



JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

**TRUE COMMISSION
PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 5, 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, Diane Brown, Marcella Lowe, Tom Martin, Gamal Lyons, Daniel Blanchard

Excused: Patti Anania

Also: John Kabat and Michelle Brabson – Jacksonville Children’s Commission; Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Tony Bates – Concerned Taxpayers of Duval County

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Chairman Wendler.

The minutes of the March 22, 2012 Performance Committee meeting were approved as distributed.

Commissioner Brown initiated discussion of the Jacksonville Children’s Commission’s (JCC’s) audit and verification procedures for its contract recipients. Audits and verifications are done in two areas – program performance and finances. Recipients get JCC dollars on a reimbursement basis and are required to keep segregated bank accounts or separate sub-funds within an account to process and account for their use of City dollars. Some JCC funds are provided to agencies that provide direct services (i.e. child care, mentoring services), others are provided to agencies that build the capacity of direct service providers via training (i.e. Episcopal Child Services which mentors teachers and child care workers to improve their level of services provision).

In response to a question about whether unit cost of service or average cost per child served are good ways to measure productivity, John Kabat indicated that they frequently are not. The varying circumstances the service providers deal with and the wide variation in the children they serve make averages fairly uninformative. Some agencies need a lot of assistance, others less so, especially in the early learning field. Mr. Kabat provided a hard copy and will provide any interested committee member with an electronic copy of the JCC’s Grant Funding Portfolio - a list of all the JCC’s recipient agencies, what programs they participate in, and how much funding they receive.

In response to a question about his perception of the biggest problems or areas of potential improvement the JCC has identified, Mr. Kabat said that the biggest problem is lack of resources. Their surveys indicate that only about 25% of the eligible population of children is being served in some neighborhoods because the needs greatly outweigh the resources available to meet them. As far as priorities, the JCC is committed to emphasizing prevention programs. Dr. Michael Hallet, a professor of criminology at UNF, has praised the early learning, TEAM UP and summer camp programs as being very effective prevention-based programs, but there are many needs still unmet. Mr. Kabat said that, if asked, many recipient agencies would identify City bureaucracy and paperwork as their major problems, and he conceded there

are opportunities for improvement in that regard. The JCC will need to consult with their recipient agencies to see how improvements can be made, but some inconvenience is almost inevitable due to the City's need to ensure proper expenditure of its funds.

Two other problems were identified by Mr. Kabat. One was the lack of a discrete identifier number for each child before they enter school. The school system does not want to issue numbers to children at birth who may never enter the public schools, and Social Security numbers may not be used. The other issue is the number of children who don't optimize their potential in school but merely do enough to graduate but never challenge themselves and don't maximize their opportunities. The community is missing out on a tremendous resource when young people settle for mediocrity and don't become the best, most productive people they could be.

In response to a question from Commissioner Brown about why Andrew Jackson High School remains so troubled after all of the time, effort, programs and resources that have been poured into its attendance zone, Mr. Kabat indicated that the programs and resources are having to overcome tremendous systemic problems of poor parenting, lack of positive role models, unemployment, poverty, and poor teaching and administration in some of the school district's poorer schools. He noted that former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice gave a speech in Jacksonville in which she called the state of our educational system a national security threat. She said that America is failing its children and will eventually pay the price for it in a failure to remain competitive in the world marketplace.

The committee scheduled its next meeting for April 19th.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Jeff Clements, Chief
Council Research Division
630-1405

Posted 4.20.12
5:00 p.m.