



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

Wes Benwick, Chair
Robert Jones, Vice Chair
Joe Andrews, Secretary

Amended Meeting Minutes August 6, 2009

4:00 p.m.

Attendance: Wes Benwick (Chair), Greg Anderson (arr. 4:16), Robert Jones, Thomas Martin, Jason Fischer, Mark Cowart (arr. 4:13), Joe Andrews, Randy Deen (arr. 4:13), Ruth Arnold, Ryan Jones

Excused: Marcella Lowe, Nicole Lester

Absent: Louvenia Tippins

The meeting convened at 4:01 p.m. with a quorum present.

Minutes

The minutes of the June 4, 2009 commission meetings were approved as distributed.

Committee Reports

Performance Committee – Commissioner Anderson not having arrived, the report was deferred.

Long Term Fiscal Health Committee – Commissioner Andrews recommended that the committee be dissolved in light of the vigorous scrutiny already being given to all aspects of the City's financial health and sustainability by numerous parties (JCCI, Special Committee on City Pension Sustainability, Finance Committee, full City Council), to which the group agreed. Chairman Benwick suggested the creation of a short-term budget committee to compile the TRUE Commission's past budget-related recommendations and any ideas gleaned from commissioners' attendance at the upcoming Finance Committee budget hearings and to make recommendations for any positions the full commission may wish to take on budgetary matters to the City Council in September before the final budget debate and adoption.

In response to a question about committee creation and the commission's by-laws, commission staff member Jeff Clements explained that the by-laws make reference to the general procedure for establishing committees but do not name or create specific standing committees. Committees are formed and dissolved by the Chair or by vote of the commission as issues arise and then are completed.

Legislative Tracking Committee – Commissioner Benwick distributed the committee issues matrix of issues considered at the last several meetings and reviewed items of interest.

MOTION: Chairman Benwick moved that the commission create a short-term budget committee to look at the pending City budget proposal and make recommendations to the full commission for a possible

report to the City Council – **approved**. Mark Cowart was appointed chair of the committee and asked for volunteers to join in the project.

MOTION: Commissioner Fischer moved that the commission direct staff to draft a resolution endorsing City Council’s adoption of pending ordinances 2009-515, 2009-516 and 2009-517 which would repeal the City’s solid waste service fee, stormwater management fee, and utility franchise fee, respectively, for consideration at the September meeting – **approved**.

Several “whereas” clauses were suggested for inclusion in the resolution. Staff will circulate a draft prior to the September meeting.

Chairman Benwick reappointed Greg Anderson as temporary chair of the Performance Committee until such time as a permanent chair is named, and appointed Joe Andrews as chair of the Legislative Tracking Committee. Both chairs asked for volunteers to join the work of their committees, and staff was asked to circulate the meeting days and times of the committees when they have been finalized.

Auditor’s Report

Thomas Carter, representing Council Auditor Kirk Sherman, reported that the office has released three audits/reports since the last commission meeting. Audit #664 – Public Buildings Division – examined whether contract custodial and security services were being properly provided and overseen, and audited the division’s inventory of maintenance supplies. The contractual aspects of the custodial and security services were being handled appropriately, although the audit did note that the Jacksonville Public Library had a contract for janitorial service separate from the contract for the rest of the City overseen by Public Buildings. The audit identified a need for better inventory practices and recordkeeping for the maintenance supplies.

Report #665 – Sheriff’s Investigative Fund – is an annual audit of cash handling procedures and records of the fund used by JSO undercover officers for covert operations, and attestation is made according to AICPA standards. The audit find that the funds appear to be fairly accounted for and reported, but noted several procedural issues that could be improved. The JSO agreed with most of the findings, generally regarding better dissemination and enforcement of existing policies, but did disagree with one finding regarding segregation of duties that would require record keeping and access to the money storage safe to be done by different personnel, citing a lack of manpower to separate the functions and the use of other procedural safeguards to ensure the integrity of the cash.

Report #666 is a follow-up on 4 previous audits: #635 – Medical Examiner’s Office; #638 – Special Events Division; #644 – Overtime; and #646 – Courthouse Construction. The follow-ups found that substantially all of the recommendations in the Medical Examiner, Special Events and Courthouse Construction audits had been successfully implemented. One item not quite completed of the Overtime audit recommendations was the computerization of the time and attendance sheet process. The system has been implemented in all functions except the Solid Waste Division, where it is still pending.

Five audits are currently underway and should be released within the next month. Otherwise the Auditor’s Office will be consumed with budget processes until the adoption of the new budget at the end of September.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Chair's Comments

Chairman Benwick encouraged commissioners to attend the Finance Committee budget hearings to observe the proceedings and collect ideas, and to inform staff about which meetings they plan to attend. Staff can then circulate that information to the group by e-mail to ensure that all meetings are covered by at least one member and that there is not unnecessary duplication of members attending meetings to ensure coverage.

Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Fischer is gratified by the tough stance that Council Member Yarborough has taken this year on budget issues and wants the commission to consider drafting a resolution thanking him for his positions. Mr. Fischer and staff will prepare a draft for consideration at the September meeting.
- Commissioner Anderson asked for clarification about the Government in the Sunshine rules regarding communication among commissioners for purposes of scheduling meetings and determining agenda items. Jeff Clements explained that commissioners may communicate among themselves for purposes of arranging a mutually agreeable meeting day and time for a properly noticed public meeting without violating the Sunshine rules, but may not discuss substantive business in the course of making those arrangements. A committee chair may request suggestions for issues or study topics by means of a broadcast e-mail or letter to the members of a committee, who should then respond to staff to collect and compile the suggestions for development of an agenda. Committee members should not share potential study issues among themselves in the form of a back-and-forth conversation unless they do it in the forum of a properly noticed meeting.

Public Comments

None

Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 3rd at 4:00 p.m. The meeting will likely be moved from the Council Chamber to another room because of the Finance Committee budget hearing scheduled in the Council Chamber until 4:30 p.m. that day.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Posted 8.10.09
12:00 p.m.

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