

Public Safety Transition Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 3, 2023, 10:10 AM
Ed Ball Building, 8th Floor Board Room

Members Present: WC Gentry; Lolita Smith; Connie Hall; Paula Renfro; Frank Denton; Rachael Tutwiler Fortune; Rev. Barry Wright, and Derrick Mitchell

Subject Matter Experts Present: Michael Munz (former Chair of the Jacksonville Children's Commission and CEO of the Dalton Agency); Dr. Saralyn Glass (CEO of the Kids Hope Alliance and an expert in birth to 18); Debbie Verges (former Project Director for the Jacksonville Journey during Mayor Peyton's and Mayor Curry's Administrations); Dr. Cheryl Fountain (UNF/Florida Institute of Education)

Liaisons Present: Rita Mairs, Office of General Counsel; Linzee Ott, State Attorney's Office; Diana Johnson, Public Defender's Office; Joe Cowan, JSO

Chairman WC Gentry called the meeting to order at 10:10am. He welcomed everyone to the meeting and shared his appreciation toward committee members for excellent work accomplished in a short period of time. He expressed his appreciation for the work of committee member Johnny Oldham who is currently experiencing health issues and could not join today. Dr. Vicky Waytowich was out of town and Ellen Glasser was attending a funeral.

The chairman discussed a summary of the recommendations for the Jacksonville Journey Review as well as asked for committee input regarding changes, deletions, or additions. A working final report will be sent to the City. The committee will continue looking at the work product. The final report is due in early September.

The chair stated if everything can be completed today, another meeting in August will not be necessary. As things arise, subcommittees may meet.

A copy of the Public Safety Transition Committee Initial Recommendation Report (August 2023) was provided to committee members.

The chairman explained the introduction of the Recommendations Report which include three subcommittees and the Mayor's charges to the committee. The subcommittees are the following:

- Jacksonville Journey Review Subcommittee
- Literacy Initiatives Subcommittee
- Community Engagement and Crime Prevention

Chairman Gentry explained throughout the current process there has been a need to align all entities and organizations around an action and strategic plan to fight crime; make the city safe; and deliver on promises. He read and shared the recommendations with the committee.

Initial Recommendations of the Journey Review Subcommittee include the following recommendations:

1. Recommendation One – Establish “Jacksonville Journey Forward”.

- Funding recommendation – Allocate \$400,000 to staffing and third-party experts in data collection and analysis.
2. Recommendation Two – Launch a citywide campaign (possibly in connection with citywide literacy initiative) to increase VPK attendance and attendance K-12.
 - Funding recommendation – Allocate 5 to 8 million dollars to cover the costs of literacy, coaching, and stipends for after-school providers, early learning providers, and elementary school teachers.
 3. Recommendation Three – Provide literacy training, coaching, and stipends to after-school providers, elementary school teachers and early learning providers.
 - Funding recommendation – Allocate 5 to 8 million dollars to cover the costs of literacy, coaching, and stipends for after-school providers, early learning providers, and elementary school teachers.
 4. Recommendation Four – Expand the availability of after-school programs and tutoring.
 - Funding recommendation – Leverage State School Readiness or 21st Century Learning Center funds to secure an additional budget of 5 to 10 million dollars. This will allow more students to be reached and provide valuable after-school opportunities.
 5. Recommendation Five – Expand upon the Read Jax Literacy campaign.
 - Funding recommendation – Allocate \$750,000 for an extensive marketing campaign that targets the entire city. This campaign will raise awareness about literacy, promote reading initiatives, and encourage community engagement to create a lasting impact on literacy rates in Jacksonville.
 6. Recommendation Six – Expand the abilities of the Kids Hope Alliance
 - Funding recommendation – Provide necessary funding to expand Kids Hope Alliance’s services to youth up to age 24 and to adults of any age, as long as they are not part of a family unit or part of Jacksonville Journey Forward program. Also, allocate resources to establish a trust fund model for Kids Hope Alliance, enabling them to carry over unspent funds each year and reinvest in projects that will benefit the community in the long run.
 7. Recommendation Seven – Ensure the community is aware of all resources offered to them. Establish a master calendar of all City events targeted to families.
 - Funding recommendation – \$150, 000 for technology and staff to manage it.

A few committee members suggested there should be an oversight committee as well as having processes in place to ensure when there are Administration shifts or changes, current recommendations are not reverted. Regarding Infrastructure there should be an oversight committee that utilizes data collection and analysis in the near and long term based upon results of data and its effectiveness, along with guiding documents.

The committee also suggested including community leaders, businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, City Council, and a strong executive summary in the recommendations.

Recommendations Literacy Initiatives Subcommittee

The draft report is attached, and the recommendations follow, starting on page 12.

Recommendation One -Chairman Gentry discussed Recommendations on page 12 to succinctly state ideas.

Recommendation Two - It is recommended that Florida State College of Jacksonville, Edward Waters University and Jacksonville University be included in the recommendation.

Recommendation Three – It is recommended that non-English speaking children and adults be included in the recommendation.

Recommendation Five – Expand non-English speaking initiatives in parks and neighborhoods.

Recommendation Six – It is suggested that gains and accomplishments are visible citywide or on display to see growth and celebration of goals accomplished. Qualitative analysis should be used to show we are growing and understood by everyone. Also develop a mechanism to collect feedback on progress being made.

Recommendation Seven – It is suggested that partnerships are formed with the community as a part of the marketing campaign effort. They should be included as active brokers at the table. This will facilitate ownership and buy in at the community level. Also including community ambassadors helps with sustainability.

Recommendations of the Community Engagement and Crime Prevention Subcommittee

Recommendation One – Move to the Review at the beginning of the document.

Recommendation Three – Add language regarding a continuum of care. Linzee Ott will send the verbiage to Debbie Verges.

Recommendation Five – Restate the recommendation to explain what juveniles are required to do if they get assistance with their restitution.

Recommendation Ten-Reword

Chairman Gentry and the subcommittees discussed each subcommittees recommendations and other promising programs for further consideration to include as listed in the draft on page 17.

- Vicky Waytowich has added language for number 4. Implement a Gange Prevention Training Initiative read: Expand the current gang prevention programs to a more developed continuum of services.

Chairman Gentry moved to approve recommendations with editing. Barry Wright moved to approve. Frank Denton seconded the motion. Recommendations were approved by the committee.

Chairman Gentry invited the public and those in the room to email appropriate ideas or thoughts to Debbie.

Four public comment cards were completed:

1. Cora Cosina – Assistant State Attorney
2. Tyrone Merchant-Read 30 Inc.
3. Kimberly Miller-Girl Scouts
4. Demitri Brewer-Center for Children’s Rights

Chairman Gentry asked if there was a need to revote on the recommendation to move forward now that Public Comment had been heard.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:08PM.