



JACKSONVILLE CITY COUNCIL

TRUE COMMISSION PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES March 4, 2010 3:00 p.m.

City Council Conference Room B
Suite 425, City Hall
117 W. Duval Street

Attendance: Committee Members Greg Anderson (Chair), Randy Deen, Ryan Jones, Joe Andrews, Thomas Martin, Hiron Peck, Marcella Lowe, Mark Cowart and Jason Fischer (arr. 3:40)

Guest: Heath Beach – Assistant Budget Officer, Administration and Finance Department; Kirk Sherman and Kim Taylor – Council Auditor’s Office; Jeff Clements – City Council Research Division

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chairman Greg Anderson who introduced the topic of indigent care funding and recounted the committee’s questions from its last meeting on this subject.

Mr. Anderson noted that the state law provision regarding a shared state/county indigent care funding mechanism which puzzled the committee at its January meeting was enacted in the late 1980s by the Florida Legislature, but was never implemented and funded. The regulations in the Florida Administrative Code that would have governed the operation of the program were just repealed in December 2009 as it was apparent that after 20 years the state would not be implementing the legislation.

The City and Shands Jacksonville do participate in the federal Disproportionate Share program under which the City sends its \$23.7 million annual contribution toward the cost of indigent care provision at Shands Medical Center to the state, which in turn uses it to leverage additional federal Medicare funding. The City’s \$23.7 million comes back to Shands as approximately \$44 million, which still does not cover the full cost of Shands’ uncompensated indigent care expenses. Jacksonville is the only large county in Florida that is prohibited from levying a local option sales tax for either indigent care or support of a trauma center hospital. Shands worked hard to get a bill passed in the 2009 legislative session to remove this prohibition but it was vetoed by Governor Crist. The hospital will try again in the current session.

The legal document controlling the City’s relationship with Shands for indigent care funding is the lease for the hospital building and facilities and the contract for indigent care provision. Kirk Sherman stated that the Auditor’s Office plans to perform an audit of the indigent care contract in the fall of 2010 for the first time in a number of years. Because the contract is basically static (the same amount of funding being appropriated each year, and little or no City interaction with Shands other than the occasional audit), it appears that there really is not a City employee or official charged with administering and monitoring the operation of that contract. Chairman Anderson said that he would pose the question to the Mayor’s Office about whom, if anyone is the City’s point person on the indigent care contract.

Commissioner Andrews raised the issue of stand-alone outpatient clinics to divert indigent care cases from the Shands emergency room. The Charter Revision Commission heard a presentation from two companies on the operation of such clinics. Jeff Clements recounted part of that presentation in which

Alachua County hired a clinic provider to establish an outpatient clinic near the site of Alachua General Hospital when that hospital, which many citizens used for indigent care purposes, was closed. The hope was that citizens accustomed to using the Alachua General emergency room for their primary health care would use the clinic at the same site rather than travel across town to the Shands Gainesville emergency room. Commissioner Deen suggested looking at the Baptist Primary Care/Solantic network of clinics as a potential model for this kind of service provision. Staff was asked to have Penny Thompson of Shands Jacksonville provide information on how the hospital has used outpatient clinics to divert primary care traffic from the hospital emergency room.

Chairman Andrews introduced Heath Beach, Assistant Budget Officer, to discuss the City's recent upgrades to the capabilities of the City's budget web site. Mr. Beach demonstrated the site and the budget information now available on-line and explained the numerous links from the raw budget information to deeper levels of departmental performance data. Mr. Beach also gave an overview of the on-going series of 6 community budget workshops which are being produced by the Mayor's Office and Public Information Office with technical assistance from the Budget Office. The first 2 of the 6 workshops have been held and were well attended by interested, involved citizens. Practical logistical lessons have been learned from the first 2 workshops that will be applied to making the remaining 4 sessions run more smoothly.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 p.m.

Jeff Clements, Chief
Council Research Division
630-1405

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4:00 p.m.