



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

Joe Andrews, Chair
Diane Brown, Vice Chair
Patti Anania, Secretary

TRUE Commission Meeting Minutes

September 5, 2013
4:00 p.m.

Attendance: Diane Brown (Vice Chair), Marcella Lowe, Daniel Blanchard, Patti Anania, Alex Marerro Ted Wendler; Danny Becton, John Campbell, Ernest McDuffie, James Edwards
Excused: Joe Andrews, Greg Radlinski, George Spencer, Keith Johnson
Absent: Leroy Kelly, Marc El Hassan

Also: Tommy Carter– Council Auditor’s Office

Vice Chair Brown convened the meeting at 4:10 p.m. with a quorum present.

Minutes

The minutes of the August 1, 2013 commission meetings were approved as distributed.

Committee Reports

Legislative Tracking Committee – the committee did not meet this month and in Mr. Andrews’ absence there was no report.

Performance Committee – Commissioner Wendler reported that the committee met earlier in the day to review its draft report on pension reform and the report is very close to completed. Commissioner Becton will make the final amendments discussed at the meeting today and the committee will meet again in two weeks to approve the final draft. Commissioner Becton urged all commissioners to read the latest draft and to contribute suggested options for solutions. The report is not intended to recommend a single best solution, but to lay out a variety of options for the Mayor and Council to consider. Please send all suggestions to Jeff Clements for redistribution to the whole group. Commissioner Wendler feels that there is no point to urging the City to take the validity of the 30-year agreement to court since a judge has already ruled (in the case of Curtis Lee v. City of Jacksonville) that the Florida Public Employee Relations Council (PERC) is the proper body to determine who is a proper entity for collective bargaining purposes. Commissioner Campbell will review the court’s ruling in the Lee case and make a report to the commission by e-mail via staff. Commissioner Wendler recapped the current status of the various lawsuits pending over various aspects of the Police and Fire Pension and the 30-year agreement with the Police and Fire Pension Fund board of trustees.

Audit Review Committee – Commissioner Lowe reported that the committee met earlier today but was unable to discuss any audits due to commissioner absences. Commissioner Campbell reviewed Auditor’s Report #737 – Council Auditor’s Follow-up Report. He categorized the 26 findings into two categories: administrative procedures/paperwork issues and more substantive issues with potential for fraud or abuse. He identified several follow-up items that seem to be problematic and may need additional attention. The first was the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund audit (#672) which still has 8 outstanding issues involving lack of standards, criteria and guidelines for determining how grants and loans are made. The second was the Public Buildings Division audit (#664) which identified a problem with supplies inventory procurement and control.

Tommy Carter of the Council Auditor’s Office reported that the Council Auditor will continue to follow up on the outstanding items of the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund audit, but doesn’t have any enforcement power over departmental responses other than to continue to highlight problems in audit reports. Commissioner Lowe stated that the TRUE Commission has the ability to assist the Council Auditor in trying to bring these outstanding items to resolution. Commissioner Campbell recommended that a representative of the Neighborhoods Department be invited to a future meeting to provide a status update on the outstanding issues and the department’s progress on developing policies and procedures for use of the economic development fund. Staff will be requested to make the request for a representative to attend the October meeting and provide details on the activities of the fund (current balance, revenue sources and uses, policies and procedures, etc.). Commissioner Blanchard urged a more aggressive approach toward the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund, given the continuing lack of compliance with the audit recommendations and the turnover of leadership in the Neighborhoods Department and the management of that fund. A recent front page *Florida Times-Union* article on the fund was critical of the fund’s management. The commission asked staff to request information from the department prior to the October meeting. The commission also asked staff to invite a representative of the Public Buildings Division to the October commission meeting to discuss the outstanding issues on that audit.

Motion (Lowe): request representatives from the Neighborhoods Department attend the commission’s October meeting and provide an explanation of the Northwest Jacksonville Economic Development Fund’s funding sources and uses, current fund balance, and the department’s progress on developing policies, procedures and criteria for use of the funds – **approved.**

Motion (Lowe) request representatives of the Public Buildings Division attend the commission’s October meeting and provide an explanation of the status of responses to the Council Auditor’s recommendations in Audit #664, particularly with regard to inventory control – **approved.**

The only new audit for next time is the Budget Quarterly Review (#738). Commissioners Marrero and Brown volunteered to lead the review. Commissioner Lowe asked for other commissioners, not members of the Audit Committee, to volunteer to lead audit reviews and contribute ideas and suggestions.

Auditor’s Report

Tommy Carter reported that the office had released one new report as noted by Mrs. Lowe in the Audit Committee report earlier - #738, the Third Quarter budget summary. The Auditor’s Office has been consumed by the budget for the past 6 weeks, but the process is nearing completion and regular audit work will resume shortly. Commissioner Lowe requested that Mr. Carter attend the

Audit Committee meetings at 2:30 on commission meeting days to hear the committee's questions on audits and perhaps obtain answers by the 4:00 full commission meeting.

Chair's Comments

None

Old Business

None

New Business

Commissioner Lowe reported that only 1 of the 7 commissioners who has not yet attended a new commissioner orientation meeting responded to the notice of the proposed session last month, so that orientation was not held. She requested staff to poll the 7 commissioners to ask for dates and times that would be convenient so that a session can be scheduled to accommodate everyone's schedules.

Commissioner Lowe reminded all commissioners that they are required to complete the on-line Sunshine Law and ethics training and sign and return the certification reform to the City Council office.

Commissioner Lowe also informed the commissioners that she has been informed that TRUE Commissioners, like members of any other appointed board or commission, may not abstain from voting on an issue that comes before the body unless they have a conflict of interest as defined by state law. She posed the question of abstaining based on lack of information and was told by both Greg Radlinski (formerly an attorney in the General Counsel's office) and current City attorney Peggy Sidman that there is no provision for abstention outside of a conflict of interest. The proper motion in that case is to defer the matter to a later date.

Commissioner Comments

None

Public Comments

A group of UNF students working on bachelor's degrees in nursing introduced themselves.

Next meeting

The commission will meet next on Thursday, October 3rd at 4:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

Posted 10.11.13
5:00 p.m.

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City Council electronic file
Media box