



Ronald B. Salem, Pharm.D.
Councilman, At-Large Group 2
Office (904) 255-5216
Fax (904) 255-5230
E-Mail: rsalem@coj.net

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

117 West Duval Street
City Hall, Suite 425
Jacksonville, FL 32202

TDD: (904) 255-5200

Meeting Date: September 24, 2026

Topic: JTA Matters

Location: 117 West Duval Street, Council Chambers

In attendance: Council Member Ron Salem, Council President Nick Howland, Council Member Chris Miller, Council Member Mike Gay, Council Member Matt Carlucci, Council Member Randy White, Council Member Jimmy Peluso, Phillip Peterson (Council Auditor's Office), Brian Parks (Council Auditor's Office), Mary Staffopoulos (Office of General Counsel), Micheal Fackler (Office of General Counsel), Cleveland Ferguson (JTA), Randall Barnes (JTA), Andy Rodgers (JTA), Jessica Shepler (JTA), Jason Gabriel (JTA)

Meeting Convened: 9:45 AM

Council Member Ron Salem called the meeting to order and asked everyone to introduce themselves for the record. CM Salem explained that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss matters pertaining to the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA). Council President Nick Howland said the recently closed Financial Audit and Oversight Select Committee may be reconvened to examine JTA matters. He identified stabilizing JTA's finances as the immediate priority and described pending legislation that would allow an advance of up to \$30 million in local option gas tax funds. He said a longer-term review of transportation priorities would require collaboration among JTA, the Mayor's Office, and City Council.

Interim Chief Executive Officer Cleveland Ferguson reported that JTA was reducing costs to align its operations with the approved Fiscal Year 2027 budget of approximately \$139 million. He described reductions in contracts and staffing and outlined a November 2nd service change intended to preserve the most heavily used bus routes while adjusting service on less-used routes. JTA plans to hold community meetings before the schedule changes take effect.

Chief Financial Officer Randall Barnes said depleted reserves, overdue vendor payments, and expenses exceeding revenue had led JTA to draw \$25 million on a revolving line of credit. Barnes said the proposed gas tax advance would allow JTA to pay down the credit line and cover eligible expenses, reducing interest costs while repaying over ten years. He also described stronger budget controls, financial reporting, and a review requested by JTA's board into how the financial difficulties arose.

JTA staff presented the status of projects funded through the local option gas tax, including roadway improvements, transit enhancements, a new St. Johns River ferry vessel, Skyway planning, and Emerald Trail segments. It was also reported that approximately \$294 million in program funds was currently unencumbered and uncommitted. A discussion ensued about whether future amendments to the



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interlocal agreement could redirect some funds or transfer certain roadway projects to the City, while accounting for existing commitments and federal funding requirements.

Council Members emphasized reliable fixed-route and paratransit service, the effects of reduced service on riders, and the need to review project priorities. Council Members expressed differing views on which projects should be reconsidered and stressed JTA's responsibility, as an independent authority, to evaluate its operations and make recommendations. JTA representatives said they were reviewing costs and service priorities and would continue working with the City on available options.

During public comment, speakers addressed continued support for the St. Johns River ferry, access to public transportation, contracting opportunities, and the effects of JTA's workforce reductions. Council Member Chris Miller clarified that he supported JTA's board and leadership carrying out their oversight responsibilities while Council worked with them on solutions. Council Member Salem thanked JTA representatives and the public, noted that Council President Howland would determine the next steps for Council oversight, and adjourned the meeting.

Adjournment: 11:50 AM

The following items were submitted for public record and can be accessed by contacting the Legislative Services Division: minutes, sign-in sheet, and video.

Minutes: Nikki Evans – completed on September 29th, 2026

cc: Council Members/Staff
Jason Teal, Director/Council Secretary
Bernadette Smith, Chief, Legislative Services Division
Colleen Hampsey, Chief of Research
CITYC@COJ.NET
Office of General Counsel
Electronic Notice Kiosk – 1st Floor City Hall
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