



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

John Palombi, Chair
Ron Mallett, Vice Chair

Meeting Minutes

November 2, 2006

4:00 p.m.

Attendance: John Palombi (Chair), Marcella Lowe, Randy Deen, John Jolly, Mike Meroney, Ron Mallett, Mark Roesser, Elaine Burnett, Greg Anderson, Lou Myers, Bob Lee,

Excused: Mark Cowart, Arnold Whisenant, Gary Looney, Charles Magee, Lee Martin,

Absent: Charles Curley, Louvenia Tippins

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

Chairman Palombi announced the receipt of a letter of resignation from the Commission from Commissioner Arnold Whisenant due to family health problems. A replacement appointment will be sought from the Mayor's Office.

Minutes

The minutes of the October 5, 2006 meeting were distributed.

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

Committee Reports

Public Parking Committee: Commissioner Roesser reported that parking issues will be considered as part of a larger City Infrastructure Task Force that has begun meeting. He attended the first meeting last week and will continue to represent the TRUE Commission with regard to parking issues.

Funding Control and Effectiveness Committee: Commissioner Myers reported that the committee had met twice since the last commission meeting – once with Linda Lanier and Dolly Dillin of the Jacksonville Children's Commission and once with Sandra Hull-Richardson of the city's Community Services Department – to understand how those grant-making agencies determine which applicants to fund and how grant recipients are monitored. The committee has requested detailed information on two grant recipients and will be meeting to evaluate that documentation.

Performance Committee: Commissioner Meroney reported that the committee had sent surveys to 24 departments and agencies and, after some follow-up requests, had received responses from all but the Fire and Rescue Department. The nature of the responses varied widely. The committee will have a draft

report prepared by the first week in December which will be reviewed with the Office of General Counsel, which volunteered to participate in the process. The committee should be ready to make its report to the commission at the January meeting.

Chapter 118 Revisions – Public Service Grants: Commissioner Lowe reported that she and Commissioner Anderson sat in on a meeting of the City Council’s Special Committee on Public Service Grants and found the presentations extremely informative. The City is making approximately \$12 million in public service grants this fiscal year. Nine organizations receive regular annual appropriations through the PSG process. Because of a change in the format of the applications, a number of applicants reported confusion and claimed that the application instructions caused them to complete the application erroneously and thereby cost them funding. Work is underway to rectify the confusion and reformat the application.

The council committee raised several questions about public service grants:

- 1) Aren’t some of the funding arrangements actually in the form of contracts rather than grants?
- 2) How many funding sources can one applicant agency tap? Should agencies be limited to one City funding source?
- 3) Should applicants be limited as to the percentage of their budget that can be obtained via PSGs?
- 4) What is the policy regarding funding of start-up programs? Should they qualify for more funding initially and then be gradually reduced?

The Special Committee has scheduled two more meetings for November 15th and 19th. Staff member Jeff Clements provided some historical perspective on how public service grant process evolved out of the old Miscellaneous Appropriations process in the annual budget ordinance. The Ordinance Code chapter governing the process is still entitled Miscellaneous Appropriations even though the system has evolved over the past 6 to 8 years to a more formalized, criteria-driven, application-based system. Ms. Lowe stated that her committee would develop a list of additional questions and considerations to be circulated to Councilman Kevin Hyde and to Ros Phillips, Director of the Community Services Department, to help them in their deliberations. Copies will be circulated to all TRUE Commissioners.

Auditor’s Report

- Council Auditor Kirk Sherman reported that his office is anxious to facilitate the commission’s work on revising Ordinance Code Chapter 118; he feels there is considerable work to be done in that area.
- Mr. Sherman will be meeting shortly with Chairman Palombi and with Audit Committee Chairman Richard Clark regarding the Auditor’s Office work program.
- Two special investigations are on-going in his office, and should be completed shortly.
- The annual budget recap is being produced.
- The auditor’s staff has worked with Commissioner Mallett on the subject of occupational license revisions.
- Mr. Sherman and some of his staff will miss the December commission meeting because they will be attending a construction auditing conference.

Chair’s Report: None.

Old Business

- The chair inquired if there was interest in continuing Commissioner Whisenant’s inquiries into the City’s sign permitting process? The commission did not indicate sufficient interest to pursue the matter further.

- Given Commissioner Martin’s absence the idea of a TRUE Commission self-assessment was deferred.
- Commissioner Burnett reported that she would be utilizing Commissioner Jolly’s institutional knowledge and contacts at JEA to investigate JEA’s “green building” initiatives and would make a report at the next meeting.

New Business

None

Commissioner Comments

None

Public Comments

Former commissioner Tony Bates congratulated the commission on finally getting the subject of Chapter 118 revisions raised to the City Council’s attention after many years of trying and urged the group to keep up the good work. As President of the Concerned Taxpayers of Duval County he is trying to pursue the mission he started with the TRUE Commission in another venue.

Next meeting

The commission’s next meeting will be on Thursday, December 7th at 4:00 p.m. in the City Council Chamber.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Items pending further follow-up

- Public Parking Committee report – Commissioner Roesser
- Performance Committee report – Commissioner Meroney
- Funding Control and Effectiveness Committee – Commissioner Myers
- Chapter 118 Revisions Committee – Commissioner Lowe
- Definition and scope of a “lazy assets” review – Commissioner Mallett
- TRUE Commission performance review – Commissioner Martin
- JEA “green building” policies – Commissioner Burnett