



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

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

Meeting Minutes March 4, 2010

4:00 p.m.

Attendance: Wes Benwick (Chair), Thomas Martin, Joe Andrews, Mike McCollum, Robert Jones, Jason Fischer, Randy Deen, Greg Anderson, Hiron Peck, Mark Cowart, Marcella Lowe, Ruth Arnold, Louvenia Tippins

Excused:

Absent: Ryan Jones

The meeting convened at 4:05 p.m. with a quorum present.

Minutes

The minutes of the February 4, 2010 commission meetings were approved with the correction of several typographical errors.

Committee Reports

Legislative Tracking Committee – Commissioner Andrews distributed a list of 9 questions he had prepared with regard to pending Ordinance 2010-146, and ordinance amending the Ordinance Code to permit the Sheriff to enter into cooperative law enforcement interagency agreements without further City Council approval, provided the agreements do not require any City funding or incur any liability on the part of the City that it does not already have. He suggested that the TRUE Commission recommend that Council not approve ordinance until it obtained answers to the 9 questions and better understood the reasons for the request, the nature and terms of the contemplated agreements, and the implications of delegating such authority to the Sheriff. With regard to Ordinance 2010-153 authorizing the write-off of missing, lost or stolen tangible personal property, Mr. Andrews recommended that the TRUE Commission appoint a subcommittee to look into the City's inventory control policies and procedures. With regard to ordinance 2010-171 to appropriate \$395,000 from the Northbank Tax Increment District Fund to construct a floating dock on the Northbank Riverwalk at the Fuller Warren Bridge for the benefit of the Riverside Artists Market, Mr. Andrews questioned the rationale for the expenditure and recommended that the commission express its opposition to the project.

Motion (Lowe): that the TRUE Commission appoint a subcommittee to investigate the City's inventory control policies and procedures – **approved**.

Performance Committee – Commissioner Anderson reported that the committee had met that afternoon and take up 2 topics – the City's new budget web site and the City's contract with and

annual contribution to Shands Jacksonville for indigent care. With regard to the new budget web site, the committee was very favorably impressed and feels like all of the TRUE Commission's suggestions for improvement have been incorporated. The new site should be a great help to citizen understanding of the budget and City finances.

The committee received a copy of a memorandum from the Office of General Counsel discussing a state statute that appears to require all Florida counties to participate in a shared indigent care funding program with the state, with the counties each paying 35% of the cost of indigent care provided in their county and the state paying the remaining 65%. The memo explains that, although the statute has been on the books since the late 1980s, apparently the state has never appropriated any funding for the purpose so the counties are not bound to participate. The state recently rescinded the regulations in the Florida Administrative Code that would have been used to administer the program because there has never been any use of the provisions. The only operative document governing the City's relationship with Shands for indigent care is the lease and contract for operation of the City's hospital by the Shands system. Mr. Anderson recommended that the TRUE Commission encourage the City to appoint a clear contract manager for the Shands Jacksonville indigent care contract and that it also encourage the Council Auditor to audit the indigent care contract at least once every 4 years.

Budget Committee – Mr. Cowart reported that the committee's scheduled meeting with Council Vice President Jack Webb to discuss the upcoming FY10-11 budget process had been canceled due to a scheduling conflict and would be rescheduled and notice posted in the near future.

Auditor's Report

Thomas Carter of the Council Auditor's Office reported that his office had released report #677, the FY10-11 first quarterly report. The General Fund is showing a \$14 million negative variance at this point early in the fiscal year. Mr. Carter also reported that the Auditor's Office would be scheduling an audit of the Shands indigent care contract in the fall of 2010, as well as an audit of the City's Banking Fund.

Chair's Comments

Chairman Benwick stated that he will ask for a presentation at the next commission meeting from the City administration on the Banking Fund. He also urged the commissioners to attend one of the Mayor's upcoming town hall budget workshops. He attended the first workshop and found it very informative and an interesting opportunity to hear the opinions of other citizens. He expressed the hope that future budget workshops would feature less presentation time by City officials and more time for public discussion and debate.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Andrews stated that the Mayor is laying the groundwork for tax increases for the upcoming FY10-11 budget.

Motion (Andrews): that the TRUE Commission ask the City to defer the 4 recently proposed downtown improvement projects (Metropolitan Park, Southbank Riverwalk, Friendship Fountain, Riverside Artists Market floating dock) for 3 years.

The committee discussed the motion at length, suggesting the need to hear from the City administration about why the projects are proposed for construction now, what the anticipated benefits would be, which address immediate public safety needs, what the return on investment is projected to be, etc.

Motion (Anderson): defer the Andrews motion for further study and review.

The Chairman deferred the Andrews proposal to a future meeting.

Motion (Ro. Jones): that the TRUE Commission pass a resolution 1) urging the Mayor to designate a clear contract administrator for the Shands Jacksonville indigent care contract and 2) urging the Council Auditor to conduct an audit of the indigent care contract at least once every 4 years – **approved**.

Commissioner Fischer stated his concern that the Mayor's proposed City fee ordinance (2010-216) will place a substantial burden on many citizens.

Commissioner Andrews asked if any commissioners were interested in considering a motion regarding pending ordinance 2010-146, the Sheriff's power to enter into interagency law enforcement agreements without further City Council action. There was no indication of interest in taking action on the subject.

Public Comments

None.

Next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 1st at 4:00 p.m.

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

Posted 3.18.10
5:00 p.m.

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