**DISCLOSURE TO SPECIAL INVESTIGATORY COMMITTEE RE: JEA**

**September 8, 2020**

My first meeting with Aaron Zahn was in the summer of 2019, after my election**.**We met at my insurance office. At the meeting, he told me of difficulties JEA was having, losing customers to solar and other types of competition. He talked about how JEA could not enter other markets because of the City Charter and state constitution challenges. I told him I understand fierce competition in the business world. I told him that while JEA faced challenges and headwinds, I would never be in favor of selling the JEA, and I felt a public utility was priceless. I countered his arguments with the value of a public utility, owned by the ratepayers of Jacksonville. I talked about the importance of a public utility that provides more than electricity, water, and sewer. I said our public utility had earned an excellent reputation for making many quality of life contributions to Jacksonville. Also, I told him I made only one promise in my campaign, and that was I would never support selling the JEA. After a little more back-and-forth conversation, he left my office.

My next interaction with Aaron Zahn was within a week after I posted on Twitter, 10/17/19, at 6:18pm, the following:

"So we got an insert Saturday in our JEA bill from the authority's Chair saying they were in a death spiral. Who would want to buy that? The CEO of JEA said at last week's board meeting, 'JEA's financial and operating performance is better than it ever has been.' Why sell?"

 I remember this clearly because Karen and I were watching football that evening.

Aaron Zahn called me about 8:00 pm and was infuriated about the tweet. He went on and on about how the time was right to sell and the awful consequences to Jacksonville if we did not. He said utilities around the country were privatizing, and JEA would not be viable in the coming years. He said it was almost impossible for JEA to go after other markets. He talked about charter changes and the state constitution ad nauseum…. But I had done my homework and refuted every point he made.

I noted sources that showed the trend of municipalities is to buy private utility companies and go public. I told him I had the facts to back up what I was saying. He did not like me standing up to him. I also asked why he wasn't on board with helping the school board for a 2019 half-penny sales tax referendum for schools. I explained that I felt we were losing potential customers for the JEA because many people want nicer schools. I told him builders and realtors were supporting a half-penny effort to bring new people to Jacksonville and keep existing property owners in Jacksonville. I asked him to think about how many new households JEA could pick up if we brought our schools up to 21st-century standards.

This conversation ended after about 45 minutes.  I then resumed watching the game with Karen.

On August 7, 2019, I met with Henry Brown, who was at the time a JEA board member and a friend of mine, to talk about the JEA. He came to my State Farm insurance office, wanting to know how I felt about what was going on with the JEA. He said he respected my opinion and wanted to know why I was so vehemently against privatization. He also wanted to give me his explanation. I told him I did not trust what was going on in our city government or at JEA and keeping JEA as a public utility was in the best interest of the citizens of Jacksonville.

I backed my opinions by many years of experience and by researching the claims of Aaron Zahn. Henry gave me his explanation, which had to do with competition, saying he felt privatization would be a better way to go. We agreed to disagree and parted, saying it was good that we could hear each other's views.

After my tweet on 10/17/19 when the JEA bill insert came out, I received a call from April Greene. She said she wanted to talk with me to hear what I had to say. We met at my insurance office and had a nice time getting to know each other. She wanted to listen to my honest opinion and said she felt could rely on what I would share. I told her I did not trust Aaron Zahn, and losing our public utility would be a disaster for Jacksonville. I told her the trend was for municipalities to buy utilities, not sell public utilities. When she left my office, I felt she appreciated what I shared, and it seemed to have made an impact on her. After our talk, she thought she had heard the truth. At that time, she was going to chair a few more meetings but had not yet called for Aaron Zahn's resignation. As Chair, she had to make some tough decisions. I told her to just be herslf and do what she knew was right, and she did. What a shame that such an outstanding public servant as April Greene had to leave the JEA Board after she performed the job with truth and excellence under the toughest of circumstances. I feel she did a fine job and was true to her fiduciary responsibility to protect the public trust with JEA at the end before parting the Board.

There were several monthly meetings at my City Council office with Sherry Hall. Whenever we met, she knew I was against the sale of the JEA and astonished that Jacksonville was going down this path. I felt Sherry was doing her job, and I never faulted her for any action. At some of these meetings, she was joined by Mellissa Dykes. The visits were usually short.

I believe this to be all my meetings. Of course, I was in attendance at some of the meetings conducted by Council Member Boylan's committee and the SIC committee.

I have no family members employed by JEA.