



JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

**TRUE COMMISSION
PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
May 5, 2011
3:00 p.m.**

**City Council Conference Room B
Suite 425, City Hall
117 W. Duval Street**

Attendance: Committee Members Ted Wendler (Chair), Thomas Martin, Marcella Lowe, Diane Brown, Gamal Lyons and Joe Andrews (arr. 3:15)

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairman Wendler who initiated a discussion of the committee's impressions after attending the first two meetings of the City Council's Ad Hoc Committee on FY11-12 Budget Savings Review. Specifically, given the nature of that committee's work, does the Performance Committee see a need to continue its investigations into internal service funds or would the committee's time and effort be better invested elsewhere?

Commissioner Brown felt that the whole City budget process seems like it needs a thorough review – it appears to be too complicated for laymen to easily understand or to make any practical recommendations. The information technology functions appears to be too fragmented, with the City, the Sheriff's Office, the School Board and the independent authorities all having IT departments that perform some or all of their IT functions. This seems contrary to the intent of consolidation and is probably more costly than it needs to be. She suggested the possibility of the Performance Committee meeting with one or more of the members of the Ad Hoc Budget Review Committee to share ideas, and suggested that focusing on high-level policy issues rather than on detailed line item analysis might be more useful.

Commissioner Lowe felt that the Ad Hoc Committee has only heard from the presenting departments about what they do, how they operate, and the cuts and changes they have already made, with little to no discussion about any plans for future efficiencies or budget savings. She believes the Performance Committee should compile a list of ideas for potential budget savings (such as reducing the number of take-home vehicles) and present that list to the Ad Hoc Committee. She intends to meet with General Counsel Cindy Laquidara to follow up on several items from her presentation to the committee. She suggested that the Performance Committee meet on May 24th just prior to the last meeting of the Ad Hoc Budget Review Committee to compile a list of potential savings for presentation to the committee.

In response to a question, staff member Jeff Clements briefly outlined the City budget preparation, presentation and adoption process. The newly-required tentative budget will be introduced in City Council next Tuesday and the formal budget presentation will be made by the Mayor on or before July 15th. The Finance Committee will hold budget hearings throughout the month of August and present its proposed budget to the full council at the first meeting in September, after which Council will hold the required public hearings and adopt the final budget by the end of the month to take effect October 1st. The TRUE Commission might want to consider developing a package of recommendations to send to the Finance Committee in late July before the budget hearings begin, and then break down the large package

into department-specific bundles of recommendations to be presented as reminders for each of the budget hearings.

Chairman Wendler stated that it seems like a daunting task to get enough information from the City departments to make a set of reasonable recommendations. He believes the Performance Committee should not restrict itself to the City's internal service funds, but wondered if the committee had the time and expertise to expand to other budget areas. Commissioner Lowe suggested that one or two good, solid recommendations with sufficient background information would be preferable to a laundry list of ideas with no solid thought behind them. She volunteered to contact the members of the Ad Hoc Committee to see who could be available to meet with the Performance Committee in early June. Commissioner Martin suggested that overuse of the Banking Fund is a crucial issue, facilitating the use of borrowed money to pay for short-lived items (vehicles, computers) that should be bought on a pay-as-you-go basis. Commissioner Lyons said it seems like the Ad Hoc Committee is in the listening mode and perhaps asking a question or two, but is not conducting an in-depth examination of the departments it's studying so far.

Commissioner Andrews stated that the City persists in approaching the budget in the same way each year and will therefore continue to get the same results. The budget is assembled by the mayor using the previous year's budget as a baseline and then adjusting expenditures up or down to meet available revenues; then the budget is handed off to a legislative body (the City Council) that is incapable of agreeing on any but the most minor expenditure cuts at the very end of the process when there's no time or ability for an in-depth, rational discussion of options. The process is fundamentally backwards. He thinks the major work of cutting the budget should be done by the mayor (the chief executive) who should propose serious reductions to meet the new economic realities and City Council (the board of directors) should approve it with a relatively high level of oversight.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Jeff Clements, Chief
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630-1405

Posted 5.6.11
5:00 p.m.