



## JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

### TRUE COMMISSION PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES March 22, 2012 3:00p.m.

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

**Attendance:** Committee Members Ted Wendler (Chair), Joe Andrews, Patti Anania, Diane Brown,

**Excused:** Marcella Lowe

**Also:** John Kabat and Cynthia Nixon – Jacksonville Children’s Commission; Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Dave Roman and Daphne Colbert – Mayor’s Office; Tony Bates – Concerned Taxpayers of Duval County

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 p.m. by Chairman Wendler who turned the meeting over to Diane Brown. Commissioner Brown noted the great quantity of information the committee received at its last meeting from Children’s Commission Executive Director Linda Lanier. Where does the committee want to go from here? Chairman Wendler distributed a spreadsheet of the JCC’s budget and the agencies that the commission funds with its \$21.68 million in subsidies to private organizations.

Cynthia Nixon of the Children’s Commission will provide an organizational chart of the JCC’s structure and employees. She referred to Schedule M of the City budget which shows the JCC’s contractual services budget for the fiscal year. The JCC doesn’t give grants; it contracts for specific services through an extensive procurement process. The JCC operates the Jacksonville Journey programs that pertain to children. They cooperate with the Duval County Schools on after-school TEAM UP centers. The JCC tracks the FCAT scores of its TEAM UP participants to see how they progress.

In response to a question about monitoring, Ms. Nixon described the JCC’s site visits. They take two forms – financial reviews (quarterly) and programmatic reviews (frequently). The site visits rarely find any real violations of the City contract; more often they are finding opportunities for improvement in programs and staff. The financial problems they encounter tend to be unintentional violations of the rigorous City rules and regulations, especially if the recipient agency is new to the process of dealing with a government grantor. The JCC recently held their first CFOs conference to get the financial officers of all their contractors in a room together to discuss regulations and processes and to answer questions and share experiences. Payments to contractors are done on a reimbursement basis, not paid up-front.

Ms. Nixon answered several questions posed by Tony Bates of Concerned Taxpayers of Duval County and a former TRUE Commission member and chairman. The JCC does 2 announced and 2 unannounced site visits per year to its contractors. The fiscal reviews are pre-announced so that all of the necessary records can be assembled for easy review. The JCC advertises for specific services and invites RFPs for what they need. They do not take unsolicited proposals from agencies looking for funding sources. The JCC board decides what services are needed in the community and RFPs are issued to meet those needs. Due to budget constraints in recent years the JCC budget is declining and they are prioritizing their

spending carefully. They are not adding any new programs. In response to a general question about the wisdom of the government raising the community's children, Ms. Nixon noted that the government will bear the price for bad parenting in one way or another. If the City doesn't fund prevention programs, then it will have to fund more police and jails. Sheriff Rutherford is firmly committed to prevention programs and is a big proponent of TEAM UP.

John Kabat stated that the JCC invests in evidence-based programs that are proven to work. Research has shown what works and how valuable prevention is in heading off more serious problems later. He invited any interested TRUE Commissioner to come along on visits to contractor agencies and see their work in person. The JCC is recognized as a national model for how to deliver children's programs cost effectively and innovatively. The agency recently won a Wallace Foundation grant (one of nine in the U.S.) for excellence in children's programming.

The JCC tracks participating children from infancy through high school. They have a weakness in tracking before age 5 before the school system issues the child a unique identifier number. They are prohibited from using Social Security numbers for identification.

In response to a question about how the JCC prioritizes its programs and how it decides what to start or stop funding, Ms. Nixon said that the JCC board makes those decisions based on the best possible allocation of limited funding. They are currently looking at cutting funding for summer camps and shifting that funding elsewhere. There are two summer camp programs - the JCC's and the Jacksonville Journey's - which together total \$1.75 million. The JCC used to give families vouchers to use at any summer camp of their choosing but has since changed to a system of directly paying summer camp operators. A big focus of the summer camps is academics so that children don't lose their learning gains over the summer and are ready for the next academic year in the fall. Mr. Kabat said it would be preferable if churches, non-profits and others would pick up the ball and provide summer camps without City subsidies but that doesn't appear to be realistic in the current economic climate and given the low-income clientele the programs are serving.

In response to a question from Commissioner Wendler about what Mayor Brown intends for the future of the Jacksonville Journey, Dave Roman said that the administration has not yet settled on a course of action. Mr. Kabat pointed out that the JCC and Journey do not duplicate each other's services because they serve different target populations, and even their combined efforts do not reach all of populations in need. The number of people living in poverty in Jacksonville has been increasing since the economic recession of 2008, so the need is growing faster than the resources to combat it.

In response to a question from Tony Bates about food programs that may duplicate assistance provided to families that also get AFDC or food stamps, Ms. Nixon stated that the JCC does not ask about family circumstances or screen eligibility, but targets Health Zone 1 (urban core) where there is a high poverty level. Funding for JCC's feeding programs is almost entirely federal funding except for an extremely small subsidy for one program. Commissioner Brown noted that 55% of the children in the Duval County public schools are on free or reduced-price lunches.

Ms. Nixon said that the JCC's budget process was changed in 2005 so data before and after that date are not comparable. City funding is easier to track than grant funding. She also pointed out that the JCC is only City agency paying debt service on the building it occupies. In response to a question from Commissioner Wendler about whether there are agencies that are entirely dependent upon City funding for their existence, Ms. Nixon and Mr. Kabat indicated that it is highly unlikely. A recipient agency would be risking its existence on the continuation of City funding that is not guaranteed. Mr. Wendler requested a list of sites/programs that are solely funded by the JCC so as not to confuse the effects of funding by other agencies in the outcomes those programs produce.

Staff will provide copies of JCC budget pages from previous years' budgets for the committee to review.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Jeff Clements, Chief  
Council Research Division  
630-1405

Posted 4.5.12  
11:00 a.m.