



**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
RESEARCH DIVISION**

117 WEST DUVAL STREET, SUITE 425  
4<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, CITY HALL  
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202  
904-255-5137

**CITY COUNCIL PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**Meeting Minutes-Twice Amended**

**February 26, 2024  
1:00 p.m.**

**Location:** Don Davis Room, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, City Hall

**In attendance:** Council Members Ron Salem (President), Randy White (Vice President), Nick Howland (Finance Committee Chair), Kevin Carrico; Rory Diamond

**Excused:** CM Freeman

**Also:** Mary Staffopoulos, Office of General Counsel; Phillip Peterson, Council Auditor's Office; Colleen Hampsey, Council Research; Merriane Lahmeur, Legislative Services Division; Peggy Sidman, Council Secretary/Director

**Meeting Convened:** 1: 01 p.m.

Council President Salem convened the meeting and called for introductions. He reviewed the purpose of the meeting, which was to discuss the hiring of legislative counsel for guidance on issues if needed as permitted through Chapter 14, *Ordinance Code*. CP Salem listed the new stadium and future collective bargaining as "big issues". He referenced the contract for consulting with Michael Huyghue & Associates, LLC, as related to the stadium, but said that the legislative counsel being discussed at this meeting would potentially advise on numerous issues not just those linked to football or the NFL. CP Salem said that he tasked CM Diamond with the search for prospective legislative counsel since he is an attorney. CP Salem said that the legislative counsel would not be an in-house position, and that the decision to engage with outside legislative counsel will be at the discretion of the council president.

CM Diamond talked about his selection process for finding an appropriate firm to act as legislative counsel to the City Council, that will not duplicate services conducted by OGC. He said he utilized a matrix to find a firm with certain parameters: located but not necessarily headquartered in Jacksonville; experience with municipal government; experience working in Jacksonville and with our City Charter; no, or very minimal, conflicts; and a breadth of experience and technical expertise. CM Diamond said he spoke to a dozen or more attorneys about the selection of legislative counsel. Utilizing the parameters listed above, CM Diamond recommended the GrayRobinson law firm that has 15 locations across Florida and in Washington, D.C.

CP Salem said he met last week with Michael Fackler, General Counsel, and that he will remain the ultimate arbiter for the City. CP Salem said that legislative counsel may not ever actually be needed, but that it is good to have such professional services available just in case.

CM Howland asked whether the contract will be with the whole firm or with one attorney. CM Diamond said it will be with the whole firm. CM Howland asked about intra-firm conflicts of interest and the use of a “Chinese Wall”, designed to prevent exchange of information or communication that could lead to conflicts of interest. CM Diamond indicated such communication barriers are common practice in law firms.

CM Carrico asked about whether an RFP should be used to procure legal counsel/services in the interest of transparency. CM Diamond said that he exercised due diligence in his search and with the use of his decision matrix, and that the Personnel Committee has the prerogative to determine the selection process. CM Carrico asked about the impact on the authority of or the relationship with the Office of General Counsel. CM Diamond said that there will not be a change to the relationship with OGC especially as related to legislation. CM Carrico asked if it would be better to authorize more staff to support OGC instead.

There was a motion and second to proceed with contract negotiations for legislative counsel from GrayRobinson. CP Salem asked if there was any public participation, but there was none. The motion was approved unanimously (4-0) by voice vote. Council President Salem will be the point of contact with OGC regarding contract negotiations, and the Personnel Committee will meet at a later date to approve the engagement agreement and the terms of the contract.

With no further business, CP Salem adjourned the meeting.

**Meeting adjourned:** 1:21 p.m.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research  
CHampsey@coj.net 904-255-5151  
Posted: 2.26.24 5:00 p.m.