



May 4, 2026

Honorable Kevin Carrico, City Council President
Honorable City Council Members
117 West Duval Street, Suite 425
Jacksonville, Florida 32202

Subject: Jacksonville Civic Council Calls for Governance Discipline Regarding JEA

Dear Council President Carrico and Honorable City Council Members,

The Jacksonville Civic Council urges the City Council not to proceed with a parallel investigation into recent allegations involving JEA and instead allow established governance and legal processes to run their course. JEA's board members are highly qualified and we have great confidence in their integrity.

Jacksonville's independent authorities – including JEA, JTA, JPA, and JAA – have governing boards, subject matter expertise, and operational independence for good reason. Managing complex systems like energy, water, transportation, aviation, and international trade requires professional specialization and a governing board to manage and oversee these multibillion dollar operations.

Our Charter reflects this judgment. It assigns distinct roles to independent authority boards, the City Council, and the Mayor: boards govern operations, especially selection and management of the CEO; the Council confirms appointments, approves budgets, and exercises audit authority through the Inspector General; the Mayor holds appointment and veto power. These roles are complementary by design and they are meant to work in sequence, not all at once.

With regard to JEA, the governance reforms enacted following the 2020 controversy strengthened this framework rather than weakened it. Importantly, this included expanding the City Council's role in board appointments precisely so that accountability could be exercised through appropriate channels. Those channels exist and they are working.

Under the Charter, JEA's board has initiated internal and independent reviews of culture and operations. The City's Inspector General is examining specific financial questions. The State Attorney and other legal authorities are conducting their own reviews. These structures have been established for exactly this kind of situation, and they should be allowed to perform their functions under the Charter and our laws. When the reviews are complete, the City Council will have the standing and the responsibility to look at the findings and decide if changes are needed.

Jacksonville has worked hard to build a reputation for serious, professional governance. The executives and board members our authorities need to attract have choices. They choose cities where governance is stable and predictable, not subject to ad hoc political intervention. Financial markets notice too: our authorities' access to and cost of capital is influenced by perceptions of governance quality. Credibility, once lost, is expensive and slow to rebuild.

This is not a partisan matter. It is a question of respecting governance structures, preserving institutional integrity, and maintaining public confidence in the City of Jacksonville.

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Sincerely,

Gary Chartrand, *Chairman*
Dennis Whittle, *CEO & President*
Amy Margerum Berg, *Board Member*
Henry Brown, *Board Member*
J.F. Bryan, *Board Member*
Marty Fiorentino, *Board Member*
Patrick Green, *Board Member*
Kevin Hyde, *Board Member*
Mari Kuraishi, *Board Member*
Eric Mann, *Board Member*
David Miller, *Board Member*
Jim O'Leary, *Board Member*
Darnell Smith, *Board Member*
Dave Sweeney, *Board Member*
Michael Ward, *Member*

Cc:

The Honorable Ken Amaro
The Honorable Mike Gay
The Honorable Will Lahnen
The Honorable Joe Carlucci
The Honorable Michael Boylan
The Honorable Jimmy Peluso
The Honorable Reggie Gaffney, Jr.
The Honorable Tyrone Clark-Murray
The Honorable Ju'Coby Pittman
The Honorable Raul Arias
The Honorable Randy White
The Honorable Rory Diamond
The Honorable Rahman Johnson
The Honorable Terrance Freeman
The Honorable Ronald B. Salem
The Honorable Nick Howland
The Honorable Matt Carlucci
The Honorable Chris Miller