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**COJ Journey Forward**

**Board Meeting Minutes**

**September 18, 2025**

1. **Welcome and Opening Chairman Remarks**

W.C. Gentry, Board Chair

Chairman Gentry called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m., outlining the Board’s distinct mission which includes identifying key factors contributing to crime, facilitating the reentry of ex-offenders, and collaborating with partners to address these challenges. Given that Kids Hope Alliance has the necessary programming and staff to support Journey’s objectives, they are an ideal partner for funding opportunities.

Mr. Gentry also mentioned that he recently discovered Ring Power Corporation's initiative to provide technical education programs for incarcerated individuals, which Mr. Griggs will explore further in the upcoming Re-entry meeting. Additionally, he announced the approval of Sylvia Perry as a new member of the Journey Forward Board.

Furthermore, Mr. Gentry addressed the schedule for Journey Forward Board meetings, noting that the ordinance mandates quarterly gatherings, with future meetings planned to occur every six weeks to two months.

Members Present: Betty Burney, Bernie de la Rionda, James Ellout, W.C. Gentry, Octavius Holliday, Hilbert McDougal, Jr., Dr. Tes Tuason

Also Present: Charles Griggs, Director of Community Initiatives

 Members Absent: Walter Piatt, Lawrence Schmitt, Stephen Zona

2. **Review/Approval of Minutes**

W.C. Gentry, Board Chair

Chairman Gentry asked if there were any amendments to the minutes for the July meeting. There being none, the minutes were approved.

3. **JF Dashboard Presentation**

Charles Griggs, Director of Community Initiatives

Mr. Griggs outlined the plans for the revamped Journey Forward website, which emphasizes essential priorities such as economic development, public safety, infrastructure, and community well-being. By consolidating these objectives into a single, user-friendly platform, the site acts as both a strategic guide and a means to monitor progress, reflecting the city’s dedication to transparency, accountability, and inclusive growth. The website is currently under development, and the Board will receive updates as advancements occur.

4. **Policies and Procedures Discussion**

W.C. Gentry, Board Chair

Chairman Gentry asked if there were any public comments regarding the Policies and Procedures and there were none. He then reviewed a draft of these procedures which include:

**Section 1.4 – Duties and Responsibilities**

Vice-Chair – In the event of the Chair’s prolonged absence or disability the Vice-Chair shall exercise all functions of the Chair “until appointment of the Chair by the Mayor as provided by Ch. 85.105, Ordinance Code, or thereafter elected by the Board.”

**Section 2.4 – Public Comment**

1. Time permitting and depending on the number of persons requesting to speak, public comment shall be limited to three (3) minutes;
2. If public comment is requested on an agenda item on which the board will take action, it should be permitted before the Board vote;
3. Public comment shall be civil and directed to matters within the province of Jacksonville Journey Forward; and
4. Except as provided in (b) above, public comment will ordinarily be scheduled at the end of the regular board meeting.

**Section 3.1 – Standing Committees**

Finance, Governance and Oversight Committees will provide reports by September of each year.
**Section 3.2 – Special Assignment/Ad Hoc Committees**

The Chair may create and appoint “persons” to ad hoc committees and designate members…

**Article V. – Effective Date**

These Rules of Procedure are effective October 1, 2025.

The Board unanimously approved the Policies and Procedures with a vote of 7-0.

**5. Administrative Update**

Charles Griggs, Director of Community Initiatives

Mr. Griggs presented an update to the Board regarding the budget, potential grant opportunities, and strategic planning for the upcoming board retreat, with each member receiving a copy of this information.

The City Council Finance Committee has approved the recommended budget for Journey Forward for the fiscal year 2025-2026, which was subsequently discussed at the City Council meeting on September 23, 2025.

Meanwhile, the Office of Grants & Contract Compliance is actively assessing eligibility for federal funding that aligns closely with the approved scopes of work. Currently, proposals are under evaluation for potential awards, with the process expected to conclude by early October, at which point the Chair will engage with the selected vendor to outline timelines and specific deliverables.

6. **Committee Assignments**

W.C. Gentry, Board Chair

Chairman Gentry presented the Board with a comprehensive list of the Journey Forward subcommittees and their respective members, which include Early Literacy, Re Entry, Juvenile Justice, School Related Programs, and Finance. Following a thorough discussion, adjustments were made to the membership of these subcommittees. Mr. Gentry will revise the document accordingly and circulate the updated version to the Board members.

7. **Public Comment**

Chairman Gentry inquired if there were any comments from the public. A representative from Housekeeping and Hospitality raised a question regarding the advantages of responding to Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and sought clarification on whether mental health services fall within the project's scope.

John Nooney expressed his support for establishing a public park along Pottsburg Creek and is advocating for a resolution that acknowledges his contributions to the advancement of the Florida Inland Navigation District.

8**. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.