



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

Marcella Lowe, Chair

John Palombi, Vice Chair

Meeting Minutes

August 16, 2005

4:00 p.m.

Attendance: Marcella Lowe (Chair), Bruce Glassman, Louvenia Tippins, Tony Bates, Mike Meroney, Randy Deen, Lee Martin, Charles Curley

Excused: Mark Roesser, Dick Berry, John Palombi, Charles Magee

Absent: Tom Crabtree, Lou Myers, Elaine Burnett,

The meeting convened at 4:10 p.m. lacking a quorum.

Committee Reports

Jacksonville Children's Commission: Linda Lanier, Executive Director of the Children's Commission, distributed several items of information to the commission for their review: 1) State of the Child report; 2) Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis report on the relationship of education to economic development; and 3) the commission's 2005-06 budget request. She noted that this is a difficult budget year and that the commission is concentrating on programs that they know from empirical evidence work best. These level 1 priorities include the TEAM UP after-school centers, early literacy programs, the Brewer Center early learning and professional development center, and the Healthy Families program. Level 2 priorities include behavioral health care and case management programs and level 3 includes services for special needs children. Lower level priorities include intervention/diversion programs, summer camps, youth travel grants and matching funds to leverage other grant funding. The commission's budget is approximately \$48 million, of which \$30 million is in federal pass-through funding and \$18 million is from the City's General Fund. She noted as a matter of baseline information that 17% of Jacksonville's children live in households below the federal poverty rate.

In response to commissioner questions Ms. Lanier discussed the Children's Commission's New Way grants, issued in conjunction with the 6 CPACs. She noted that the grants are difficult for the Children's Commission to administer and not very cost-effective from their standpoint, taking as much or more administrative effort for a \$500 grant to a neighborhood group as for a \$200,000 grant to a larger permanent entity with a staff. Part of the problem has been a dispute between attorneys for the City and the Jacksonville Community Foundation over the wording of contracts with the grant recipient agencies. The Children's Commission thought funneling the New Way grants through the Foundation for payment would be quicker than the City's payment system, but this has not proved to be the case. The New Way

grant program is not proposed for funding in the FY05-06 budget because of the emphasis on funding programs with better empirical data and a track record of achievement.

Regarding the recommendations of the Council Auditor's Office in its audit of the Children's Commission several years ago, Ms. Lanier reported that they have been addressed with varying degrees of success. Recommendation 1: hire an internal auditor – done. Recommendation 2: make unannounced audit visits to grant recipients – done on a partial basis now. Recommendation 3: produce an unduplicated count of the number of children served by the JCC's various funded programs – impossible at the current time due to limitations of the commission's computer systems. The 3 databases tracking different programs cannot be made to communicate with each other at this point.

Sally Robson, a visitor to the commission meeting representing the Southwest CPAC, was the New Ways grant committee chair for her CPAC and reported that the process has been both rewarding and frustrating. She has seen funding priorities evolve away from small "grass roots" neighborhood organizations to larger, better funded, better staffed traditional service provision agencies. Commissioner Martin believes that the Children's Commission is losing the focus on non-traditional, neighborhood level innovation that made the New Way grants so valuable to begin with. He lamented that the CPACs are involved only at the front end of the process to solicit participants and make grant recommendations, but then never hear which applicants do or don't receive the grants from the JCC or how the programs operate if funded. Commissioner Bates questioned the need for the New Way grant program and wondered why community organizations turn to the government for funding rather than raise the money privately as various civic improvement groups (Sertoma, Civitans, Elks, Moose, etc.) used to do.

During the course of the discussion several additional commissioners arrived and a quorum was determined to be present.

MOTION: Commissioner Deen moved that the TRUE Commission bring to the Mayor's attention the problems with the New Ways initiative over the past 3 years as raised by several speakers today, using the next meeting of the Mayor with the CPAC chairs as a vehicle for initiating the discussion.

◆ The motion was **approved**.

Minutes

The minutes of the July 19, 2005 meeting were previously distributed.

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

Public Parking: Commissioner Meroney distributed copies of a report of the Public Parking Committee entitled "Suggestions for Improvement of the City of Jacksonville Parking Operations." The committee held extensive discussions with Bob Carle, the Chief of Public Parking, and found him to be extremely cooperative, forthcoming, and anxious to make improvements in his division's operations. The committee feels the City needs to consciously determine what functions it wants public parking to serve, adopt formal policies toward those desired ends, and then operate the Public Parking Division as a business to achieve the desired results. The public parking function gets "short shrift" now because so many conflicting interests are at work – how much parking space is really needed? How expensive? Public sector vs. private sector provision? Market rate vs. subsidy? Should it be a profit center? Who, if anyone, should get free parking (i.e. boards and commissions, City Hall visitors)?

MOTION: Commissioner Meroney moved that the committee's report be sent to the Mayor and City Council President as an attachment to a cover letter suggesting that changes need to be made in the City's public parking policy.

◆ The motion was **approved**.

Housing Partnership Committee: in the absence of the committee chair the issue was deferred.

CityLink: Commissioner Bates reported that he and commissioners Lowe, Berry, Tippins and Palombi had met with Councilwoman Gwen Yates, Monica Rubi, Manager of the CityLink system, and Roslyn Phillips, Director of the Neighborhoods Department, to discuss the system's operations and capabilities, and that he had followed up after the meeting with additional questions for Ms. Rubi. His impression is that there is considerably more issue tracking data available internally on the CityLink internal intranet than is available to the general public via the CityLink web site on the Internet. Call dispatch to the appropriate department works well, and each type of complaint has a pre-determined response time developed by the responding department. CityLink has the capability to track logged items that are past due, but use of that information is the responsibility of the responding department. A notification system to the affected departments of overdue items will be instituted shortly, as will a CARE policy group made up of representatives of all participating departments to discuss common issues and concerns.. Councilwoman Yates will convene a follow-up meeting in October after the conclusion of the budget process.

Budget Process: Commissioner Meroney, who has been attending the initial Finance Committee budget hearings, reported that according to the materials handed out to the committee thus far, the Finance Committee members are only considering the current year's original adopted budget vs. the proposed budget for next year. There appears to be no consideration of actual spending through the first 3 quarter vs. the original adopted budget, nor any information on multi-year trends. The Auditor's Office makes presentations on each department and agency's proposed budget and suggests various minor technical changes, but there is no discussion of broad policy issues. Apparently some of the hearing dates are changing, and staff was requested to confirm the new hearing dates to all members by e-mail.

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 TRUE commissioners and requests to know what sites the commissioners are interested in viewing so that access can be arranged. Commissioners will need to sign appropriate paperwork agreeing to use the network only in authorized ways, and will need to be issued log-in codes and passwords. Staff was requested to send out a list of what is available on the intranet so that commissioners may have an idea of what would be of use to access.

Commissioner Comments

None

Next meeting

The commission will be shifting to its new schedule meeting in September – typically the first Monday of the month at 4:00 p.m. following the conclusion of the GOOHS Committee meeting, in the City Council Chamber. For September, however, the meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 6th because of the Labor Day holiday on Monday the 5th.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Items pending further follow-up

- 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
- Housing Partnership home rehab program – Commissioner Myers

- JEDC reorganization – Commissioner Berry
- TRUE commissioner access to the City Intranet – staff
- CityLink audit follow-up – Commissioner Bates
- Public Service Grants Chapter 118 amendments – Chairwoman Lowe