



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

Dr. Keshan Hargrove, Chair

TRUE COMMISSION PRELIMINARY MEETING MINUTES

*(Note: these minutes are not official until reviewed and
Approved by the commission at a future meeting)*

May 8, 2025

4:00 p.m.

Lynwood Roberts Room, 1st floor, City Hall

Attendance: Dr. Keshan Hargrove (Chair), Commissioners: Stephanie Oglesby, Daniel Henry, Kevin Luhrs, Kim Pryor, Alexander Hoffman, Chris McHugh, Bruce Tyson

Excused: Commissioners: Velma Rounsville, Anthony Zoubini, Andrea Letizia, Ramon Day, Charles Barr

Also: Nayeli Jimenez– City Council Research; Tommy Carter – Council Auditor’s Office; Lori Boyer and Peter Sherwill – Downtown Investment Authority

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

Approval of minutes

The minutes of the April 3, 2025 commission meeting were approved unanimously as distributed.

Downtown Investment Authority – Lori Boyer and Peter Sherwill

Lori Boyer, CEO of the Downtown Investment Authority and Mr. Sherwill provided an overview of the Office of Public Parking and how city-owned parking is managed downtown. The office oversees on-street meters and most city-owned garages and lots, though some facilities are privately managed or leased by the DIA. City garages are primarily designated for employee parking. While public parking is available, it is mostly concentrated in the Duval Street Library Garage. Other garages, like Ed Ball and Yates, are structured for short visits or employee access, with pricing discouraging long-term public use.

Mr. Hoffman asked about occupancy rates. Ms. Boyer confirmed garages like Duval are fully subscribed with a waitlist; Mr. Sherwill added daily usage is approximately 70%. Ms. Boyer explained that a 2019 parking study recommended tiered pricing, but Council adopted a 50% discount for city employees. This removed pricing incentives and led to full garages and long waitlists. She noted this undermined effective allocation, as employees now compete for the most convenient spaces regardless of actual need.

Ms. Boyer acknowledged city fleet vehicles take up valuable spaces and recommended relocating them to remote lots. Mr. Hoffman asked whether fleet departments like JFRD and JSO are charged; Ms. Boyer confirmed departments are billed, but JFRD, JSO, JEA, state legislators, and others have legal exemptions allowing free meter parking, making management difficult.

Mr. Hoffman expressed concern about public access to courthouse-area parking due to official vehicles occupying on-street meters. Ms. Boyer acknowledged the challenge and lack of current data on lost revenue for that specific area, although general meter studies have been conducted. Mr. Hoffman asked how law enforcement parking privileges are verified. Mr. Sherwill said marked or credentialed vehicles are exempt; unmarked vehicles without documentation are ticketed unless an affidavit confirms official duty. Ms. Boyer cited past issues with state probation officers and noted a solution was reached to allow them to park in reserved juror spaces instead of occupying public meters.

Ms. Pryor suggested issuing digital parking passes to track official vehicle use. Ms. Boyer supported the idea but noted legal and departmental resistance, including refusals from agencies to accept such passes. She added that ordinance changes would be required to enforce such accountability.

Ms. Pryor asked about the continued operation of a surface lot at the old Greyhound station despite zoning prohibitions. Ms. Boyer said the lot violates the downtown zoning overlay, but the City mistakenly issued a permit, which now legally protects it from removal.

Mr. McHugh and others questioned the impact of underused discounted employee parking. Ms. Boyer proposed a voucher-based system where employees receive parking credits to use at any garage, allowing market-based pricing. However, labor and bargaining concerns have stalled this effort.

Mr. Henry criticized repetitive road patching from utilities digging into the same areas. Ms. Boyer explained overlapping projects from companies like TECO and JEA contribute to this issue. She referenced a new ordinance requiring better notification and timelines for right-of-way work and said a map-based detour tool is under development to help residents navigate closures.

Mr. Kevin Luhrs voiced extensive concerns regarding the ethics, financial transparency, and suitability of the proposed land swap involving the City and JWB-affiliated Gateway Jax. He cited past tenant treatment, legal settlements, and concerns over racial disparate impact from eviction screening practices. Mr. Luhrs also questioned the integrity of public financial figures cited by JWB representatives, alleging misleading and double-counted projections. He raised ethical concerns over JWB's role as a UF booster and potential conflicts tied to property acquisition timing, political donations, and insider knowledge regarding the selection of the LaVilla site. Mr. Luhrs advocated for a direct purchase of the Interline building rather than a land swap and urged for greater scrutiny over financial assumptions and JWB's public dealings.

Ms. Lori Boyer responded that the legislation is pending before Council and clarified that DIA pursued a land swap as a cost-effective alternative to purchasing the Interline building outright. She provided background on appraisals, valuation constraints, and public use considerations of both properties involved. Ms. Boyer stated that DIA negotiated design and hotel use commitments from the developer to secure long-term park maintenance funding through a 2% surcharge. She emphasized that Gateway Jax has met performance benchmarks on prior agreements and confirmed that the \$20 million completion grant would be reimbursed only after project completion. Ms. Boyer also clarified that ROI projections from DIA use standard city formulas, which include discounting and inflation considerations. In closing, Ms. Boyer stated that the Council Auditor's Office is currently reviewing the financial projections.

Public Comment

John Nooney highlighted the private ownership of 90% of Jacksonville's waterways and sought commission support for a documentary project.

Council Auditor's Report

Mr. Tommy Carter from the Council Auditor's Office presented two follow-up audit reports. Report #830B, the second follow-up to the Real Estate Audit, addressed 7 outstanding issues, with 4 resolved and 3 still open. The remaining issues include: inaccuracies in the fixed asset inventory database, failure to reconcile 168 City-owned properties, and delays in disposing of surplus properties, only five auctions occurred in the past year, with 129 identified surplus properties still held and over 2,400 potential surplus properties pending review.

Report #805B, a follow-up on the Building Inspection Division Audit, cleared 6 of 16 remaining issues, leaving 10 still unresolved. Key issues include improper system access for terminated or unauthorized staff, uncollected or unexplained fee adjustments, failure to double fees for unpermitted work, errors in plan review fee calculations, escrow reconciliation issues, lack of updated SOPs, and inconsistent use of required forms for private provider inspections. Mr. Carter confirmed that all related reports had previously been shared with the Commission.

Audit Committee

None

Legislative Tracking Committee

None

Chair's Comments

None

Old Business

None

New Business

Mr. Daniel Henry asked whether the TRUE Commission would follow last year's practice of assigning members to attend budget hearings and provide reports, with the option to draft resolutions if warranted. Noting that the Commission does not meet in July, he suggested the June meeting be used to finalize assignments ahead of the August budget hearings. He asked for clarification on whether this would align with legislative services' timeline. Chair Hargrove responded that she had no objection, provided there was agreement among all commissioners

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 – June 5, 2025

The meeting was adjourned at 5:38 p.m.

Nayeli Jimenez- Council Research Division

njimenez1@coj.net 904-255-5140

Posted 05/12/2025 5:00 PM