



JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

**TRUE COMMISSION
LEGISLATIVE TRACKING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
June 20, 2012
12:00 p.m.**

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

Attendance: Committee Members Joe Andrews (Chair), Greg Radlinski and Ted Wendler

Excused: Tom Martin

Also: Jeff Clements – Council Research Division

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Chairman Andrews. The committee reviewed and staff answered questions about the following bills:

2012-373 (reduction of FY11-12 budget and reallocation of debt service funds): the committee asked staff for additional information from the Council Auditor's office about the purpose of this transaction.

2012-377 (recognizing and protecting the free exercise of religion in the City of Jacksonville): the committee debate whether or not this is an issue within the TRUE Commission's purview. The same rationale as applied to 2012-296 (sexual orientation as a class protected from discrimination) might similarly apply here – the possibility of incurring expensive litigation as a result of the adoption of the ordinance may make it an issue in which the TRUE Commission has a legitimate interest.

Motion (Radlinski): the committee recommends that the TRUE Commission adopt a resolution opposing passage of 2012-377 on the grounds that it may invite expensive litigation against the City – **approved 3-0**.

2012-380 (appropriating \$19,456 from Special Council Reserve fund to purchase Jaguars suite tickets for the 2012 football season): staff explained the history of City purchases of Jaguars tickets and use of a suite designated for the City in the lease for the team's use of EverBank Field. The City had purchased the tickets throughout the team's existence until 2 years ago when tight budgets caused the City Council to discontinue the purchases. The Jaguars intend to market the City's reserved suite to other users if the City does not exercise its option to purchase the tickets for the upcoming season.

Motion (Radlinski): the committee recommends that the TRUE Commission oppose passage of 2012-380 – **approved 3-0**.

2012-381 (timing of reinstatement of term limits for constitutional officers): determined not to be a TRUE Commission relevant issue.

2012-382 (appropriating \$30 million within the Better Jacksonville Plan Unified Courthouse Project budget for the construction of the State Attorney's Office): staff explained that the State Attorney requested the bill to ensure that sufficient funds remain within the overall Unified Courthouse Project

budget for the State Attorney's building given the additional costs incurred for the new courthouse by the failure of the building to pass its certification test and the extra work incurred.

Motion (Radlinski): the committee recommends that the TRUE Commission oppose passage of 2012-382 – **approved 3-0.**

2012-383 (supporting community contribution tax credit eligibility for Builders Care): staff explained the state's community contribution tax credit program and the City's role in assisting the applicant in becoming eligible for the state tax credit.

The committee discussed the best means of conveying today's recommended actions to the City Council in a timely manner given the fact that the TRUE Commission will not meet again until August to consider the recommendations. The suggestion was made to send a representative of the Legislative Tracking Committee to the next City Council meeting to convey the committee's recommendations clearly labeled as those of the Legislative Tracking Committee, not of the full commission. It was decided that the recommendations would be transmitted to the TRUE Commission Chairman with the request that he determine the best procedure for conveying the commission's recommendations to the City Council in a timely manner.

City pension plans discussion

The committee turned its discussion to a potential TRUE Commission study of the City's pension plans and the possibility of making some recommendations to the Mayor and City Council for changes to the current plans to ensure their sustainability. Commissioner Radlinski urged a thorough study of all options before settling on a proposed course(s) of action. A solid base of knowledge about the existing pension plans, their features, the promised benefit package, and the costs will be necessary to understand where the systems stand now and why they face the unfunded liability problems that have appeared in recent years. Then alternative retirement plans will need to be studied to determine what is fair and what is possible. At least three factors have to be taken into account: 1) the benefit package – to what are retirees entitled? 2) how is that benefits package funded? 3) by what process could the City transition from one plan to another (i.e. from a defined benefit to a defined contribution plan)?

Commissioner Wendler stated that the unfunded liability problem is bad and growing worse, especially for the Police and Fire Pension Fund. Although that fund's actuarial report has not yet been released to the public, the unfunded liability is almost assuredly growing rapidly.

The committee discussed how to start the process and how to assemble the information that will need to be considered. Who can come and speak knowledgeably to the committee about pension issues? Are there any resources available to the commission to apply toward such a study? Commissioner Radlinski suggested that the committee needs to come up with several concrete suggestions for ways to improve the sustainability of the pension plans and offer them to the Mayor to be used in the collective bargaining process with the City's unions since pension matters are a bargainable item, even if the City has not done that before. The commission will also have to get some clarity on the 30 year agreement between the City and the PFPF, what it governs and whether or not it binds the participants in the bargaining process.

The group decided to pursue the pension issue as a subcommittee of the Performance Committee. A meeting will be called for Monday, June 25th at 10 a.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

Jeff Clements, Chief
Council Research Division

Posted 6.27.12
5:00 p.m.