



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

Marcella Lowe, Chair

John Palombi, Vice Chair

## Meeting Minutes

March 6, 2006

4:00 p.m.

**Attendance:** Marcella Lowe (Chair), Lee Martin, Lou Myers, Mike Meroney, Mark Roesser, John Palombi, Arnold Whisenant, Charles Curley, Mark Cowart, Ron Mallett, Dick Berry, Gary Looney, Elaine Burnett

**Excused:** Bruce Glassman, Randy Deen, Louvenia Tippins, John Jolly

**Absent:** Charles Magee

The meeting convened at 4:05 p.m. after the GOOHS Committee meeting with a quorum present.

### Minutes

The minutes of the February 6, 2006 meeting were previously distributed.

◆ The minutes were **approved as distributed**.

### Committee Reports

Jacksonville Housing Partnership Committee: Commissioner Myers reported that the commission's letter approved in February had been sent to Kerri Stewart, Interim Director of the Jacksonville Housing Commission outlining the committee's work and findings, and that he is awaiting a reply. Commissioner Roesser noted that he had spoken with Ms. Stewart recently and understood that she had received and read the letter and was working on the issue.

Performance Committee: Commissioner Palombi reported that he had met with the GOOHS Committee Chair Suzanne Jenkins, Council President Kevin Hyde and Councilwoman Elaine Brown to discuss an expansion of the process of departmental reviews that the GOOHS Committee began this council year. The concept being discussed would have all council committees assume oversight responsibility for the various departments and agencies that fall within their area of jurisdiction. There is a recognition of the need to better integrate performance measurement and reporting with the budgeting process. Mr. Palombi expects to see city council members attend TRUE Commission meetings to help seek help in defining issues and framing questions to ask of the departments. The Performance Committee plans to meet again in March.

### Auditor's Report

Assistant Council Auditor Pam Markham reported that her office is currently working on several audits that are nearing completion, including an audit of the HDR Better Jacksonville Project management contract and an audit of the library construction process. An audit of city cell phone usage is also nearing completion, and studies of overall library operations and the Shands Jacksonville indigent care contract are just beginning. Ms. Markham also noted that her office will shortly be hosting its 5-year peer review visit by the National Association of Local Government Auditors (NALGA), the national certifying organization of local government auditors.

Council Auditor Kirk Sherman, in response to a question posed at the February meeting, reported that state law requires local governments to have an occupational license review committee, and that Jacksonville currently has a committee within the administration that serves that purpose. The state law provides that occupational license fees may be raised by up to five percent every two years, but that Jacksonville has not raised its occupational license fees in several years. Commissioner Mallett stated that he served on the last citizen commission appointed to review occupational licenses several years ago, and he feels that mayors don't want to touch the issue of occupational license fee increases because it would be perceived as a tax increase, although it is a fee, not a tax. He offered to meet with Mr. Sherman to see where the current committee and review process lie.

### Chair's Report

- Chairwoman Lowe introduced David Lee, the potential nominee from the North CPAC to replace Dick Berry when his term expires in June.
- Ms. Lowe distributed copies of the Florida Government in the Sunshine law to the recently-appointed commission members.
- The Chairwoman announced that a new commissioner orientation meeting would be held on Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00 p.m. in City Hall to provide information on the commission's mission, policies and procedures and on the Government in the Sunshine law.
- Ms. Lowe read the thank-you note she received from retired Council Auditor Richard Wallace expressing his thanks for the commission's retirement gift and wishing the commission well.

### Old Business

- Tax Collector Mike Hogan was unable to attend today's meeting because of a conflicting meeting, but will be attending the April meeting.
- The TRUE Commission's request for a legal opinion from the General Counsel's Office regarding its scope of authority has been submitted by the Council President and a reply is being drafted by the OGC. It should be completed and released shortly.

### New Business

- Commissioner Whisenant stated that he has been watching the progress of the Wesconnett Boulevard widening project and is disappointed with the apparent quality of the work being done. He wondered who he or the commission could talk to in order to get an idea of how well the project is deemed to be going and when it will be completed. Chairwoman Lowe said that she would send a letter to Public Works Director Alan Mosley to seek and update on the project.
- Commissioner Roesser is concerned that the change in procedure for making copies of audits available to commissioners (via e-mail notification of the availability of the reports for download from the Council Auditor's Office web site) does not conform to the commission's Policies and Procedures document as it should. He wants to be sure that everyone receives a copy of each audit so that they can be read and committees assigned for review work at the commission meetings. Commissioner Martin volunteered to review the Policies and Procedures to see if they need amending to reflect the new method of audit availability.

- The commission was polled at the February meeting regarding which members wanted to receive audit reports electronically versus paper copies. The following members who were not present at that meeting indicated the following preferences for addition to that list:  
Electronic: Looney  
Paper: Berry, Burnett

#### Commissioner Comments

- Commissioner Martin welcomed Commissioner Looney and prospective commissioner David Lee of the North CPAC, present in the audience, to the commission.
- Commissioner Myers asked that an updated commission roster be sent to all members.

#### Public Comment

- Rosa Walker, a participant in the Housing Partnership home rehabilitation program, thanked the commission for its good work on her behalf in dealing with the Housing Partnership regarding her problems with the program. She appreciated the commission's willingness to take on her case and finally prompt some satisfactory response.
- Linda Johnson, also a participant in the Housing Partnership home rehabilitation program, also thanked the commission for its action thus far, but stated that her problems with the program have yet to be solved. She is still getting doubletalk from the contractor and no word at all from the Housing Partnership after 12 telephone calls.

#### Next meeting

The commission's next meeting will be on Monday, April 3, 2006 at 4:00 p.m. following the GOOHS Committee meeting in the City Council Chamber.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:09 p.m.

#### Items pending further follow-up

- Housing Partnership home rehab program – Commissioner Myers
- Legal opinion on scope of TRUE Commission jurisdiction – Chairwoman Lowe