



Taxation, Revenue, and Utilization of Expenditures (TRUE) Commission

Dr. Keshan Hargrove, Chair

TRUE COMMISSION Preliminary Meeting Minutes

January 4, 2024
4:00 p.m.
Don Davis Room, 1st floor, City Hall

Attendance: Commissioners Keshan Hargrove (Chair), Charles Barr (Vice Chair), Tony Zebouni, Ramon Day, Daniel Henry, Bruce Tyson, Kim Pryor (arr. 4:44)

Excused: Commissioner Velma Rounsville

Absent: None

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

Chairwoman Hargrove convened the meeting at 4:01 and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

Invited Speaker: Paul Freeman, Information Technologies Division (ITD)

Mr. Freeman said ITD just finished the first phase of its inventory of all computer applications within the City and all of the users of each application in order to be able to control user access after employees leave a department or leave the City government. The system is ready for acceptance and testing by the first client agency (Employee Services Department). Commissioner Day asked if rights terminations will be done at the touch of a single button or if each application will need to be accessed and shut off individually. Mr. Freeman said some will be done automatically, others will have to be handled case-by-case depending on which specialized non-City applications some employees use. It will be the responsibility of departing employee’s supervisor to ensure that all specialized applications are disabled. ITD will inform supervisors about what applications each employee has access to. Chair Hargrove asked if there is a double-check on supervisors to ensure that they follow through and if there are repercussions if they don’t disable all relevant systems after an employee leaves. Mr. Freeman said that is beyond his scope of responsibility, but it might be possible to develop a checklist for managers to help them ensure they are taking care of that function. Commissioner Zebouni said it might be worthwhile to give Employee Services a role in the process by generating an email to the supervisor when they process an employee outplacement to list all tasks that should have been completed – ID badge surrendered, last check issued, keys returned, all computer rights terminated, etc.

Commissioner Henry asked if supervisors have to formally attest to the fact that they have turned off all computer access to applications. Mr. Freeman said he will be working with departments about how they inventory all employee application rights and list what rights should be terminated. Mr. Henry said the TRUE Commission heard at a previous meeting from the Chief of Procurement about ways to make more City information available electronically to the general public via the City website and asked how long that process and the electronic signature system might take to implement. Mr. Freeman said he doesn’t

have a timeframe yet but is in the process of determining the order of departments to implement the DocuSign electronic signature application. In response to a question from Mr. Henry about whether the 1Cloud financial management system has the capability to make more financial information available to citizens online, Mr. Freeman said he does not have expertise in 1Cloud and recommended that Wanyonyi Kendrick, the City's new Chief Information Officer, be asked about that system. Mr. Zebouni asked about the City's use of artificial intelligence (AI). Mr. Freeman said they are in the process of exploring AI options but haven't settled on anything yet.

Chairwoman Hargrove thanked Vice Chair Barr for chairing recent meetings when she has been absent while attending Leadership Jacksonville events.

Approval of minutes

The minutes of the December 7, 2023 commission meeting were **approved unanimously as distributed.**

Public Comment

None

Council Auditor's Report

Tommy Carter of the Auditor's Office reported that he had 1 report to present:

#873: Quarterly Budget Summary for the Twelve Months Ended September 30, 2023 - Issued 12/15/23
Mr. Carter reported that the General Fund General Services District ended the fiscal year with a \$73.4 million positive variance although there are still some adjustments going on with the City's books, so the numbers are not yet finalized. Overall, the General Fund experienced a negative \$1.9M variance on revenues. Ad valorem taxes exceeded budget by \$12.6M, and state shared revenues were up by \$22.5M, which was offset by reduced revenue from borrowing not being done for 2 capital projects that were not started in the fiscal year. There was a positive \$75.4M variance in expenditures.

JEA experienced surpluses in both the electric and water systems and the authority will need to file budget amendments to reflect a transfer of funds from a reserve account to cover Plant Vogtle-related debt payments and the expenditure of \$93M for water and sewer capital projects.

JTA's bus, Connexion (transportation-disadvantaged) and ferry operations exceeded their authorized expenditures by a total of \$2.2M so a budget amendment will be needed. Mr. Henry asked if the Auditor's Office or Legislative Services Division know when the budget amendment will be filed. Mr. Carter said it would be drafted by the Office of General Counsel and should be filed shortly, although the JTA board passed a similar resolution regarding a budget amendment last year that was not introduced until nearly a year later.

JPA experienced a \$13.5M favorable variance due to excess cruise ship income and lower debt costs.

JAA experienced a \$47.8M surplus due to the Concourse B construction project not starting in 2023 as anticipated.

Mr. Henry posed a question about the City venues budget and whether ASM Global, the operator of the venues, got authorization from the City for the work it performed that exceeded budget. Mr. Carter said ASM can do work when authorized by the City but he doesn't know if they got advance approval for the work that exceeded the budgeted amount. Mr. Henry asked about COVID leave payout amounts to employees who left City government, particularly in the Mayor's Office. Mr. Carter said he talked to the Employee Services Department and they are compiling that information manually since it is not in an automatically generated report.

Legislative Tracking Committee

None

Audit Committee

None

Chair's Comments

None

Old Business

By-laws revision: Mr. Day explained his several proposed amendments to the by-laws, most of which are primarily stylistic or to make the language non-gender specific. The group discussed Article V(B) regarding the purpose for which studies would be made. There was also discussion about Article V(F) regarding the ability of the Commission to receive grants and donations for its work. The consensus of the group was to leave the language unchanged as it currently reads in the Ordinance Code, with the understanding that the current membership has no interest in soliciting any such donations. After further discussion it was determined that since all of the language of Article V is taken directly from the Ordinance Code, it should be left unchanged.

Mr. Day discussed his idea for creating two Vice Chairs, 1 for Taxation and Revenues and 1 for Utilization of Expenditures, to give more organizational structure to the commission's work once more members are appointed and there is more capability perform studies. Chair Hargrove said she didn't see a need to make the change to two vice chairs since the commission's membership is not large enough to warrant it now. Mr. Barr noted that the by-laws can be changed at any time in the future if the need arises.

Motion (Day/2nd Zebouni): adopt the by-laws changes to Article VI as distributed by Commissioner Day and discussed today, with the exception of the language regarding creation of two vice chairs, and making no changes in any language drawn directly from the Ordinance Code – **approved 7-0**.

New Business

Commissioner Day noted that there have been no appointments to the TRUE Commission by the last 3 mayors, so he will make a proposal at the next meeting to request the drafting of legislation to amend the TRUE Commission's Ordinance Code authorization to eliminate mayoral appointments to the commission and make the membership consist of 1 appointment by each of the 19 City Council members and 1 from each of the 6 CPACs for a total of 25 members. Commissioner Pryor said consideration needs to be given in the drafting as to how to handle the transition of current appointees to the new membership system. Mr. Zebouni noted that the Civil Service Board has the power to self-appoint members; Mr. Day said he did not agree with boards having that power. Several members suggested that commission members contact the Mayor's Office directly and request that the vacant mayoral seats be filled. Mr. Zebouni recommended not sending numerous emails to the Mayor's Office that would create a public record suggesting that the office is being delinquent in its duties. Chairwoman Hargrove said she would contact the Mayor's boards and commissions director personally to discuss this subject. Mr. Zebouni recommended contacting Mayor Deegan and/or Chief Administrative Officer Karen Bowling directly rather than the boards and commissions director.

Commissioner Comments

Mr. Henry noted that the commission has heard from the City's Public Works Department, Procurement Division, Office of General Counsel and Information Technologies Division in the last year and asked if the commissioners had any thoughts about how to proceed with taking action, if needed, on what has been learned from those presentations. Chair Hargrove invited commissioners to propose topics for exploration at the next meeting.

Mr. Day suggested having invited speakers to attend the first two meetings of a quarter and then formulate ideas and make recommendations on those topics by the end of the quarter.

Mr. Tyson said the commission has heard lots of interesting information from various departments but hasn't coalesced it into a unified timeline and explored how one department's actions relate to another's.

Mr. Henry said the initial impetus for inviting the speakers was a discussion about capital improvement projects and how more information could be made available more easily to the general public.

Mr. Day requested a copy of the commission's Policies and Procedures manual. Staff will send it to all members.

Mr. Zebouni, who is legal counsel for the Utility Contractors Association, asked if the commission would be interested in hearing from participants in the City's Jacksonville Small and Emerging Businesses (JSEB) program and area contractors about how the re-write of the Procurement Code will impact them. The consensus of the group was for Mr. Zebouni to invite several speakers to the March meeting to address this topic.

Ms. Pryor suggested hearing from JEA about why its rates are increasing while the authority is experiencing budget surpluses.

Mr. Barr suggested the need for an orientation meeting for new members to help them understand how the TRUE Commission is constituted and how it operates.

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 – February 8, 2023 (note – NOT the first Thursday of the month)

The meeting was adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

Jeff Clements, City Council Research Division

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Posted 2.15.24 4:00 p.m.