

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CITY OF JACKSONVILLE
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
MEETING

Proceedings held on Thursday, October 22,
2009, commencing at 9:06 a.m., City Hall, Lynwood
Roberts Room, 1st Floor, Jacksonville, Florida,
before Diane M. Tropa, a Notary Public in and for
the State of Florida at Large.

PRESENT:

- WYMAN DUGGAN, Chair.
- ED AUSTIN, Commission Member.
- JIM CATLETT, Commission Member.
- WILLIAM CATLIN, Commission Member.
- JESSICA DEAL, Commission Member.
- TERESA EICHNER, Commission Member.
- ROBERT FLOWERS, SR., Commission Member.
- BEVERLY GARVIN, Commission Member.
- MECHELLE HERRINGTON, Commission Member.
- ALI KORMAN, Commission Member.
- JEANNE MILLER, Commission Member.
- GARY OLIVERAS, Commission Member.
- CURTIS THOMPSON, Commission Member.
- GEOFF YOUNGBLOOD, Commission Member.

ALSO PRESENT:

- LOREE FRENCH, Office of General Counsel.
- PEGGY SIDMAN, Office of General Counsel.
- JEFF CLEMENTS, Research Division.

- - -

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 October 22, 2009 9:06 a.m.

3 - - -

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning. How is
5 everybody doing? Enjoying this nice weather, I
6 hope, while it lasts.

7 Diane has asked me to remind everybody to
8 speak into the microphones when you speak.
9 Don't assume that -- back here, that she'll be
10 able to hear you because she can't.

11 Thank you.

12 Let's begin with the Pledge and a moment of
13 silence.

14 (Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.)

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

16 As a reminder, please turn off your cell
17 phones or put them to vibrate.

18 Mr. Clements, you want to just tell us
19 briefly what we have before us?

20 MR. CLEMENTS: All you have in your packet
21 today is today's agenda and the transcript of
22 last week's meeting.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: As you know, our meeting
24 topic today is moving the City elections, and we
25 are scheduled to have Council President Clark,

1 who is here, to address legislation that would
2 move the elections -- the City elections from
3 the current May off-year cycle to the fall
4 gubernatorial cycle.

5 Council Vice President Webb is also
6 scheduled to be here. I spoke with him late
7 yesterday afternoon. He will be addressing the
8 legislation that he had pending, which I
9 understand he is withdrawing, but he can give
10 you more details about that. That would move
11 the elections from May of '11 to November of
12 '11.

13 So essentially what we're going to be
14 hearing from today are competing visions, one
15 that would move the elections six months closer
16 to us, to where we are today, and one that would
17 move it six months later.

18 And then Supervisor Holland will be here --
19 is here to talk to us as the subject matter
20 expert on elections in Duval County and his
21 thoughts on these competing visions.

22 So without any further delay, I will invite
23 Council President Clark to come to the podium to
24 address us.

25 (Mr. Clark approaches the podium.)

1 MR. CLARK: I'm glad you guys chose a more
2 intimate setting for Jerry and I. We feel --
3 it's nice.

4 You need to -- what do we do? How does
5 this work?

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. If I can have you --
7 our court reporter swear you in.

8 MR. CLARK: Okay. I'm only going to talk
9 about this, then. I'm not --

10 THE CHAIRMAN: That's what you think. You
11 haven't been before this crowd.

12 THE REPORTER: Do you affirm that the
13 testimony you're about to give will be the
14 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
15 truth so help you God?

16 MR. CLARK: I do.

17 THE REPORTER: Thank you.

18 MR. CLARK: Do you need me to state my name
19 and all that?

20 THE CHAIRMAN: No. I think we're familiar
21 with your resume.

22 MR. CLARK: Okay. Well, I appreciate you
23 guys -- you know, all the work you've done so
24 far.

25 I guess today, what we're going to do is

1 I'll talk briefly as to why I support moving the
2 elections on the gubernatorial cycle,
3 specifically the gubernatorial cycle as opposed
4 to the presidential, but there -- there are a
5 few reasons. I'm going to start with the one
6 that's most pressing and the one that I think
7 will actually, really give this some serious
8 thought from the council.

9 We've had these votes in the past. They
10 have been ridiculously close in the past,
11 ten-nine votes, and it's always been hotly
12 contested and debated.

13 We have a few other things now happening in
14 our world that I think are worthy of
15 discussion. The biggest of which is the way in
16 which we're doing our budget now. This was year
17 one of my belief of multiyear issues with our
18 budget. This is not going to go away.

19 Every -- you know, the market may be up,
20 but the market is up because we've got a -- I
21 don't know how many -- couple trillion dollars
22 of government money in there kind of keeping it
23 artificially inflated. When that goes away --
24 you know, the dollar is about as weak as it's
25 ever been, so it's going to come down. It's

1 inevitable. The regular market forces are going
2 to force it down, so we're going to continue to
3 see an inflated number year over year that we're
4 going to be required to fill the hole of our
5 pension obligation for no other reason than the
6 market.

7 You know, we've done a pretty good job
8 other than the market influence and some issues
9 that we've allowed to happen through the years,
10 that the administration, I think, is trying to
11 correct this year through collective bargaining,
12 another issue.

13 So, in a nutshell, to get to the point,
14 you're looking at a \$3 million hit on the
15 '10/'11 budget. \$3 million is roughly about
16 10 percent of what we project to be our
17 shortfall. We're looking at probably
18 \$30 million today. And that could go up, it
19 could go down, but I think a real good number to
20 start with is about \$30 million.

21 So if you tell me today that, on top of
22 doing what I believe is the right thing to do
23 anyway, which is run us concurrently with the
24 gubernatorial cycle, that I can immediately take
25 10 percent of a number that I'm going to be

1 forced to find in '10/'11 and start off, I'd say
2 that's a huge win. And everybody says, well,
3 it's only \$3 million every four years. Only
4 3 million? I mean, we were looking at \$4,000
5 line items in this year's budget.

6 We're going to be forced, as we start
7 structuring our budget going forward, to start
8 looking at this thing year over year over year,
9 and the budget cycle needs to start probably
10 January 1 of every year, January 2 of every
11 year. We need to organize that going into it,
12 but the only way we can really do that and give
13 any incoming mayor a real leg, moving forward
14 target is to say come in -- you get elected, you
15 know, August, November -- those are the cycles?
16 August, November. January you take office, and
17 you've got a solid six months to prepare.

18 (Mr. Webb enters the proceedings.)

19 MR. CLARK: So my belief is that it will,
20 one, save money; two, we have to -- we have to
21 find a better way to skin this cat. It's a
22 shame that it had to get to this point in our
23 finances to have that discussion.

24 So, first and foremost, it's a financial
25 decision that's a wise one. It's a structure

1 system for us from a budgetary standpoint that
2 we need to enact. It makes sense for us to move
3 that.

4 Everybody says, well, it's only once every
5 four years. Well, you know, throw somebody into
6 this animal once every four years, twice every
7 eight, that's a -- so, what, 25 percent of the
8 time you're just going to say, oh, well, we'll
9 just run with the budget? I don't think so. I
10 mean, we're pushing a billion dollars now in the
11 general fund. That's a big number to just let
12 it fly once every four years. I'm not willing
13 to do that.

14 So from a financial perspective and a
15 budgetary perspective and a time line of logical
16 moving ebb and flow of the way we run our
17 government, it makes sense to move the
18 election. It's a logical thing to do.

19 The other side of this is, when you have a
20 small election -- when I ran originally, we had
21 a 16 percent turnout. Now, granted, it was a
22 special, but it was a 16 percent turnout.

23 And what you find when you have nonmayoral
24 races, that percentage is ridiculously low,
25 below 30 for sure. And so when you have these

1 tiny, little turnouts, you get anomalies, you
2 get factions, you get special interest groups
3 that have an enormous impact on the election, an
4 enormous impact and one that's scary.

5 To give you a perfect example, when I ran,
6 I ran in the exact same district Jerry Holland
7 ran in. He ran in a regular cycle. The person
8 that ran against him took three precincts.

9 I don't even know -- what was the
10 percentage? What did you get, 60, 70?

11 MR. HOLLAND: Sixty-six.

12 MR. CLARK: Sixty-six percent is what he
13 took away from that vote.

14 He won -- his opponent took three
15 precincts. He took 66 percent of the vote,
16 which is a landslide. Anything over 55 is a
17 landslide. Sixty-six percent of the vote.

18 When I ran, that person got the exact same
19 three precincts, exact same three, and I won by
20 less than 2 percent because those same three
21 precincts were just as -- he almost won by
22 taking the exact same precincts and nothing else
23 because of a special interest, because of
24 something that was going on at the time, because
25 he had -- and that's scary. That's very scary.

1 So the ideas is, if you allow more people
2 to vote in the system, you're going to get the
3 right choices made and you're not going to allow
4 some special interests to get involved and be
5 able to overrun an election, which is very
6 scary. In these times, we need to make sure
7 that everybody has an opportunity to vote.

8 So those are my big two points. I'm going
9 to let Jerry speak to the process, for obvious
10 reasons. And if there's anything I need to
11 bring, I was on the canvassing -- oh, I've got
12 questions. Okay. I thought I got away.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes. Just as a reminder,
14 commissioners, since I don't -- I'll need you to
15 raise your hand.

16 Commissioner Catlett.

17 MR. CATLETT: Is there any downsides that
18 you're aware of to moving the election time?

19 MR. CLARK: The downside is you probably --
20 yeah, the downside is I would take -- it would
21 be a personal downside. I'd probably lose five
22 or six months of my term, but I don't have a
23 problem with that. I mean, I don't -- I don't
24 have a problem with that.

25 MR. CATLETT: I appreciate what you're

1 saying as my friend as well as our president,
2 but I'm saying systemically is there any
3 downside to it?

4 MR. CLARK: Systemically?

5 MR. CATLETT: Is there anything that's --
6 that it creates a new problem somewhere else?

7 MR. CLARK: I don't see one. I haven't
8 seen one. I've thought about it. I've tried to
9 figure -- I've tried to think about what the --
10 what the negatives would be.

11 There are some arguments on, you know, size
12 of ballots, things like that, but everything
13 I've seen has us on the front page of the ballot
14 still. It's not -- I mean, I think Jerry is
15 going to go through the list of who would
16 actually be in front of us from a local
17 perspective, and it's practically nobody. So
18 the idea that you get lost is an absurdity.

19 MR. CATLETT: Thank you.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Youngblood.

21 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: Between the two bills --
22 there are competing bills, and I think Jack Webb
23 is going to be removing his. There's an
24 immediate rub, though, obviously. What is that
25 rub that you see? And I believe that's what

1 Commissioner Catlett is asking also --

2 MR. CLARK: Well, the rub --

3 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: What's the rub?

4 MR. CLARK: The rub, the difference in the
5 two, why the two?

6 One says we ought to be stand-alone people,
7 ought to take City issues and have them
8 wholistically stand on their own, and you should
9 be your own voice.

10 The other says the voter -- the electorate
11 is pretty darn smart. If you're going to -- if
12 you're going to vote and you're going to take
13 the time to go and you are going to take the
14 time to vote, you're probably going to
15 educate -- you're not going to walk in blind.

16 You know, the real anomaly was -- that
17 people try to use is the Obama election. The
18 Obama election is the anomaly. That's the one
19 where you have more first-time voters than we
20 ever had in the history of first-time voters. I
21 mean, that's the anomaly, and that's when you
22 get the -- when everybody gives you these crazy
23 numbers of down ballot numbers. That's not
24 fair. They're not fair to use those numbers
25 because that's the one you really ought to take

1 out. That's the one that doesn't look like any
2 other election in the history of elections.

3 So if you take that one out, you don't see
4 it. Those numbers fall in line like you would
5 think they'd fall in line. Really they fall off
6 when you hit the judges. I mean, no one -- no
7 one has any idea. That's when it falls off.

8 So the competing idea between the two was,
9 do we have the City stand on its own -- the same
10 argument falls, though. The same argument is,
11 the way we structure our system, the way to best
12 run this government is to start it year over
13 year, to allow an administration or a City
14 Councilperson the time to digest what is the
15 most important part of my job, which is the
16 City's finances. That's it. That's --
17 everything else is secondary to that.

18 So they both had the exact same purpose.
19 The difference is, is there really an idea why
20 you'd want to remain stand-alone? And I don't
21 know that there's really a logical reason for
22 that anymore. I understood the purpose
23 originally, but I just don't see that you gain
24 anything from it.

25 You're not going to raise any more money.

1 The people who say we're fighting for money, if
2 you just open your account -- if the election is
3 November and the locals start in February and
4 you have four months -- if you open your account
5 when these end, you're -- it was over -- you're
6 over before you get started.

7 There's nobody that hadn't opened their
8 account six months, eight months, nine months --
9 they're running and raising money at the exact
10 same time that all the gubernatorial and
11 congressional and all of that stuff is going
12 on. Nobody opens it in December. You can't
13 raise money between Thanksgiving and Christmas.
14 I mean, nobody does that.

15 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: Thank you.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Korman.

17 MS. KORMAN: Two questions for you.

18 Who -- it's my -- actually one. My
19 understanding, according to Mr. Holland
20 originally, this would be a cheaper plan to --
21 long-term for the -- the community, so who would
22 be our opponents for this? I mean, who would
23 really be against this?

24 MR. CLARK: Really the biggest argument --
25 it isn't a -- everybody agrees on the financial

1 aspect of it. Nobody will argue with those
2 numbers because they're numbers, it's easy.

3 The argument here is, will the City -- will
4 the City in itself, the people who run, do you
5 need to be -- do those issues need to stand
6 alone? Do we need to remain separate or not?
7 And that's the issue.

8 And there are arguments on both sides of
9 that as to why people believe you ought to have
10 an election based solely on the City, and I'm
11 sure our Supervisor of Elections will tell you
12 what other cities have done and what other
13 municipalities are doing out there. I don't
14 know that there's that many left that
15 separate -- the big counties like ours, but I'll
16 let him speak to that.

17 MS. KORMAN: Can I follow up, Mr. Chair?

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

19 MS. KORMAN: Just so I understand the
20 process, if your bill -- or whoever's bill moves
21 forward, when would that all happen to -- I
22 guess I'm trying to figure out -- schematically,
23 would it -- is it even worth us going through
24 with this process ourselves if you have a bill
25 going on?

1 MR. CLARK: Absolutely.

2 I mean, ideally, in an ideal world, the
3 bill is there, you get ten votes, and we'd move
4 on. If we don't -- and I don't know when your
5 decisions -- and I don't know the time frame of
6 everything you're doing, but it's worth the
7 discussion because, I mean, if it's another
8 ten-nine, which I assume it might be -- I would
9 prefer it be, you know, nineteen-zero, but -- on
10 the good side. But if it's not, you know, maybe
11 this -- maybe there's another way. Maybe you
12 put it on the ballot. Maybe you just -- I don't
13 know. I mean, there's -- I don't want to just
14 let it go.

15 Worst-case scenario, you put it on the
16 ballot and you let the voters decide it, and
17 then you push it out another five years, nothing
18 changes, and there's redistricting and there's a
19 whole bunch of other things that come into
20 play.

21 So, ideally, you know, you guys would talk
22 about it, you guys would have an idea. I mean,
23 I don't know that you guys will move fast enough
24 to give us an idea of what you guys think, but,
25 you know, it doesn't hurt for -- a lot of my

1 colleagues actually look at the transcript, see
2 what you guys are doing, so it wouldn't be --
3 surprised to see them hear the debate that you
4 guys have and the discussion you guys have and
5 read that and try to educate themselves a little
6 more.

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Let me just -- I will ask --
8 I will call on both of you, but I just -- I want
9 to interject.

10 Originally, when I picked this as the topic
11 for this meeting today, it was with the
12 understanding that the council was going to vote
13 on these two competing bills next Tuesday and I
14 wanted us to be relevant to that process and
15 take a position today after this -- after these
16 speakers.

17 It is now my understanding -- and the
18 council president can verify this. It's my
19 understanding that Vice President Webb's bill
20 has been or will soon be withdrawn, so that will
21 certainly not be voted on Tuesday, and that
22 Councilman Redman's bill, which would have the
23 effect, at least as originally introduced, of
24 moving them to November of '10, is still in
25 committee.

1 So nothing is --

2 MR. WEBB: It was discharged from
3 committee. There was an amendment that was
4 passed to not approve or not go forward, not
5 approve the J bill at the Rules Committee.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: So there's currently no
7 legislation pending that would have the effect,
8 if passed, of moving the elections to November
9 of '10 in its current form?

10 MR. WEBB: No, that's not correct.

11 I, mean, again -- the resolution,
12 Mr. President, if I may.

13 MR. CLARK: Is it four-three? What was the
14 vote?

15 MR. HOLLAND: Four-three -- no, four-two.
16 One was missing.

17 MR. CLARK: Okay. So four-two, and the
18 effect of the vote was not to send it to
19 Tallahassee?

20 MR. HOLLAND: The effect of the vote was to
21 tell Tallahassee they did not support it.

22 Any J bill must go forward, whether it's in
23 support or opposition.

24 MR. WEBB: That's correct.

25 MR. CLARK: Right.

1 So there are four votes right now out of
2 nineteen that say -- that aren't -- that don't
3 want to send a letter of support to
4 Tallahassee. There are two of the seven on the
5 committee that say yes.

6 It still comes to the body. It still gets
7 debated. It can go -- it will still come up,
8 so -- is it in a posture to be voted on
9 Tuesday?

10 MR. WEBB: Yes, it is.

11 MR. CLARK: So it will get voted on on
12 Tuesday up or down.

13 MR. WEBB: As well the J-2 bill, the Webb
14 bill --

15 MR. CLARK: Right.

16 MR. WEBB: -- when it looked as if -- there
17 was a motion, I believe, to not support it as
18 well, and I believe -- I just moved -- I recall
19 at Rules I just moved to withdraw the bill
20 subject to further discussion as to a ballot
21 initiative.

22 MR. CLARK: Right.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. So just to make sure
24 I understand, Tuesday night there will be a vote
25 on the Redman bill?

1 MR. CLARK: Right.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: And on the Webb bill?

3 MR. CLARK: Is Holt on Rules?

4 MR. HOLLAND: He was absent.

5 MR. CLARK: So Holt is a sponsor on there.

6 So right now you got four to four, so it's
7 in play.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. So with that
9 understanding, then, I think perhaps we're in a
10 posture to debate and take a position on this
11 today.

12 MS. KORMAN: Just a question.

13 So the bill that Mr. Redman -- Councilman
14 Redman has is basically what President Clark was
15 saying?

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Correct.

17 MS. KORMAN: That is -- okay.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. Although it was
19 amended in committee to say the opposite, but
20 that's the intent of his bill.

21 MS. KORMAN: Okay.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Now, is this a point of
23 order or --

24 MR. OLIVERAS: No. Put me in the queue.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Commissioner

1 Eichner.

2 MR. EICHNER: Go ahead.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Catlin.

4 MR. CATLIN: I'll pass.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Oliveras.

6 (Discussion held off the record.)

7 MR. CLARK: I just want to make sure he and
8 I were both noticed that we're on here so we
9 don't have any Sunshine issues.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Oliveras.

11 MR. OLIVERAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Mr. President, you mentioned there's
13 arguments for and against this. Would you care
14 to share perhaps the organizations or
15 individuals that are against this idea of
16 consolidating the election?

17 MR. CLARK: I don't know who they are. I
18 really don't know who they are, I really don't.
19 I don't know that there's an organization that's
20 come out saying we're against it.

21 You know -- Teresa, plug your ears --
22 there's probably a lot of political consultants
23 who don't like the idea because they get -- A,
24 because, you know, they're losing a whole
25 election cycle to make money, so -- and it's

1 hard -- you can only control so much.

2 If there are ten elections going on, you
3 can probably -- you can handle, I don't know,
4 three or four. If there are 20, you can still
5 only handle three or four. You can't handle
6 ten, so you lose a cycle, but, I mean, that's --
7 but I -- again, I haven't had those discussions
8 either with -- I don't have a lot of political
9 consultants. They cost money.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: I have a substantive
11 question. I just want to make sure that I
12 understood the figures that you were citing.

13 Are you saying that the projected budget
14 shortfall for the '10/'11 budget cycle is
15 30 million --

16 MR. CLARK: You know, a guess -- a good
17 guesstimate number is 30 million. I mean, some
18 people use 45-. We know we're off roughly --
19 what our property appraiser has said, right now
20 the commercial -- the housing market, believe it
21 or not, is stabilized. If anything, there's
22 been a .0001 uptick, basically flatlined, but
23 not negative anymore.

24 The commercial values, however, look to be
25 today that it's going to be about a 7 percent

1 hit, which, from a property value, would roughly
2 be overall about \$15 million, tack on top of
3 that what our pension obligation increase --
4 above and beyond what this year's increase was,
5 you're looking at roughly 30 million,
6 conservatively. It could go higher, but I try
7 to use 30- so that I can get a -- it's a nice
8 round number for me to take a bite out of as we
9 budget toward next year.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: And so assuming that the
11 \$3 million cost -- and I'll ask the supervisor
12 to verify this because this is really his area
13 of expertise, but assuming for the purposes of
14 my question that that's the hard number, then
15 moving the election would save -- would get you
16 to 10 percent of that shortfall?

17 MR. CLARK: It's 10 percent, rough- --
18 yeah, that's a -- I mean, ask anybody. Jack
19 will tell you the same thing. It was hard to
20 come up with \$10,000 items, much less
21 \$3 million. \$3 million is a lot of money in a
22 single cycle.

23 And, you know, people try to spread it out
24 over four years. It's never spread out over
25 four years. And other arguments are, well, you

1 never know when you're going to have a special
2 election. Well, that's above and beyond
3 anyway. That's not -- that's not going to
4 change your budgeting. A special election is a
5 special election. It's never in our budget, so,
6 you know, I --

7 It's a lot of money in a single cycle.
8 And, you know, if you tell me every -- you know,
9 every four years that I can save 3 million --
10 \$3 million is a baseball quad, built out,
11 perfect, brand new, ready to go. It's a brand
12 spanking new community center with basketball --
13 and the whole nine yards every four years.
14 Every four years you tell me I can build another
15 community center or a baseball park or a
16 soccer -- something, you're darn right. You
17 know, I'm all about it. I mean, that's -- I
18 mean, we're desperate to find money like that.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Any other questions,
20 commissioners?

21 MS. MILLER: Through the Chair, just as a
22 point of order, if the -- if you're going to ask
23 the commission to vote on something or take a
24 position on something today, I'd like to get a
25 clear understanding of which bill supports which

1 date, so if we could have -- understand the
2 bills or even have a copy of the bills --

3 MR. CLARK: There's one bill today because
4 Councilman Webb said he is withdrawing because
5 of the posture of the bill that sits today.

6 There's one bill as it sits today, and the
7 bill is to move the election cycle up to run
8 concurrently with the gubernatorial cycle, which
9 is August and November of 2010.

10 MS. MILLER: August.

11 MR. CLARK: August would be the primary,
12 November the general.

13 MS. MILLER: So we'd be moving it back --
14 moving it three months --

15 MR. CLARK: Moving it -- we are moving it
16 from February to -- February is the typical,
17 correct?

18 MR. HOLLAND: No. It's actually March and
19 May.

20 MR. CLARK: March and May to August and
21 November.

22 MS. MILLER: Okay. Of 2010?

23 MR. CLARK: 2010.

24 MS. MILLER: Got it. Thank you.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Korman.

1 MS. KORMAN: What it will do -- because we
2 have a new mayor coming in, so how will that
3 affect that -- will it --

4 MR. CLARK: They'll get six months of being
5 able to decipher what is a budget and put their
6 team in place --

7 MS. KORMAN: So our current --
8 (Simultaneous speaking.)

9 MR. CLARK: I mean, it would have helped --
10 I mean, I can't imagine what it would have done
11 for Mayor Austin, giving him six months to
12 actually transition instead of six weeks. Can't
13 imagine how much more prepared you'd be.

14 MS. KORMAN: So current Mayor Peyton would
15 have a six-month shorter sentence -- not
16 sentence.

17 MR. CLARK: Yes, he'd have a six-month
18 shorter sentence.

19 MS. KORMAN: I didn't say that.

20 MR. CLARK: Well said.

21 (Simultaneous speaking.)

22 MS. KORMAN: Term.

23 So as part of all the elections going on
24 now, that will change all that process,
25 correct? I mean, they'll have a quicker

1 election -- will go to the ballot quicker.
2 They'll have a shorter time to campaign,
3 correct?

4 MR. CLARK: Between now and then for this
5 cycle?

6 MS. KORMAN: Uh-huh.

7 MR. CLARK: Sure, but -- I mean,
8 grass-roots, ground-game politics really don't
9 start till about 90 days out, so there's plenty
10 of time.

11 It consolidates the amount of time any
12 candidate would have today to raise money, which
13 may help many people in the room who don't have
14 to write checks.

15 MS. MILLER: I just wanted to clarify. I
16 may have confused myself, so -- it's the -- the
17 bill is to move the cycle that -- the current
18 election is scheduled for March and May of
19 2011 --

20 MR. CLARK: Yes.

21 MS. MILLER: -- is that right?

22 MR. CLARK: Yes.

23 MS. MILLER: So the proposed bill would
24 move it up to August/November of 2010?

25 MR. CLARK: Correct.

1 MS. MILLER: A year from now?

2 MR. CLARK: Yes.

3 MS. MILLER: Okay. Thank you.

4 MR. CLARK: The bill that I support. The
5 other -- I mean, it may be in a posture to
6 withdraw. I guess, technically, that one, they
7 could --

8 MR. WEBB: It's before the council.

9 MR. CLARK: They could run with that as
10 well and -- deny and run. I mean, we do plenty
11 of -- but anyway, yes, the bill I support does
12 that.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Austin.

14 MR. AUSTIN: Yes. I think when this was
15 set up by the -- originally, that it was a -- as
16 the president mentioned, that they -- they
17 wanted it to be segregated out so that you would
18 raise the public's interest and -- just the City
19 elections, and would be able to concentrate more
20 and understand those issues, but when -- since
21 we adopted the charter, the State has separated
22 out and put the State elections on off years
23 from the federal election. The governor and
24 president all run -- off years, two years.

25 So that's -- takes out some of the

1 confusion and takes away some of the
2 justification for creating the special thing
3 because it's not as complicated as it was, in my
4 judgment.

5 I think Ms. Korman's comments about the
6 mayor -- you have to really start to work on
7 your budget before you get any authority in the
8 mayor's office when you come in, and it's just
9 not -- not very satisfactory to be meddling
10 around before you get the authority to do
11 things.

12 So it seems to me, with the change of
13 circumstances and with the -- what you see from
14 the negative aspects of the mayor's office and
15 the City Council, that this is a sound
16 proposal. I don't know whether it's the proper
17 time to speak to that or not, but it -- it seems
18 pretty sound to me.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Eichner.

20 MS. EICHNER: I'll be nice, I promise.

21 Did I understand you right that special
22 elections are not budgeted?

23 MR. CLARK: They're never budgeted.

24 Whenever we have a special election -- no
25 one plans for a death or, you know, anything

1 horrific like that. So, you know, we never
2 budget -- I mean, the latest special election
3 for the state Senate, 70 80 percent of that was
4 paid for by the State. We get reimbursed.

5 We do have to have a local component when
6 it's just local stuff, but, you know, very
7 rarely -- I mean, we've had more than our fair
8 share lately, but prior to that, I mean, it --
9 we really don't have that many and we don't ever
10 budget for such a thing.

11 There are many things in this budget that
12 we don't specifically, you know, budget for. We
13 have plenty of reserves and emergency monies
14 that you can move for something like that, but
15 there would never be a need to -- well, we have
16 a special election once every five years, let's
17 make sure we -- we don't -- we don't do it that
18 way.

19 MS. EICHNER: Okay.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Oliveras.

21 MR. OLIVERAS: Mr. President, because we
22 have the state House seats and the Congressional
23 seats that are two-year terms -- just help me
24 clarify this. We're still going to have
25 elections every two years?

1 MR. CLARK: Yes, because the State -- the
2 State was pulled out from the presidential cycle
3 so that the gubernatorial and the presidential
4 run separately.

5 Now, you know, the state House still runs
6 every two years. Congress runs every two
7 years. So you're always going to have two years
8 with -- I think they wanted -- to Mayor Austin's
9 point, I think they wanted the executive
10 branches in the state and the executive branch
11 for the nation to be separate because those are
12 two very significant things for everybody, so
13 what you've done is --

14 What we would do is eliminate the off-term,
15 not really running in the -- not even running in
16 the same month, which is where I think
17 Councilman Webb's came to, is, look, at least
18 everybody would get on a rhythm of when we vote,
19 and it would also satisfy our budget needs and
20 the mayor's needs and everyone, really. It
21 would be helpful to get this thing cranked up at
22 the beginning of every year and really -- really
23 look at . . .

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Flowers.

25 MR. FLOWERS: How would we divide out the

1 council districts?

2 MR. CLARK: Nothing would change.

3 We would -- I mean, right now we've got
4 regular cycles. All 14 -- all 19 would run at
5 the same time. We have -- we really -- some
6 people say you want to stagger it, but it really
7 doesn't make any sense to stagger it because
8 really we have a pretty good ebb and flow as it
9 sits now. People that are termed out and not
10 termed out, people that decide not to run again,
11 it falls within a window pretty closely of about
12 60 -- sometimes it's 60 percent either way that
13 stays and goes, so we've got a pretty good cycle
14 of people turning over.

15 You don't -- and due to term limits, we
16 always have a regular cycle, but we wouldn't --
17 there's really not a purpose to stagger, so
18 everybody would run just like they run now and,
19 you know -- other than the eleven redistricting,
20 but I don't -- that's a whole other issue.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Thank you.

22 MR. CLARK: Should I stay?

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Please, if you can, because
24 there will probably be questions when we start
25 talking.

1 Council Vice President Webb.

2 (Mr. Webb approaches the podium.)

3 MR. WEBB: Good morning.

4 My name is Jack Webb, sitting vice
5 president, Jacksonville City Council.

6 Thank you for hearing me this morning.

7 I've been notified by General Counsel, I
8 can't dispute anything that Council President
9 Clark has said because that would be a violation
10 of Government in the Sunshine, so I guess my
11 comments will be very brief.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. First, we have to
13 have our court reporter swear you in.

14 MR. WEBB: Oh, thank you very much.

15 THE REPORTER: Do you affirm that the
16 testimony you're about to give will be the
17 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
18 truth so help you God?

19 MR. WEBB: I do.

20 THE REPORTER: Thank you.

21 MR. CATLETT: Excuse me, Mr. Chairman.
22 Are these not publicly-noticed meetings?

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

24 MR. CATLETT: So you can say whatever you
25 want, I would think.

1 MS. FRENCH: There was a notice.

2 AUDIENCE MEMBER: But there wasn't a notice
3 that these two would be discussing City Council
4 business.

5 MS. FRENCH: Well, let me -- okay. Let
6 me -- I'm sorry. This is Loree French, and I'm
7 stepping in here for Steve Rohan, who is out of
8 town.

9 Maybe I misunderstood the comment that was
10 just made, but it is clearly shown here that
11 they will be discussing the City election
12 schedule, so they will clearly be -- or could
13 potentially be debating with each other over
14 their differences of opinion as to when the
15 election should be moved to or if they have
16 differences of opinion in that nature, but it's
17 correct that they cannot -- you know, you're not
18 free to start asking him issues about other
19 business that's coming before council that is
20 unrelated to the issue of the election schedule
21 because nothing else was noticed for this
22 meeting.

23 So if that clears this up, that -- that may
24 be what OGC has already advised him of earlier,
25 but -- but certainly he could discuss what was

1 noticed in the meeting, which is the election
2 schedule, but no other City business, no other
3 council business.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms. French.

5 MR. WEBB: Mr. Chairman --

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Vice President Webb.

7 MR. WEBB: -- thank you for having me
8 today.

9 At the Chair's discretion, procedurally,
10 I'll -- we can attack this however you'd like,
11 whether it's subject to -- you know, provide a
12 brief explanation as to what my bill is and then
13 open it up to questions, whatever the Chair --

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Please, yes, just give us an
15 overview of your bill, why perhaps you thought
16 it was necessary to introduce it in opposition
17 to the Redman bill.

18 MR. WEBB: Okay. Very good.

19 Actually -- I appreciate that.

20 I wouldn't characterize my bill as an
21 opposing bill or offered in opposition to the
22 Redman bill. Actually, I think they are the
23 creation of the -- well, I'll say this: I think
24 there have been iterations of the Redman bill
25 that have been rolling around City Hall and the

1 City of Jacksonville for a number of years, this
2 concept of combining the municipal county
3 elections with the state and federal as well
4 as -- to marry them up so as to -- to provide
5 some cost savings.

6 In fact, when I came on council, I remember
7 that -- I recall that Councilman Holt had
8 introduced a bill right around that time because
9 that was the first -- really that was the first
10 instance we -- experience we had with a drastic
11 budget shortfall, but that bill did not get any
12 traction and was ultimately withdrawn, as well I
13 think when Supervisor Holland was on the City
14 Council I think there were a number of attempts
15 to pass a bill of this ilk as well, and I --

16 You know, I will say this with respect to
17 that bill: It makes sense in many respects with
18 regard to \$3 million. I mean, \$3 million is
19 \$3 million, and this -- in this era and this age
20 of shrinking budgets, we need to look everywhere
21 for cost savings.

22 Now, that begs the question, though, I
23 think, that's wholly distinct, I guess, from my
24 bill, is that this -- this policy consideration
25 related to -- this policy consideration with

1 respect to the bifurcation, the separation of
2 the state and federal versus the municipal is
3 something I think has been -- I don't want to --
4 I'll call it sacrosanct, Mr. Mayor, but it's
5 something that's been out there for a long time.

6 I heard Council President Clark speaking a
7 number of moments ago and a couple of the
8 questions that were asked related to the
9 separation of the state elections from the
10 federal elections. Well, you know, the State,
11 you know, looked up and said, well, you know,
12 our state races are important. We need to
13 separate them, maintain a distinct nature so
14 people can focus on those state races. I think
15 that's precisely why we maintain this separation
16 between the local elections and the state and
17 the federal.

18 Now, having said that, if we were to
19 consider what I would describe -- and I don't
20 want to call it a -- "drastic," but a very
21 significant public policy change for the City, I
22 think that's something that arguably should be
23 left to voter referendum, so -- and that's
24 something that came out during the debates in
25 the Rules Committee just last week.

1 However, aside from that, my bill is a
2 little bit different, again. And I'll admit to
3 you, it is not driven by immediate -- I don't
4 want to call it "onetime," but immediate
5 recurring budgetary savings as a result of
6 consolidation of the elections, rather it is --
7 it is more of a compromise bill in a sense
8 that -- kind of kills two birds with one stone;
9 that is, it achieves the budgeting efficiencies
10 necessary -- budgeting efficiencies that -- I
11 think that we've all come to realize we need,
12 and addresses the -- I guess the dysfunction
13 that results from us being -- our budgeting
14 process being controlled by state law, which
15 anticipates a November election cycle, and the
16 fact that we, in fact -- we have a spring
17 election cycle. It's an attempt to marry
18 that -- to fix that problem, but at the same
19 time to maintain the separate, distinct nature
20 of local elections from the state and the
21 federal.

22 (Ms. Herrington enters the proceedings.)

23 MR. WEBB: In fact, there were two bills
24 that I introduced, and I'd like to describe them
25 as companion bills. The first one -- the first

1 bill is -- it's been deferred one additional
2 cycle so that Councilman Hyde and I can have a
3 meeting to discuss modifications to the bill,
4 but that bill would extend the budgeting process
5 such that the mayor would be required to provide
6 to the council on May 1 a proposed budget.

7 Okay?

8 What that would do is provide the council
9 with a -- an extra two months to vet the budget
10 prior to the certification of the tax rolls by
11 the property appraiser's office in early July
12 because what happens now is that we get the
13 budget in early July, the property appraiser
14 certifies the tax rolls. That's when we know
15 how much we have for the coming year, but at
16 that point we're already wrestling with this
17 issue of what's the proper millage rate.

18 If we were to have the budget earlier, then
19 we would have an ample opportunity to get our
20 arms around it, the property appraiser sets
21 the -- the millage -- excuse me -- sets the tax
22 rolls, and we know how much money -- revenue we
23 have, so we -- then we have an additional 30,
24 60 days to wrestle with the budget, to set
25 priorities, to cut -- to make a decision as to

1 whether or not we want to raise ad valorem or do
2 whatever we need to do to get the budget done.

3 What happened in the budget -- what's
4 happened in the budget process over the last
5 couple of years, we've become fixated on this
6 ad valorem, on this millage rate rather than
7 looking at the overall budgeting priorities. So
8 the initial bill would, in fact, remedy that
9 situation, but when we started drafting that
10 bill what occurred to me was that it really only
11 got halfway there because it just, I guess,
12 clarified for me and for some of my colleagues,
13 my cosponsors, the inefficiency that's -- that
14 results from the current election cycle because
15 if the mayor were to present to us a tentative
16 budget on May 1, then the new City Council
17 president would come in on July 1 and he
18 would -- he or she would name a new Finance
19 Committee at that point. So you would have the
20 prior Finance Committee wrestling with the
21 budget for May/June and then you'd have a whole
22 new Finance Committee come in on July 1 and
23 start all over again.

24 Now, you're not going to lose a whole lot
25 of institutional knowledge at that point, but

1 you're going to lose some. You've lost that
2 momentum. And what that clarified for me was
3 the fact that there's -- there's an inefficiency
4 here.

5 Again, as I said before, because we are a
6 municipality and also a county, our budgeting
7 process is driven by Florida state law,
8 Chapter 200, I believe, is the proper cite. And
9 that, again, anticipates, you know, an October
10 to end of September fiscal year, and also as
11 well anticipates a November election cycle.

12 So, again, my bill would attempt to address
13 that issue so as to provide the new council, the
14 new mayor additional time -- and I would say as
15 well that when the new council president would
16 take office on that January 1, he or she would
17 name that Finance Committee who would have
18 ownership of the budgeting process for the
19 entire year, would be in office for four months,
20 up until May, and then get the budget and own
21 the budget all the way through the budgeting
22 process.

23 There would be -- you wouldn't have to
24 change your horse, you know, halfway across the
25 creek. And, again, at the same time, preserves

1 the separation of the local municipal elections
2 versus the state and federal, which I think is
3 something that was well considered -- and,
4 Mr. Mayor, you could speak to this far more
5 accurately than I can, but the -- something that
6 was -- that has been kicked around in this city
7 for a long time and, again, something that's
8 been decided it's important.

9 You know, we talk about saving money.
10 That's great. I'm all about saving money
11 wherever we can. You know, Council President
12 Clark and I beat our heads against the wall this
13 past year looking for additional revenues and
14 looking for areas to cut, but I'll tell you
15 this, you know, you could save \$3 million every
16 day of the week. And that's not to be flippant
17 about this at all, but we can cut Public Works
18 by \$750,000 tomorrow morning, but that means
19 that we're just not going to be able to pave as
20 many roads. That's just the reality of it.

21 There's a difference between cutting
22 budgets so as to eliminate inefficiencies and
23 there's a difference in cutting budgets so -- to
24 eliminate or to compromise the ability of
25 government to function.

1 I think the recent JCCI study says it well
2 in that we -- we need to foster transparency in
3 government. We are -- we're not -- apparently,
4 according to the JCCI study, we're not doing a
5 very good job of it right now.

6 My view is that marrying up -- pulling it
7 back to '10 and marrying up our local elections
8 with the state and federal I think is going
9 backwards. I think, if anything, we need to be
10 greater advocates of the separation, the
11 duality, and to maintain that.

12 Now, if, in any event, though, that is
13 something that is considered -- this is just
14 not -- this is just not merely moving an
15 election from May to March or March to May.
16 This is, again, something that's, I think, core
17 to the way we do business as a government, as a
18 city, and it's something that should be left to
19 the voters perhaps.

20 So, having said that, I'll take any
21 questions.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Miller.

23 MS. MILLER: Through the Chair to Council
24 Vice President Webb, thank you for coming today.

25 MR. WEBB: Thank you.

1 MS. MILLER: You've obviously given a lot
2 of thought to the governance issues or the
3 impact on City Council governance issues, so
4 I -- I have a question.

5 It seems as though the -- and you made a
6 good point that the local election timing right
7 now could have an impact on the timing of our
8 budget, you know, the City's budget cycle.

9 Do you foresee, if there is a change in --
10 or have you given any consideration to, if there
11 is a change to the timing of the elections,
12 would there have to be a resultant change in --
13 I'm not sure we can change the budget cycle, as
14 you mentioned, but the City Council elections
15 and then the City Council appointment of
16 committees?

17 Because it seems like you would -- if you
18 have an election, and the election, it lines
19 people up and gets people into office at a
20 certain time and thereafter the mayor's budget
21 address in July, and then we -- we move forward
22 with the committee appointments around that time
23 for the council, do you foresee any other
24 impacts on governance -- City Council governance
25 and the business of the budget?

1 You mentioned that, and maybe I -- I'd like
2 to hear a little bit more about that and the
3 potential of their governance impacts.

4 MR. WEBB: No, I don't.

5 I think there would be a onetime hit, to be
6 honest with you. I think there's -- and there's
7 a onetime hit that would occur as a result of
8 either bill. With Council President Clark's
9 bill, pulling it up -- pulling it back to '10,
10 again, there would be -- we can't legally --
11 statutorily, we cannot shorten our terms, so the
12 next council reps that come in would have a
13 short -- would actually serve for three and a
14 half years. So there is -- there is some --
15 there will be some issues with regard to when
16 people take office and things of that nature,
17 and that, obviously, would affect the governance
18 of council.

19 With my bill, it would necessarily require
20 an extension of our sentence -- excuse me -- our
21 terms for six months, which we are -- according
22 to state -- as per state law, we can do,
23 although it's -- politically, it creates
24 questions for -- or concerns for people.

25 But as far as -- once you absorb that hit,

1 that initial adjustment period, no, it's very
2 smooth because, again, in a mayoral election
3 year, your mayor would take office on January 1
4 or -- you know, or January 5th or whatever date
5 we would so determine. He would take office --
6 he or she would take office, and the council
7 president would take office at that time as
8 well. You'd have a whole new council coming
9 in. And whoever the council president is would
10 be the council president from January 1 to
11 December 31st.

12 The council president, at that time, would
13 appoint his standing committees, his Finance
14 chair, and that Finance chair would serve for
15 the duration -- assuming he didn't get fired, he
16 would serve for the duration of the -- of
17 that -- of the council president's term.

18 So, again, you would have January 1,
19 December 31, the mayor would -- even in a new
20 mayoral administration, the mayor would have,
21 what, one, two, three, four months, five months
22 to get up to speed on the budget and give it to
23 the council. The council, likewise, would have
24 that ability to get their feet underneath them
25 and run with the ball. And then when they got

1 it, when they got the budget on May 1, while --
2 they'd have ownership of it for the remainder of
3 the year. So I think for purposes of
4 governance, I think it would be far more
5 efficient.

6 MS. MILLER: May I follow up?

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

8 MS. MILLER: Thank you.

9 And so it seems like the only change --
10 maybe a logistical change would be a change in
11 the timing of the City Council president
12 election?

13 MR. WEBB: Yes.

14 MS. MILLER: Because doesn't that usually
15 occur in the -- in May --

16 (Simultaneous speaking.)

17 MR. WEBB: Yes, and we would have to change
18 the council rules with regard to that. I think
19 the council -- Richard, I don't recall. I think
20 we hold the City -- I think we hold leadership
21 elections sometime -- what, May?

22 MR. CLARK: Late May.

23 MR. WEBB: So we would, obviously, have to
24 adjust that, but --

25 MS. MILLER: Okay. And, if I may -- and

1 certainly -- I'm sure OGC will tell me if we
2 can't ask this question. Why are you
3 withdrawing your bill?

4 MR. WEBB: That's a great question
5 because -- well, here's the procedural
6 background on this whole thing.

7 Councilman Redman had introduced his bill
8 prior to mine, and so my bill was one cycle
9 behind his. They both came before Rules. Don's
10 bill came up first, and it got voted down. It
11 got voted down at Rules. In fact, there was a
12 motion to amend to -- to not support the
13 J bill. Okay? The J-1 bill, which is Don's
14 bill.

15 It came before the council -- and, again,
16 my bill had not as yet been taken up. And so
17 Don's bill came before the full council. And no
18 good deed goes unpunished, I think, in some
19 respects in that I -- I really wanted a more
20 vigorous debate on both -- the merits of both
21 bills, so I had actually -- at council, I moved
22 to rerefer Councilman Redman's bill back to the
23 Rules Committee so that we could debate both
24 bills at the same time.

25 Don's bill came back up, same result.

1 There was a motion to not support the J bill,
2 and my bill -- and then -- and we voted on that,
3 and then my bill came up for debate as well, and
4 there was a lot of interest in the bill, but
5 there was some -- my view in the debate was --
6 my opinion is that -- given the tenor of the
7 debate -- there was some concern about the
8 prospect of extending existing council terms and
9 the mayoral term, so there was a -- I could feel
10 a motion afloat to move to not support my bill,
11 so I just moved to withdraw it and -- subject to
12 further discussion with some of my colleagues
13 again at the Rules Committee about the prospect
14 of placing it -- reintroducing that bill in
15 resolution form so as to have a ballot
16 initiative on the issue.

17 So that's why I moved to withdraw it.

18 Again, I'm not -- I'm not -- I guess I'm
19 not giving up the debate or the -- I'm just
20 changing tactics on this. I think that we will
21 introduce it and I think I will have a number of
22 cosponsors on that resolution for the ballot
23 initiative.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Other questions?

25 COMMISSION MEMBERS: (No response.)

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

2 MR. WEBB: All right. Thank you very much.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Vice President
4 Webb.

5 MS. MILLER: Can I have one follow-up?

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

7 MS. MILLER: Just to summarize -- and I
8 think this would probably apply to the bill that
9 you're -- your bill, Mr. Redman's bill, or --
10 and the bill that Council President Clark is
11 supporting.

12 If the elections are moved to a November --
13 August/November and the new term for the mayor
14 and the council is January 1 through December 1,
15 then is it your opinion that the -- both the
16 council members and the mayor, then, are in a
17 better position to address and plan for and deal
18 with the budget --

19 MR. WEBB: Absolutely.

20 MS. MILLER: -- when the budget hits?

21 MR. WEBB: Absolutely.

22 MS. MILLER: Okay.

23 MR. WEBB: And that --

24 MS. MILLER: So either bill, but it will --

25 MR. WEBB: Yes.

1 MS. MILLER: When moving it back, you're --

2 MR. WEBB: I think both bills get us
3 there. I think both bills get us there.

4 I think that the distinction between the
5 two bills is very clear. Mine maintains that --
6 the separation between the local elections,
7 state, and federal, which, I think, is a major
8 policy consideration for the City and -- whereas
9 the other bill does not. Okay?

10 Thank you.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.
12 Supervisor Holland.

13 (Mr. Holland approaches the podium.)

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Welcome, Supervisor of
15 Elections Holland.

16 MR. HOLLAND: Thank you very much.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you for coming to talk
18 to us.

19 Our court reporter will swear you in.

20 MR. HOLLAND: Yes.

21 THE REPORTER: Do you affirm that the
22 testimony you're about to give will be the
23 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
24 truth so help you God?

25 MR. HOLLAND: I do.

1 THE REPORTER: Thank you.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

3 MR. HOLLAND: Thank y'all for having me
4 again. It's my pleasure to speak on the
5 elections. It is our business.

6 A little bit of what I want to talk to
7 you -- is kind of put away some of the myths
8 about moving the elections.

9 Typically -- and I think some of the
10 questions was kind of like who is against it or
11 what are the reasons why not to, and I think a
12 lot of times when you look at the positives to
13 doing something, you do look at the negatives to
14 say what are the consequences. And I think a
15 lot of those consequences are truly what I call
16 myths, and by that I mean from the standpoint --
17 you will hear constantly from anyone who's
18 against it that local elections get lost along
19 with the gubernatorial or federal elections,
20 they get lost.

21 Now, you have to first ask yourself, what
22 does that mean? What is the consequences of
23 getting lost? We just had -- and it doesn't
24 happen often. We just had a local race,
25 City Council race, in the 2008 presidential

1 election. That was for City Council, at-large,
2 Group 2. That race also ran in the 2007
3 election. It had to be rerun because of a court
4 order replacing that council member.

5 Now, if you would say -- that was a
6 presidential election. Surely that race would
7 get lost. What would be your evidence and
8 what -- what was the consequences of getting
9 lost? You would think at first, if you were
10 trying to present that evidence, that would be,
11 well, probably less people were focused on it;
12 therefore, they didn't vote in that election.
13 Okay. And they were focused on the
14 presidential.

15 And, obviously, it's -- it was a record
16 turnout for us. I think the last -- we had
17 77 percent turnout in this presidential
18 election. I think the last highest one was
19 back, I think -- if I have my statistics right,
20 was back in 1968.

21 So if there's that case of it getting lost,
22 how did it get lost? Well, people that would
23 say it got lost would say, well, yes, it got
24 lost, let me tell you why. Because there was
25 9 percent undervotes. You say, okay, well,

1 that -- how many were they in the 2007? In
2 2007, there was 5 percent undervotes. So you
3 could say 4 percent of those who went to vote
4 decided not to vote in that election. Okay?
5 And would that be significant.

6 It would be similar to this: It would be
7 like measuring -- if that was your justification
8 to saying the race got lost, it would be
9 measuring the contents of two containers, an
10 8-ounce container and a 64-ounce container, and
11 measuring the contents by how far away they are
12 from the top. Okay?

13 Because in the presidential, you were
14 9 percent from the top, 9 percent didn't vote
15 for it. In the local election, it was
16 5 percent, but I would assure you that there is
17 more contents in a 64-ounce one than there is in
18 the 8-ounce one. You do not measure it by how
19 many didn't vote in it.

20 In fact, in the 2008 election, four times
21 as many people participated in the City Council,
22 Group 2 election than they did in 2007. Okay?
23 There was almost -- I think in this race, in
24 2008, I think for that race there was almost
25 360,000 votes cast for that race, for the

1 City Council, Group 2. There was about 90,000
2 cast in 2007. Can you say the race got lost if
3 more people participated?

4 I think Council President Clark made a good
5 point, is that in our world of elections
6 participation is what makes democracy work. If
7 you have more people participating in the
8 process, you're going to get a truer reflection
9 of what the people want, and I think that's a
10 good thing. That's not a bad thing.

11 I don't think you can say it got lost -- if
12 for some reason in 2008 less than 90,000 people
13 voted in that election for that race, then I
14 would truly say that that is not a myth, that
15 would be a true statement, that it got lost, but
16 you cannot say a race gets lost when four times
17 as many people participate in that race.

18 You've got to look at also -- we look at
19 statistics in elections, statistics from the
20 standpoint -- consolidation, obviously, 1968.
21 The highest turnout for a race since
22 consolidation was actually in 1968 for a local
23 election. It was 82.52 percent, but don't get
24 excited. Actually, the first race under
25 consolidation was held during the presidential

1 cycle. From that point on, we diminished in the
2 turnout.

3 Also, we've changed something -- and y'all
4 are aware of this. In 1995, we changed from a
5 first and second primary in a general election
6 for a local. We changed to a first election and
7 a general election, unitary election.

8 Since 1995, the average turnout for both
9 the first and the general is 29 percent
10 turnout. If, as in the case -- when the mayor
11 is the incumbent and is maybe slightly
12 challenged or not challenged, the average
13 turnout is 16 percent turnout. That, I think,
14 is a problem. That, I think, is not what the
15 founders of consolidation wanted, is a local
16 election -- though we characterize it as focused
17 on local elections -- when only 16 percent of
18 the voters turn out.

19 I don't think there's anything to say
20 that -- when we focus on local, that we can't
21 focus on other things. We do it already. We do
22 our school board elections in the fall. We do
23 our Clerk of the Court in the fall. We do our
24 county judges in the fall, soil, water and
25 conservation. And the school board is obviously

1 the example. I don't think we have suffered in
2 that situation. I think we have elected some
3 outstanding school board members and I think the
4 direction of our school board. So you can't
5 say, well, we can't focus on local at the same
6 time, and that's even -- that's presidential and
7 fall.

8 So those myths, I think, are the reasons
9 that many people do not support moving it. But
10 I think, in reality, it actually is a better
11 thing for democracy. I think it actually
12 encourages a greater participation.

13 Again, the average participation in
14 presidential is 64 percent, average
15 participation in gubernatorial/general elections
16 is 50.6 percent. You're going to get more
17 citizens participating in local elections. And
18 in doing so, you're going to get a better
19 government.

20 And that's my point of moving the elections
21 up to the fall cycle, the gubernatorial.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

23 And can you confirm the \$3 million cost
24 figure?

25 MR. HOLLAND: Our first estimates -- and,

1 again, we have not prepared that budget for next
2 spring. Based on historical numbers of previous
3 elections, 3 million would be the most. It
4 could be somewhere between 2.9- and \$3 million.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

6 Commissioners.

7 Commissioner Oliveras.

8 MR. OLIVERAS: Thank you for being here
9 again, Mr. Holland.

10 A question about the length of the
11 ballots. I've been to the poll where I feel
12 like I'm taking a test, especially when we get
13 the constitutional amendments.

14 How would the placing of the candidates be
15 on -- on what I would assume to be a lengthened
16 ballot? And is there any evidence in talking to
17 other supervisors of elections where perhaps a
18 little fatigue occurs, that -- you know, the
19 bottom of the ballot where they just don't vote
20 for some of the, you know, less significant
21 races, soil and water, conservation districts,
22 that sort of thing?

23 MR. HOLLAND: Good question.

24 There's two variables that you need to look
25 at there: the positive effect from having more

1 races on a ballot versus a negative effect of
2 only having a couple.

3 For example, when we have a special
4 election, it only has one or two candidates on
5 the ballot, there is a lower turnout. So you
6 have a positive and negative based on the number
7 of things on the ballot.

8 The more you put on the menu -- the more
9 you put on the ballot, the more interest there
10 is to go to the polls. That's the positive to
11 having a larger ballot.

12 Now, from the standpoint -- again, as we
13 measure those two vessels, when you have a lot
14 on the ballot, yes, there will be opportunities
15 and more chances that someone won't vote for
16 everything on the ballot, but there will be more
17 people participating, you know, from that
18 standpoint.

19 Now, from the order, it will go federal,
20 state, local. Those will be the orders. And
21 then within the order of those is like --
22 obviously, mayor, constitutional officers,
23 City Council, at-large district councilpeople.

24 You go into the size of the group that
25 you're representing down to the smallest group.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Eichner.

2 MS. EICHNER: Jerry, just to give us an
3 idea of how many people will be on a ballot, how
4 many were on the 2003 ballot?

5 MR. HOLLAND: 2003, actually -- because a
6 lot of times you will not have candidates
7 opposed.

8 In our local elections today, there are
9 eleven -- the maximum that could be on your
10 ballot in a local election is eleven. You have
11 a mayor, four constitutionals, five at-large,
12 and one district. That's the most that you can
13 vote for.

14 We've been averaging, as Council President
15 Clark was mentioning, because of term limits,
16 because also incumbents sometimes not being
17 challenged, those situations, somewhere between
18 five and six of the eleven have typically been
19 on the ballot.

20 MS. EICHNER: So would you agree that there
21 were over a hundred candidates on the ballot in
22 2003?

23 MR. HOLLAND: No, no.

24 A hundred candidates -- when you talk about
25 the number of candidates, again, it is not

1 the -- you don't get to see, as a voter, all the
2 candidates that are on the ballot.

3 If you're in District 3, you don't see the
4 candidates -- the nine that ran in District 7.
5 So from that standpoint, no, you do not see a
6 hundred candidates.

7 So from the standpoint -- you see the
8 eleven races that you've got, you know, and how
9 many are on that. But then if there's only five
10 or six from that, then you're only seeing the
11 candidates on those. So you really are not in
12 that situation.

13 And also a good point, you know, as
14 Commissioner -- as Gary was mentioning -- and
15 the situation is -- we send a sample ballot to
16 every voter. What we do in the elections office
17 is encourage the voter to take that sample
18 ballot, fill it out as if they were going to
19 vote, bring that in with them and transfer their
20 answers.

21 So unlike the situation where you're
22 blindly coming in and -- oh, my gosh. Here's
23 this, you know, list of all these candidates and
24 I've never seen them and for the first time I'm
25 going to decide all these things and I'm

1 confused. That very, very seldom happens
2 because we see -- and the poll workers see
3 constantly the voter bringing in their sample
4 ballot, they've taken the time, they've studied
5 the issues, they bring it in, and they fill out
6 the official ballot.

7 And that's the purpose of sending -- not
8 every household, but every individual voter that
9 sample ballot, so they have time. That goes out
10 the first day of early voting, so they have two
11 weeks to study that ballot. So, depending on
12 the number of candidates, they really have
13 plenty of time to make their decisions.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: And to follow up on that,
15 Supervisor, is it your general opinion that the
16 local races, those five or six or potentially as
17 many as eleven, would be on the first page of
18 the ballot?

19 MR. HOLLAND: Most likely they would be on
20 the first page.

21 When you look at -- I think we were
22 counting earlier there may be as many as eight
23 races before then, depending on the number of
24 candidates in those. You also look at also --
25 is typically --

1 Again, we have a first general and a second
2 general versus the gubernatorial runs a primary
3 and a general. So, therefore, the primary has
4 less candidates on it for the state because,
5 again, you're only dealing with those candidates
6 for one particular party. So it's very likely
7 that the majority, if not all of them, will be
8 on the first page.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

10 Commissioner Deal.

11 MS. DEAL: How many other counties around
12 the state are you aware of that maybe hold
13 special local elections for the -- well, I guess
14 it wouldn't be a special election, but local
15 elections separately from the fall?

16 MR. HOLLAND: Good point.

17 First of all, all county governments in the
18 state of Florida, all except Duval -- 66 county
19 governments hold their all's [sic] during the
20 fall. Sixty-five of them hold them during the
21 gubernatorial. One of them holds their county
22 elections during the presidential. That's what
23 happens currently.

24 Now, there has been a move of many cities
25 to combine their city elections, which have

1 typically been sometimes separate, to the fall
2 cycle.

3 Tallahassee held a referendum -- I think
4 it's now been about four years ago. They put
5 their move to go on to the fall cycle. It
6 passed by 89 percent. So the City of
7 Tallahassee moved theirs on -- with Leon County
8 and the fall elections in the gubernatorial.

9 Several cities in Miami-Dade also just
10 moved theirs about three months ago.

11 This is a trend that's going on throughout
12 the state. We've even seen our local
13 municipalities at the beach to coincide exactly
14 with our primary and general dates.

15 Efficiency throughout government is
16 really -- has been a key point of why many
17 people have moved these, and also they've
18 realized -- the beaches realized -- they did
19 theirs -- their first election on the general
20 and then they did a runoff several weeks after
21 the general election in the fall, and the
22 drop off of voters -- they'd have a high turnout
23 in the general election and the 50 percent, and
24 then they'd have less than 5 percent. And they
25 said, there's -- how can we take a runoff and

1 only have 5 percent participating?

2 So many municipalities have moved now to
3 the primary and general to match the state.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Youngblood.

5 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: Hey, Jerry. Thanks for
6 coming.

7 MR. HOLLAND: You're welcome.

8 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: The savings of \$3 million,
9 is that because the budgeting from the national
10 and state, for the election process, will come
11 into the City to take care of the election
12 process? Was that put into that number or is
13 that still an additional savings on top of
14 that?

15 MR. HOLLAND: Well, we -- the county pays
16 for your fall elections as well as for your
17 spring elections. The only supplement money
18 that we get from a county government is -- when
19 there is a special election that involves State
20 candidates, we must first pay it and then the
21 State reimburses us for the State portion.

22 We pay, right now, for the gubernatorial
23 and presidential elections in Duval County, but
24 we also pay for the spring elections. The
25 savings is you're not having those 3,000 poll

1 workers in the 272 precincts and all the
2 advertising that we must do for public notice of
3 the spring elections. You're being able to put
4 those at the same time as the fall elections, so
5 you don't have a duplication of that cost.

6 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: Okay. So there would be
7 no state funding other than special elections
8 only?

9 MR. HOLLAND: That is consistent to what's
10 currently going on.

11 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: Okay. Very good.
12 Thank you.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Miller.

14 MS. MILLER: Through the Chair, thank you,
15 Supervisor Holland, for coming again.

16 Question. The \$3 million cost figure, is
17 that \$3 million net? And I guess another way to
18 ask the question is, what is the additional --
19 I'm assuming it's some marginal cost --
20 additional cost of moving -- of adding the
21 candidates to the November ballot?

22 I'm assuming there's some cost in that.
23 Maybe it's not as much since you're doing --
24 you're staging the election, you know, at one
25 time versus twice, but is there any -- is --

1 that \$3 million cost, is that a net savings or
2 is that -- the 3 million just gross?

3 MR. HOLLAND: It's as close to net and
4 gross, and probably the only variable that could
5 possibly change -- the size of our ballot -- the
6 size of the paper that we buy. The ballot can
7 be anywhere from 8-and-a-half by 11 to
8 8-and-a-half by 17. Okay? And that's what also
9 allows us to put more races on the front, is by
10 going to a 17-inch ballot.

11 The size of that paper could be the only
12 variable that changes. The number of poll
13 workers, the same in the two elections. You
14 know, those variables that we use in the two
15 you're duplicating. You're no longer doing the
16 advertisements.

17 That's the only variable I can think of
18 that really may change by putting it on, is that
19 we may change the size of the ballot from an
20 8-and-a-half by 11 to 8-and-a-half by 17.

21 MS. MILLER: And, through the Chair, as a
22 follow-up, if I may, the -- you mentioned the
23 constitutional officers or some of the -- were
24 elected in the fall; is that correct?

25 MR. HOLLAND: We have one constitutional

1 now in Duval County elected in the fall, and
2 that's the Clerk of the Court.

3 MS. MILLER: And the rest are --

4 MR. HOLLAND: The rest of the
5 constitutionals are elected in the spring
6 elections.

7 MS. MILLER: And why is the Clerk of the
8 Court elected in the fall?

9 MR. HOLLAND: You have to go back to the
10 founders of consolidation. That was their
11 decision to put the judicial system on in the
12 fall elections, and so the clerk was considered
13 part of the judicial system.

14 MS. MILLER: Okay. Thank you.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Eichner.

16 MS. EICHNER: Jerry, since you've been
17 supervisor, how many special elections have we
18 run in Duval County?

19 MR. HOLLAND: As of this point, I think
20 there were two. We ran the one for -- that
21 Representative McBurney won, and we ran the one
22 just now that John Thrasher won. Those are the
23 only two -- is there another one?

24 MR. WEBB: No.

25 MR. HOLLAND: Okay.

1 MR. WEBB: Jerry and I spent a lot of time
2 during those elections.

3 MR. HOLLAND: Since 2005, those are the two
4 that I -- that comes to mind.

5 MS. EICHNER: Okay. And then your race,
6 right? The one in 2005 --

7 MR. HOLLAND: That was before I came on.

8 MR. EICHNER: Okay. How much has been
9 budgeted for those three elections or how much
10 money have we spent on those special elections?

11 Because that -- I mean, that would be the
12 change. If we change the election cycle and
13 then have a special election, that would be
14 money that we've heard is unfunded, so how much
15 money have we spent in the last four years?

16 MR. HOLLAND: Okay. Good point.

17 Look at the current election schedule.
18 Those -- both of those specials were not able to
19 coincide with elections. Okay. So -- even our
20 current schedule didn't allow those to duplicate
21 on top of other elections.

22 In the McBurney race, I think our total
23 cost came up to about 250,000. Our total number
24 that we just submitted for the State for the
25 Senate race, District 8, was 495,000 for that --

1 for a special election.

2 MR. EICHNER: And is that both the -- the
3 first and the general?

4 MR. HOLLAND: That 495- was both the first
5 and the general is our total cost. And of that,
6 we also had some that the City will bear, which
7 is for the school board race, for those
8 precincts -- there was fifteen -- and the ten
9 that was in the City Council race will bear that
10 cost.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Korman.

12 MS. KORMAN: Maybe I didn't follow, but
13 I -- I appreciate the special elections, but we
14 can't control deaths, we can't control -- so, I
15 mean, that's going to happen regardless, isn't
16 it, the special election situations?

17 MR. HOLLAND: Most special elections -- and
18 look at the three that was just mentioned.

19 In my situation, the special election was
20 due to the illness of the Supervisor of
21 Elections. Obviously, not predictable. And the
22 governor removed and appointed an interim and
23 had a special election.

24 In the other House seat, that was an
25 appointment. That probably happens more often

1 than sometimes the illnesses throughout the
2 state, where, when a new governor comes in, they
3 will look at their House and Senate members that
4 they've served with sometimes and they will
5 appoint them to either judicial or other
6 positions, and they will open those. You
7 know -- and the death, obviously, of
8 Senator King.

9 They're very -- but even the State doesn't
10 budget for that. You would think that -- there
11 are special elections somewhere throughout the
12 state every year. The way the State does it is,
13 you submit, then in that next legislative
14 session they will take up for the items that
15 have been submitted and then appropriate, but
16 they do not have an appropriation budget every
17 year for special elections.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Thank you very
19 much, Supervisor. Appreciate it.

20 MR. HOLLAND: Thank you very much.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, commissioners.
22 Commissioner Korman.

23 MS. KORMAN: I have a question. You could
24 tell me I can't ask this, but since they're both
25 here -- and it's a topic for another time, so

1 tell me no if you want to.

2 I am curious about both of the councilmen's
3 opinions about the size of the City Council.
4 Should I wait and ask them?

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Only because it wasn't
6 noticed.

7 MS. KORMAN: Okay.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: We're having --
9 (Simultaneous speaking.)

10 MS. KORMAN: -- (inaudible) ask that
11 question. I understand.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: This was noticed just to
13 discuss a very narrow issue. And because of the
14 Sunshine Law considerations, we, unfortunately,
15 are constrained by that.

16 Commissioner Youngblood had a question, I
17 believe.

18 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: I had a very similar
19 question to Commissioner Korman's, to ask other
20 questions regarding constitutional officers and
21 how it affects the City Councilmen and so forth.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Probably fortunately for
23 these two councilmen, we are constrained from --

24 MR. WEBB: I'll leave and Richard could
25 take the podium.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Actually, having said that,
2 Vice President Webb, I know that you are under
3 some family considerations --

4 MR. WEBB: I am.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: -- and so if you do need to
6 leave, please do so. I appreciate your
7 participation to the extent you're able to.

8 MR. WEBB: Thank you very much.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Commissioners,
10 you've heard the testimony. I do think it's
11 appropriate for us to take a position on this
12 issue given the pendency of the vote on Tuesday
13 night, as Council President Clark pointed out.

14 Notwithstanding the intention to withdraw
15 the bill, it's entirely possible that other
16 parliamentary considerations could come into
17 play and there could be a vote taken on Council
18 Vice President Webb's bill as well.

19 So I, at this point, would like to throw it
20 open for discussion. I mean, I certainly have a
21 viewpoint, but I don't want to direct the
22 conversation.

23 Who would like to begin?

24 Commissioner Catlin.

25 MR. CATLIN: I'll point this at my

1 political guru sitting across the table from
2 me.

3 Would y'all -- and we heard from
4 President Clark that he doesn't think this would
5 affect a proposed staggered election system in
6 the future. Do you-all see that as any problem
7 if you move this forward to August, that this
8 would affect any kind of staggered system?

9 I mean, I guess, notwithstanding the
10 possibility that a couple of people may not run
11 for reelection, but do you-all see any problem
12 with moving this up involving staggered
13 elections in the future?

14 MS. EICHNER: No, I don't see an issue with
15 it. I think we have 14 of the 19 City Council
16 people who are -- will be incumbents in the next
17 election cycle, so -- but I do think this --
18 changing it one way or the other -- and I
19 won't -- I'm not going to take a position today,
20 although I feel like I have a position.

21 The thing that I am concerned with most is
22 how those special interests and how the power of
23 incumbency will play in the next election
24 cycle.

25 MR. CATLETT: Well, although I don't have

1 Jerry Holland's particular interest in having a
2 huge election turnout, I am interested in the
3 \$3 million. \$3 million, as someone said, is
4 \$3 million. And I am pretty much a fiscal
5 conservative, so if we can do something more
6 efficiently without penalty -- and I've asked
7 everybody is there any other penalty to this --
8 then I'm all about saving \$3 million.

9 On the other hand, I will say that if only
10 17 percent of the people care about City
11 elections, then having a bunch of people vote
12 that don't really care about it doesn't really
13 impress me that much, frankly, but the
14 \$3 million does impress me. And if we can save
15 \$3 million without other penalties, we certainly
16 ought to look at that.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Miller.

18 MS. MILLER: Through the Chair, I have -- I
19 have some -- I would like to hear from
20 Mayor Austin and from Ms. Eichner on -- and
21 expand on your perspective, Ms. Eichner, if
22 you're comfortable with that because you do this
23 for a living, so I -- I'd like to know more
24 about your perspective in that regard, and also
25 from Mayor Austin if he's still with us.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: He'll be back.

2 MS. MILLER: Okay. But I did have a --
3 wanted to clarify as to the cost. As I
4 understand the bills and the two bills that are
5 before council, Councilmember Webb's bill would
6 move the election to the fall, but it would
7 still be a local election? It would not be
8 associated with any other cycle; is that
9 correct?

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

11 MS. MILLER: So the \$3 million hit would
12 still be there; is that correct?

13 MR. WEBB: Correct.

14 MS. MILLER: So you'd still have -- you'd
15 just -- would move it to the fall, but it
16 would -- but we'd still incur that cost, whereas
17 if it's moved to the -- if we go with the -- or
18 if we support moving it up to the gubernatorial,
19 presidential cycle, then we would apparently
20 save \$3 million?

21 I just want to clarify that.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: That's the testimony we've
23 heard today.

24 MS. MILLER: So if the driving force or if
25 one of the main arguments in support of moving

1 the election cycle is cost savings, then the
2 real -- then the only real option would be
3 moving it to the presidential or gubernatorial
4 cycle? If that's the primary argument.

5 THE CHAIRMAN: I think that's a fair
6 summation, yes.

7 MS. MILLER: Okay. I just want to clarify
8 that.

9 So if Ms. Eichner is familiar with -- or is
10 comfortable with providing her perspective or
11 expanding on her perspective as to why we might
12 want to keep local elections, I think it's
13 important to hear because I think some of the
14 candidates -- the local candidates have a
15 particular perspective, and maybe we don't --
16 we're not hearing from them today, but I
17 certainly have heard from many City Council
18 members about why there's an interest in
19 focusing on local.

20 And then, Mayor Austin, if -- I don't know
21 if you have an opinion on this of -- you know,
22 for or con, better or worse, but in your
23 experience as mayor, would it have been better
24 for you? Do you think it would have been an
25 easier transition in terms of preparing for the

1 budget, although you -- you had experience with
2 local government and the City before.

3 Do you think -- how would that impact a
4 mayor and a mayor's performance and their
5 transition into government, if at all, by moving
6 the cycle?

7 MR. AUSTIN: There isn't any question that
8 the transition from -- to taking -- taking over
9 the mayor's office from the outside is
10 cumbersome because of the budget, and one of the
11 main reasons is the budgetary process. You
12 don't have time -- you have to do work on the
13 budget before you take office, which for a lot
14 of people is impractical -- it's impractical for
15 anybody because you don't have the staff, you
16 don't have the resources, the access that you
17 need to prepare the budget.

18 I don't know -- I don't think -- don't know
19 whether you can change a budget cycle. I don't
20 know that that's practical or not, but there
21 isn't really any question in my mind -- I think
22 the reasons that the founding fathers, so to
23 speak, wanted it separate was so that the people
24 could be better informed about the municipal
25 candidates and municipal issues.

1 I think when they split this -- the federal
2 and the state elections, they reduced that
3 importance of that some.

4 On the overall picture of the thing, I
5 think the low turnout and all of the other
6 things that are involved, that we would be well
7 served to make the change that's being
8 recommended. That's my personal --

9 I think the reasons that they -- they put
10 it in on a separate date have been ameliorated.
11 They're not as significant as they once were and
12 the circumstances of budgets and budget dates
13 and submission of budgets is awkward and almost
14 intolerable, and I would -- if it comes up, I
15 will vote to make the change.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: To which date?

17 MR. AUSTIN: Oh, that -- you're asking
18 which date?

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Change to May -- to November
20 of '10, to the presidential -- to the
21 gubernatorial cycle?

22 MR. AUSTIN: I would go to -- you know, I
23 haven't studied those dates in particular, but I
24 would instinctively say, yes, that I would put
25 it on the state level -- on the state elections

1 instead of the national elections.

2 I don't really have a real strong political
3 science reason for that. It just seems more
4 logical to me.

5 MS. EICHNER: Commissioner Miller, are you
6 asking me for my opinion as well?

7 MS. MILLER: I am, if you're willing to
8 share.

9 MS. EICHNER: I don't disagree that a
10 \$3 million savings is certainly worth it. If --
11 you know, if I could save \$3 million, I would
12 save \$3 million.

13 I think we could all find a way to save
14 \$3 million. I think what we give up is more
15 important than how we save money. And we just
16 went through that cycle on council, looking for
17 things to give up. We can find \$40 million --
18 or \$40,000 not to fund a Veterans Day parade or
19 we can find \$40,000. We obviously didn't want
20 to give up a sponsorship of that parade, and I
21 don't disagree with that. I think that's good
22 money to be spent, but I think \$3 million on
23 keeping our local elections separate is worth
24 the money.

25 We just had a special interest group spend

1 \$2-and-a-half million in 25 precincts in our
2 county on television and in direct mail, and so
3 for a candidate who's going to run in a
4 district, citywide election and be competitive
5 in that with 60,000 bucks in the bank is not
6 feasible.

7 I mean, the power of incumbency becomes
8 that much more important when you're putting
9 that many people on the ballot, regardless of
10 whether you're on the front or the back of it,
11 but I may -- I may think that I like the idea of
12 putting it on as a ballot initiative. We have
13 plenty of those right now going around, one
14 including how we draw district lines. So I'd be
15 more interested to talk about that a little bit,
16 but I think that the \$3 million we spend gives
17 everyone a little bit more time.

18 I mean, the reason that we have low-turnout
19 elections is because nobody's really interested
20 in showing up at the polls, so the people
21 that -- I mean, it's sad to say that, but that's
22 the truth.

23 And we spend money in advertising and we
24 mail every single voter a sample ballot. Jerry
25 does a great job of educating people on who the

1 candidates are. They get to -- free advertising
2 through the supervisor to every single voter in
3 the district, and we still have low-turnout
4 elections.

5 I would say that it's still worth keeping
6 them separate because -- you know, I'm -- I am
7 going to get hired by anybody that's on the
8 ballot. You know, I'm going to find a candidate
9 in a race and work for them. That's -- I think
10 these days you could watch a (inaudible) of
11 Fox News and buy a \$13 box of business cards and
12 be a political consultant.

13 Everybody's got an opinion about how to do
14 it, but I believe that separate elections are
15 what we intended to have when we went through
16 consolidation, you know -- and staggered terms,
17 all those things, I think it's all just the
18 effect of it, but I really do --

19 My biggest concern is, what do we give up
20 by changing it? There is -- you know, I would
21 agree that there's a reason to change it based
22 on budget. You know, November would be a better
23 time frame for me anyway, me personally.

24 But in the last -- since almost 1999,
25 there's been one year that I've not worked in an

1 election cycle somewhere in Northeast Florida,
2 so there is an election every year, regardless
3 of how -- you know, whether you want to
4 consolidate them or not. And we're going to
5 spend money on them, but I believe having them
6 separate is a great thing to do, so . . .

7 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Korman.

8 MS. KORMAN: I respect the fact that
9 Commissioner Eichner -- this is her livelihood
10 and her job, and so, of course, she has a strong
11 opinion about this.

12 I think -- my personal concern is -- maybe
13 I'm an internal optimist -- that this past
14 election cycle, with the presidential cycle --
15 Mr. Holland -- was a big number. We had a lot
16 of voter turnout. And I think by consolidating
17 the elections together, with the presidential,
18 we'll continue to have higher voter turnout and
19 hopefully engage people. And this is about the
20 citizens of our community, not just the
21 political officials in the office.

22 So I think, looking at the bigger picture
23 and being the eternal optimist and trying to be,
24 by moving and consolidating the elections
25 together, you will continue to have higher

1 turnout because people pay more attention to the
2 presidential elections, send them to the state,
3 and hopefully they'll start paying attention
4 more to the local ones with the mailers and
5 everything else, so --

6 MR. EICHNER: Just as a clarification.

7 We're not -- the state -- federal elections
8 and state elections are on off-election cycles,
9 so these would not be --

10 MS. KORMAN: Well, I thought they said
11 that -- oh, the gubernatorial -- I'm sorry, the
12 state ones. I apologize. The state ones.

13 But even -- people are more interested in
14 their governor's race than they are locally, so
15 I think we'll have -- and I apologize for saying
16 presidential, but I think we'll have a better
17 turnout. And that's what we want to do, go in
18 and get as many people out as we can, and I
19 think --

20 Because I think it's sad when we elect
21 local people, local officials, off of a very
22 small group because of a religious organization
23 or a special interest or anything else, so I
24 think that it's important to get as many people
25 as a turnout as we can. I think this is the

1 way --

2 Plus, saving \$3 million right now is a lot
3 of money, and it's better than taking it away
4 from a social service or something else, and I'm
5 more than happy if this is what -- you know, the
6 hit we have to take. I support that.

7 MS. MILLER: And I would agree.

8 I mean, my -- my argument for that is, in
9 the savings -- in the \$3 million savings -- the
10 more people you put on the ballot and the
11 further down the ballot you are, the less votes
12 you're going to get, so -- I mean, it's
13 historically been that way.

14 The number of people that voted in 2003 for
15 the mayor's race was not the exact same number
16 of people that voted for the sheriff, although
17 the exact same people went to the polls and the
18 exact same number of people could have voted for
19 both, and there is -- the mayor is on top and I
20 think the sheriff is right below him or a couple
21 of spaces below.

22 So the further down the ballot you get, the
23 less votes you're going to get, so the -- you
24 know, we could talk all day about turnout. It
25 depends on who's running, who's on the ballot,

1 and how excited the voters get about the
2 candidate on there.

3 And why people vote for somebody is an
4 anomaly no one's yet to figure out. I wish I
5 could, but I just -- I still feel like we're
6 giving up a lot and we're saving \$3 million
7 every four years.

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Supervisor Holland.

9 MR. HOLLAND: (Inaudible.)

10 THE CHAIRMAN: That's okay.

11 I'm interested in your thoughts on
12 Commissioner Eichner's statement that the
13 further down the ballot you are the less votes
14 you get, but I need you to come to the podium.

15 MR. HOLLAND: Sure.

16 (Mr. Clark exits the proceedings.)

17 (Mr. Holland approaches the podium.)

18 MR. HOLLAND: You've got to examine
19 everything from the standpoint of its
20 variables. Is it the distance from the ballot
21 or is it in relationship to what you may
22 consider the voter to be the most important?

23 Obviously, the president is first. Would
24 you say the president was the most important, or
25 would you say the school board, which was

1 further down on the ballot? Is the relationship
2 of voting more for the president because he was
3 first or was it because the school board was
4 further on the ballot?

5 I don't think today -- unless I could do
6 more statistical analyses and talk to voters, I
7 would not say that because they were first on
8 the ballot.

9 Now, that goes back to the same thing, if
10 your name is first within the list, do you get
11 more votes? And those kind of things. Those
12 are things we always talk about.

13 There is a drop-off as you go down, but
14 there is a drop-off also of the importance of
15 the races. But, again, as we talked before, the
16 more races the more people participate. So if a
17 person is not interested further down, they just
18 don't vote, but more do participate in the
19 entire process.

20 So the answer to your question is, does it
21 make a difference on the ballot where you're at
22 I don't think can be defined as quickly as to
23 say what race is it on the ballot.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: So, in other words,
25 statistically, you might get a lower percentage

1 of the votes, but in absolute votes, you could
2 get more -- a higher number of votes, but
3 statistically it could look like a lower
4 participation rate because you just have more
5 people voting?

6 MR. HOLLAND: That's what we refer to as
7 undervotes. Undervotes is when someone does not
8 vote for anyone in that race.

9 Typically, referendums are the last thing
10 on the ballot. Referendums are last on the
11 ballot, but because of the wording of them and
12 people get confused with them or whatever
13 reason, there is more undervotes on referendums
14 than there are on the candidates.

15 Those, again, are not issues because they
16 were last on the ballot, but they may be issues
17 on the importance of the referendum or are they
18 confusing and those kind of issues. So I don't
19 think you can put the order as the primary
20 reason why someone drops off.

21 It's often characterized as ballot
22 fatigue. I say that's a myth also because,
23 again, the majority of people come in with their
24 ballot already filled out, so they didn't have
25 fatigue in transferring their answers from one

1 ballot to the other.

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Right.

3 But it would also be the case that, if you
4 bring more people to the polls --

5 MR. HOLLAND: You're going to get more
6 participation in the race, the more races that
7 are on a ballot. And, therefore, more people
8 will study all the candidates because they're
9 important to all of the races they go to.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Right. Okay.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. CATLETT: Can I ask another question
13 while he's up there?

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Absolutely.

15 MR. CATLETT: Is there any influence on how
16 people are feeling about the governor's race?

17 Let's say they're all on the same ballot
18 and let's just say that they're angry about
19 government in general. I would say that's
20 characterized right now by a lot of people,
21 mostly because of the economy.

22 Does that have an effect on the City
23 Council if they're mad about the governor or
24 what he's doing, if your City Council is on the
25 same race?

1 MR. HOLLAND: From the standpoint -- and it
2 goes back to often people say that there is a
3 push to throw them all out. That's the
4 expression, but the reality is -- is back to
5 incumbents in any race has a better chance of
6 being a known variable than an unknown
7 variable. So, therefore, voters are more likely
8 to go with the known variable.

9 So to answer your question, I mean, from
10 the standpoint -- if you combine the two, do you
11 associate all of them? I would say from the
12 standpoint -- because if you're looking at the
13 gubernatorial, you're actually putting your
14 first group of races in on primary ballots.

15 So not necessarily would someone be upset
16 with that particular -- their party. They're
17 getting their party ballots, plus the local
18 elections. So they're not going to be quick to
19 say, well, I'm throwing them out because of this
20 party, you're voting this party kind of
21 situation.

22 So I would not say there would be an
23 association, in the same way sometimes,
24 obviously, one member -- one party will be
25 elected to the executive branch, and then the

1 legislative branch will gain control in another
2 party. They do not always commonly associate
3 both of them and vote party line, but that's one
4 of the myths out there, that if you put them
5 together, then someone will vote party line all
6 the way down. But it's evident, and even in
7 this last election, you know, that is not the
8 situation.

9 And Duval County has an anomaly of itself.
10 It votes different than the state, as it did on
11 Amendment 1, as it did on the CFO, as it did on
12 several things. You know, it votes separately.
13 We have some very independent voters.

14 MR. CATLETT: Thank you very much.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Oliveras, you
16 had a question or a comment.

17 MR. OLIVERAS: I'm going to withdraw it.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Commissioner Catlin.

19 MR. CATLIN: I hate to keep on asking my
20 across-the-table neighbors. This is on a
21 business side.

22 Are TV spots this time of the year, during
23 election cycles, are they -- is it like supply
24 and demand? Are they more expensive than the
25 rest of the time?

1 And then I'll ask you my second question
2 because I would hate to -- if they are more
3 expensive, you're, in essence, punishing your
4 people running for mayor who have to raise more
5 money, so I'll let you answer that.

6 MS. EICHNER: No. Actually, the people in
7 that scenario that you're punishing is the
8 television station. And here's sort of how this
9 whole thing works:

10 They have what they call a window. That
11 window typically would start just right around
12 qualifying. They are required to offer the
13 lowest unit rate. And if, you know, you were a
14 candidate and, you know, you got a gubernatorial
15 candidate, you both are offered the same amount
16 of -- same amount.

17 So if you're able to buy news, everybody
18 else on the ballot has to be offered the equal
19 time for that same thing. They can't sell you
20 something that another candidate can't get.

21 And so what really ends up happening is the
22 television station then blows out all their
23 commercial advertisers because they have to
24 allow certain numbers. And so what has happened
25 with some radio stations locally is they have

1 only offered advertising to federal candidates.
2 And it's happened a number of times with a
3 couple of the companies here, where a local
4 City Councilman or a local mayor or a local
5 sheriff isn't offered to buy time on those radio
6 stations because there's federal candidates on
7 the ballot.

8 So what could -- what could happen -- and,
9 I mean, I don't think any of us can predict what
10 would happen -- was that -- you know, if you
11 spend \$2-and-a-half million in this market on
12 television, you can almost own a TV station.

13 And so the corporate private companies
14 would be the ones that would lose out as well as
15 the TV station because their ad revenue is going
16 to go down because they have to offer it to you
17 at their lowest unit rate, which is across the
18 board what everybody does.

19 So, you know, I don't -- I don't -- I see
20 the issue being more how badly or how adversely
21 this would affect our local companies that are
22 trying to earn business through advertising here
23 locally. That's the biggest thing that I think
24 affects it.

25 MR. CATLETT: And then there's -- and she

1 explained that very clearly. But in addition to
2 that, there's jockeying for position. There are
3 only so many spots in a day, although you'd
4 think they were unlimited from what we see in
5 elections. But there are only so many spots and
6 there are different times, there are different
7 viewers watching television more in one group at
8 this time slot than this time slot. It's been
9 my experience that the firstest with the mostest
10 gets the best spots, and that is a tremendous
11 advantage.

12 The same thing with billboards. There are
13 only so many billboards. And if you have the
14 money to go out and get those billboards the
15 first day you're legally capable of doing that,
16 why, you're going to control where the best
17 billboard sites are through the election.

18 The same thing with signage. You know, if
19 you have a guy that owns a lot of retail centers
20 and you go talk to him first and he says yes,
21 then that puts everybody else at a competitive
22 disadvantage.

23 So it's like that with everything. You
24 know, the first guy that raises the most money
25 on a given race, the better it is for him.

1 Now, this -- particularly on countywide
2 races, district races, this may not have that
3 kind of effect because district guys usually
4 don't have the cash to buy a lot of
5 advertising. So they've got to go out there and
6 knock on doors, they've got to get their
7 volunteer coffees going, their CPAC influence.

8 Am I right here, Jessica?

9 MS. DEAL: Uh-huh.

10 MR. CATLETT: And they have a whole
11 different situation because they can't afford a
12 lot of air time, but you can be competing
13 with -- if you're -- if running at the same time
14 as the governor's race, you're competing for the
15 best air time, along with everybody else that's
16 competing to get the best slots for air time.

17 Am I right about that, Ms. Eichner?

18 MS. EICHNER: Yeah. I would just -- I
19 would just add one thing. The time slots that
20 he's talking about are in 15-minute increments.
21 And they put a value on those based on the
22 number of people that are watching, and those
23 are called gross rating points.

24 And so depending on what those numbers
25 are -- you know, if I am -- you know, if I'm

1 Firehouse Subs and I spent \$600 to be in the
2 news for 30 seconds and somebody comes in who's
3 a candidate and I've got to get bumped out, they
4 could pay \$300 because they do it different --
5 you know, they get lowest unit rate. I don't.
6 I have to pay commercial.

7 And they do it a couple of different ways.
8 I mean, there's preemptible -- there's
9 nonpreemptible, which is a fixed cost. That's
10 the most expensive. I could be paying \$600, the
11 same as a commercial private company.

12 Or there's preemptible with notice, and
13 it's a certain amount of time where the TV
14 station has to give you notice that says, hey,
15 you paid me \$300, but it -- you know, the
16 gubernatorial candidate is willing to pay 600,
17 so are you willing to pay 600 for this same
18 spot? If not, you're getting bumped out. Your
19 governor spot is going to run. And then you've
20 got to spend that -- either take it back and
21 figure out how to spend it in your campaign or
22 find more spots on that TV station that are
23 available.

24 So it really becomes -- you're competing
25 with the gubernatorial and all the state people

1 who are running TV like crazy and
2 multimillion-dollar campaigns or you're pulling
3 that money back in and you're trying to figure
4 out, do I put that in canvassing neighborhoods?
5 You know, do I -- do I buy more signs? Do I
6 spend it in direct mail? How do I do that?
7 What's the best use of that dollar, which is
8 what you're trying to figure out in a campaign
9 anyway.

10 But those -- the competitive nature of
11 advertising and campaigns is mind-blowing if
12 you -- you know, if you watch it, but I still
13 say there's more to moving an election and
14 spending that 3 million bucks than just, you
15 know, buying up advertising dollars. We're
16 giving up a lot.

17 We gave up a lot in the budget cycle for
18 not increasing the millage. We would give up a
19 lot by not spending that 3 million bucks. It is
20 as important as a Veterans Day parade is to our
21 military community. We give up the opportunity
22 to decide who our local leaders are when we're
23 not bogged down with who our state leaders are
24 at the same time.

25 And it doesn't make or break me at all, you

1 know. I -- I can work for 10 candidates or I
2 can work for 20. That's my decision on how I
3 staff an office, if I even decide to run a
4 campaign.

5 I don't have to work for anybody, but my
6 preference for the electorate is -- they should
7 be -- we should be able to decide who our local
8 leaders are separately from who we're deciding
9 who our state leaders are because -- you know,
10 nobody is paying attention, you know. I mean,
11 we tell -- we tell candidates, if you send a
12 direct mail piece, you literally have seven
13 seconds from the time that they pick that mail
14 up out of the mailbox before your piece of mail
15 goes in the trash can.

16 So, I mean, we're fighting for seconds.
17 We're fighting for yard signs in a yard. We
18 shouldn't be fighting for advertising and we
19 shouldn't be trying to compete with all the
20 people who are going to raise millions of
21 dollars to run statewide campaigns.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioners, Vice
23 President Webb needs to leave but wants to make
24 a comment before he goes.

25 MS. MILLER: And may I ask a question

1 before Ms. Sidman leaves about the bills?

2 THE CHAIRMAN: Sure. She can stay.

3 Vice President Webb.

4 MR. WEBB: Sure. Thank you very much,
5 Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it. And I do have
6 to leave. I've got a -- had a death in the
7 family, so I've got to get -- tend to some
8 personal matters.

9 But I will say what's clear -- and, again,
10 I guess I'm still under oath. This relates to
11 my earlier comments, that what I'm hearing is
12 that this is about budgeting. Okay. And that's
13 great. And I said that at the outset. That's
14 why, you know, conceptually, I know where
15 Mr. Holland is coming from and Council President
16 Clark, and that's wonderful.

17 But I will say this: For every action
18 there's an equal and opposition reaction.
19 Okay? You move something, something is going to
20 change. You're going to -- again. So I would
21 caution, just, you know -- obviously, this body
22 is very deliberate in its proceedings, but I
23 guess if we're talking about budgetary issues,
24 then we should be looking at budgetary issues
25 overall. Okay?

1 I mean, I just asked Jerry before, you
2 know, about -- if we're really looking to cut
3 money and save money, all right. Well, let's --
4 how do we do that and perhaps maintain this
5 duality, this separation given the risk -- the
6 potential risk that may -- that we run if we
7 were to consolidate?

8 For example -- and this is something near
9 and dear to my heart -- early voting. I mean, I
10 understand -- I was just asking Jerry about
11 that. You know, it is state mandated, but what
12 expense -- what is actually mandated? What are
13 we required to do as a county, as a
14 municipality?

15 I'll tell you, when I ran for election,
16 early voting was both a burden and a blessing.
17 I mean, I truly believe I won my race because of
18 early voting because I got some -- I've come
19 full circle, but I got some negative press in
20 the Times-Union and that just fired me up. And
21 I stood outside the early voting site in
22 Mandarin for two weeks, every day for 12 hours a
23 day, and I didn't move. But, I mean, it was one
24 heck of a sacrifice.

25 But I will say this: I mean, I wonder what

1 those people who vote early -- I mean, I wonder
2 what the net additional increase in voter
3 participation results from early voting. You
4 know, is it 14 percent? Is it 18 percent? How
5 many people are voting out there? And do we
6 just make it more convenient for those same
7 people to vote?

8 I guess -- and I'm not knocking early
9 voting, but I will say that, if we're looking at
10 cost savings, if we're looking at budgeting
11 issues, then let's look at everything. Let's
12 just not -- let's not throw the baby out with
13 the bath water.

14 So I apologize. I just wanted to make that
15 comment.

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Vice President.
17 Our condolences to you.

18 MR. WEBB: Oh, thank you very much. I
19 appreciate that.

20 MS. EICHNER: Happy belated birthday too.

21 MR. WEBB: Oh, yeah. Tuesday was my
22 birthday, by the way, so -- it's been a rough
23 week.

24 MR. WEBB: Ali, did you have a question?

25 MS. KORMAN: Oh, no.

1 MR. WEBB: Oh, I'm sorry.

2 Thank you very much.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Sure. Thank you.

4 I don't see Ms. Sidman. Is she gone?

5 (Mr. Webb exits the proceedings.)

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioners --

7 MS. KORMAN: She's right there

8 (indicating).

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Ms. Sidman, Commissioner
10 Miller has a question for you about the pending
11 legislation.

12 MS. MILLER: Through the Chair, if there
13 are others in the queue before me, it can wait,
14 assuming Ms. Sidman can stay.

15 MS. SIDMAN: I'm sorry. I just had to take
16 a call. I'm happy to answer.

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Go ahead. Just go ahead.

18 MS. MILLER: Okay. I apologize to my
19 fellow commissioners if I've jumped up, but I do
20 have a question. It's more of a reality check.

21 If the -- with the bills pending before
22 City Council now that the Council may vote on on
23 Tuesday, the bill I believe -- is it Councilman
24 Redman's bill that Council President Clark
25 supports that would move the election -- I want

1 to be clear -- the 2011 May election -- March,
2 May election to 2010, fall of 2010. The primary
3 would be in September and then a runoff in
4 November or -- if the primary in --

5 MS. EICHNER: August.

6 MS. MILLER: August and November.

7 Okay. And so is it in the form of a
8 J bill? Does the legislature have to act on --
9 is the bill in the form of a J bill?

10 MS. SIDMAN: Yes. Both the Redman bill and
11 Webb's bill are in the form of the J bill, and
12 what's in front of City Council right now is a
13 resolution that states whether the City Council
14 supports or opposes it.

15 As you heard, was mentioned earlier, on
16 Redman's bill, there was a Rules amendment to
17 strike support and insert oppose J-1. That's
18 the one to move it back to the gubernatorial
19 cycle.

20 On Webb's bill, as you heard him say, he
21 felt that that was coming, so he moved to
22 withdraw his local legislation. The J bill is a
23 state bill. There's not within the bosom of the
24 council. That's state legislation.

25 So the effect of this, if the J bill

1 doesn't get withdrawn by the state legislature,
2 is that this bill would go forward at the state
3 level with absolutely no resolution for or
4 against J-2. That's the function of withdrawing
5 a bill that states the opinion of the City
6 Council.

7 So I don't know what's going to happen on
8 Tuesday, but that's where we are now.

9 MS. MILLER: And then it goes to the Duval
10 Delegation to decide if they're going to bring
11 it forward?

12 MS. SIDMAN: Correct.

13 MS. MILLER: They vote on it. And then it
14 goes --

15 MS. SIDMAN: In January.

16 MS. MILLER: In January.

17 And I'm just trying to get the timing right
18 because I think we all need to be aware of
19 what -- the impact of the recommendation.

20 So the -- if we were to vote to support
21 moving it, essentially that would take it to the
22 legislature. The legislature would have to
23 act. The end of the session is May. The
24 governor has to sign bills by the end of -- or
25 the beginning of July, July 1st.

1 So what you're talking about is really the
2 candidates and not really knowing if there's
3 going to be an election until July 1st at the
4 latest. It could possibly be earlier if the
5 governor -- once he receives the bills in May,
6 there's about a 30 or 60 -- a 30 or 45-day time
7 period when he can receive the bills and sign
8 them.

9 So up until that point -- and please
10 correct me if I'm wrong -- you've got July until
11 August to run a campaign for mayor, for City
12 Council, for -- I mean, theoretically, you'd be
13 running beforehand and you just would run -- but
14 I'm just trying to understand what it would do
15 to the election cycle for the various offices
16 that would be affected.

17 Is that time frame correct?

18 MS. SIDMAN: And I can tell you that the
19 January time frame for the Duval Delegation is
20 correct, and that, yes, it would have to go --
21 in order to do the J bill to change the charter,
22 it would have to go through the legislature and
23 be signed by the governor.

24 I don't know exactly when the bills go to
25 the governor, if they hold them till the end, or

1 if it gets through early, if the governor can go
2 ahead and sign that. I don't know that.

3 But as far as the time frame for the
4 election, I mean, maybe Jerry can talk about the
5 condensing of that. I don't have that
6 information.

7 MS. KORMAN: The governor -- I'm pleased to
8 work there. The governor basically would either
9 take a bill or -- it depends. He may hold it,
10 but we don't have control.

11 MS. MILLER: Right, there's no control.

12 But then another option would be, as
13 mentioned, although it's not before a bill,
14 would be to put it on as a referendum in the
15 next cycle, and that would be another option, I
16 guess.

17 MS. SIDMAN: (Nods head.)

18 MS. MILLER: Okay. I just wanted to get
19 that time frame.

20 Is that time frame correct?

21 MR. HOLLAND: That's correct.

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms. Sidman.
23 Commissioner Korman.

24 MS. KORMAN: A couple of things.

25 The first thing, I guess towards

1 Commissioner Miller, is -- my concern is -- and
2 I respect and I hear your concern and that's a
3 very valid concern. I don't want to be
4 shortsighted because we're just focusing on one
5 election cycle and we're trying to make a change
6 for the future, you know.

7 And then the second -- my second concern
8 is -- this is not a budget issue. We are not
9 here to discuss budget issues in general and
10 that's up to the City Council. I think that the
11 \$3 million, yes, is a point. But I think when
12 Councilman Webb was saying he (inaudible) the
13 budget, I know personally I'm not looking at
14 trying to go through the budget and say what
15 they should or shouldn't cut out.

16 And then my last point is, on the flipside
17 for Commissioner Eichner and Commissioner
18 Catlett, we've seen many local races and some
19 not local races lately in the past few election
20 cycles where money hasn't won a race. It's been
21 grass-roots.

22 So, with that being said, I'm not as
23 concerned about the advertising and the direct
24 mail as I am, once again, about the citizens and
25 what is going to help the citizens go out and

1 vote and make an educated vote, hopefully. So I
2 think that's the big picture we need to
3 concentrate on.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Oliveras.

5 MR. OLIVERAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 I just -- I was going to ask this earlier
7 of Mr. Holland, but I -- the way things have
8 been presented today -- I had a concern earlier
9 that local candidates in local elections may get
10 lost in the shuffle. I don't think I've heard
11 anything that's changed my view of that, you
12 know, and I've -- I'm sure we've all been in
13 there, in the ballot booth, and we've marked
14 these lengthy ballots, and I just --

15 I just don't see when you're -- you're that
16 candidate at the bottom of the ballot and your
17 name begins with Y that you're going to get the
18 same fair shake as the candidate whose last name
19 begins with A, in Mayor Austin's case. I
20 just --

21 You know, I've been involved in political
22 activity at the union level for many years, and,
23 you know, it's -- you don't get empirical data
24 on this. You ask, you inquire. It feels like
25 something that's a little nebulous, but the gut

1 instinct is that if you're at the bottom of the
2 ballot, you have -- you're in an adverse
3 condition.

4 Names are placed on the ballot
5 alphabetically. You have that last name that
6 begins with Y at the bottom of the ballot,
7 you're not going to get as many votes. It's
8 just how it is. And I just -- I'm just
9 concerned that if we put these local elections
10 in with everybody else on a long ballot, that
11 the local candidates aren't going to have the
12 same fair shake.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Deal.

14 MS. DEAL: I just -- I do support moving
15 the elections to the gubernatorial -- moving
16 them back to the gubernatorial races. I believe
17 it streamlines government. I think it
18 streamlines government from the aspect that it
19 does save taxpayer dollars. It also allows
20 those people that are going into office, who are
21 making these huge decisions on behalf of the
22 constituents that voted them in, it gives them
23 more time to become knowledgeable as to what
24 these issues are, how the process works, and so
25 on.

1 I do think it also -- and I don't know -- I
2 don't think it shuts out the local guys. I
3 just -- and gals. I don't believe it does
4 that. I think it obligates candidates to run --
5 to be in touch more directly with the people who
6 are going to be voting for them to make
7 themselves known as to who they are, what issues
8 they believe are current for those people who
9 live within their district, and I do believe
10 that it obligates them to get out in front of
11 the constituents and make their message known.

12 I also do believe that it also minimizes
13 the special interest groups from impacting
14 particular elections, various elections,
15 whatever it may be. And so I do like the idea
16 of that, but I think the things that I stated
17 before that are probably more important as to
18 how I'm viewing this particular issue.

19 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Austin.

20 MR. AUSTIN: Can I ask a question of
21 Mr. Holland --

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Absolutely.

23 MR. AUSTIN: -- the Supervisor of
24 Elections?

25 MR. HOLLAND: Yes, sir.

1 MR. AUSTIN: What percentage of the voting
2 population, registered voters, voted -- voted in
3 the last couple of elections for the state
4 officers and what percentage voted for just the
5 municipal elections?

6 MR. HOLLAND: All right.

7 On the local elections -- and this is taken
8 from the most recent to the past. In the last
9 general unitary election, overall was
10 9.08 percent. For the first election, it was
11 19.13 percent.

12 In the 2003, in the general election, the
13 second one, it's 49 percent. In the first
14 election, it was 40 percent.

15 In 1999, it was 15.7 percent, in the
16 general. In the first election, it was 22.7.

17 In 1995, in the general, it was
18 30 percent. In the first election, it was
19 50 percent.

20 What you also see is a pattern of -- every
21 eight years of it dipping as you get a mayor
22 who's an incumbent, and that will dip also
23 because typically either won't be opposed or
24 will be opposed lightly.

25 MR. AUSTIN: Thank you.

1 MR. HOLLAND: I just want to --

2 MR. AUSTIN: Go ahead.

3 MR. HOLLAND: Oh, let me -- you also asked
4 on the state elections.

5 MR. AUSTIN: Right.

6 MR. HOLLAND: I can give you that number
7 also.

8 MR. AUSTIN: Right.

9 MR. HOLLAND: On the state elections, in
10 the general, in 2006, it was 41.75 percent. On
11 the primary, 18 percent.

12 On the general, in 2002, 54 percent. On
13 the first primary in 2002, 28 percent.

14 In the general in 1998, 47 percent. And
15 that was actually the last one before we went to
16 a first and second primary, so you really got to
17 look at one primary versus general.

18 It was an average, again, of those as
19 50.6 percent.

20 MR. AUSTIN: Can you put them side by
21 side?

22 MR. HOLLAND: Sure.

23 Is it easier starting early, going late, or
24 which way?

25 MR. AUSTIN: Let's take the last three,

1 say.

2 MR. HOLLAND: The last three. Let's
3 compare -- and I'm going to go ahead and call it
4 first prim- -- I'm going to take the first
5 election first and then the general election.

6 In 2007, the first election was
7 19.13 percent.

8 MR. AUSTIN: For local?

9 MR. HOLLAND: For local, 2007. The
10 general, the second election, was 9.06 percent.
11 In the first primary of the gubernatorial, it
12 was 18.2 percent. In the general, it was
13 41.75 percent.

14 2003, the first election was 40.6 percent.
15 The general election was 49.5 percent.

16 In the 2002, the first election, the
17 primary was 28.84 percent. The general was
18 54 percent.

19 We'll go back one more. 1999, the first
20 election, 22.7 percent. The second election,
21 15.7 percent.

22 We'll go back one more on the state. On
23 the state, though, you start going into first
24 and second primaries. There's a drop-off. I
25 don't know if you want those numbers, but

1 obviously -- and the number of candidates gets
2 very limited. The first primary, 9 percent.
3 The second primary, 1.2 percent. The general,
4 47 percent.

5 So really I think you want to look at
6 primaries and generals, not first and second.
7 That's why both the city did away with them and
8 also the state.

9 Does that help any?

10 MR. AUSTIN: Yes. Thank you.

11 MR. HOLLAND: Okay.

12 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Miller.

13 MS. MILLER: Through the Chair -- and
14 directed to Supervisor Holland.

15 I had a question. If the -- if the City
16 Council votes in favor of J-2 and if it moves to
17 the Duval Delegation, the Florida Legislature
18 and the governor, and we then have our -- the
19 upcoming elections are going to be moved to the
20 August-November cycle, how does that impact --
21 qualify -- I mean, can your office handle that?

22 I mean, it seems like there's going to be a
23 compressed time frame. Have you given any
24 thought to the qualifying period, getting
25 candidates on the ballot, how all that would

1 work in a 60-day time frame?

2 MR. HOLLAND: Right. We coincide
3 qualifications at the same time, but remember
4 also, our office does not qualify state
5 candidates, so it does not add a burden to us
6 when you move local on to state because the
7 state candidates qualify in Tallahassee.

8 MS. MILLER: Right. I'm just talking about
9 for the local -- because we would be talking
10 about local candidates.

11 MR. HOLLAND: Correct. The local
12 candidates --

13 MS. MILLER: So how would that impact -- I
14 mean, in that time frame?

15 MR. HOLLAND: Again, from the time frame --
16 as far as them filing, they already have filed
17 now, the candidates have. They will coincide at
18 the same qualifying as the other local
19 candidates like the school board, soil, water,
20 and the judges at the same time. So they would
21 just be qualifying during that same time period.

22 The impact to us during that process, it
23 wouldn't -- adding another 11 races for
24 qualifying during that period of time would not
25 make an impact that our office couldn't handle.

1 MR. HOLLAND: And there would be no concern
2 about the timing for the ballot?

3 MR. HOLLAND: No.

4 MS. MILLER: I don't know how far in
5 advance you put candidates on the ballot.

6 MR. HOLLAND: From the standpoint -- and
7 that's why we coincide with the state's
8 qualifying.

9 No, there is not a problem putting it on
10 the ballots, and that's why we put both
11 qualifying at the same time. So there would
12 still be time. And we also -- the issues is not
13 just on the ballot for election day, but we're
14 required to get overseas ballots out 45 days
15 prior and early voting and all those.

16 So, yes, the timing coincides with the
17 state qualifying and, therefore, would allow us
18 sufficient time to meet all the statutory
19 requirements.

20 MS. MILLER: So -- I'm just, again, trying
21 to clarify. So what day in August would the
22 primary -- do we have a date in August?

23 MR. HOLLAND: August is -- August 24th is
24 the election day, and early voting starts two
25 weeks prior.

1 MS. MILLER: But you have to get overseas
2 ballots out 45 days before?

3 MR. HOLLAND: Forty-five days prior is when
4 overseas ballots go out.

5 MS. MILLER: So you would have to print
6 ballots the beginning of July?

7 MR. HOLLAND: It's -- well, you take the
8 end -- it wouldn't be -- it would be in July,
9 not the beginning, but it would be in July.

10 MS. MILLER: It would be in July
11 sometime --

12 MR. HOLLAND: Yes.

13 MS. MILLER: -- I mean, to get to the
14 45 days out?

15 MR. HOLLAND: The qualifying is also in
16 July.

17 MS. MILLER: Right. And I'm just wondering
18 from that -- if the governor doesn't sign it
19 till June 30th -- we don't know, you know. I'm
20 just wondering how that would work.

21 MR. HOLLAND: What we start with on a
22 ballot layout is we take filed candidates and we
23 start laying out a ballot based on the races
24 that candidates have filed for. So we lay out a
25 ballot prior to the end of qualifying, and then

1 we start adding or omitting names based -- and
2 then adding or omitting -- not adding races
3 because we already had them on there, but
4 omitting races if there's no opposition because
5 qualifying also can produce you races without
6 opposition. So that --

7 But all that is done that weekend when
8 qualifying ends. I mean, it's a process that is
9 done. We do it the same way on presidential,
10 gubernatorial, local. The number of candidates
11 doesn't impact it.

12 MS. MILLER: Thank you.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Holland, I think what I
14 hear Commissioner Miller asking is not so much
15 what impact would it have on your office, but
16 what impact would it have on people who are
17 considering running if there's a shortened -- if
18 they don't know until July 1 that officially the
19 election is going to be in August and November.

20 And maybe I'm putting words in her mouth,
21 but I have -- it seems to me -- and I want your
22 perspective on this -- that if people are
23 thinking of running for those races, they're not
24 going to wait until July 1. They're going to be
25 starting now, regardless of whether the election

1 is in November of '10 or May of '11, typically
2 candidates start that process well in advance.

3 MR. HOLLAND: They do.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: So . . .

5 MR. HOLLAND: From the standpoint -- from a
6 candidate's perspective rather than our office
7 is obviously this will not be news that no one
8 will know about until the governor signs it.
9 Whether the decision is the Council votes up or
10 down next Tuesday, the public will know that.
11 The candidates know that. They're monitoring
12 that also. When should they enter the race,
13 when should I file, what are the options if it's
14 going to happen then.

15 To think that a candidate is caught totally
16 by surprise and the governor signs something,
17 they were thinking, gee, I was going to file,
18 you know, January of next year and now I only
19 have a week to do that, that's probably not
20 going to be a successful candidate anyway.

21 But from the standpoint -- there would be
22 ample time for candidates to know that
23 information, and I think they would be working
24 on two schedules. And that's a burden on them,
25 they would be working on two schedules, but they

1 would know -- I mean, they're going to use
2 plan A or plan B based on the decision.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

4 Commissioner, other comments?

5 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: I have a question.

6 THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Youngblood.

7 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: The amount of registered
8 voters -- I know you've given it in percentages,
9 but I want to put a little finer point to it.

10 The amount of registered voters to a
11 current citywide race such as the mayoral race,
12 that percentage you said was 17 percent as the
13 voter turnout? So we have a little over -- or
14 just under 600,000 registered voters.

15 MR. HOLLAND: 533,000.

16 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: 533,000. Okay. 533,000,
17 and what amount elected the current city mayor?

18 MR. HOLLAND: What amount elected the
19 current -- okay. He did not run in the second
20 election, just in the first election.

21 In the first election for his reelection,
22 there was 104,121 that voted in that election.

23 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: Wow.

24 MR. HOLLAND: But also consider also for
25 the at-large City Council race, it was decided

1 in the second race, 49,000 voted in that race
2 for the at-large Councilmember.

3 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: Thank you.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Catlett.

5 MR. CATLETT: When you were looking at
6 this, has your -- has your office taken a
7 position on which of the bills, if any, that you
8 favor? And, if so, which one and why?

9 MR. HOLLAND: From a -- I have an office
10 and a personal. Okay?

11 MR. CATLETT: Well, give us both.

12 MR. HOLLAND: Okay. From an office
13 perspective, we look at it from the standpoint
14 of the efficiency of doing the operation, of
15 voter participation, of the -- how the process
16 works. We also deal with a budget too, like
17 everyone -- like the City does. Our budget is
18 due July 1, you know, to turn over, but we have
19 to prepare that prior to that.

20 I know I came into office on a special
21 election, was elected April 15th, but had to get
22 started on that process for July 1.

23 From an office standpoint, it is an
24 efficiency to combine the two.

25 From the standpoint of positives and

1 negatives, you know, I look at, again, the
2 voter. I look at that -- not one referendum
3 that's been put on the ballot in the state of
4 Florida to move elections have failed. All of
5 them have passed.

6 I look at the voters -- often we talk about
7 the voter not having the ability to make a
8 decision. The voters overwhelming keep saying
9 give it to me at one election when I go and
10 speak at town meetings. So the feedback I'm
11 getting from voters --

12 Now, I get different feedback from
13 candidates and also in the media and the
14 consultants and those kind of things, but
15 from -- the voter says, why do I need to come
16 back five months later and vote again? Why do I
17 have to put up with them darn signs for another
18 five months all over the city? Why do I have to
19 do all this? Can't I just do it all in the
20 fall? And that's my response as an office in
21 that situation of responding to the voters.

22 From a personal standpoint, there's an
23 advantage of it being in the spring. Local
24 elected constitutional officers can actually run
25 for a federal position at the same time as they

1 hold office in the fall. So if I'm in the
2 spring and I desire to run for a federal office,
3 I can do that if it stays in the spring.

4 So on a personal level, if I desire to run
5 for a federal office, it's actually better to be
6 in the spring, but that's not my position. I
7 would rather have the office and the
8 efficiency.

9 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

10 MR. CATLETT: Thank you.

11 MR. HOLLAND: Yes, sir.

12 MR. AUSTIN: This may not be fair. I
13 should know. Is the fiscal year set by state
14 law or is it in the charter? Or is that a legal
15 question?

16 MR. HOLLAND: State law.

17 MR. AUSTIN: I'm sorry?

18 MS. FRENCH: It's set by state law.

19 MR. AUSTIN: It's a state law?

20 MS. FRENCH: Yes, it is.

21 MR. AUSTIN: Thank you.

22 MS. FRENCH: And the millage right and the
23 budget process in Chapter 200, it's all the same
24 for all counties in the state.

25 MR. AUSTIN: I thought so. I assumed

1 that.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. HOLLAND: Thank you.

4 MR. AUSTIN: Let me finish.

5 I'd like to point out that I have not been
6 persuaded at all by \$3 million out of \$4 billion
7 over a four-year period that that is significant
8 enough to affect something as important as an
9 election.

10 And I'm also not persuaded that -- the
11 inconvenience of the candidates running against
12 and getting time and so forth. As long as it's
13 fair, the same for all the candidates, I'm not
14 persuaded that that inconvenience should dictate
15 what we do in making this decision.

16 And I reaffirm that it would be much more
17 convenient, procedurally, for the mayor and the
18 City Council if it were moved.

19 And that's all I need to say.

20 Thank you.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: I don't see anybody who's
22 wanting to speak, so I'm going to go on the
23 record at this point. I think we should move it
24 to the gubernatorial fall cycle, and I'll tell
25 you why.

1 First, the JCCI study talked about the
2 crisis of confidence in our electorate and their
3 public -- and their trust, the public's trust in
4 our electoral system. And I think moving it to
5 the fall, where we already know there's a higher
6 participation rate, makes the public bear their
7 burden of electoral politics. They have a role
8 to play too.

9 And if we make it more convenient for them
10 to have input on their local elected officials,
11 then if they choose not to, then I think it's
12 easier for -- for other people to defend the
13 status quo by saying, well, wait a minute. You
14 can't sit on the sidelines and take pot shots.
15 Politics is a participatory sport.

16 If we move the elections to the fall, we
17 have given you, the public, the greatest
18 possible potential to shape your quality of life
19 by the people that you elect.

20 You have to carry the ball across the
21 line. I'm sorry with the sports analogies. And
22 if you don't do that, then I don't want to hear
23 you come back and complain that you think our
24 government is corrupt.

25 So that's my first reason.

1 I think it will absolutely mitigate the
2 role and impact that special interests can have
3 in an election.

4 I thought what we saw in this most recent
5 state Senate election was awful on a host of
6 fronts. And I think the more races that you
7 have on the ballot, the more you crowd out the
8 influence and opportunity for special
9 interests. No matter what your particular
10 special interest is, it levels the playing
11 field.

12 I think, personally, that the \$3 million in
13 this particular budget environment that we find
14 ourselves in -- I think the mayor makes an
15 excellent point. \$3 million over a \$4 billion,
16 four-year cycle is not a lot of money, but next
17 year we're going to be in a world of hurt and
18 this could be 10 percent of our shortfall.

19 I think a higher participation rate is an
20 absolute civic good. And if we put the local
21 races in front of the people, when the most
22 people come to the polls, then there is an
23 absolutely civic good to that.

24 Now, I know you can say that the down
25 ballot races get a lower percentage of the

1 votes, but one of my favorite expressions is
2 there are three types of lies. There are lies,
3 damned lies, and statistics. And if you get
4 more people voting, then you still have a higher
5 participation rate, even if percentagewise it
6 looks like it's a lower turnout down ballot.

7 Big spenders have an advantage, but they
8 don't always win. You know, you can look at the
9 JuCoby Pittman, Glorious Johnson race, you can
10 look at the Clay Yarborough, Cheryl Grimes race,
11 you can look at the races in St. Johns County a
12 couple of cycles ago where the people with --
13 who outspent their opponents ten to one lost.

14 So, yes, you make an excellent point, but I
15 don't think at the end of the day that's the end
16 all and be all.

17 And I guess I would wind up with -- again,
18 people are going to start running for these
19 races well before July 1. And the worst-case
20 scenario for them is they wind up with an extra
21 six months if the bill doesn't pass and they --
22 or more. They'll know that they have until
23 May. But they're going to start running today
24 if they're thinking about this, so I don't think
25 the candidates are going to be handicapped. As

1 the mayor pointed out, they'll all be equally
2 handicapped.

3 And as to the shortening of the terms
4 versus the extending of the terms, I think our
5 current office holders should do their civic
6 duty and just take that hit for the good of the
7 corporate and civic enterprise that Jacksonville
8 is, that the charter is designed to create.

9 And those are my thoughts.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Eichner.

11 MS. EICHNER: I am -- I don't want to argue
12 the fact that I think it should be moved. I am
13 in favor of moving the election cycle to
14 November. I see all of the same reasons that
15 have been debated here for why I would support
16 something like that.

17 My position on not moving it and keeping it
18 separate is this -- a couple of things, and I
19 keep going to the power of incumbency.

20 If you are -- personalities aside --
21 currently holding office and are up for
22 reelection in this next cycle and you're
23 considering running -- and I've worked on both
24 sides of the fence where I've had candidates
25 who've had their opposition fall out the last

1 day of qualifying; I've worked for candidates
2 who qualified on the last day of qualifying and
3 won, so I don't think that we can talk about
4 individual races and what happens in those
5 races. Those are strategy decisions that are
6 made across the board in campaigns.

7 My concern is that we have current people
8 in office who have a power over somebody who's
9 never been elected before because they currently
10 hold that position, and that gives them better
11 positioning to be reelected. And the more
12 people you put on a ballot, the more powerful
13 that comes.

14 And if we can sit here and make the
15 decision that special interest is not going to
16 be as active in races because we put more people
17 on the ballot, that's -- that's a misnomer. I
18 don't think that there's any business group or
19 civic or special interest group in town that is
20 going to be less active in politics. They're
21 actually probably going to be more active.

22 And if -- the reason that they become so
23 active is because there are blocks of voters
24 that they represent, so they become more -- they
25 become more important because those are people

1 that -- you can almost put the feather in the
2 cap and count on. That's the -- you know, I
3 mean, that's the chess game you play, whether
4 you have their endorsement or not.

5 I still think that the biggest reason that
6 I would oppose this is because of the power of
7 incumbency. We have -- you'll be putting more
8 people on the ballot. The people who are
9 elected to serve have the ability to shake hands
10 with their voters, schedule town hall meetings,
11 get out and do grass-roots. I mean, they have
12 the power to make some decisions that affect
13 voters. As a first-time candidate, the ability
14 to be able to do that takes lots of people and
15 twice as much money as anybody else.

16 And I work for candidates who've never had
17 it -- I mean, who have less money than anybody,
18 you know, so it doesn't -- it doesn't
19 necessarily mean he who raises the most wins.
20 It is he who works the hardest wins. And when
21 you are an incumbent, it's almost assumed that
22 the person who's running against you has to work
23 twice as hard as you are to be able to beat you,
24 so the power of incumbency becomes that much
25 more important if we move it and put that much

1 more -- that many more people on the ballot
2 because --

3 You know, Jack talked about early voting
4 and standing on that street corner for two solid
5 weeks. That's true. Put a governor's candidate
6 out there, put CFO and five members of the
7 cabinet that we've never had on a ballot all in
8 a same year -- as long as I can remember -- or
9 most people can remember -- then you've got, you
10 know, Republicans, Democrats. You know, the FOP
11 support becomes more important, police, fire,
12 Jax Biz, FCMA. You're putting a lot of people
13 in a conundrum all because we're talking about
14 saving \$3 million.

15 Special interests are going to spend the
16 same amount of money. You know, the trial
17 lawyers are going to spend \$2-and-a-half million
18 if they don't want somebody elected to the
19 Senate. They could -- that's what they do.
20 They do it statewide. It's not just here.

21 So I just -- I feel like keeping the --
22 keeping it separate and giving the people more
23 time to decide who they want to vote for -- I
24 mean, I don't know how more easy we can make it
25 for somebody to vote. It is the easiest thing

1 in the world to do.

2 I mean, there was a day when I started
3 voting that I had to have an illness, a death in
4 the family or be in jail not to be able to
5 request an absentee ballot. Now I can sit on
6 the sofa and watch soap operas and get one.

7 So, I mean, we're educating voters; we're
8 sending ballots to their house; you know, we're
9 giving them an opportunity to vote two weeks in
10 advance; they can request an absentee ballot and
11 vote at 3 a.m. on a Saturday if they want to.

12 Turnout, I mean, you're not going to be
13 able to change that. That changes with money
14 and that changes with the candidates on the
15 race. That's why I still go back to the power
16 of incumbency is the biggest thing, in my mind,
17 that affects everything that we've talked about
18 today.

19 MR. CATLETT: Well, I do agree with almost
20 everything Teresa said, the exception being that
21 when you're raising money for campaigns -- going
22 back to what Billy asked earlier. When you're
23 raising money for campaigns, there's only so
24 much money in the community at any given time.
25 If you don't think so, go out and try to raise

1 money for several candidates at one time during
2 an election.

3 So that -- special interest groups, still,
4 even though they don't have the power and votes
5 because they're diluted with a bigger turnout,
6 they do have power with money because at the
7 same time -- if they go ask you, Billy, can you
8 give \$100 for this campaign? You say, I believe
9 in that guy or that gal, and you give \$100. And
10 then the next candidate comes along and wants
11 \$100 and the next candidate in the governor's
12 race and the cabinet race, pretty soon you're
13 going to out of hundred dollarses [sic].

14 Well, maybe not you, but a lot of people.

15 So that's something that is a reality of
16 life. There's only so much money in the system
17 at a given time. And, frankly, I think that's
18 one of the reasons they have governors' races
19 off from the president's race because, again,
20 there's only so much money in the system at any
21 given time.

22 So, you know, you have to also look at
23 that, that there is a finite amount of dollars
24 available for contributions to support
25 legitimate candidates. And if they're all at

1 one time, then you're going to lose some really
2 good candidates at the same time because it's
3 all bunched together.

4 And having been a fund-raiser for some fine
5 candidates, I can tell you that is a factor.
6 That is a factor if you've done it, that there's
7 only so much money out there. And usually the
8 guy that asks first, with the most, does better
9 than those who jump in late.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Korman.

11 MS. KORMAN: Clarification for Commissioner
12 Catlett. Regardless if it's in the spring or
13 fall, you're still asking the same people for
14 the same amount of money during that same time,
15 unless I've missed -- I've missed --

16 MR. CATLETT: You're absolutely right,
17 absolutely right, but I will tell you that they
18 don't have the same amount of money in different
19 businesses in the spring and fall. If you've
20 got two different time frames, you're going to
21 get more money if you have one election in the
22 spring and one in the fall.

23 I don't know if that's good or bad; I'm not
24 making a judgment on it, I'm just saying
25 statistically that's true.

1 I mean, you could have all the elections at
2 the same time as the president -- the president,
3 governor, City Council, judges, the whole
4 magilla -- and, again, I will promise you that
5 the candidates at the lower levels are going to
6 have a heck of a harder time raising money
7 because they're competing with the president and
8 the governor at that point.

9 MS. KORMAN: Mr. Chair -- I mean, I guess
10 speaking from the company I work for, we budget
11 for the year, so -- and I know a lot of
12 companies do the same thing, so it's a yearlong
13 process. And, God forbid, there's more
14 elections than we think, we have to figure out
15 if we can come up with the money, but it's still
16 a yearlong budget -- we don't budget seasonal,
17 but we're also not the top political involvement
18 either, so . . .

19 MR. CATLETT: Yeah, but any of our bigger
20 companies and many other companies --

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioners --
22 (Simultaneous speaking.)

23 MR. CATLETT: -- (inaudible) not staffwise,
24 but moneywise.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Youngblood.

1 MR. YOUNGBLOOD: I think what it does is
2 it -- it truly does force those individuals
3 running for office to be more involved in their
4 community, so I like the idea of having it
5 aligned with the governor's race. I would
6 agree. And it does -- we know in business that
7 competition typically fares out the best, so I
8 like good, healthy competition.

9 My comments.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Garvin.

11 MS. GARVIN: Well, in talking about the
12 funds that -- and you talk about companies,
13 companies may budget, but it's also those
14 individual voters that give. And I know, you
15 know, my budget gets hit whenever there's a
16 political race. You know, I'm giving it
17 personally. And so if it's all at the same
18 time, it's going to affect me in how much I can
19 give to different candidates.

20 So if you look overall -- I mean, it's easy
21 to say a company can do it, but you have to
22 think about the individuals. And, yeah, it
23 would affect me in how much I could give
24 different candidates.

25 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. I think we --

1 Commissioner Miller.

2 MS. MILLER: Through the Chair, I
3 appreciate the opportunity and the speakers
4 today, the opportunity to talk about this, and
5 I -- I appreciate your comments, Mr. Chairman,
6 and I agree with you, and you were very eloquent
7 in your statements.

8 And the reason I asked the questions of
9 Supervisor Holland was less about the candidates
10 running or potential candidates. It was more
11 about the impact on the office and the ability
12 to execute this within the statutory
13 requirements and the state requirement. It was
14 a more practical and pragmatic concern because
15 if someone is going to run, either they're --
16 they should be aware of this. And if they're
17 not aware of it, then -- then that might be an
18 indicator, so they should be monitoring this and
19 be involved. As Commission Youngblood has said,
20 you want people who are actively engaged and
21 involved in their community and have some track
22 record of that, so --

23 And I understand the concerns, and I've
24 heard these arguments since I represented
25 council many, many years ago, when council --

1 then Council President Holland had it, you know,
2 proposed. And it goes back and forth and it
3 keeps coming up, but I -- at the end of the day,
4 I think -- for the reasons that the chairman
5 stated, some of the reasons Commissioner Korman
6 has stated and in the interest of what is best
7 for the electorate and the civic good and
8 bringing the most voters to bear and making --
9 as you said, the voters have to bear the
10 burden. And if there is a crisis of confidence
11 in our electorate, have as many people as
12 possible voting and participating in the process
13 and -- whatever they're labeled as, R, D, other,
14 whatever, that they should be participating and
15 involved. And if you have to get them there by
16 getting them there through some other process,
17 then maybe that is a way to bring more people
18 to -- out on the issues of concern and get more
19 people involved. And at the end of the day, it
20 is an election to represent people.

21 So I would be in favor of moving it to --
22 and consistent with a gubernatorial cycle or a
23 cycle that would bring out larger numbers of the
24 electorate for more of the altruistic reasons.
25 And if the budget benefits, then -- then so be

1 it, but I think, as Commissioner Korman said, we
2 have to look at the long-term impact and the
3 impact to the community.

4 And I really have to say, I -- it concerns
5 me that we're the only county in the state that
6 has this off cycle.

7 And the governance issue, as Mayor Austin
8 mentioned, is a big one. We -- the last budget
9 cycle with the City Council was less than -- oh,
10 I don't know -- you know, the best performance,
11 I guess, we could have. And that was as they
12 were sitting. Okay? They've been there a
13 while, a few years.

14 I think if they come in at the beginning of
15 the year, they have time to vet the budget, to
16 go through, to set up their departments, to make
17 their appointments, the department heads can
18 then develop their budgets, determine their
19 needs, and move forward with a budget that is
20 reasoned and -- and then the council has time to
21 vet that as well.

22 So those are -- that's my opinion. And if
23 we were asked to vote, that's how I would vote.

24 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner Austin.

25 MR. AUSTIN: Thank you.

1 I see it as sort of two competing interests
2 here. We have the inconvenience of running at
3 the same time, a few other people running but
4 less than were running when they adopted this
5 originally, against the interests of the elected
6 mayor and the council putting together a
7 thoughtful budget for the people in the first
8 year.

9 And really the -- some of the best -- some
10 of the things that you'll run on that are to
11 influence and to make changes in the government
12 or in your first budget really make a major
13 impact on the issues you run on. And to do that
14 in a haphazard, rushed way is -- is
15 inappropriate. We need a better way to do
16 that. I don't know if there's any other way
17 than changing the election or not. I don't
18 think so with the state law that requires the
19 budgetary year and -- it's uniform all over the
20 state, so I think we're stuck with that, and I
21 don't think, then, we have any alternative to
22 debate the competing interests of the
23 inconvenience of the candidates against the
24 inconvenience of the public's interest and
25 having a thoughtful, worked-through budget at

1 the outset.

2 Thank you.

3 THE CHAIRMAN: All right. We've had some
4 very good discussion today.

5 And, at this point, I would like to put us
6 on the record on this issue so that we can
7 convey that to the City Council, so I would
8 entertain a motion on the issue.

9 Commissioner Korman.

10 MS. KORMAN: A motion to -- I don't even
11 know how I should say this -- to -- is it a
12 resolution? I mean, how are we -- is it a
13 resolution? Is it --

14 THE CHAIRMAN: You could say that we
15 recommend to the council that they endorse --

16 MS. KORMAN: That we endorse --

17 THE CHAIRMAN: -- a fall 2010 --

18 MS. KORMAN: -- moving the elections on the
19 same -- local elections on the same cycle as the
20 gubernatorial elections, all in the fall
21 season.

22 Is that clear enough?

23 THE CHAIRMAN: The fall gubernatorial
24 cycle.

25 MR. AUSTIN: (Inaudible.)

1 THE CHAIRMAN: This would be a
2 recommendation to the council that they endorse
3 the J bill, I suppose, that would have the
4 effect of moving the City elections to the fall
5 gubernatorial cycle.

6 MR. AUSTIN: (Inaudible.)

7 THE CHAIRMAN: The charter.

8 MR. AUSTIN: The charter.

9 MS. MILLER: Second.

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

11 Okay. I have a motion and second.

12 Do we feel the need for any further
13 discussion?

14 Commissioner Oliveras.

15 MR. OLIVERAS: Mr. Chairman, I just --
16 through the Chair, perhaps through OGC. Because
17 I am a filed candidate for the school board for
18 the 2010 cycle -- I don't believe I have a
19 personal conflict in voting for or against this
20 recommendation, but I just want to check with
21 you to make sure.

22 I see indirect consequences, but nothing
23 direct, but how do y'all feel?

24 MS. FRENCH: Usually when you have a
25 concern over voting -- of a conflict -- unless

1 there's an obvious -- usually a conflict deals
2 with personal interest, personal gain with
3 respect to, like, a competitive procurement
4 process.

5 In this case -- if you, yourself, do not
6 believe you have a conflict, then -- I think
7 you've stated out loud on the record, you know,
8 your involvement, and I don't see an issue with
9 that going forward.

10 MR. OLIVERAS: Okay. Thank you.

11 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Commissioner, for
12 raising that.

13 MR. OLIVERAS: Just checking.

14 THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

15 All in favor, raise your hand.

16 COMMISSION MEMBERS: (Indicating.)

17 THE CHAIRMAN: Opposed.

18 MR. EICHNER: (Indicating.)

19 THE CHAIRMAN: The motion passes.

20 Thank you all. I know that this is a
21 deeply-felt issue. I think this has been the
22 level of debate that I would hope and expect we
23 would bring to the process, so thank you all.

24 Ms. Sidman.

25 MS. SIDMAN: Just -- I think it might be

1 helpful to get some clarification.

2 I think what you just passed is a
3 resolution to support Councilmember Redman's
4 resolution, which is 2009-622, which supports
5 J-1, moving the election from May 11th -- May
6 2011 to November 2010, which moves the election
7 up by six months and shortens the current seated
8 council members' and mayor's and -- terms by six
9 months, so --

10 MR. HOLLAND: It doesn't cut the current.
11 It's the next -- the next cycle.

12 (Simultaneous speaking.)

13 MS. SIDMAN: It doesn't cut the current
14 seated council members?

15 MR. HOLLAND: No.

16 MS. SIDMAN: Okay. So it's to support
17 Redman's bill, -622.

18 THE CHAIRMAN: That's correct.

19 MS. SIDMAN: All right. Thank you.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Commissioner --

21 MS. MILLER: Through the Chair, how will
22 this be communicated to the council? Do you
23 plan to attend the council meeting on Tuesday or
24 should we send a letter to the council president
25 or distribute it --

1 THE CHAIRMAN: I will send a formal
2 communication to the council president and ask
3 him for the opportunity to appear to convey in
4 person our sense of the matter.

5 MS. MILLER: And -- thank you.

6 And then -- and then regardless of the
7 council outcome, I think it would also be
8 important to communicate our position to the
9 Duval Delegation because the Delegation
10 ultimately has the -- determines whether or not
11 to move forward with this. The council's
12 resolution is merely a recommendation.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: That's correct, and I will
14 convey our correspondence to them as well.

15 I see everybody packing up. We still have
16 public comment.

17 Is there anybody here who would like to
18 speak at public comment?

19 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: (No response.)

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Going once --

21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: (Inaudible.)

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Please come to the
23 podium.

24 (Audience member approaches the podium.)

25 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Conrad Markle, Concerned

1 Taxpayers of Duval County, 1146 Romney Street.

2 Joe Andrews had left a while ago, is the
3 treasurer of the Concerned Taxpayers of Duval
4 County. He left me a question he wanted me to
5 direct to Mr. Holland, and it was, what group do
6 you see to be the greatest opposition to moving
7 the elections?

8 THE CHAIRMAN: Commissioner [sic] Holland,
9 that's -- it's within your discretion to decide
10 whether to answer that or not. You're not a
11 member of the commission. The public comment is
12 to us, so I'll leave that up to you.

13 MR. HOLLAND: I'll abstain.

14 MR. MARKLE: Oh, okay.

15 THE CHAIRMAN: You're free to contact him
16 privately, but this, perhaps, is not the right
17 forum.

18 MR. MARKLE: Okay. Joe asked me to
19 (inaudible) the question.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you.

21 All right. Seeing no other members of the
22 public and no other issues that the
23 commissioners want to raise, we're adjourned.

24 Thank you.

25 (The above proceedings were adjourned at

1 11:40 a.m.)

2 - - -

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF FLORIDA:

COUNTY OF DUVAL :

I, Diane M. Tropa, certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing proceedings and that the transcript is a true and complete record of my stenographic notes.

Dated this 27th day of October, 2009.

Diane M. Tropa