



## **Task Force on Consolidated Government**

Jacksonville City Council  
Council Member Lori Boyer, Chair

September 26, 2013

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF MEETING 5**

#### **Task Force Member Comments**

- JSO looked at providing police for JAA but the cost was too high because of the pension liability, otherwise the JSO was competitive
- Council Presidents used to hold bi-monthly meetings with the board chairs and CEOs of the independent authorities
- TF would like information on what percentage of the Charter has been amended and by what method – voter referendum, J-bill or City Council ordinance.
- The original Charter provision required the General Counsel to certify that the OGC could not provide a particular legal service before hiring outside counsel. Has that been repealed or if not is it being followed?
- The independent authorities (except for the JTA) are required to use the OGC unless OGC agrees to outside counsel for a particular reason
- The process for hiring outside counsel is set forth in the Ordinance Code for City agencies, and is in the independent authorities' charters
- JTA is a good candidate to have its legal services returned to the OGC.

#### **Sheriff's Office Presentation**

##### Central Service Generally

- Central service **costs** have become problematic as the City increases internal service charges but cuts other discretionary lines in the budget so that there is little room for the department to respond
- The JSO does utilize all City central services as required by ordinance, except for the very law enforcement-specific functions that require a greater degree of confidentiality or strict internal control
- None of JSO's employees duplicate anything already being done by City central services
- Quality is not a problem; billing for service is a problem.

##### Central Service Specifically:

- Procurement & IT

- JSO personnel deal with police-specific items (weapons, vehicle equipment, tactical gear, etc.)
- Some IT provided by the City, some in-house by JSO personnel depending on the service.

#### Financial Impact

- JSO usually has their cost savings swept back into the General Fund to balance the City's budget
- This year the City Council approved an ordinance allowing the Sheriff to keep his year-end budgetary savings to be used for strategic investments (i.e. replacement of old patrol cars), but not general operating expenses.

#### Unity of Purpose

- The JSO has the same mission as the rest of the City; it just deals with the law enforcement end of things
- JSO is an integral part of the City government and has personnel assigned to Parks and Rec., Code Enforcement, JAXPORT, and others
- The Sheriff praised consolidation
- Elected sheriffs/chiefs can tell the truth at all times in all venues and won't be influenced

#### Responses to Task Force Questions

- If Jacksonville had a police chief, there would still be a sheriff's office pursuant to state law that would control the jails and civil process service.
- Parts of JSO's budget are controllable and other parts (central services) are not
  - JSO also bears a portion of the liability on the General Employees' Pension Plan because they have civilian employees who participate in that plan
- State law allows the Sheriff to appeal their budget to the Governor and Cabinet

### **Constitutional Officers Panel**

#### Central services

- Tax Collector
  - utilizes all of the City's central services and has none in-house. He cautioned that their total dependence on the City can be problematic if the City under-funds its central services and can't provide the quality and timeliness of service that is needed
- Supervisor of Elections
  - has a small department that couldn't duplicate central services cost effectively so he utilizes all services, but does have his own IT personnel for elections-specific equipment like voting machines and mailing machines
- Property Appraiser
  - uses City central services except for a couple of IT personnel for GIS, etc.

#### Financial Impact

- The constitutional officers negotiate with the Mayor's budget office over what will be presented to the City Council, then appear before the Finance Committee to lobby for additions or restorations
- Tax Collector

- 75% of the Tax Collector's budget comes from fees for state services rather than the City General Fund
- is a budget-based office rather than a fee-based office, so it gets revenue from a 0.25% charge on transactions and any deficit is made up by the City General Fund.
- Supervisor of Elections
  - mandated by state law to provide certain levels of service which they try to exceed where possible, so that forms the base budget request.
- Property Appraiser
  - budget must be approved by the Florida Department of Revenue so is somewhat unlike the other officers
  - under state law a property appraiser has the power to appeal the county's budget decision to the Governor and Cabinet for reasons of inadequacy.
- The three officials all said that they don't take a "use it or lose it" attitude and don't spend unnecessarily at the end of a fiscal year to avoid having any fund balance left.

#### Advantages of Being Independent

- Jim Overton felt that they are definitely part of the City team and don't have any advantage
- Jerry Holland stated that internal department heads cannot lobby but can achieve the same privately
- Michael Corrigan felt that the perception of an advantage may be overblown because the constitutional officer's task of lobbying the City Council is more difficult than that of other internal departments when the Mayor opposes the Const. Officers

#### Connections between the constitutional officers and City departments other than central services

- Mr. Corrigan stated that the degree of connection varies office by office depending on the functions involved
  - The City's FAMIS financial management system is an impediment to cooperation
  - Replacement of that system would open the doors to more cooperative arrangements
- Mr. Overton stated that his office's data is widely used because it is the backbone of the City's property data and maps
- Mr. Holland said that his office works with the City on voting locations and public information.

#### Unity of Purpose

- Jerry Holland stated that City does not currently appear to have an overall mission (at least not one shown on the City's web site), so it's hard to say how well they match up.
- Mr. Overton said that consolidation has the effect of restricting his office more than any other property appraiser in Florida other than Miami-Dade County, although he is personally a fan of consolidation.

#### Elected vs. appointed officers

- Mr. Corrigan favored election for the accountability that it provides to the citizens

- Mr. Holland stated neither method is a guarantee of better performance – it depends on the individuals

Checks and balances:

- Mr. Overton stated that his office is both overseen by the City and heavily regulated by the state, the Tax Collector is also heavily regulated by the state
- The Council Auditor audits each of the constitutional officers once every 5 years

**Duval County Agricultural Extension**

- The Extension Service has a Memorandum of Understanding with the City that extends through 2016 that covers the operational details
- The City pays one-third of the agency’s budget, the state two-thirds
- City funding and Extension’s overall budget have been declining in recent years
- An allocation from City stormwater utility fees pays for the Florida Lawns education program
- The City recently received a federal rural initiatives grant for areas outside the I-295 beltway, which would tend to indicate that the federal government still recognizes that the City has some rural areas

**Duval County Health Department**

- The City’s contribution to the Health Department budget has fallen substantially in recent years from \$3 million in 2008 to \$795,000 now
- The current funding is allocated only to grant matches; the \$3 million was budgeted for operation and the department’s services
- The department occupies City buildings but does not use any City central services
- Jacksonville’s local contribution to the health department is the second lowest of Florida’s metropolitan counties, and most large counties have a tax levy for the benefit of their health department and indigent care purposes

**Task Force General Discussion**

- There seems to be a conflict between the practices and policies advocated by the Agriculture Department and what City departments are implementing in capital projects
- The City departments don’t connect well with the Agriculture and Health Departments because of their relative independence