



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

Marcella Lowe, Chair

John Palombi, Vice Chair

Meeting Minutes

July 19, 2005

4:00 p.m.

Attendance: Marcella Lowe (Chair), Dick Berry, Louvenia Tippins, Mike Meroney, Lou Myers, Charles Magee, Mark Roesser, Elaine Burnett, Randy Deen, Lee Martin, John Palombi

Excused: Bruce Glassman, Tony Bates,

Absent: Tom Crabtree, Charles Curley

The meeting convened at 4:00 p.m. with a quorum present.

Minutes

The minutes of the June 21, 2005 meeting were previously distributed.

◆ The minutes were **approved as distributed**.

Meeting Schedule

The commission discussed moving the day and time of the monthly meeting to coincide with meetings of the City Council's Government Operations, Oversight, and Human Services (GOOHS) Committee in order to encourage more cross-attendance at the meetings by TRUE commissioners and City Council members. The commission decided to move its monthly meeting to follow the first GOOHS Committee meeting of each month at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber. The commission recognized the fact that due to the observance of Monday holidays, meetings may on occasion be shifted to the following day in accordance with the Council Rule regarding moving of committee meetings due to holidays. The new meeting day will take effect with the September meeting on September 6th (a Tuesday, because of the rescheduling of the GOOHS meeting from Monday due to the Labor Day holiday).

Committee Reports

Public Parking: Chairman Roesser requested deferral of the report to the August meeting, and requested the assistance of his committee members in producing minutes of the last meeting of the committee with Bob Carle, the Chief of Public Parking.

CityLink: Jeff Clements reported on behalf of committee chair Tony Bates that Councilwoman Gwen Yates would be scheduling a meeting with Roslyn Phillips, Director of the Neighborhoods Department, and Monica Rubi, Manager of the CityLink system, within the next two weeks. Interested TRUE

Commissioners are welcome to attend, and details of the time and place will be communicated by e-mail when the meeting has been scheduled.

Auditor's Report

Assistant Council Auditor Pam Markham reported that the office has two audits underway - a review of the implementation of the City's new Oracle human resources/payroll computer system, and the annual audit of the Sheriff's Office investigative fund. Most of the office's efforts will for the next two months be devoted to support of the Finance Committee's budget review and adoption process. She announced that the Finance Committee's budget hearings will be all day affairs scheduled for August 11th, 18th and 25th and September 1st and, if necessary 2nd. Interested TRUE Commissioners are invited to attend to hear the detailed discussion of each element of the budget. Commissioners Berry and Meroney volunteered to attend the meetings and inform the commission of their findings.

Chairwoman's Comments

- Chairwoman Lowe reported that she had attended the GOOHS Committee meeting the previous day to make the commission's report on the Sheriff's Office Investigative Fund audit and JEA Pipe Bursting audit approved at the last meeting. The commission's report was well received and the committee indicated its general agreement with the commission's recommendations. Ms. Lowe also noted that the GOOHS Committee requested a report from the TRUE Commission at the first GOOHS meeting of each quarter, which she will be happy to make. Finally, she stated that she had offered the commission's assistance to GOOHS whenever possible; they need only call on the TRUE Commission when they identify an issue that would benefit from citizen review and input.
- Regarding commission membership, the chairwoman appointed Mark Roesser to coordinate efforts to search out and have the commission nominate qualified, interested persons for appointment to fill the vacancies on the commission. At the moment the Mayor has 3 seats vacant, and 2 Council appointees are serving expired terms until replacements are seated. The commission has made 2 nomination suggestions to the Mayor's Office and 1 to the Council, which is in process. Ms. Lowe has another potential nominee to contact.

New Business

- City Intranet access: staff member Jeff Clements reported that the City's Chief Information Officer has approved access to the City's Intranet by interested TRUE commissioners. An application form will need to be filled out, after which a user name and password will be assigned for remote log-in. Several commissioners requested a training session with the Information Technologies Division to familiarize them with the log-in procedures and use of the Intranet.
- Commissioner Martin reported that his CPAC has heard several complaints from neighborhood groups that were awarded Children's Commission "New Ways Initiative" grants by the CPACS about the slowness with which those grants are paid out to the recipient organizations. According to the grant guidelines, payment is supposed to be made to the recipients in the month of June or within 2 weeks of the start of the grant-funded program, but this often is not the case. He also has a concern with the apparent shift in the funding pattern of these grants from small, grass-roots neighborhood organizations to larger, staffed agencies that have professional grant writers. This seems like unfair competition and not the original intent of the New Ways Initiative program.

Commissioner Magee reported that he understood part of the problem to be a delay in the General Counsel's Office reviewing and approving the wording of grant contracts. The standard contract has apparently been changed several times. This delay in approval and ultimately in fund disbursement has the effect of discouraging small, community-based organizations from attempting to use the program and may contribute to the greater success of larger, professionally staffed organizations in

obtaining these funds. Pam Markham reported that the Children's Commission's budget process is going to change this year with more controls instituted, so that may make a difference.

- A letter to the commission from Rosa Walker regarding her problems with the Housing Partnership's operation of its home improvement assistance program was distributed to the commissioners and to the Council Auditor. Mr. Wallace agreed to look into the charges made in the letter, and commissioners Myers, Martin, Burnett and Deen volunteered to form a committee (Myers to chair) to look into the operation of this program as outlined in the letter and in the Public Comment portion of the June meeting by Ms. Walker.

Commissioner Comments

None

Public Comments

Ms. Linda Johnson appeared before the commission to lodge several complaints about her experience with the Housing Partnership's operation of the housing rehabilitation program. Her comments echoed those of Ms. Walker from the previous meeting – work done poorly; work recommended that was not needed; an inability to find out what the program's administrative cost is, thereby making it difficult to know how much is available for actual construction; requests to sign contracts without being given the opportunity to read and understand them; etc.

Next meeting

The commission's next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 16th at 4:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Items pending further follow-up

- Children's Commission audit – Commissioner Martin
- Cash Management Committee – Commissioner Lowe
- Powers and Duties – 57.105(b) – Commissioners Curley and Myers
- Powers and Duties – 57.105(f) – Commissioners Roesser, Glassman and Palombi
- Housing Commission response to TRUE inquiries – Chairwoman Lowe
- JEDC reorganization – Commissioner Berry
- TRUE commissioner access to the City Intranet – staff
- Audit #595, Public Parking Division – Commissioner Roesser
- CityLink audit follow-up – Commissioner Bates
- Public Service Grants Chapter 118 amendments – Chairwoman Lowe