**Taxation, Revenue, and Utilization**

**of Expenditures (TRUE) Commission**

**Daniel Henry, Chair**

**TRUE COMMISSION**

**Meeting Minutes**

**February 3, 2022**

**4:00 p.m.**

**Don Davis Room**

**1st floor, City Hall**

**Attendance:** Commissioners Daniel Henry (Chair, arr. 4:04), Dr. Keshan Chambliss, John Roberts, Ramon Day, Velma Rounsville

**Excused:** Commissioner Bruce Tyson

**Absent**: None

**Also**: Jeff Clements – City Council Research; Tommy Carter – Council Auditor’s Office

The meeting was convened at 4:02 p.m. by Vice Chair Chambliss and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

Approval of minutes

The minutes of the January 13, 2022 Commission meeting were **approved unanimously as distributed**.

Public Comment

None

Council Auditor’s Report

Tommy Carter of the Auditor’s Office reported that the office has not released any new reports since the last commission meeting.

Audit Committee Report

None

Legislative Tracking Committee:

Commissioner Roberts reported on his analysis of the percentages of legislation introduced in various categories. The predominant type is land use and zoning ordinances and appointment resolutions. He noted several new legislative items of interest:

2022-46: appropriating $30 million to parks and recreation items for facility repairs, maintenance and upgrades.

2022-29: appropriating $600,211 grant to Lift Jax, Inc. to purchase, renovate and reopen the historic Debs grocery store on Florida Avenue. Mr. Roberts noted that this bill addresses both food desert and historic preservation issues.

2022-87: $200,000 from the Northwest Jax Economic Development Fund for an economic incentive grant to Big Mountain Paper Company. Mr. Roberts said his research shows that the company was only recently incorporated and he found no evidence that the company is actually producing paper anywhere. It appears that the OED needs to be doing better research on its grant applicants and he wants to see copies of OED’s last 2 years of annual reports which should be available. Jeff Clements accessed the ordinance and legislative fact sheet for the project online and found that Big Mountain Paper is a subsidiary of a company called Nateen that sells it products in over 80 countries worldwide. It appears that Big Mountain was formed to be the local branch and local grant recipient for the parent company.

**Motion** (Roberts): the TRUE Commission requests copies of OED’s last 2 annual reports – **approved 5-0**.

Chair’s Comments

Mr. Henry said February 9th is the date the Inspector General Selection and Retention Committee will decide on which candidates will be interviewed for the IG position; there may be 1 or 2 days of interviews depending on how many candidates are chosen. Interviews will be held at the end of February, most likely in-person. He also noted that City Chief Financial Officer Joey Greive has been invited to come to the March TRUE Commission meeting to discuss the implementation of the 1Cloud financial management system and the late quarterly reports that have resulted. Questions for Mr. Greive can be submitted in advance to Mr. Clements who will distribute them to everyone.

Old Business

Sheriff’s Office staffing proposal

Commissioner Day said he is working on a comprehensive proposal incorporating Sheriff’s Office staffing, the $10M grant the City has received to fund mental health co-responders, and additional funding for the Kids Hope Alliance. Mr. Day said he has met personally with Sheriff Williams who is interested in the proposal and would likely include it in his budget proposal for FY22-23. Mr. Day said that 2.36 officers per thousand citizens is the average for city police departments in Florida and that is what he will be proposing that Jacksonville reach. He will also be including information that will be provided by Mike Weinstein, CEO of the Kids Hope Alliance, when he receives the report of an ongoing consultant study of the total service needs of Jacksonville’s youth. Mr. Day said he hopes his report will make the case for increased funding for enhancing both children’s services and law enforcement as two sides of the crime prevention issue. Commissioner Roberts said that a profile of the need (number of unserved youth, their education level, social service needs, etc.) will have to be developed before a reasonable dollar figure can be determined. Mr. Day said he will continue meeting with Mr. Weinstein to be sure his methodology is sound and grounded in commonly accepted metrics for determining the scope of the community’s needs. He will invite Mr. Weinstein to address a future TRUE Commission meeting about the consultant study.

Commissioner Rounsville asked about the status of the mental health co-responder program, which has been in a pilot program for the last 2 years. Mr. Day said his understanding is that the $10 million grant the City will be getting will fully fund 12 co-responders (2 trained mental health professionals for each of the 6 JSO patrol zones, covering the 2 shifts per day). He doesn’t know if the grant will fund the program for one year or multiple years; that is still unclear. At some point the community is going to have to make the decision about whether the program is valuable enough to fund with local resources when the grant runs out. Chairman Henry said the City is flush with resources presently because of the infusion of the federal government’s COVID assistance programs, so this is a chance to get some needed things done either directly with the federal funds or by using them to supplant other funding sources.

Peer Cities Comparison Report

Commissioner Roberts said the comparative tables are really the meat of the report and answer more questions than the text does. He did the research to find out how Jacksonville compares with other similar consolidated city/county governments with roughly our same population on the basis of per capita expenditures and expenditure as a percentage of residents’ income. Jacksonville ranks fairly well in the comparisons, despite having lower overall income than most of the others. Jacksonville falls short in the areas of expenditures on health care and education compared to the other cities. One notable fact is that Jacksonville has a large percentage of persons who have some college education but never finished a degree. Commissioner Day asked about Table A-1 and what the total budget figure included. Mr. Roberts said it includes the school district and the independent authorities along with the City proper to be comparable with the other cities. Mr. Day asked for more detail on how Jacksonville’s total revenue and expenditure figures were calculated and said he is inclined to exclude the budgets of the independent authorities as being more like separate business enterprises and concentrate solely on core city services like police, fire, recreation, etc. Mr. Roberts said he would have to recalculate the tables for each of the cities to ensure that they all were compared on like service provision. He will review the Jacksonville data to better explain its revenues and expenditures in more detail and will send his source documents to Mr. Day for his review.

New Business

None

Commissioner Comments

None

Next meetings

Audit Committee – at the call of the Chair as needed when new audits/reports are released

Legislative Tracking Committee – at the call of the Chair as needed

Full commission – March 3, 2022

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

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Posted 3.4.21 5:00 p.m.