

JSEB Monitoring Committee



Quarterly Meeting, Q2 2025

Thursday, May 15, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Don Davis Room, 1ST Floor, City Hall, 117 West Duval St

JSEB MONITORING COMMITTEE PRELIMINARY MEETING MINUTES

May 15, 2025

10:00 a.m.

Don Davis Room, 1st floor, City Hall

Committee Members:

Mike Zaffaroni, Trade Association Member, Chair: Present

Roderick Myrick, JSEB Contractor Member: Excused

Monique Thompson, Citizen Member: Present

Kimano Edwards, Citizen Member: Present

Leslie Campbell, JSEB Contractor Member: Excused

Vacant, Non-JSEB Contractor Member: Vacant

The Honorable Council Member Terrance Freeman, Designated Member: Present

Advisors:

Gregory Grant - JSEB Administrator, GGrant@coj.net: Present

Shannon MacGillis - Office of General Counsel, SMacGillis@coj.net: Present

Staff:

Ivana Gavric, EBO Office, IGavric@coj.net: Present

Greg Pease, EBO Office, gpease@coj.net: Present

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Zaffaroni convened the meeting at 10:03 a.m. and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

2. **Roll Call and Verification of Quorum** (4 members): Conducted by Chair; quorum satisfied at 10:30 by arrival of K. Edwards.

3. **Approval of Minutes from prior meeting(s):** *none pending.*

4. **Call for Public Speakers:** *none*

5. Reports:

A. JSEB Administrator: Status of program goals to date. (10 minutes)

Gregory Grant, JSEB Administrator, reported strong program growth since August 2023. The number of JSEB participants has more than doubled, increasing from 215 to 489, reflecting 132% growth and a steady monthly increase of approximately 5%. In the current fiscal year, JSEB contractors received \$107 million in procurement payments, and the program is on pace to reach a similar total again. Over the past two years, \$1.2 million in capital has been deployed to JSEB, with \$700,000 remaining for disbursement.

To support ongoing development, three workforce centers have been established offering training in procurement, estimation, and business sustainability. A transparency dashboard now enables council district-level tracking of program metrics. Outreach initiatives have also expanded, with meetings and participant testimonials now available online, contributing to increased visibility and participation. Grant also confirmed that the program currently meets 22% of the city's 20% legislative JSEB participation goal. The two current focus areas are unbundling large contracts into smaller, accessible packages and auditing participation schedules, although the latter requires additional resources or technology to streamline.

Chair Zaffaroni inquired about the locations and staffing of the new entrepreneurship centers. Mr. Grant responded that the centers are currently located at the downtown library on Laura Street, in the Phoenix Arts District, and at on Golfair Blvd. An additional center is planned for Cecil Field, with another under consideration on the South Side to ensure broader geographic access. The staffing and operation of these centers are being arranged through an RFP process specifically designated for JSEBs, offering opportunities for qualified businesses, including consultants, to participate. Outreach meetings will now rotate among these centers rather than being held by district, with the first scheduled for May 22 at 6 p.m.

Chair Zafaroni also requested better communication of upcoming events to avoid missing them, to which Mr. Grant recommended checking the program's frequently updated website.

Council Member Freeman suggested to notify the JSEB Monitoring Committee of important upcoming events via email in the future. Shannon MacGillis added that email blasts to Committee Members could be used to notify members about such events quickly, and clarified the Sunshine rules of email communication when sent to all members.

Chair Zaffaroni raised questions about the interpretation of the city's 20% JSEB participation goal, pointing out that applying 20% to the full \$1.92 billion city budget would imply a target of \$380 million. Mr. Grant clarified that the cited \$107 million represents actual payments made, not designated allocations. Greg Pease explained that the 20% target is calculated only on qualifying expenditures, such as contracts for services and capital improvements, not on employee costs and other non-contractual items. Chair Zaffaroni praised the clarity of this explanation and noted the importance of accurate communication to partners like the Jax Chamber. Mr. Grant added that the committee would receive monthly situation reports tracking both city-internal and external JSEB engagement, such as those tied to stadium or Gateway Jax projects.

Council Member Freeman emphasized the importance of tracking JSEB involvement in all projects receiving city funding, noting this data could support future initiatives like disparity studies. Mr. Grant agreed and confirmed that external participation is now being measured. He also acknowledged Council Member Freeman's contributions to integrating nonprofits into the JSEB program, which adds equity and reinforces the need to unbundle large contracts.

Responding to a question from Chair Zaffaroni about what the 489 JSEB participants means and what they doing. Mr. Grant explained the program's new tier system. Businesses are categorized into three tiers based on revenue: Tier 1 includes those

earning less than \$300,000, Tier 2 covers those earning between \$300,000 to \$1 million, and Tier 3 includes businesses earning up to \$12 million. Currently, 55% of participants fall in Tier 1, 25% in Tier 2, and 20% in Tier 3. The goal is to reach an even distribution across tiers to demonstrate business development and growth.

Council Member Freeman asked how businesses transition between tiers and the duration of JSEB eligibility, which Mr. Grant confirmed is 15 years from the date of a participant's first contract, per recent legislation. Council Member Freeman inquired about the development of the JSEB transparency dashboard and whether it was built internally. Mr. Grant confirmed the dashboard was developed by the IT department and remains in refinement to improve data accuracy before full public release. When asked about how the program evaluates its online outreach, Mr. Grant acknowledged the need to start tracking how users find event information and committed to exploring analytics through the IT department or informal event surveys. He also confirmed that internal discussions are ongoing about incorporating AI tools — such as B2GNow — to help automate contract unbundling and identify opportunities more efficiently. Council Member Freeman encouraged exploring a pilot project using AI for this purpose.

Committee Member Monique Thompson asked for details on how the \$107 million in payments was distributed across the different tiers of JSEBs and how many businesses received those contracts. Mr. Grant said that this tracking only began recently, and a full breakdown would be available by year's end. He added that future reporting would include not just contract values, but also the number of firms per tier securing contracts, which will provide insight into whether a few dominant firms are winning disproportionate shares of the contracts and help shape more equitable access initiatives.

Committee Member Kimano Edwards asked for clarity on what the intent of the Entrepreneurship centers are. Mr. Grant responded to explain the centers will be a full-service resource for the public with a focus on entrepreneurship and workforce development. He also explained the partnership JSEB has with COJ Employee Services to have a monthly information session for COJ employment.

B. Equal Business Opportunity Office: status of continuing education, training and mentoring programs, and program marketing and community outreach, including recommended goals, methods to measure goals, and the achievement or otherwise or previously set goals, as to each topic.

6. Presentations:

A. Rules of Order, Sunshine Laws and Ethics Code: Shannon MacGillis (10 minutes)

Shannon MacGillis, representing the Office of General Counsel, outlined her responsibilities to the committee. Her primary role is to ensure that meetings adhere to proper parliamentary procedures, including compliance with Robert's Rules of Order and Florida's Sunshine Laws. She helps manage meeting structure, facilitates motions and voting processes, and keeps the official record clear—particularly during public comments. While she provides legal guidance, she clarified that she is not part of the Ethics Commission, does not handle contract law, and will not assess the qualifications of JEP participants.

MacGillis explained how the Sunshine Laws apply to communications between Committee members. She emphasized that committee members must avoid discussing any matters that could

come to a vote outside of public meetings and cannot use staff as intermediaries to communicate with one another.

Additionally, MacGillis noted that ethics training is mandatory every four years and must be completed within six months for new members. She reassured members that seeking her advice is encouraged, and she will always offer accurate legal guidance, even if it means taking time to find the correct answer.

Continuing her explanation of Sunshine Law compliance, MacGillis reiterated that members of the same committee must not engage in any form of communication—whether in person, by email, or even on a napkin—about issues likely to come before the body for a vote. She strongly advised against such conversations outside of public meetings and encouraged members to contact her directly if they are uncertain about what can be shared. She offered to help members draft emails appropriately or facilitate distribution through staff to ensure proper one-way communication. MacGillis highlighted that emails marked, “ONE WAY COMMUNICATION – DO NOT REPLY” are carefully constructed to avoid violations, often using blind copy addressees. However, not all senders follow best practices, so members should never “reply all,” as doing so could inadvertently result in a Sunshine Law breach, which carries legal consequences.

MacGillis concluded by emphasizing her availability to guide the committee through compliance issues at any time—before, during, or after meetings—and encouraged members to use her as a resource.

7. Unfinished Business (If Any): *none pending.*

8. New Business

- JSEB Updates – Gregory Grant (15 minutes)
 - o JSEB Monitoring Committee – City Ordinance Code 126.607 – Establishment/Purpose
 - o New and recently passed legislation
 - o Entrepreneurial Centers/Ribbon Cutting

Committee members sought clarification on their legislative responsibilities. Mr. Grant introduced the topic and expressed optimism about the committee’s progress, crediting Councilman Freeman for his strong support of the program. Greg Pease from the JSEB office elaborated on the committee’s official purpose, referring to Jacksonville City Ordinance Section 126.607. He explained that the committee is tasked with annually reviewing program performance, including tracking contract awards to JSEBs, evaluating training and access to capital initiatives, and comparing outcomes to program goals. The committee also monitors financial thresholds and participation limits, and can recommend legislative changes through formal reports to the Mayor or City Council.

Ms. MacGillis from the Office of General Counsel clarified that the ordinance had recently been updated with new responsibilities, including setting annual goals and identifying legislative needs. She emphasized that upcoming changes would likely require tracking both the number and value of contracts awarded to JSEBs.

Motion: Motion to amend Section 126.607(c), Ordinance Code, to provide that the JSEB Monitoring Committee shall meet monthly with the exceptions of June–July and November–December), while maintaining quarterly reporting.

Moved by: M. Thompson

Second by: K. Edwards

Discussion: The members generally acknowledged that while special meetings are permitted, using them too frequently could be problematic. Formalizing a monthly schedule helps ensure transparency and predictability for the public.

Vote: voice vote, pass (unanimously)

Motion: Motion to amend Section 126.607(c), Ordinance Code, to provide that the JSEB Monitoring Committee may meet monthly with the exceptions of June–July and November–December), while maintaining quarterly reporting.

Moved by: K. Edwards

Second by: M. Thompson

Discussion: The members generally discussed that “shall” meet monthly may be too big of a commitment, and that perhaps alternative language such as “may” meet monthly as business requires would be preferable. There was a consensus of the Members that additional language be explored prior to a vote.

Vote: NO VOTE; tabled by Chair to the next meeting in the interest of time.

9. Announcements

10. Adjournment: Conducted by Chair

Meeting adjourned 11:36 p.m.