



JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

**TRUE COMMISSION
PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE
CHILDREN'S COMMISSION/JAX JOURNEY SUBCOMMITTEE**

MEETING MINUTES

February 15, 2012

3:00p.m.

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

Attendance: Committee Members Diane Brown (Chair), Ted Wendler, Joe Andrews, Tom Martin and Daniel Blanchard

Guests: Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Tony Bates – Concerned Taxpayers of Duval County; Dave Roman – Mayor's Office; Wayne Ezell – *Florida Times-Union*

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Chairwoman Brown. She explained that staff had previously circulated several Children's Commission documents via e-mail. The Children's Commission's City-funded budget is approximately \$21 million, of which \$15.7 million is spent in grants and contracts for service provision and \$5.3 million is salaries and operating expenses. The Children's Commission has an overall budget of about \$59 million when federal, state and private funding are added to the City's General Fund appropriation. Approximately \$4.6 million is transferred to the Children's Commission from the Jacksonville Journey.

Commissioner Wendler said that he had not yet been able to have a discussion with the Mayor about his plans for the future of the Children's Commission and Jacksonville Journey, but he would attempt to do so shortly. Dave Roman stated that during the City Council's consideration of the mayor's recent reorganization plan, the mayor made it clear that he wanted to bring the hiring authority for the Children's Commission Executive Director and staff into the mayor's office rather than under the Children's Commission board. After considerable discussion in City Council that did not happen, but the Mayor is still talking to JCC board members and supporters about potential changes to the current structure. He is also interested in the idea of combining the Children's Commission and Jacksonville Journey because of the partial overlap in their objectives and because children's issues are in part due to family and social conditions that the Journey addresses. The Mayor sees a nexus between the two.

Jeff Clements gave a brief overview of the history of the JCC which was created in the early 1990s as the successor to the Children's Board after the release of a JCCI study that recommended the consolidation of all children's-related programs under one umbrella organization. The JCC was created by Mayor Austin after voters had defeated a referendum that would have created a Children's Commission with taxing power as authorized by the Florida Statutes.

The group posed several questions about the extent to which the JCC tracks its program participants after their graduation from high school and the extent to which it can be determined if participation in JCC

programs such as Team Up after-school programs, academically enriched day care, early literacy initiatives, etc. improves life outcomes. Questions will be posed to the JCC about how they track their participants while in the various programs and whether they are followed after high school. Dave Roman stated that the JCC's programs have expanded beyond Health Zone 1 (urban core) to other parts of the community where crime or socioeconomic conditions are becoming more problematic.

Commissioner Andrews expressed an interest in seeing objective evaluations of the objectives and performance of JCC's program and proposed analyzing the commission's annual reports and validating their statistics. Dave Roman noted that the City Council Finance Committee had asked the Jacksonville Journey Oversight Committee to report in March on all their programs, objectives, short- and long-term effectiveness, etc. and suggested that this would be interesting reading for the subcommittee. The Journey Oversight Committee meets on the third Thursday of each month in the Ed Ball Building, and the next meeting will be this week. The public is welcome to attend. Mr. Bates felt that the TRUE Commission could play a valuable role in evaluating the structures, performance and independence of the JCC in a non-political and impartial way. The Mayor's attempt to change the JCC structure met strong political opposition from the commission's supporters.

Staff pointed out that the JCC's Executive Director, Linda Lanier, has announced her imminent retirement from the City. The committee would like to have her attend a meeting and answer questions before she retires. Mr. Clements will inquire about her availability for the March 1st Performance Committee meeting.

Chairwoman Brown summarized the next action steps: 1) read the 2010/11 JCC annual report and particularly examine the objectives and performance measures; 2) Mr. Wendler will communicate with Chris Hand or Karen Bowling of the Mayor's Office about the Mayor's plans for the JCC and Jax Journey; 3) examine the March Jacksonville Journey quarterly report; 4) staff will contact Linda Lanier about speaking at the March 1 committee meeting; and 5) Diane Brown will talk to individual council members to solicit their ideas about what would be useful to review.

The commission briefly discussed the value of early learning programs that focus on academic skills rather than other developmental skills. Mr. Wendler will ask a psychologist friend if he can shed some light on what research says about the value of early literacy and early education programs.

The next meeting will be on March 1st at 3:00 p.m. prior to the next full TRUE Commission meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Jeff Clements, Chief
Council Research Division
630-1405

Posted 2.16.12
5:00 p.m.