



JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

**TRUE COMMISSION
PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
December 1, 2011
3:00p.m.**

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

Attendance: Committee Members Ted Wendler (Chair), Marcella Lowe, Joe Andrews (arr. 3:05), Tom Martin, Hiron Peck, Patti Anania, Daniel Blanchard, Ernest McDuffie (arr. 3:30)

Excused: Diane Brown

Guests: Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Tony Bates – Concerned Taxpayers of Duval County

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairman Wendler.

Mr. Wendler stated that Council Member Ray Holt had asked the Arlington Tea Party organization to research successful privatizations of EMS services in other jurisdictions for the benefit of his Special Committee on Privatization. Commissioner Lowe stated that she had called City EMS numerous times when her late husband had health problems and was never billed for the calls except for the one instance where he was transported to the hospital. Jeff Clements explained that the Fire and Rescue Department only charges for transport, not for initial response. In response to a question about why the City sends both an EMS unit and a fire truck to medical calls, Mr. Clements stated that the reasons he's heard enumerated by the Fire and Rescue Department during budget hearings are 1) all firefighters are certified EMTs and therefore capable of dealing with medical emergencies; 2) the City has more fire trucks than EMS units, and therefore the closest unit with the quickest response time to a medical call may be a fire engine; and 3) EMS responders never know what they're going to face when they respond to a call. A call to 911 reporting an unconscious person might be a person having a heart attack or stroke and the responding EMTs may need more than the just the two personnel on a rescue vehicle; the 3 or 4 additional personnel on a fire engine would be extremely useful to perform multiple medical functions in a serious emergency situation.

The committee discussed whether it should concentrate its efforts on studying and getting involved in privatization issues given the existence of the Council's Special Committee on Privatization. Commissioner Andrews urged clarity about recognizing the difference between "privatization" and "outsourcing". Privatization means completely handing a function over to the private sector to perform in lieu of government being in the business. Outsourcing is a mechanism by which a government responsible for providing a service contracts with a private entity as the delivery mechanism for that governmental service. The committee asked staff to provide the list of jurisdictions that have outsourced some or all of their EMS service being compiled by the Privatization Committee's staff to everyone.

Former TRUE Commissioner Tony Bates suggested that the commission could be helpful to the Privatization Committee by giving independent support and encouragement to the committee which will

likely face serious political push-back from parties opposed to any outsourcing or privatization. The TRUE Commission would have to perform its own study and be convinced that the proposals were the right thing to do before throwing its support behind the Privatization Committee's recommendations. Chairman Wendler felt it made sense for the TRUE Commission and the Performance Committee to get involved in studying privatization as that is clearly an area where the Council has an interest and would likely welcome the TRUE Commission's suggestions and input. He suggested that Performance Committee members pick one or two areas of personal interest and knowledge where privatization might be useful in producing budgetary savings and do some investigating to come up with suggestions.

Mr. Bates stated that he's heard the City administration will be issuing RFPs/RFIs in the next few weeks to gauge private sector interest in providing fleet management, EMS, fire inspection and employee health care services. He also stated that the Mayor's administrative reorganization proposal would have the Jacksonville Children's Commission and the Library Board folded directly into City government with directors appointed by the mayor rather than by the current appointed boards. He suggested that the TRUE Commission can be a valuable asset in helping the City study privatization/outsourcing options because the TRUE commissioners have business backgrounds that differ from those of government bureaucrats, politicians, or Tea Party activists.

In response to a question from Commissioner Andrews about whether the commission had ever studied City procurement practices, Commissioner Lowe stated that some efforts had been made several years ago in the areas of contract specification development and contract management after awards were made, but no real conclusions were ever reached.

Chairman Wendler reiterated the importance of commissioners volunteering to undertake investigations, either alone or in small groups, on areas of possible privatization or outsourcing so that the TRUE Commission can contribute in a meaningful way to the Privatization Committee's work.

The minutes of the November 3 Performance Committee meeting were approved as distributed.

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

Jeff Clements, Chief
Council Research Division
630-1405

Posted 12.5.11
5:00 p.m.