



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

Dr. Keshan Hargrove, Chair

TRUE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

August 8, 2024

4:00 p.m.

Lynwood Roberts Room, 1st floor, City Hall

Attendance: Commissioners Dr. Keshan Hargrove (Chair), Charles Barr, Velma Rounsville, Kevin Luhrs, Bruce Tyson, Alexander Hoffman, Daniel Henry (arr. 4:09), Wen Raiti (arr. 4:21)

Excused: Commissioners Tony Zebouni, Andrea Letizia, Kim Pryor

Absent: None

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

Commission Chair Dr. Keshan Hargrove convened the meeting at 4:00 p.m. and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

Approval of minutes

The minutes of the June 6, 2024 commission meeting were **approved unanimously as distributed**.

Public Comment

None

Council Auditor’s Report

Tommy Carter of the Council Auditor’s Office reported that there were no new audits released since the last meeting. The Auditor’s Office staff is deeply involved in budget hearings through July and August.

Legislative Tracking Committee

None

Audit Committee

None

ASM Global Contract Committee

None

Chair’s Comments

None

Old Business

Commission vacancies: the commission has 1 vacant CPAC seat (North). Commissioner Day said he had spoken to Joe Inderhees, Mayor Deegan's Deputy Chief of Staff, and he said the Mayor does intend to fill her vacant TRUE Commission seats.

New Business

Commissioner Day proposed that TRUE members review the City budget and that the Commission take a formal position at its next meeting in September. The commissioners had been provided with a schedule of the budget hearings and discussed how to divide the budget presentations up among themselves for review. The following assignments were agreed to: Hearing 1: Sheriff's Office, Fire and Rescue, City Council, Tourist Development Council – Commissioner Day; Hearing 2: Mayor's Office through Pension Funds – Commissioner Barr; Hearing 2: Finance and Administration Department through Emergency Contingency – Commissioner Hoffman; Hearing 3: Tax Collector through Court System Technology Fund – Commissioner Rounsville; Hearing 3: Public Defender through City Venues – Commissioner Tyson; Hearing 4: independent authorities, Economic Development, Neighborhoods Department – Commissioner Henry; Hearing 5: JTA, debt affordability, CIP - Commissioner Luhrs; Hearing 6 – Risk Management, Planning Department Public Works – Commissioner Hargrove.

Commissioner Henry asked about how the Finance Committee is handling its contingency fund this year. Jeff Clements explained they're doing it differently this year. Since the mayor proposed to use \$47 million in reserve funds as a funding source for next year, the committee has been taking actions to reduce or eliminate that use of reserve funds throughout the hearings. So rather than making reductions that accumulate into a contingency fund that can be allocated to various uses on the wrap-up day, the reductions are being applied against the use of reserves and a tally is being kept of the amount of reserves still being needed, with the goal of reaching as close to \$0 as possible. Mr. Henry asked about how the committee will handle the wrap-up day. Mr. Clements explained the budget hearing and voting schedule.

Motion (Day): the TRUE Commissioners will divide up the budget hearing schedule among themselves as discussed earlier to study and discuss at the September 5 meeting for the commission to discuss in a workshop format and determine if it wants to make any comments – **approved unanimously**.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Henry recommended that commissioners listen to the recording of today's Finance Committee meeting, which was very different from those of previous years. The Property Appraiser made a plea for a higher pay scale to help with employee retention, saying the City has a very low pay scale compared to other counties, particularly adjoining counties. Mr. Clements said General Counsel Michael Fackler said the same thing about the Office of General Counsel's difficulty in hiring and retention. He said Jacksonville pays OGC employees 20% lower than other governmental attorney's offices and far less than private sector. Sheriff Waters said the combination of the raises and the opportunity for employees to join the Florida Retirement System contained in the collective bargaining agreements just agreed to will help tremendously to improve hiring. Commissioner Luhrs said it appears Jacksonville is just not competitive with its salaries.

Commissioner Henry asked if the local Associated Builders and Contractors chapter had sent any comments on the Procurement Code revisions to the commission following their presentation at the last commission meeting; Mr. Clements said they have not.

Commissioner Rounsville said she and new commissioner Wen Raiti will work together on the Budget Hearing #3 review.

Commissioner Luhrs introduced himself to the group. He is in his last semester in the Master of Public Policy program at Jacksonville University and holds a BA in history from the University of North Florida. He has considerable data science experience gained through projects with Jacksonville Area Legal Aid and Florida Data Science for Good.

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 – October 3, 2024

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Jeff Clements, City Council Research Division

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