

JSEB Monitoring Committee Meeting



Thursday, June 26, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Don Davis Room, 1ST Floor, City Hall, 117 West Duval St

JSEB MONITORING COMMITTEE PRELIMINARY MEETING MINUTES

June 26, 2025

2:00 p.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: Excused
Kimano Edwards, Citizen Member: Present
Leslie Campbell, JSEB Contractor Member: Present
Vacant, Non-JSEB Contractor Member: Vacant
The Honorable Council Member Terrance Freeman, Designated Member: Present

Advisors:

Gregory Grant - JSEB Administrator, GGrant@coj.net: Excused
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 2:08 p.m. and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

2. Roll Call and Verification of Quorum (4 members): Conducted by Chair; quorum satisfied at 2:20 p.m. by arrival of K. Edwards.

3. Approval of Minutes from prior meeting(s): [taken up upon quorum] Approved
Motion to approve: Freeman, 2nd Edwards; unanimous

4. Call for Public Speakers: *none*

5. Reports:

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

The administrative report was presented by Mr. Pease, stepping in for the JSEB Administrator, Greg Grant, who was unavailable due to a scheduling conflict. Pease provided a brief update, noting that not much had changed since the last meeting. He presented summary figures as of March 31, 2025, noting that while data is gathered monthly, it is typically reviewed and compiled on a quarterly basis. According to the update, the total procurement spending had reached approximately \$230.3 million, with over \$9.6 million paid to JSEB prime contractors, and nearly \$37.5 million paid to

subcontractors. Combined, the total payments to JSEBs amounted to around \$47.2 million, representing just over 20 percent of their participation goal. Pease said the program was in a solid position overall.

Chair Zaffaroni asked for clarification on the distinction between prime and subcontractor payments. Pease explained that prime contractors work directly with the city, whereas subcontractors are hired under a prime contractor's lead. Both arrangements count toward JSEB participation goals, but the distinction is important, especially for Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects. By ordinance, a portion of CIP work—believed to be around 20 percent—is required to be awarded directly to JSEB prime contractors.

Pease continued his report by noting that the Access to Capital program funds had been fully distributed, and that the office was preparing to contract a new provider to manage the next phase of the initiative. A previous balance of approximately \$700,000 to \$750,000 had since been allocated. Pease restated from the last meeting, we have had an increase to 489 JSEBs compared to 2023. There is a goal of an annual increase of 5% per year.

Chair Zafarroni expressed a desire to learn more about current developments and asked whether a system existed to bring more businesses into the JSEB program. They referenced outreach efforts from the previous year, particularly Mr. Grant's involvement in attending events across city council districts to raise awareness about the program. These events were well-attended and effective in informing people about JSEB. In response, staff confirmed that outreach efforts are ongoing and are expected to continue. A major source of interest has been the entrepreneurship and workforce development centers. Word-of-mouth has played a significant role in promoting these centers, especially within the communities where they are located. As more people learn about the centers, inquiries and interest in the JSEB program continue to grow. Additionally, the city has recently opened up JSEB certification to nonprofits, and the application process for them has just begun.

The conversation then shifted to the operational status of the centers. Ivana, JSEB Project Analyst, explained that although some centers like the Golfair location and a library branch have not officially opened, they have already begun soft operations and are monitoring foot traffic. A Request for Proposals (RFP) is out to hire a firm to manage these centers, with the hope of being fully operational by July. The Phoenix Arts District center has had less foot traffic, and the fourth center in Cecil Field is undergoing renovations, with a projected opening in August.

Chair Zafarroni inquired about how the city plans to measure the centers' success. Staff responded that an upcoming JSEB survey will provide participant feedback, including perceptions of the centers. Additionally, the RFP for center management includes specific requirements around collecting and reporting metrics—such as foot traffic, number of visitors, participation in training sessions, and the distinction between JSEB and non-JSEB attendees. Reports will be submitted quarterly to help the city track progress and determine effectiveness.

Greg Pease clarified that the RFP seeks a vendor to manage the day-to-day operations of the centers—opening and closing, managing calendars, tracking attendance, and ensuring logistical needs are met. However, programming and training activities will still be

overseen by city staff and partner providers. The vendor's role is primarily administrative, not content-based. Chair Zafarroni stated that they'd like to receive regular updates on the centers' performance. Mr. Pease confirmed he had no additional updates, and no further questions were raised by the committee.

The discussion moved on to the status of the quarterly report. Shannon MacGillis explained that they are working on a draft version, designed to resemble a report card. This new format would include clearly defined goals and performance measures—such as achieving 20% JSEB participation in Capital Improvement Projects—and would track whether targets were met, exceeded, or missed. If targets were not met, the report would include a written explanation and the proposed remedy to be implemented by the next quarter. This would provide a consistent and easy-to-read tool for tracking progress over time. Committee members could review past and current reports side-by-side to assess follow-through on stated plans. The completed report would be submitted quarterly, reviewed and voted on by the committee, and then signed by the chair and forwarded to the council president and the mayor.

Council Member Freeman asked what would happen if the committee or a council member found the report card unsatisfactory. The response was that the committee could request revisions or defer approval to the next meeting if more information was needed. The process allows for transparency and accountability.

Council Member Freeman appreciated the creation of a report card with measurable standards that could highlight problems before they escalated. He expressed concern that in some areas of government, when people feel immune to oversight, they may ignore such feedback. Therefore, he hoped this system would help reinforce accountability in the JSEB program.

Shannon MacGillis recommended that staff continue working on refining the scorecard and bring back a near-final version for the committee to review at the next meeting. The idea was for the scorecard to comprehensively cover all relevant metrics—anything the committee deems important to monitor. The member used a light-hearted example about pie baking to illustrate that if the committee decides a certain outcome or activity should be tracked, such as producing a specific number of pies, then that should be added as a line item. The report would then show not only whether the target was met but also explain how shortfalls would be addressed. The committee could establish follow-up expectations, such as when a remedy—like purchasing a new oven—is expected to be implemented, and request updates when goals are reached. She stressed that the committee should have the flexibility to add new items to the report as long as they are measurable and align with either established ordinances or internal program goals. They welcomed future discussion about enhancing the committee's policy authority, noting that these improvements would benefit the program long after current committee members have moved on. The goal is to create a reporting tool that ensures accountability, transparency, and continuity, regardless of changes in staffing or administration.

Shannon MacGillis also suggested that once the report card format is finalized, it should be presented to the City Council to demonstrate how the JSEB program's progress and goals are now being tracked in a more transparent and structured way. They acknowledged that not every goal will always be met, but emphasized that it's more important for council and the public to understand what the program is working toward.

and how it's performing. She explained how exceeding a performance goal too often can indicate a need to raise the target. If a metric is consistently underperforming for valid reasons, the goal might need to be re-evaluated. The committee could recommend revising internal targets or even ordinance-based goals, depending on the situation. The point was that these metrics should evolve as the program matures.

Chair Zaffaroni chimed in, agreeing that establishing baseline goals—like the target number of certified JSEBs—is essential and that it's not always a yes-or-no discussion. They supported bringing a near-final version of the report card to the next meeting so that the committee could make any final tweaks before adopting it.

Mr. Pease asked about the process of submitting the completed scorecard. According to the ordinance, the report is supposed to be submitted within 14 days after the meeting. He wondered how to incorporate committee feedback in time, considering the short turnaround. Shannon MacGillis responded that the ordinance's language was somewhat vague and might even be impractical. She suggested designating specific quarterly meetings where the finalized report card format would be used. During these meetings, a pre-filled version would be distributed for committee review. For example, in a January meeting (if that were a designated quarterly meeting), the administrator would provide a completed scorecard with metrics already filled in, indicating whether each goal was met or not. This system would ensure the committee has time to discuss the results, request changes, or approve the report for submission to the city council and mayor. The new process would better align with the committee's desire for meaningful oversight and improved tracking of the JSEB program's progress. She discussed the practicality of finalizing the scorecard report during the meeting itself, noting that once the committee reviewed and suggested any changes, the updated version could be signed by the chair and submitted promptly. While the current ordinance calls for submission within 14 days of the meeting, this timeline could work as long as most of the effort is completed during the meeting. The committee agreed that voting on the report would happen after it is presented and revised, and then it would be submitted with a cover letter and the chair's signature as the committee's official endorsement.

The conversation then shifted back to reviewing the minutes from the previous meeting [due to the satisfaction of quorum]. After confirming that everyone had reviewed them, a motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

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: *None*

7. Unfinished Business (If Any):

At the last meeting, there had been a motion and a second to propose changing the meeting schedule in the ordinance. The suggested language was that the committee “shall meet monthly, no less than quarterly,” accommodating breaks in months like June, July, November, and December. However, time constraints had delayed the vote. Staff recommended withdrawing that motion and starting fresh, especially since updated

language had since been developed. The motion to withdraw was made, seconded, and approved.

To guide a new discussion, a draft version of ordinance language was proposed for Section 126.607(c), which currently only requires quarterly meetings with the JSEB administrator. The new language would state that the committee “shall hold regular meetings at least quarterly at such times and places as it may designate and may hold more frequent meetings as determined by the chair”. The idea is to designate four of these regular meetings as official quarterly meetings, ensuring consistent structure and public expectation around those specific sessions.

Council Member Freeman asked whether this language would require the JSEB administrator or their staff to attend all meetings, including additional ones beyond the quarterly minimum. Staff assured the committee that current leadership is committed to full participation and would be present at all meetings. Freeman emphasized the need to codify this expectation in case future leadership isn’t as committed, noting the importance of building policy that will endure beyond the current administration and committee members. He also raised concerns about scheduling logistics. City council members often plan meetings far in advance, so it would be helpful for this committee to do the same. Knowing when meetings—especially the designated quarterly ones—will occur would allow everyone to plan ahead and avoid scheduling conflicts. He suggested that while the chair could call additional meetings as needed, there should be some built-in structure for the year.

Shannon MacGillis responded with a possible solution: the ordinance could require a minimum of quarterly meetings while the committee’s own internal rules could establish a regular monthly schedule, excluding certain months. That way, any adjustments to the meeting schedule wouldn’t require changes to the ordinance itself—just an update to the committee’s bylaws or policies.

Chair Zaffaroni supported this suggestion and emphasized the importance of making sure key staff, like the administrator or a designated representative, are required to attend. Without staff present, the meetings could become ineffective or a waste of time. They recommended adding that requirement to either the ordinance or the committee’s bylaws to avoid future issues if leadership changes.

Shannon MacGillis acknowledged that some of these concerns bordered on broader policy issues and noted that committee members or council sponsors could work together to propose legislation that reflects those priorities.

Council Member Freeman suggested language of a “JSEB administrator and/or Staff”. Greg Pease responded to suggest the verbiage to say department designate rather than staff.

Member Leslie Campbell asked for clarity on the current discussion and whether the language is going to create a new type of meeting. Shannon MacGillis responded the discussion is to have more regular meetings monthly and regular attendees for those meetings.

Shannon MacGillis stated in the past, the committee has relied on detailed meeting minutes from the quarterly sessions as their main form of reporting to the City Council

and the Mayor's Office on the program's progress. The idea now is to replace those minutes with a report card. At the scheduled quarterly meetings, the committee would expect presentations from the program administrator, along with any other relevant individuals—such as the risk manager, who typically reports in the spring and fall. This report card would serve as the committee's official message to both the council and the mayor, summarizing how the committee evaluates the JSEB program. Meanwhile, internal surveys would remain part of the program's own internal review process.

Council Member Freeman is in support of this discussion to have a standard report card rather than using past minutes. He raised a question to staff the possibility of requiring specific departments of the City to present to the committee with direct information from those departments. Shannon MacGillis responded to the question with, the body has the ability to invite other departments to attend but is not to require at this time. However, an invitation from this body would carry weight.

Council Member Freeman highlighted the need to shift how the Jacksonville Small & Emerging Business (JSEB) program is perceived, pointing out that many people associate the initiative primarily with a few individuals like Mr. Grant rather than recognizing the committee members who are actively shaping and advancing the program. He argued that the contributions of the committee members, such as Ms. Campbell and Mr. Edwards, should be more visible, especially given the significant financial role the program plays—currently handling \$47 million with the potential to grow further considering there are only 400 registered businesses out of 26,000 small businesses in the city. He emphasized the importance of laying a strong policy foundation now to support that future growth.

The committee moved to formalize a policy around meeting frequency and administrator attendance. The verbiage will state a change to 126.607(c) “the committee shall hold regular meetings at least quarterly at such times and place as it may designate and may hold more frequent regular meetings as determined by the chair”. A motion was passed to hold regular quarterly meetings with the option for additional ones at the discretion of the chair. These extra meetings would be clearly stated in the bylaws for transparency. There was also support for holding meetings in different communities to make them more accessible, reflecting a desire to bring the committee's work directly to the people it serves.

8. New Business

- JSEB Updates – Gregory Pease/Shannon MacGillis (10 minutes)
 - o New, recently passed and pending legislation 2025-411
 - o New Reporting Requirements

A legislative update was shared regarding bill 2025-411-E, particularly around the role of "prime mentors" within the JSEB program. These participants, though no longer eligible for the 20% contract set-asides, remain in the program and retain access to support resources like capital. The legislation aims to allow seasoned businesses to stay involved in mentoring roles without dominating contract opportunities intended for newer or smaller businesses.

There was considerable discussion about the extended participation period for mentors. Some members expressed concern that allowing mentors to remain in the program for up

to 24 years—15 years as a participant and an additional 9 as a mentor—could limit access for newer participants. They questioned whether there should be a clearer transition or “off-ramp” for mentors to ensure turnover and opportunity for others. Some committee members were supportive of the extension as a way for mentors to give back, while others questioned what the actual incentives were for businesses to remain in the program if they no longer had access to contracting benefits. It was noted that access to capital remained a benefit, though the amounts might not be significant for more established companies.

Concerns were also raised about whether the program adequately prepares small businesses for large-scale contracts. Members recalled real examples of businesses awarded contracts they were unequipped to handle, which ultimately caused service gaps and delays for the city. The group emphasized the need to shift the program’s focus from merely awarding contracts to supporting real capacity building, business development, and financial sustainability. They stressed the importance of not setting businesses up for failure by pushing them into opportunities they aren’t ready for, and instead ensuring they are positioned to grow and diversify beyond city contracting.

Data collection and reporting emerged as another critical topic. Members underscored the importance of not only tracking how much money is spent, but also how many businesses are benefiting. They raised concerns that if only a few firms are securing the majority of the contracts, it undermines the broader goals of the program. Reporting should reflect both the total contract value and the distribution among participants to assess equity and effectiveness.

The committee agreed to hold its next meeting on Wednesday, August 13th at 3 p.m. Acknowledging improved communication from the staff, they also pointed out ongoing issues around event execution, particularly at business information sessions held in partnership with UF problems such as locked venues, poor parking, and unclear coordination were brought up, along with concerns that only one staff member, Ivana Gavric, JSEB Project Analyst, had been consistently attending these sessions. While her work was praised, several members said the burden shouldn’t fall solely on one person and that the office needs more support.

There was a strong call for better coordination, clearer communication, and more consistent engagement between the committee and city staff. Members offered to assist with outreach and represent the committee at public events but emphasized that they need to be kept in the loop and provided with relevant information in advance. They recommended that future agendas include a list of upcoming events to help improve awareness and involvement. The conversation ended on a positive note, with members expressing enthusiasm about the direction of the committee, their expanding role, and the opportunity to shape a more impactful, long-term strategy for supporting small businesses in Jacksonville.

9. Announcements: *None*

10. Adjournment: Conducted by Chair

Meeting adjourned 3:36 p.m.

