

# LOUISVILLE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW COMMISSION MINUTES

Friday, June 9, 2023  
3:00 p.m.

## I. CALL TO ORDER:

Co-Chair Jones called the meeting to order at **3:03pm**.

This meeting was held pursuant to KRS 61.826

## II. ROLL CALL:

**Present (13):** Co-Chair Rep. Jason Nemes  
Co-Chair Earl Jones  
Senator Gerald Neal  
Senator Mike Nemes  
Rep. Ken Fleming  
Rep. Pamela Stevenson  
CM Jecorey Arthur  
CW Cindi Fowler  
Marianne Butler  
Shelby Williams Somervell  
Scott Shoenberger  
Mayor Bonnie Jung  
Chief Sean Dreisbach

**Absent (2):** Senator Julie Raque Adams  
CM Anthony Piagentini

**Attendees:** Dr. Paul Coomes  
Professor Bill Hoyt  
Professor Matthew Ruther

### III. REPORT FROM MR. COOMES:

- Dr. Coomes presented his “Local Government Services & Expenditures in Jefferson County (Continued from 4/12/23 Meeting)”
- Jumped to the 4th slide, discussing Street paving & the Road Condition index and added the percent of square footage of pavement.
  - States that geographic distribution of paving is fairly stable, year to year and states the suburban cities receive their own state road fund dollars and are responsible for their local streets. Metro is responsible for the major roads passing through the cities.
  - Average road condition is best in the suburban cities and worst in the Urban Service District (USD)
  - Discussion on the Road Condition Index and what a rating of 50 means. CW Fowler & former CW Butler spoke to 50 and below being eligible for repaving first.
- Slide 6 - Metro Public Health and Wellness provided estimated residence of clients for Metro clinics, test & services from May 2022-April 2023.
  - Usage is roughly proportional to population distribution with 36.9% coming from USD, 10.4% from small cities, 42.2% from formerly unincorporated county & 10.7% coming from outside the county
  - Coomes states it is well distributed
  - Co-Chair Jones asked who pays for those outside of the County.
  - Coomes assumes it comes from the General Fund and if someone needs service and they walk into a clinic, they get served, regardless of county
- Slide 7 - Metro Public Health and Wellness revenues are \$21.5 million in FY22.
  - Although an additional \$8.4 million is funneled through Public Health from the General Fund pays for medical care of inmates at Corrections and \$.9 million for Family Health Centers
- Slide 8 - TARC generated \$71.4 million in FY22
  - Estimated Tax paid by residents:
    - USD = 19.8%
    - Suburban Cities = 15.5%
    - Formerly Unincorporated Area = 36.5%
    - Non-Residents = 28.2%
  - Ridership:
    - USD = 77% of bus usage
    - Suburban Cities = 8.9%



- Slide 10 - Coomes states Metro Council Staff have been tracking Capital Projects - \$2.5 billion over the last twenty budgets but no geographic identifiers, \$1.6 billion over the last ten budgets.
  - 55% funded by bonds
  - 22% funded from federal funds
  - 6% from the General fund
- Slide 11 - \$382 million in community projects over 11 fiscal years
  - Primarily parks, libraries, street improvements, sidewalks renovations
  - Coomes states Steve Haag & Beth Stenberg provided the data
  - The downtown zip codes: 40202 & 40203 account for 2/3rd of the expenditures.
  - CM Arthur spoke to the new housing units report that CM Piagentini references when speaking about Metro Council District 19's overwhelming new housing compared to other Council Districts.
    - CM Arthur references the chart showing from 2019 through March 2022, 8,419 new dwelling units were built and over 80% of those are in Council Districts outside of the Urban Service District.
    - CM Arthur asks again where the data came from and explained you can alter the Capital Projects and expenditures data based upon what you include and exclude and would like additional information on what was included and excluded.
  - Coomes agrees lots of affordable housing has been constructed in the suburbs however that information is excluded from this data.
    - All federally subsidized projects are excluded. What is included is Parks & Libraries, primarily, as well as streetscape projects such as Nulu & New Dixie.
    - CM Arthur's statements reference the \$2.5 billion in capital projects over the last 20 years that are not available.
  - CM Arthur asks why it was excluded
  - Coomes states if the project is federally funded, the project would have occurred anyway regardless of distinctions in USD, Small Cities, Formerly unincorporated areas.
  - CM Arthur states the source for housing is not always federal. Metro bonds and some did come from ARP funds. Expenditures based upon geography need to incorporate all capital expenditures as that would more accurately reflect new investment county-wide, reducing the share of development in 40202 & 40203

- Rep. Ken Fleming asked how much Louisville Metro bonds for Affordable Housing. CM Arthur stated this year is \$15 million, all bonded with year's past being \$10 million and with ARP funds, \$100 million.
- Fleming stated those amounts will will have an impact if incorporated into the data set, but not significantly to make 40202 & 40203 out of the 50% of the capital expenditures.
- Coomes clarifies that we are only looking at \$382 million of the total \$2.5 billion in capital infrastructure. Too decipher by zip code and funding source Coomes would need sort through thousands of capital projects and assign zip codes to each for the past 20 years, to Arthur's point. Coomes reiterates he will do it if the Commission is asking for it.
- Co-Chair Jones asks what are we looking for here?
- Coomes & Co-Chair Jones discuss back and forth what is included or excluded in the Capital Expenditures list and what the criteria is to be included in the data vs. what "community projects" were excluded
- Regional Libraries are denoted with a red "RL" on the slide.
- Senator Nemes asked if there has been any consideration in the libraries having their own tax base. Co-Chair Nemes clarifies that Bullitt County does but not in Jefferson County.
- Butler guessed that projects with a combination of federal / state / local dollars were excluded. Coomes suggests that is true (although he referenced the New Dixie project earlier and that is a federa / state / local combination project and he stated it was included.)
- Co-Chair Jones clarifies that the data provided appears to be projects that are paid exclusively by Jefferson County tax payers. Co-Chair Nemes states that he is not sure that is correct and that if those excluded were included it would look unbelievably unfair towards the USD but explains that is due to projects like Yum! Center & Soccer stadium but they serve community purposes, where libraries are regionally utilized. He would like a list of projects that were excluded.
- Co-Chair Nemes states that this is very important because the people living outside the Watterson 2/3rds of the population feel they are not getting the services they pay for and the study will either prove or disprove that presumption
- Co-Chair Jones would prefer two lists, one as shown and the other with the inclusion of all funding sources to determine any sort of imbalance.

- Arthur clarifies that LaTonya Bell is the Council Financial Analyst, not Steve Haag who works for the Republican Caucus.
  - Butler clarifies that there are several expenditures downtown reinvesting in Metro owned facilities/buildings.
  - Coomes says he will send the full list and will see if he can identify the capital list from LaTonya to see if he can sort it by the three geographies: USD, Small cities & formerly unincorporated areas. He also hopes it will have all funding sources
  - Mayor Jung questions who picks the projects, why were they picked and why were certain zip codes not touched at all. Coomes clarifies that the data represents only 1/7th of all capital expenditures.
  - Coomes intends to speak with LaTonya Bell, Deputy Mayors, Directors of Departments to answer questions at upcoming meetings.
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- Professor Hoyt provided an overview of his presentation: “A Comparison of Local Government Expenditures between Louisville & Neighboring Cities”
  - The presentation will cover trends in spending and a comparison to similar cities/countries.
    - Cities include: Birmingham, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Lexington, Memphis, Nashville
    - Years covered are 1992-2017, every 5 years from Census with 3 cycles before and 3 cycles after merger.
    - Expenditures of Corrections, Fire Protection, Libraries, Parks, Police & summing all 5 categories. Spending is per capita, per person spending.
  - Corrections:
    - Louisville is relatively steady per capita before and after merger and is on the lower end of expenditures on Corrections compared to these peer cities
  - Fire:
    - Lexington had bad data in 1997
    - Louisville is relatively steady per capita, before and after merger
    - Louisville is the lowest per capita on Fire expenditures
    - No data provided for the major post2017 expansion of Suburban Fire/EMS
  - Libraries:

- Louisville has a slight decline after merger with the lowest per capita, neck and neck with Memphis.
- Parks:
  - Louisville lowest per capita.
  - Decline post merger but rebounds to pre-merger level in 2017.
- Police:
  - Louisville declines post merger with gradual increase back to pre merger level by 2017.
  - Lexington is lowest per capita, Louisville is second lowest per capita & Indianapolis is 3rd lowest per capita
- Sum:
  - Louisville is last in comparison to all cities
  - A decline post merger from 2002-2007
- Why Different Trends?
  - We are looking at Per Capita
  - Population increases and decreases fluctuate per capita measurements
- Populations Growth:
  - Louisville, Nashville & Lexington have the fastest population growth
  - Louisville's population growth between 2002 & 2007 coincide with merger
  - Spending per person fluctuates due to merger and thus decreases in expenditures per capita with the influx in population at one time.
  - Fleming asked for clarification on the Population Relative to 1992 index.
  - Professor Hoyt clarifies that the index is the population at a given year divided by the population relative to 1992.
  - Co-Chair Nemes states he would like to see the numbers as Nashville states they have grown 16% in 10 years, while Louisville has only had a growth of 40,000 people since the last Census.
  - Hoyt states Nashville has added more people but the growth rate is similar
  - Nemes would like to see data that includes years after the expansion of the Suburban Fire/EMS.
  - Spending of small cities, Louisville Metro, etc is included in Hoyt's data however, how it is paid is not accounted.
  - Coomes states that this presentation demonstrates that Louisville spends generally less per capita than these peer cities on Parks, Police, etc.

- Jones states that he is not surprised, due to lack of growth in comparison than other cities.
- Nemes states that he has always heard that Louisville's taxation is really high compared to other cities and with this information maybe our expenditures are low maybe our taxes are low in comparison to these peer cities. That might change fundamentally how he looks at local tax policy to encourage the legislature to allow Louisville to tax differently.
- Hoyt states he could use the data to compare tax revenues from peer cities
- Nemes is concerned with the data that states that Louisville & Nashville are growing at the same rate
- Fleming states he believes we are still on the high end of the tax bracket looking at taxes at a whole.
- Nemes states something is not jiving
- Hoyt reiterates that this graph only shows expenditures, not revenue sources, so Louisville may be funding more locally than other cities
- Hoyt states Louisville is one of the highest occupational tax rates cities, citing a previous study conducted for Governor Steve Beshear
- Uncertain who is speaking, I believe from the voice it is Scott Shoenberger, states he is intrigued by the data and is interest in the sources and uses for Louisville and all peer cities. He is also interested in the growth of per capita income as that factors into the analysis of the sources.
- Hoyt says a better measurement, due to the high occupational tax, may be taxes per dollar, to demonstrate behavioral incentives. Hoyt explains we could be high in taxes per dollar but low in taxes per person due to lower average incomes.
- Jones asks what conclusions should we draw from this analysis.
- Hoyt posits it would be interesting to see how much of Louisville's spending is supported by taxes upon Louisville vs. State/Federal Aid. Jones asks Hoyt to look into this.
- Shoenberger asks to review data on the overhead / administrative expenses of the city/municipalities. Hoyt explains differences between how cities classify expenses being an issue, although he has done this with the data
- Mayor Jung spoke to concerns of how Fire/EMS responds to runs across the county. She stated 40% of runs are outside of the district. She asks who pays for the runs outside of the Fire District.



- CW Fowler explained there is an MOU for suburban fire districts to provide service and that has increased due to opioids.
- Chief Driesbach explained that the fire district's residence pay the original tax to their fire district, however anytime they respond outside of their district they will bill the patient's insurance company for that run if they transport the patient. If the insurance does not cover they will try to recover any funds from the patient directly. Ambulances do not have borders. Whichever location can respond quickest will respond. This causes increased "border jumping" between fire districts but provides faster level of service.
- Chief Driesbach goes on to explain the abuse of the 9-1-1 system. He recognizes its an imperfect system.
- Fleming stated that if a fire protection district responds but the patient refuses service the district has to eat the cost of that run.
- Chief Driesbach confirms Fleming's statements and states non-emergency runs are not made by Fire Districts. They are too busy responding to emergencies. The Fire Districts have collectively agreed not to bill residents if they are not transported since they are all paying a tax regardless of location. He states adding ambulances will not help as there is always one more run than what you have ambulances for.
- Co-Chair Nemes states Louisville EMS does not have an incentive to cover the whole city much less their own area so they have no incentive to not let the suburban fire run the route. If there is an incentive for Louisville EMS they are more likely to start covering more to avoid paying suburban fire districts.
- Fowler mentioned for the administration of Narcan, if an ambulance is not available they send SUVs. Chief Dreisbach said they are called "Fly Cars" throughout the city to administer narcan from a paramedic to administer narcan/start CPR. Jtown makes 1-2 per day runs to administer Narcan for a drug overdose and most of those people do not have medical insurance for coverage.

#### **IV. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES:**

- GAPS:
  - Scott Schoeberger stated Gaps will have their meeting in the next few weeks.
- SERVICES:
  - No Report given
- TAXES:
  - No Report given

#### **V. FUTURE MEETINGS DISCUSSION:**

- Co-Chair Jones initiated conversation about the Public Comment meetings throughout the city.
- Conversation ensued regarding potential locations
- Brian Powell asked the Commission to identify the appropriate dates/date ranges for the Public Comment hearings.
- Jones reminded everyone that September 15th is the date required by Statute for the final report to be given to the LRC and suggested meetings all be completed in July.
- Public hearings will start being scheduled the week of July 10th
- Metro TV was suggested by CW Fowler. Sonya Harward the Council Clerk stated she did not believe that would be possible although they could be recorded and the video could be uploaded.
- Monday & Tuesday evening dates were suggested with one date on a Saturday.
- Attendance is requested for all Commission members to all Public Comment meetings.
- Co-Chair Nemes stated he believed the meetings outside of the areas the elected officials represent should be attended to understand the sentiment throughout Louisville Metro.
- Sonya suggested setting parameters on the Public Comment sign ups
  - Speakers will be given 3 minutes a person

- Sign ups will occur 30 minutes before the meeting (5:30pm-6pm) with a maximum of 30 people, meaning 90 minute meetings expected with 2 hours reserved for the full meeting
- Mayor Jung mentioned answering questions, although Co-Chair Jones clarified that the meetings will be for public comment and for the commission members to listen to the input directly, not answer questions on the data or what has been presented. Mayor Jung agreed and stated the Commission is not prepared to answer questions.
- Co-Chair Jones then spoke to requesting having some officials present at the next meeting to answer questions of the administration.
  - Jones stated inviting the Mayor's Office, EMS, Emergency Services, Public Works
- Co-Chair Jones asked Dr. Coomes, Professor Hoyt & Professor Ruther what additional data will be presented. Capital projects will be reviewed and explored further.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS:**

- No New Business was discussed

**VII. ADJOURNMENT:**

Co-Chair Jones adjourned the meeting at **5:14pm**.

This meeting was held pursuant to KRS 61.826