



Taxation, Revenue, and Utilization of Expenditures (TRUE) Commission

John Palombi, Chair

Pam Korn, Vice Chair

Greg Anderson, Secretary

Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2009

4:00 p.m.

Attendance: John Palombi (Chair), Joe Andrews, Ron Mallett, Greg Anderson, Elaine Burnett, Steve Jarecki, Marcella Lowe, Wes Benwick, Mark Cowart, Nicole Lester

Excused: Robert Jones, Randy Deen, Pamela Korn (resigned from commission)

Absent: Louvenia Tippins

The meeting convened at 4:10 p.m. with a quorum present.

Minutes

The minutes of the January 8, 2009 meeting were **amended** to reflect that Commissioner Jones, not Commissioner Benwick, posed a question to CAO Alan Mosley regarding the extension of the local option gas tax and whether or not he considered it a tax increase. The minutes were **approved as amended**.

Chairman Palombi noted that he had received a letter of resignation from the TRUE Commission from Pam Korn. A replacement appointment will be sought.

Committee Reports

Performance Committee – Commissioner Anderson reported that the committee is working on three projects: 1) follow-up on the procurement and contract management report of several years ago, with City Inspector General Pam Markham; 2) the current performance management initiative, with Heath Beach, the acquisition of the Actuate software package, and a data mining database application; and 3) ITD issues with Kevin Holzendorf. The committee has been invited to hold its next meeting in the ITD offices on February 19th at 11:30 a.m.

Long Term Fiscal Health Committee – Commissioner Andrews reported that his committee had met twice in January to discuss potential study topics and to get an overview of City pension issues from Commissioner Palombi. Mr. Andrews indicated that he is attending the JCCI's study of City long term fiscal health issues and is compiling a great deal of valuable background information from those meetings. Commissioner Burnett reported that she recently held a meeting with Sheriff Rutherford and JSO budget officer Maxine Person to discuss the finances and operations of the department. Her summary of that meeting will be distributed to the members electronically. The Sheriff reiterated his

belief that Jacksonville “can’t arrest its way out of its crime problems.” Ms. Burnett interprets this to mean that the city needs to have programs like the Blueprint for Prosperity and Jacksonville Journey succeed in improving economic and social conditions in the city as the real antidote to crime. Commissioner Andrews reported that he had met with John Keane and Dick Cohee, the administrators of the Police and Fire Pension and had a very worthwhile discussion of pension issues. They expressed their gratitude that the commission was interested in hearing their views on the real pension issues.

Legislative Tracking Committee – Commissioner Benwick indicated the committee had not yet identified any issues that required the commission’s attention, but the committee felt that the review process of new legislation was very worthwhile and informative. He volunteered to take over the leadership of the committee following Pam Korn’s resignation from the commission, and invited additional commissioners to become involved in the review process. Committee meetings will be moved back one-half hour and begin at 9:30 a.m. on the second and fourth Fridays of the month. Mr. Benwick did suggest that the TRUE Commission may want to make some official statement on the proposed Trail Ridge Landfill contract extension before the Council acts on the bill.

Auditor’s Report

Kirk Sherman reported that his office released a report this week on court costs, an annual certification required by state law. Two more audits are anticipated to be complete and released in April. Mr. Sherman and several of his staff are spending a great deal of time reviewing the Trail Ridge Landfill contract proposal. He noted that it is extremely important to have landfill capacity permitted, constructed and ready to receive waste when needed, referencing the landfill crisis of the early 1990s that led to the construction of the current landfill. The proposed contract is worth approximately \$1 billion over 30 years to the winner, but ultimately the City holds the final liability for what happens to the landfill site. In response to a question from Commissioner Palombi about the possibility of new technology substantially changing the way landfills operate, Mr. Sherman indicated that there are some new technologies on the horizon but nothing that is feasible or proven at the moment for large scale operations like Jacksonville’s 3,000 tons per day of disposal needs. The contract does provide that if there is a major change in technology that affects landfill costs, the contract can be re-opened.

Mr. Palombi stressed the need for the contract to be worded such that the City’s interests are protected because in his experience on the TRUE Commission, the past practice seems all too often to put all the liability in any contract on the City’s back. Mr. Sherman stated that the City has approximately 5-7 years of disposal capacity left in the current landfill cell. Waste Management Inc. wants to add 30 more years of disposal capacity and assume all liability for landfill closure costs (a very large expense) in return for the 30 year contract extension at a reduced tipping fee. Mr. Sherman reiterated that the City, as the site owner, has the ultimate responsibility for keeping the closed landfill protected and monitored.

Chair’s Comments

Chairman Palombi reported the resignation of Pam Korn from the commission and stated that he would send a letter to Ms. Korn thanking her for her service to the commission. The commissioners discussed how Ms. Korn should be replaced as Vice Chair – by temporary appointment by the Chairman, or by election? Commissioner Mallet recommended electing Greg Anderson as Vice Chair and Wes Benwick as Secretary. Commissioner Anderson declined the suggestion citing his time constraints due to business commitments.

The commission voted 7-2 to have the Chairman make a temporary appointment to fill the vacancy until the commission’s election of officers in June.

Old Business

None

New Business

- Commissioner Anderson reported that the commission is still looking for good nominees to fill several vacancies on the board and encouraged the commissioners to approach potential candidates and recommend that they consider an appointment. Two CPAC appointments are currently in process in the City Council, and two other nominees are being considered.
- Commissioner Burnett will give staff her report on job search assistance to distribute to all commissioners and will also have distributed a report she received from a citizen concerned about getting the Mayport community's vision for its future incorporated into the Jaxport cruise terminal proposal.
- Chairman Palombi indicated that more help is needed on the Long Term Fiscal Health Committee – it is a big topic and more hands are needed to share the work. Commissioner Andrews stated that he would likely be scheduling a committee meeting for Wednesday, February 11th.

Commissioner Comments

None

Public Comments

- Jason Fischer asked staff to check on the status of his appointment resolution which he thought should have been introduced by now.

Next meeting

The commission's next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 5th at 4:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Posted 3.6.09
2:15 p.m.

c.c. cityc@coj.net
City Council electronic files
Media box