM Newby noted the connection between crime and employment, wherein those with well-paying jobs may be less likely to engage in criminal behavior. CM Gaffney thanked all of the attendees who were at the meeting for their time and said he was ready to listen.

Ben Frazier, Northside Coalition of Jacksonville, described his organizational mission which is to empower the Northside neighborhood by neighborhood and house by house. Mr. Frazier talked about the correlation between crime, violence, guns and poverty; and said if the city can increase employment, there will be a decrease in crime. Mr. Frazier went on to describe the

Northside Coalition pilot program for job training in partnership with the Sims Consulting Group. The program funding request is \$125,000 and would include: training over the course of 12 weekends (96 hours) for 15 students will be trained various specialized technical careers, such as fiber optics; a bi weekly stipend/food to participants to earn while they learn; industry approved certification at the end; job placement in high paying positions; location in 32208 or 32209 to reach the underserved and marginalized; an opportunity for economic and political empowerment. Participants would need to have a high school diploma or GED, and would have access to mentors, and also motivational and conflict resolution training.

Dr. Jennifer Blalock, Quench the Violence, spoke about how the organization founded by Pastor LeCount after the tragic loss of his son. Pastor LeCount began by simply giving out water bottles on Moncrief Road, with the belief that stopping for a cool drink could calm tempers and resolve conflicts peacefully (one of their organizational missions is “Take a drink and chill out, think about it, and conclude that there is no need to commit a violent crime”). Dr. Blalock spoke about an action based jobs initiative in neighborhoods that would: focus upon teaching psycho-social and professional skills; teach financial management; provide life coaches and workplace boot camps; teach tech skills; conduct career assessments; and partner w Boost! for training and placement. The program aims to get participants ready for community colleges, teach Microsoft Office applications, infuse a sense of self sufficiency/pride, and strengthen anger management and communication skills. The target population would be 200-250 participants, 18-35 year olds in cohorts, high school diploma not required, and the funding request is \$200,000 for implementation in multiple locations.

Bishop John Guns, Founder of Operation Save Our Sons, spoke about how he started the organization after the 2012 shooting death of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin to help teach young black men how to respond better when confronted by police or anyone else, with the intent to see fewer funerals, and less young men going to prison. Bishop Guns described a mentor based job initiative (Menturn) that would, in partnership with JaxChamber, serve youths with a minimum of 3 risk factors as defined by the Department of Juvenile Justice, exposing them to previously unknown career fields after school. The participants would be 50 10th and 11th graders who would attend meetings, visit local businesses and interact with leadership in order to change how they see themselves and the thus world through exposure. There would be a stipend component, case management, social and life skill training, and a goal to have an identified career path after high school. The funding request for this program is \$250,000.

James Coleman, Workforce Industrial Training, described his organization and its coordination with CM Newby’s recently filed legislation for the Boost! program. The Boost! program funds are separate from any of the requests from the other groups at this meeting, and would include \$100,000 to train and place 50 students in one year. WIT is already in operation and provides trainings with various workforce and construction certifications.

CM Priestly Jackson spoke about the need for job programs that target individuals aged 16-24 and also those 25 and older who have faced career disruptions for whatever reason (pandemic, incarceration, lack of skills). CM Priestly Jackson expressed the importance of working with the schools and other nonprofit entities with the absence of silos, city wide, and especially reaching underserved neighbors and those who have experienced multigenerational poverty.

CM Priestly Jackson listed the poverty rates for all 14 council districts:

CD 1: 15.4%	CD 8: 33.1%
CD 2: 7.2%	CD 9: 30%
CD 3: 8.3%	CD 10: 24.3%
CD 4: 18.5%	CD 11: 10.5%
CD 5: 17.8%	CD 12: 15.5%
CD 6: 7.1%	CD 13: 8.2%
CD 7: 31%	CD 14: 14%

There was a discussion about stipends, as opposed to hourly wage payments. The consensus was that hourly pay would be better in order to instill work ethics. It was noted that for many of the participants, wages received would be their first encounter with a paycheck, and for some the first time completing anything. Bishop Guns told a story about taking a group of young men to Atlanta and visiting Morehouse College. One of the young men was so inspired that it became his goal to attend the school, and will subsequently receive a scholarship upon completion of high school. CM Priestly Jackson said that a uniform living wage should be offered to participants in the proposed jobs programs, and that the goal should be to reach 350 individuals throughout all of the programs, that the programs should offer continued training and support for participants “to and through”, and that the programs should only partner with accredited nonprofits. CM Priestly Jackson also said that there could be coordination with City independent agencies (such as JaxPort) for potential career pathways.

Peggy Sidman, OGC, talked about legal requirements for granting City funds and how contracts can be drafted to fit specific programs. Contract requirements include a legal entity name, and specified deliverables and wages if any (what is the city buying and how do they know they got it). Ms. Sidman said she would distribute a list to the applicants with all items that would be needed for contract, and noted that this is one time funding as of right now. CM White asked about including firefighter apprenticeships in some of the programs, and CM Priestly Jackson said there have been talks regarding adding JFRD/first responder training to the curriculum at the Frank H. Peterson Academies.

CM Newby thanked all attendees and said that if/when he becomes council president he will look to expand and continue to fund these programs if successful. He also took a moment to congratulate DCPS Superintendent Greene for her recent award for Florida Superintendent of the year. Mr. Frazier commented on the need to use community solutions to solve community problems.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:16 pm

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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