

1 Introduced by Council Member Lahnen:
2
3

4 **ORDINANCE 2025-265**

5 AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING \$3,000,000 FROM
6 GENERAL FUND OPERATING RESERVES TO THE GENERAL
7 FUND OPERATING SUBSIDIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO
8 OTHER GOVT ACCOUNT TO PROVIDE FUNDS TO THE
9 UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA ("UNF") FOR THE UNF
10 ESPORTS PROGRAM (THE "PROGRAM") AS DESCRIBED
11 HEREIN; PROVIDING FOR CARRYOVER TO FISCAL YEAR
12 2025-2026; WAIVING SECTION 118.107 (NONPROFITS
13 TO RECEIVE FUNDING THROUGH A COMPETITIVE
14 EVALUATED AWARD PROCESS), PART 1 (GENERAL
15 PROVISIONS), CHAPTER 118 (CITY GRANTS),
16 *ORDINANCE CODE*, TO ALLOW FOR A DIRECT CONTRACT
17 WITH UNF; APPROVING, AND AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR,
18 OR HER DESIGNEE, AND THE CORPORATION SECRETARY
19 TO EXECUTE AND DELIVER ON BEHALF OF THE CITY A
20 GRANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE
21 AND UNF FOR THE PROGRAM; FINDING THAT THE
22 PROGRAM CONSTITUTES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN
23 DUVAL COUNTY FOR PURPOSES OF MEETING A PORTION
24 OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL CITY FINANCIAL COMMITMENT
25 FOR THE COUNTYWIDE STRATEGIC FOCUS AS DESCRIBED
26 IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL JACKSONVILLE STADIUM
27 COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENT APPROVED BY
28 ORDINANCE 2024-905-E; PROVIDING FOR OVERSIGHT BY
29 THE GRANTS AND CONTRACT COMPLIANCE DIVISION OF
30 THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT; REQUESTING EMERGENCY
31 PASSAGE UPON INTRODUCTION; PROVIDING AN

1 EFFECTIVE DATE.

2
3 **BE IT ORDAINED** by the Council of the City of Jacksonville:

4 **Section 1. Appropriation.** For the 2024-2025 fiscal year,
5 within the City's budget, there is hereby appropriated the indicated
6 sum(s) from the account(s) listed in subsection (a) to the account(s)
7 listed in subsection (b):

8 (The account information is attached hereto as **Exhibit 1** and
9 incorporated herein by this reference)

10 (a) Appropriated from:

11 See **Exhibit 1** \$3,000,000

12 (b) Appropriated to:

13 See **Exhibit 1** \$3,000,000

14 (c) Explanation of Appropriation:

15 The funding above is an appropriation of \$3,000,000 from
16 General Fund Operating Reserves to the General Fund
17 Operating Subsidies and Contributions to Other Govt account
18 to provide a grant to the University of North Florida
19 ("UNF") for the UNF Esports Program (the "Program") as
20 described herein.

21 **Section 2. Purpose.** The purpose of the appropriation in
22 Section 1 is to provide funding from the City of Jacksonville to the
23 University of North Florida for its new Esports Program as described
24 in **Exhibit 2**, attached hereto and incorporated herein by this
25 reference. The Program's primary focus is to enhance student
26 engagement and provide workforce development and skills training
27 opportunities for Jacksonville students interested in a career in the
28 Esports and gaming industry. This initiative, in conjunction with
29 hosting local and regional Esports events, is intended to position
30 Jacksonville as a regional leader in the rapidly growing Esports
31 industry. Through partnerships with local high schools, the Program

1 will offer annual Esports tournaments, mentorship and skills training
2 for high school students interested in pursuing collegiate Esports,
3 workshops on career pathways in gaming, game development,
4 broadcasting and Esports management, and integration of
5 Esports-related curricula in high school STEM and business programs.

6 A portion of the City funds will be used to pay the salaries and
7 benefits for several positions to manage and administer the Program.
8 In addition, a large portion of the City funds will be used to
9 purchase, install and configure audio visual equipment for the Esports
10 arena, to purchase high-performance computers, software and other
11 equipment to support the Program, to pay for printing and advertising
12 costs, and to purchase team uniforms for Esports tournaments.

13 **Section 3. Carryover.** The funds appropriated herein shall
14 not lapse but shall carryover to fiscal year 2025-2026.

15 **Section 4. Waiver of Section 118.107, Ordinance Code.** The
16 provisions of Section 118.107 (Nonprofits to receive funding through
17 a competitive evaluated award process), Part 1 (General Provisions),
18 Chapter 118 (City Grants), *Ordinance Code*, are hereby waived to allow
19 for a direct contract with UNF. This waiver is justified because the
20 Program provides a unique opportunity for students in Jacksonville
21 to develop the necessary skills and talent to obtain and maintain
22 high-demand careers in the rapidly-growing and competitive digital
23 economy.

24 **Section 5. Approval and Authorization to Execute.** There is
25 hereby approved, and the Mayor, or her designee, and the Corporation
26 Secretary are hereby authorized to execute and deliver on behalf of
27 the City a grant agreement with UNF in an amount not-to-exceed
28 \$3,000,000, subject to the Term Sheet and Budget more particularly
29 described in **Exhibit 2**, for a term commencing on May 1, 2025 through
30 September 30, 2026, and all other contracts and documents, including
31 extensions, renewals and amendments to the agreement, and to otherwise

1 take all action necessary to effectuate the intent of this Ordinance,
2 subject to appropriate legal review and approval by the General
3 Counsel, or his or her designee, and the City's Risk Management
4 Division for appropriate insurance and indemnification requirements
5 in accordance with Section 128.601, *Ordinance Code*.

6 **Section 6. Finding that the Program Constitutes Workforce**
7 **Development for Purposes of Meeting a Portion of the Supplemental**
8 **City Financial Commitment as Described in the Supplemental Community**
9 **Benefits Agreement Approved by Ordinance 2024-905-E.** The City has
10 determined that the \$3,000,000 investment with UNF for the Program
11 as described herein provides a unique opportunity for workforce
12 development within Duval County. Therefore, this contribution shall
13 be counted toward the Supplemental City Financial Commitment for the
14 Countywide Strategic Focus as outlined in the Supplemental
15 Jacksonville Stadium Community Benefits Agreement between the City
16 of Jacksonville and Jacksonville Jaguars, LLC, as described in and
17 approved by Ordinance 2024-905-E.

18 **Section 7. Oversight Department.** The Grants and
19 Contract Compliance Division of the Finance Department shall oversee
20 the project described herein.

21 **Section 8. Requesting Emergency Passage Upon Introduction**
22 **Pursuant to Council Rule 4.901 Emergency.** Emergency passage upon
23 introduction of this legislation is requested. The nature of the
24 emergency is that UNF has requested these funds be made available as
25 soon as possible as Program activities are scheduled to begin on May
26 1, 2025.

27 **Section 9. Effective Date.** This Ordinance shall become
28 effective upon signature by the Mayor or upon becoming effective
29 without the Mayor's signature.

1 Form Approved:

2

3 /s/ Mary E. Staffopoulos

4 Office of General Counsel

5 Legislation Prepared By: Mary E. Staffopoulos

6 GC-#1681549-v2-UNF_Esports_Approp_(Lahnen).docx