



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARING #7 MINUTES

August 23, 2024
9:00 a.m.

Location: City Council Chamber, City Hall – St. James Building

In attendance: Council Members Ron Salem (Chair), Raul Arias, Rory Diamond, Terrance Freeman, Will Lahnen, Nick Howland, Ju’Coby Pittman (arr. 9:08),

Also: Council Members Mike Gay, Chris Miller, Michael Boylan, Reggie Gaffney Jr., Randy White, Kevin Carrico, Rahman Johnson (arr. 12:12); Kim Taylor, Brian Parks, Phillip Peterson, Heather Reber - Council Auditor’s Office; Mary Staffopoulos, Shannon MacGillis – Office of General Counsel; Merriane Lahmeur, Steven Libby – Legislative Services Division; Darnell Smith, Karen Bowling, Joe Inderhees, Brittany Norris, Scott Wilson– Mayor’s Office; Anna Brosche, Angela Moyer – Finance Department

Meeting Convened: 9:01 a.m.

Chairman Salem convened the meeting and the attendees introduced themselves for the record. The Chairman said the committee will take up deferred and incomplete items first, then enhancement requests from committee members, then enhancement requests from non-committee members.

Reduction Requests

Motion (Diamond): remove the \$10M Homelessness Initiatives Fund from the budget entirely.

Council Member Lahnen recommended not taking out the entire amount now. Chairman Salem said there is \$2.4M elsewhere in the budget that could be used to get the initiative started. Council Member Howland said the Sheriff’s Office wants \$3-3.5M to be available for enforcement of the new state law on homeless camping on public property. President White said he agreed with keeping at least \$2.4M for JFRD response to complaints about homeless camping and some additional for JSO response when arrests are needed. Mr. Salem said he wants to see emphasis on the Homeward Bound bus ticket program. Mayor’s Chief of Staff Darnell Smith said he thought \$1M was going to be allocated for the Jacksonville Housing Finance Commission per action of the Special Committee on Homelessness and Affordable Housing chaired by Council Member Joe Carlucci. He understood that the plan was for the \$10M initiative to go through a committee process for consideration after the budget is completed. Chairman Salem said the plan can still go through a regular committee process; Mr. Smith said a vote to eliminate all the funding today is not in the spirit of that agreement to deal with it later after the budget.

Council Auditor Kim Taylor reported that there is \$1.4M in a contingency for homelessness in the current budget, the proposed budget adds \$2.2M for next year, and the Special Committee on Homelessness and Affordable Housing had a plan to use \$1M. Mary Staffopoulos with the Office of General Counsel said there is a difference between homelessness and affordable housing and what money is allocated to each.

Motion (Howland): amend the Diamond amendment to put \$1M of the Homelessness Initiatives Fund “below the line” in a contingency account and remove the other \$9M from the budget entirely, reducing use of Operating Reserves by a corresponding amount.

Council Member Freeman asked for clarification about the net effect of the proposed amendments. Ms. Taylor said they would leave \$1M “above the line” plus the \$2,640,000 for a total of \$3.64M for homelessness law response. Mr. Freeman asked for some allocation of funding to the Journey Forward initiative. Ms. Staffopoulos said there is a Council Member Salem ordinance pending to split the Cure Violence money between a Council Contingency and the City Council’s strategic priority list, so there would not be anything left from that for Journey Forward. Council Member Diamond said he supports Journey Forward and suggested doing all the budget cuts first to see what is left to allocate among the enhancement requests. Mr. Freeman said Journey Forward was discussed in an earlier hearing and should precede enhancement requests.

President White said he requested that the \$10M be put “below the line” and that would be his preference, but he accepts the will of the committee. Council Member Pittman asked if she would have abstain from the vote due to a potential conflict of interest with her employment; Ms. Staffopoulos said not on this movement of funds but perhaps later on a motion for specific uses. Council Member Arias said he has spoken to the team working on the Journey Forward and they need \$600,000 to get the program started in the spring of 2025; he advocated for allocating at least that much rather than nothing at all. Mr. Diamond suggested taking up enhancement requests #3 and #4 on the list first and then the other items afterward.

The Howland amendment was approved unanimously via a voice vote.

Motion: move the Diamond amendment as amended – **approved unanimously via a voice vote.**

Council Member Diamond said he never got any feedback from the administration on his request at an earlier meeting for information on what duties Mike Weinstein would be performing for the next year.

Motion (Diamond): remove 1 FTE position (Administrative Aide) and reduce salary and benefits lines of the Finance Department by \$292,694.

President White said institutional knowledge has a value. CFO Anna Brosche said Mr. Weinstein was intimately involved in the stadium negotiations and there is still more stadium work to do. He also is working on other projects for the department. Darnell Smith said Mr. Weinstein has an important role to play in the pre-construction, construction and post-construction phases of the stadium renovation and is the City’s point person for the preconstruction process. He is also working on the future of the Sports Complex area and is the Mayor’s liaison to the independent authorities. Kim Taylor said the Mayor can transfer positions and funding to restore the position within her scope of authority. Council Member Diamond said if the position is working for the Mayor’s Office then it should be budgeted there and he sees far too many upper management positions making extremely large salaries. Council Member Carrico suggested hiring that employee on a contract basis to retain the institutional knowledge without having a full-time position. Council Member Pittman said the Council needs to give the Mayor’s Office what it needs to do the job. The budget hearing process this year was unlike any other she has seen, starting with substantial cuts before any discussion took place. Council Member Lahnen said he opposes the

amendment and the Finance Department needs to have time to do succession planning. Council Member Arias said this issue could have been avoided if Council Member Diamond's question had been answered in a timely manner. He asked if the salary for an Administrative Aide is typically this high. Ms. Taylor said the Administrative Aide position is a generic one typically used for Mayor's Office employees. Chairman Salem said the Council was disrespected by the administration not answering questions about why the position is located in the Finance Department and what it does for the Mayor's Office. Council Member Howland asked how much the Finance Department budget is growing apart from this position. Ms. Taylor said the budget is down \$2.1M primarily from a change in internal service charges. One position was transferred in during the last year. The salary line grew 2.3%. Darnell Smith said he was not in the chamber when the question was raised at the earlier meeting about what the position does for the Mayor and the committee said it would take it up at the wrap-up session which is where it is being addressed now. There was no intention to disrespect the committee. Council Member Freeman lamented that this discussion has become so personal about a single individual. The committee is reducing a salary budget and removing a position, not an individual.

The motion failed 3-4 on a show of hands (Diamond, Salem, Freeman in favor)

Chairman Salem asked for a motion to remove the amounts in the budget, including the Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) amounts, for downtown riverfront parks from the budget now and discuss them at the next Finance Committee to understand why the budgets are increasing so substantially, what facilities are proposed, estimated completion dates, and who has authorized the increases to project budgets.

Motion (Salem): remove \$90M of funding related to Riverfront Plaza, Shipyard West Park, and Metropolitan Park and bring \$6M back "above the line" related to Riverfront Plaza for FY24-25.

Council Member Lahnen asked if there would be a violation of the CBA if funding the parks is a contractual obligation of the City and the funding is pulled. Ms. Staffopoulos said it needs to be paid in the next several years pursuant to the agreement. Council Member Howland said the City has committed to the CBA and approved spending \$56M for parks in that agreement so he would prefer the Salem amendment exclude the \$56M committed pursuant to the CBA. Council Member Arias said not paying the \$56M would cost the City the Jaguars match for that amount. Ms. Staffopoulos said the Jaguars might claim a breach of contract regarding their entire \$118M CBA contribution. Mr. Salem said he is not trying to cancel any projects but wants answers about why the costs are going up so dramatically and who is authorizing those increases. Council Member Freeman said he will be abstaining from the vote because of a conflict of interest on this issue due to his employment. Ms. Taylor said the \$56M was not in the mayor's budget proposal – Council added that in. She said the large increases in the project budgets showed up in this year's CIP compared to last year's document. Council Member Diamond said this is a typical pattern of price inflation on many City projects and the argument is always made that we are committed to building what was designed. Mr. Howland said the Council approved the CBA and put the \$56M into the budget.

Motion (Howland): amend the Salem amendment to leave the \$56M for parks related to the CBA funding in the CIP and put the other \$96M "below the line" pending further investigation the other 3 projects.

Chairman Salem expressed agreement with the Howland amendment. Darnell Smith said the inclusion of the \$56M was necessary because it was omitted from the budget in error. He said the Jaguars are preparing for the NFL owners meeting in October where the owners will need to approve the CBA so they will need to know what the City is committed to do. The Jaguars have agreed to provide additional funding beyond their original proposal because the City wanted to include more for the parks. Council Member Lahnen said leaving the \$56M in the Howland amendment alleviates the concern about the CBA

and the NFL owners' approval. In response to a request from Mr. Salem, Public Works Director Nina Sicker said the additional \$6M for Riverfront Plaza is needed to finish the construction currently underway. Kim Taylor said the \$6M for that project would be removed from the budget by the Salem amendment as originally proposed.

The Howland amendment was approved unanimously via a voice vote (Freeman abstained).

The committee engaged in further discussion about the \$6M allocation for Riverfront Plaza. At the request of Council Member Pittman, Darnell Smith said the administration opposes the cut of the \$6M which is absolutely needed to complete the project now underway.

Motion (Pittman): restore the \$6M "above the line" for the completion of the Riverfront Plaza project - **approved unanimously via a voice vote** (Freeman abstained)

Council Member Diamond said the point of the whole exercise is not to cut projects but to get answers to questions that have not been answered.

Motion (Howland): approve the Salem amendment as twice amended – **approved unanimously via a voice vote** (Freeman abstained).

Riverfront Park Restaurants

Returning to a discussion from an earlier meeting, Chairman Salem said he has had discussions with several representatives of various interests about downtown riverfront restaurants. He would prefer to see an RFP issued and take proposals from private developers and would like to see more definitive costs.

Motion (Diamond on behalf of Salem): place the Southbank Authorized Expenditure for St. Johns River Park Restaurant (\$1.5M) and Northbank Plan Authorized Expenditure for Riverfront Plaza Restaurant (\$1M) into designated contingencies within their applicable CRAs and get further information on designs and prices before taking further action.

Council Member Diamond said the City should not be developing restaurants and an RFP process would tell us what the private sector thinks is feasible. Council Member Arias said the funding allocated for the buildings is completely insufficient to build a restaurant. Any restaurateur would want to be involved in the design of the building they were going to use. The City shouldn't own and maintain the building. He prefers a food truck court concept rather than a permanent restaurant. Sondra Fetner of the DIA board said the board had this same conversation about what is appropriate for the parks. The board did not consider selling the land to a developer because of the bad experiences the City has had with that model previously on downtown parcels. She said building restaurants for lease is a common CRA function and would give the community what they've asked for with regard to more riverfront dining. Alan Devault of the DIA staff said the Palms Fish Camp experience is a good example of a restaurant lease that really works. He said the City would only be responsible for maintaining the building structure, not the interior mechanicals. DIA is ready to do an RFP for an operator very soon which would allow the chosen restaurateur to be involved in the design of the building. Chairman Salem said he would prefer to do an RFP for the site and let the private sector express an interest. He fears the process will once again produce a very expensive building without Council's input.

The Diamond motion was approved unanimously via a voice vote.

Motion: (Diamond on behalf of Boylan): allocate \$1.5M from funding for UF Health indigent care to JaxCareConnect to fund patient health advocates to provide services to divert the uninsured from the UF Health emergency room to one of 6 primary care clinics.

Patrick Green, CEO of UF Health Jacksonville, said the hospital does not support the motion unless the funding is restored at some point during the fiscal year; UF Health needs the full \$56M budgeted for indigent care. Sunil Joshi, Chief Health Officer, said the administration's intent is to find the \$1.5M elsewhere in the new budget for restoration to UF Health. Council Member Boylan said UF Health's City funding allocation is going up from \$40M to \$56M in the new budget and JaxCareConnect has had great success diverting patients from the emergency room and the \$1.5M to support that effort would produce a great benefit.

Mr. Diamond withdrew the motion without objection.

Kim Taylor said at this point the committee's actions result in putting \$255,489 into Operating Reserves.

Items Deferred for Wrap-Up

#1 – Property Appraiser salary and benefits increase

Motion (Diamond): approve 50% of the Property Appraiser's request for additional salary and benefits funding (\$886,358.50).

Property Appraiser Joyce Morgan advocated for full funding of the request. Council Member Pittman urged approval of the full amount requested (\$1,772,717) because of the importance of the office and the fact that those employees have not received raises in several years. Council Member Freeman urged consistency in the treatment of constitutional officers and said the Finance Committee approved raises for the Tax Collector's Office last year. Council Member Arias said the proposed salary increases only make the salaries equitable with other jurisdictions and are not extravagant. Council Member Lahnen, who serves on the Value Adjustment Board, said the Property Appraiser's workload has increased substantially in the last few years and the work is vitally important.

Motion (Lahnen): amend the Diamond motion to approve the full requested amount of \$1,772,717.

Ms. Taylor said there is \$17.7M in deferred items to be considered and council members have requested additional enhancements. Council Member Freeman asked about the amount of funds being considered for Council strategic priorities. Ms. Taylor said \$3.8M is being proposed in separate legislation - \$2.8M for council strategic priorities and \$1M for a Council Contingency fund. Chairman Salem said the \$2.8M will only fund 74% of the council's adopted strategic priorities so each priority area will be reduced by 26%. Council Member Howland asked why the original \$1.4M request is now \$1.77M. Ms. Morgan said the additional amount represents the cost of benefits that go along with the increased salaries.

The Lahnen amendment was approved unanimously via a voice vote.

The Diamond amendment as amended was approved unanimously via a voice vote.

#3 – Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department bucket truck

Chairman Salem said the item has been resolved and no action is needed.

#4 – Court system additional positions

Motion (Diamond): approve the request for 4 additional positions within General Fund/GSD for Court Administration - **approved unanimously via a voice vote.**

#5 – Ethics Office salary increase

Motion (Diamond): approve the Ethics Office request to move funding of \$12,814 from part-time to full-time salaries - **approved unanimously via a voice vote.**

#6b – KHA increase to afterschool program provider reimbursement rate

Motion (Diamond): approve the KHA request to increase the afterschool program reimbursement rate from \$12.50 to \$14.41 per student.

The committee was in recess from 11:08 to 11:20 a.m.

Mary Staffopoulos said the 3 KHA-related items (#6a, b and c on the list) should not be acted on today because committee members have conflicts of interest, so those items will be taken up in separate legislation at a later meeting. The committee may discuss the items today without voting. Kim Taylor said that separate legislation will be using Operating Reserves as the funding source unless another source is identified. Council Member Arias said he thinks 6b is the most important. Dr. Saralynn Grass, CEO of the Kids Hope Alliance, said the current rate is lower than the state’s rate and the increase in the state’s minimum wage has made it difficult for the program providers to provide the full level of service for the current rate since they can hire fewer interns for the amount of money available due to the higher wage. Council Member Freeman said investing in youth on the front end reduces expenditures on the back end when youth get into trouble.

Designated contingency items

#1 Jacksonville Symphony salaries

Motion (Arias): move funding of \$500,000 for Jacksonville Symphony salaries previously placed in a contingency “above the line”.

Council Member Arias said the symphony requested \$1M and the Mayor allocated \$500,000 in the budget. Steven Libman, President of the Jacksonville Symphony, said the funding will help support the symphony’s youth activities and the symphony is a major activator of downtown at night. Council Member Freeman asked how many children are served. Mr. Libman said 75,000 per year, 80% of whom are Jacksonville residents, and they bring tens of thousands of children to experience the symphony live. Council Member Pittman asked about the Youth Orchestra and how many of its participants are from disadvantaged neighborhoods. Mr. Libman said about 75%, and no child is turned away for lack of resources. He also noted that 100% of participants in the senior youth ensemble go on to college.

The motion was approved unanimously via a voice vote.

#2 City Council municipal dues and affiliations

Motion (Pittman): restore the \$251,787 for dues and affiliations previously placed in a contingency fund “above the line”.

Ginger Deegal, Executive Director of the Florida Association of Counties, said the organization is non-partisan and member-driven and represents all 67 counties. The voting members of the board are elected county governing body officials. They are about advocacy, education and collaboration for elected officials and employees. Council Members Pittman and Arias advocated for the funding. CFO Anna Brosche said that state and national associations are great opportunities to build connections, learn about innovations, and broaden our local perspective. Council Member Howland said Jacksonville doesn’t need to be in both the city and county associations.

Motion (Howland): amend the motion to remove funding for membership in Florida League of Cities (\$65,000) from the budget.

Motion (Howland): amend the previous motion to remove funding previously placed in a designated contingency related to the Florida League of Cities and National League of Cities (\$96,228); move back “above the line” the funding related to the Florida Association of Counties and National Association of Counties (\$132,669); place \$20,000 of travel expenses related to these memberships back into the City Council budget; and remove \$2,890 of travel funds previously placed “below the line”.

Council Member Carrico said he paid his own way to attend the Florida Association of Counties conference this year and is the Council’s appointee to the Florida League of Cities and in his opinion membership in the Association of Counties would be more beneficial. Council Member White and Pittman advocated for membership in both organizations.

The Howland amendment to the amendment was approved 5-1 (Salem opposed)

Ms. Staffopoulos summarized the amendments and the motion to be voted on.

The Pittman motion as amended was approved 5-1 (Salem opposed)

Ms. Staffopoulos said the removal of funding for the National League of Cities removes the City’s membership in the organization entirely, not just City Council’s participation. The motion moved the funding for dues and travel for the Florida and National Association of Counties “above the line”.

#3 – Mayor’s Office dues for Florida and U.S. Conference of Mayors

Motion (Pittman): move \$30,188 for membership in the Florida and U.S. Conference of Mayors “above the line”.

Chairman Salem asked how long the City has been a member of these organizations. Ms. Taylor said the current year is the first in the last several years that the mayor has been a member of these organizations. Darnell Smith said Mayor Deegan has been appointed Chair of the Ports and Exports Committee of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and advocated for membership in the state and national leagues as a valuable resource for the city in making contacts with other cities and with the federal government. Council Member Lahnen said he supports the motion because of Mayor Deegan’s position in the organization. Council Member Arias said he is supportive because of the savings from the previous motion and because Jacksonville as one of America’s 10 largest cities belongs in the room with the other major cities. Council Member Johnson said he will be making a subsequent motion to restore the funding for membership in the two city associations.

The Pittman motion was approved 4-3 by a show of hands (Howland, Diamond, Freeman opposed).

Item #4 – CAO car allowance

Council Member Pittman asked Darnell Smith to comment on the item. Mr. Smith said the allowance is part of the CAO’s employment contract. Council Member Howland said the CAO is paid a substantial salary and can absorb the transportation cost. Council Member Johnson said \$300 a month is a very low amount compared to what top executives of other organizations are provided. In response to a question from Chairman Salem, Director of Employee Services Diane Moser said the CAO doesn’t have a formal contract but does have an offer letter that included the allowance. The previous CAO had a \$500 a month

allowance. Mary Staffopoulos said no action by the committee means the \$3,600 stays in the budget “below the line”.

Clean-up Item

#1 TDC request

Motion: appropriate TDC fund balance for additional funding to Visit Jacksonville in the amount of \$125,000 for Marketing and \$125,000 for Convention Grants – **approved unanimously via a voice vote.**

The committee was in recess from 12:26 to 1:06 p.m.

Motion (Diamond): remove the CAO auto allowance of \$3,600 from the budget entirely – **the motion was approved 5-1 via a voice vote** (Pittman opposed).

Chairman Salem reviewed the status of budget funding after the deferred and wrap-up items and before consideration of enhancements: the budget is using \$1,733,985 of Operating Reserves after removal of the \$3,600 for the CAO’s auto allowance; if the KHA enhancements (\$2.8M and \$55,000) are approved that would bring reserve use up to \$4,592,585.

Brian Parks said Council Member Gay has asked to remove his enhancement requests #16, 17, 19, 20 from the list. Council Member Lahnen asked to remove his request #30, a \$3.2M enhancement for a UNF program. Council Member Howland said his enhancement requests #10 and 11 can be combined into the larger United Way Mission United program. Chairman Salem said he has been informed that there is \$150,000 in the budget for United Way’s 211 call line. ECA Joe Johnson representing Council Member Ken Amaro said he is willing to remove his enhancement #13 regarding the United Way 211 program.

Chairman Salem said the use of reserve funds stands at \$4,592,585 given the changes made to date and assuming the KHA requested enhancements are approved. The remaining enhancement requests total \$4,432,000. He recommended that the total of those two figures - \$9,020,985 - be the target for total Operating Reserve use, which would mirror the use of reserves in recent years.

Enhancement Requests

Motion (Diamond): approve Finance and Council President enhancement requests #1 – 11 (excluding #2, #3 and #5)

Council Member Carrico asked about his ability to vote on the enhancements at a future meeting given his employment with an agency that receives funding from the United Way. Ms. Staffopoulos said staff would research any potential conflicts of interest for future voting purposes.

Council Member Johnson asked for clarification that none of these enhancements deal with items on the City Council’s strategic priorities list. Chairman Salem said 74.1% of the strategic priorities are covered in separate legislation, plus \$1M for a Council Contingency. Ms. Staffopoulos said several items on the list will require term sheets that must be developed so the funding will need to be placed “below the line” until those term sheets are developed, and Council will take further action at a later date (#6 Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, #7 FOP Fallen Officer Relief Fund, #9 Boselli Foundation, #10 United Way – Mission United)

The Diamond motion as clarified by Ms. Staffopoulos was approved unanimously via a voice vote.

Council Member Diamond thanked the committee for its support of additional funding for Animal Care and Protective Services. Council Member Boylan asked to propose an enhancement of \$1.5M for JaxCareConnect.

Motion (Arias): allocate \$600,000 of Operating Reserve to the Journey Forward initiative.

Council Member Freeman advocated for approval of the amendment. President White said \$9,652,197 is the average use of reserves over the past 10 years, excluding the year when federal ARP funds were available to meet needs.

The Arias motion was approved unanimously via a voice vote.

Motion (Diamond): approve all Other Council Member enhancement requests (excluding #13, 16, 17, 19, 20 and 29).

Kim Taylor said that motion would represent use of \$9,620,985 from Operating Reserves.

The Diamond motion was approved unanimously via a voice vote.

Council Member Gaffney Jr. requested a \$500,000 CIP project for design of a Dinsmore area sidewalk construction project for FY24-25 and \$1M for a traffic light CIP project at Braddock Road and Dunn Avenue, for funding in FY25-26. City Traffic Engineer Chris LeDew said the signal at Braddock and Dunn is on a state road and it will be at least 5 years before the state can get to construction. There has been a surge in accidents at that intersection and 4 major developments are going to add over 1,000 more homes north of the intersection, increasing the problem. Mr. LeDew said the cost estimate is \$3.6M and the \$1M would pay for design and to get construction started. Mr. Gaffney Jr. said he will be asking the Duval Legislative Delegation for state funding for the project. Mr. LeDew said there has been some discussion of using mobility fee funds for that light, but it would take Council action to amend the mobility plan. Brett James, Director of Planning and Development, said there is a project in that area that was to be funded with “fair share” dollars that is no longer going to be constructed, and the “fair share” funds will be requested to be moved to this project via future legislation.

Motion (Arias): add a CIP project of \$1M for a traffic light at the intersection of Braddock Road and Dunn Avenue for funding in FY25-26 via borrowing – **approved unanimously via voice vote.**

Motion (Pittman): add a CIP project of \$500,000 for design of a Dinsmore sidewalk construction project (estimated total cost of \$5M) for funding in FY24-25 via borrowing - **approved unanimously via voice vote.**

Council Member Howland returned to discussion of the Emerald Trail project from a previous meeting and asked that the same process be undertaken to provide a detailed analysis of the trail project as will be provided on the downtown riverfront park projects deferred earlier in the meeting. Ms. Taylor said the conflict bills will be on the agenda for the second Finance Committee in September and that would be a good time for that presentation.

Council Member Boylan advocated for the allocation of \$1.5M for JaxCareConnect to continue the investment in diverting people out of the emergency room at UF Health Jacksonville to other health care providers. Patrick Green, CEO of UF Health Jacksonville, said this is a valuable collaboration that does great work, but cautioned that the hospital can't take a cut from its previously appropriated indigent care funds. Mr. Boylan said it is worth the use of Operating Reserves to support this cost-saving program.

Motion (Pittman): appropriate \$1.5M from Operating Reserve for the JaxCareConnect emergency room diversion program.

Council Member Freeman asked it was possible to partially fund the program with a lower amount and then find other resource, perhaps from council member district allocations. Council Member Boylan said the absolute minimum would be \$500,000 to keep the diversion program in the emergency room going. The other \$1M was to be split among the 6 clinics to allow them to staff up to accept more patients. Mr. Freeman asked what other funding sources might be found. Angela Strain, Executive Director of We Care Jax, said foundations and individual donors have contributed to getting the pilot project underway. They have approached 4 foundations that may be interested in providing funding if the City shows an equal commitment. Council Member Johnson asked if this could be funded through the Council's strategic priorities funding. Ms. Strain said if no City funding is provided then the program can't continue beyond next February. Chairman Salem said he would contribute \$25,000 from his MHOP enhancement request as a match to \$325,000 from Operating Reserve (keeping total reserve use under \$10M). Ms. Taylor said there is \$100,000 in the mayor's non-profit initiative in the Special Events budget that will carry forward to the next fiscal year and she understands that it will not need to be expended until next spring. Mr. Salem said if the administration would contribute the \$100,000 then he would contribute \$25,000 from his MHOP enhancement request. Joe Inderhees said there are uses planned for those funds. Kim Taylor said those funds are available in the current year's budget and won't be used before year-end. Mr. Inderhees said the administration would agree to release that \$100,000 from this year's Special Events budget.

Motion (Howland): allocate \$500,000 to JaxCareConnect - \$375,000 from Operating Reserve, \$100,000 from the administration from the FY24-25 Special Events budget for a non-profit open house, and \$25,000 from Council Member Salem's MHOP enhancement request.

Council Member Arias said the City is not obligated to provide funding year after year to the same organizations and programs since there are many competing needs that deserve funding.

Council Member Lahnen asked for confirmation that the amendment, if approved, would still keep the use of Operating Reserve below \$10M for next year. Ms. Taylor said the total, if this amendment is approved, would be \$9,995,985.

The Howland amendment was approved unanimously via a voice vote.

The Pittman amendment as amended was approved unanimously via a voice vote.

Council Member Diamond said the Finance Committee has defunded the Mayor's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion position both last year and this year; last year the administration shifted funding to keep the position anyway. He will therefore be introducing legislation to amend the Ordinance Code to affirmatively prohibit mayors from doing that in the future and will introduce legislation to prohibit the City from treating people differently for any reason.

Meeting adjourned: 2:13 p.m.

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