



JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

TRUE COMMISSION NEW COMMISSIONER ORIENTATION MEETING MINUTES September 26, 2012 3:00 p.m.

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

Attendance: Commissioners Marc El Hassan (Chair), Marcella Lowe, Patti Anania, James Edwards, Alex Marrero, Danny Becton (commissioner nominee)

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Chairman El Hassan who made introductory remarks and asked Commissioner Lowe to run the presentation. Ms. Lowe reviewed Ordinance Code Chapter 57 (the TRUE Commission's legislative authorization), the commission by-laws, policies and procedures, and audit review process.

The following general points were made:

- Commissioners can investigate and collect information on a topic of interest on their own volition and don't need to ask the full commission's permission in advance.
- Council Auditor audits and reports are released on a regular basis and should be reviewed – they are a wealth of information on City government finances and operations. The TRUE Commission's Policies and Procedures Manual is a good source of information on the nuts and bolts of commission procedures.
- The Office of General Counsel has issued a legal opinion confirming that the TRUE Commission has broad authority to review and investigate the budgets and operations of the Constitutional officers as well as the City government proper.
- The commission is supposed to make quarterly and annual reports to the City Council of audits reviewed, studies produced and other actions taken.
- The commission has no budget, relying on staffing provided by Jeff Clements of the City Council Research Division, the Council Auditor's Office, and other City departments and agencies upon request.

During the course of the discussion of audit review procedures, Commissioner Anania volunteered to chair an Audit Subcommittee to review the recently released audit of the Property Appraiser's office. Commissioners Diane Brown and Alex Marrero will join the committee. Ms. Anania requested that Property Appraiser Jim Overton be invited to attend the next TRUE Commission meeting next Thursday to discuss the audit and also the several proposed constitutional amendments on the November ballot that pertain to property taxes and exemptions.

The major sources of the TRUE Commission's work are: 1) Council Auditor audits, 2) the commission's Legislative Tracking Committee reviews of newly-introduced legislation, and 3) special project committees established after expressions of interest by particular commissioners. The group discussed

the importance of active participation in audit reviews and committee work, where the real work of the commission gets done.

Ms. Lowe and Mr. El Hassan outlined the requirements of Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law and its application to TRUE Commissioners, who may not discuss commission business with other commissioners except in a properly noticed and recorded meeting. Commissioners may meet individually with City Council members, departmental officials, and others without any notice requirements; only meetings of two or more TRUE Commissioners about TRUE business must be noticed by staff. Chairman El Hassan noted the importance of commissioners being clear about who they represent when speaking in public or to the media. Commissioners may instigate explorations and investigations on their own prior to bringing findings to the full commission and may identify themselves as members of the TRUE Commission when doing so, but should not give the impression that the TRUE Commission has taken a position on any issue if it has not done so formally. Members may speak to the City Council or a council committee and may identify themselves as members of the commission when doing so, but should clearly state that they are speaking as an individual and not representing the commission if the full commission has not taken an official position on the subject in question.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

Jeff Clements, Chief
Council Research Division
630-1405

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5:00 p.m.