

# City of Jacksonville

*117 W. Duval Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32202*



## Meeting Minutes

**Thursday, December 7, 2023**

**12:30 PM**

**Council Chamber**

### **Special Committee on Homelessness & Affordable Housing**

*Council Member Joe Carlucci, Chair  
Council Member Ken Amaro, Vice-Chair  
Council Member Raul Arias  
Council Member Jimmy Peluso  
Council Member Chris Miller*

**1. Introductions & Opening Comments**

Attendance: CM J. Carlucci (chair), CM Miller, CM Arias, CM Peluso

Also: CP Salem; Phillip Peterson, Assistant Council Auditor; Mary Staffopoulos, Deputy General Counsel; Eamon Webb, Research Assistant

CM J. Carlucci called the meeting to order. He previewed the two main planned points of discussion for this meeting: 1) the structure of the planned Homelessness Initiatives Commission and 2) potential funding sources. He noted that the Special Committee will not meet again until January and that he will look to reschedule meetings from the original Mondays during committee weeks to avoid another scenario where other committee meetings force this special committee to reschedule.

**2. Old Business Review**

**3. New Business Updates**

CM J. Carlucci mentioned that several amendments discussed in the mayoral taskforce legislation (2023-807 and 2023-847) had been relevant to the funding of homeless initiatives.

CM J. Carlucci requested that Mary Staffopoulos summarize a draft piece of legislation that would create a Homelessness Initiatives Board. Ms. Staffopoulos explained the various sections of the draft legislation, including the name of the established commission; the establishment and need for the commission; the composition of the commission; the functions, powers, and duties of the commission; and the organization and proceedings of the commission.

Ms. Staffopoulos explained that any official members of the commission, whether voting or nonvoting, would be subject to Sunshine Law requirements. She explained that the Special Committee could avoid this issue by structuring representatives from, for example, the Neighborhoods Department as liaisons rather than as voting or nonvoting members of the commission. She cited the Waterways Commission as an example of another voting body that has many liaisons that are required to attend and report on various issues but are not members of the commission for Sunshine purposes.

CM Arias commented that he believes it to be important that CMs are voting members on the commission.

CM Peluso stated that he is in support of structuring these representatives as liaisons to maximize communication between members. Scott Wilson, liaison from the administration, reiterated that it would be ideal if the Neighborhoods Department representative on the commission could communicate with members not subject to Sunshine.

CM Peluso pointed out that the Miami Homelessness Trust has representatives from various stakeholders from across the community, including an interfaith representative. He suggested that the commission could be expanded from the current proposed seven members to include various liaisons, including from JSO, JHA, the Jacksonville Civic Council, and the Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that this language in the legislation should be amended to clarify that the Jacksonville City Council is still the appointment authority of these possible liaisons. She also clarified that these liaisons would not count for purposes of holding a quorum.

CM Arias said that he would prefer that these representatives from various stakeholders so not be so prescriptively specific to certain organizations. He worried that requiring that these representatives be from organizations that charge for dues would effectively be "pay-to-play."

CM Miller worried that adding too many liaisons to the commission could reduce its efficiency and agreed with CM Arias that the ordinance creating the commission should not be prescriptive about additional liaisons. He explained that subject-matter experts could be consulted on an as-needed basis.

CM Peluso stated that he did believe it to be important that a liaison from JHA to be on the commission, as he believed the current communication between the Council and JHA to be lacking. CM J. Carlucci added that he believed it to be important that a liaison from JSO be on the commission, as JSO is most tangibly interacting with the unhoused on a daily basis.

CM Peluso commented on the proportion of appointments in the proposed commission, with the

Council President getting four appointments and the mayoral administration getting three, and stated that four for the administration and three for the Council President was more standard. He stated that the mayor is always elected by the whole City and that the Council President will frequently be representing a specific district. CM Arias responded that he felt that the commission should have a greater proportion of Council members, as the Council President's initiatives are what initiated the conversation to creating this commission. Mr. Wilson stated that the administration would be content with the proposed proportion of appointments.

Ms. Staffopoulos explained that the terms could be structured in a variety of ways, and the current draft specified for three-year terms. She explained the section of the draft legislation outlining the functions, powers, and duties of the commission.

CM J. Carlucci noted that the name should be amended to remove "Prevention," as the commission would not solely be focusing on homelessness prevention. Cindy Funkhouser, President and CEO of Sulzbacher Center, clarified that the word prevention is specifically used to refer to keeping those who currently have homes from becoming homeless and that this was a small percentage of homelessness services existing in the City. The Special Committee decided to change the name to "Homelessness Initiatives Commission," with the fund being named the "Homelessness Initiatives Special Revenue Fund."

CP Salem spoke about the scope and duties of the commission, stating that he would like all homelessness initiatives approved by the full Council to first be reviewed by the commission. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that the draft legislation could be changed to reflect this scope; the Special Commission came to a consensus that it would function similarly to LUZ, with the commission making a recommendation on projects for approval or denial to the full Council. CM Miller and CM Arias stated that this commission would ideally serve as a hub for discussion to bring various stakeholders in the homelessness space together to reduce redundancy of service.

CM Peluso suggested that the Special Committee could also take some notes from how the Public Service Grant process operates. Phillip Peterson of the Council Auditor's Office explained that the PSG process involves a pool of money which is distributed to grantees based off a scored application process. CM Peluso noted that this process allows subject-matter experts to have direct input regarding how funds are spent.

Ms. Staffopoulos stated that further pondering the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the commission would be the "homework" of the Special Committee.

CM J. Carlucci turned discussion to potential funding sources for the proposed Special Revenue Fund.

CM Peluso proposed a possible solution using funds raised by document stamp fees in the City; this is an existing state fee that Jacksonville could potentially re-capture for purposes of this fund if the state legislature were to pass a bill allowing it. Ms. Staffopoulos stated that she would have a memorandum on this potential legislation ready by Monday. CP Salem noted that dedicated funding sources typically foster debate, and CM Peluso responded that this specific funding source should not be controversial given that it re-captures funds that would already otherwise go to the state, not adding any new tax or fee.

CM Arias stressed the importance of these funds being used specifically for Duval County programs and not programs existing outside the County.

CM J. Carlucci asked whether there is a number on the amount of funds raised by document stamps in Duval County, and Ms. Staffopoulos stated that this number could be obtained.

CM J. Carlucci proposed a second idea, which would recreate the funding of the Jacksonville Upward Mobility Program (JUMP). An amount equal to 1% of the amount of economic development incentives granted each year, excluding CRAs and downtown, is appropriated to JUMP. CM J. Carlucci proposed that 4% of this amount would be logical for purposes of this fund. He also suggested capping the total percentage taken from economic development incentives at 5% so that future Councils do not keep chipping away at these incentives.

#### **4. Stakeholder Comments**

Public Comment:

Shannon Nazworth, President and CEO of Ability Housing, thanked the Council for the creation of the Pilot program created via the mayoral taskforce legislation. She spoke to a concern raised by CM Arias, stating that funds received through the City government are used within the City. She also expressed that in addition to being a funding source, the Homelessness Initiatives Committee should function as a place to discuss policy reform, citing voucher preference for the existing homeless population as one policy reform need.

#### **5. Working Groups Discussion**

#### **6. Closing Remarks**

CM J. Carlucci noted that the Special Committee would not be meeting again until January, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:58 P.M.

Minutes:

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