

OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL RESEARCH DIVISION

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FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARING #1 MINUTES

August 11, 2022 9:00 a.m.

Location: City Council Chamber, 1st floor, City Hall

In attendance: Council Members Aaron Bowman (Chair), Matt Carlucci, Kevin Carrico, Joyce Morgan, Ron Salem, Randy White

Also: Council Members Terrance Freeman, Nick Howland, Michael Boylan; Kim Taylor, Phillip Peterson, Brian Parks – Council Auditor's Office; Paige Johnston, Mary Staffopoulos – Office of General Counsel; Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Merriane Lahmeur, Barbara Hobson – Legislative Services Division; Steve Cassada and Eric Grantham – Information Support Services; Angela Moyer – Budget Office; Brian Hughes, Charles Moreland, Leeann Krieg, Rachel Zimmer – Mayor's Office; Joey Greive – Finance and Administration Department

Meeting Convened: 9:02 a.m.

Chairman Bowman convened the meeting and welcomed the committee members to the most important task the City Council undertakes each year. Council President Freeman said he looks forward to the great work of the committee on an extremely important task.

Mr. Bowman said that he has asked for opening remarks from each of the departments/agencies on their budget before the Council Auditor presents her budget review. He noted that 16 of the City Council members are running for office asked the members to please not make political speeches. Public comment will be allowed at the end of the meeting, time permitting, with 3 speakers being given the opportunity to address topics on today's agenda. Council Member Carlucci said that council members should be able to speak freely about any topic.

Introductory presentation

Chief Administrative Officer Brian Hughes gave introductory remarks about the Mayor's proposed budget and said that this is a budget developed in good fiscal times but that prepares for potential future financial difficulties. He thanked CFO Joey Greive, Budget Officer Angela Moyer and CIP Coordinator Theresa Eichner for their hard work in preparing the budget, including a lot of preparatory work and coordination with the Council Auditor's Office. The \$350 million allocated to reserve funds is very solid, as well as \$70 million in federal ARP funds in reserve for the next administration. The proposed millage reduction was a responsible amount. He and his staff are available at any time to answer questions or address problems. The administration will be very resistant to reducing reserves or using the ARP set-aside because those are prudent assets to prepare for the future. \$50 million is being programmed for City Council to spend on parks and quality of life issues at the Council's discretion. Almost all departments and constitutional officers got enhancements and upgrades this year to meet their needs and leave a good foundation for the next administration.

CFO Joey Greive thanked all of the Budget Office personnel who worked long and hard to produce the Mayor's budget, the development of which began in January. They have recently briefed the bond rating agencies on the proposed budget and have received favorable responses, in part because of the very solid reserve funds the City has built up over the years.

Chairman Bowman said he is very pleased to see the good working relationship between the administration and the Council Auditor's Office throughout the budget development process.

All page references from this point refer to Council Auditor's Budget Hearing #1 handout

Council Auditor Kim Taylor briefly reviewed the 13 budget-related ordinances and resolutions – 2022-500 through 2021-513 – and the timetable for their adoption. She will be pointing out throughout the hearing process the departments that are proposed to get federal American Rescue Plan funding. Ms. Taylor reviewed the calculation of ad valorem taxes based on the millage rates that are slightly reduced from the current year. Increased value of pre-existing property will produce new revenue of \$80.8M and new construction will produce an additional \$25.5M in new revenue. Total net ad valorem revenue is estimated at \$945.2M. The Save Our Homes capped increase for homesteaded properties is 3%, which is less than the CPI for the year. Council Member Carlucci requested a report on the growth in the taxable value of the core downtown properties covered by the downtown Business Improvement District to know how much revenue the downtown area is producing. Ms. Taylor noted that the Council vote on the millage levy will require a 2/3 majority due to a requirement of state law regarding the difference between the proposed millage rate and the adjusted rolled-back rate, which has not happened in at least 10 years. The City's total budget is \$3.8B, the independent agency budgets total \$3.9B for a total Council budgetary approval of \$7.7B. The mayor proposes to add 117 positions to the overall employee cap, 116 in the General Fund and 8 in Special Revenue Funds, less a reduction of 1 in the Enterprise Funds and 6 in Internal Service Funds for a total of 7,868.

Ms. Taylor reviewed and discussed budgeted expenditures, particularly non-departmental expenditures that will not be discussed again after today and highlighted any substantial changes. She noted that each department's budget will reflect 2 years of collective bargaining salary increases, the current year and next year, because the current year's increases were not shown in the individual departmental budgets but were in a single centralized account because the agreements were not approved when the current budget was being prepared. The employer contributions to the defined benefit retirement plans are going down somewhat and the contributions to the defined contribution plans are increasing because of the shift in employee participation in the different plans. There is a \$3.9 million non-departmental lapse factor applied to salaries other than the Sheriff's Office, which has its own lapse of \$4.9 million.

Motion: on p. 23, approve Auditor's recommendation #1 for an increase of \$110,000 in miscellaneous revenues to match the current budget for the sale of used assets; this will have a positive impact to Special Council Contingency of \$110,000 - approved.

Motion: on p. 23, approve Auditor's recommendation #2 to increase the Fuel Tax-Municipal (1 Cent) revenues by \$450,000 to align with the actual revenues based on the latest distribution data from the State; this will have a positive impact to Special Council Contingency of \$450,000 – **approved**.

Motion: on p. 23, approve Auditor's recommendation #3 to increase the Sales Tax-Local Government $\frac{1}{2}$ Cent revenues by \$2,100,000 to align with the actual revenues based on the latest collections; this will have a positive impact to Special Council Contingency of \$2,100,000 – **approved**.

Council Member Carlucci said he preferred that there be a single special council contingency fund rather than also having a Council President's contingency as was done this year. Ms. Taylor said there will be a report later in the process of all changes in direct contracting with third parties showing increases and decreases. There is an allocation of \$75,000 to pay for the mayoral transition process after the elections next spring.

Non-Departmental Expenditures

Council Member Carlucci asked for clarification about what is happening with the Jacksonville Beach lifeguard station given the controversy about the status of volunteer lifeguards and a recent media report about the possibility that the building might be torn down. Joey Greive said the line item in the non-departmental budget relates to a City debt service commitment for a project approved in last year's budget. Brian Hughes said that he was unaware of any discussion about possible demolition of the building, and the City is not involved in the controversy about paid and volunteer lifeguards.

Council Member Morgan asked about the history of funding for the Sister Cities International dues and whether it has decreased. Mr. Hughes pointed out the difference between the \$1,910 for membership dues and the \$10,000 support allocation in another budget.

Council Member Carlucci thanked the administration for substantially increasing the allocation to Public Service Grant funds, which will support much good work in the community.

Motion: on p. 31, approve Auditor's recommendation to reduce the contribution from JPA and the payment to the Debt Management fund by \$12,006,000 since JPA has already made the final debt payment during FY21-22 – **approved**.

Public Service Grants

Motion: on p. 33, approve Auditor's recommendation to the Schedule of Public Service Grants (Schedule A2) be updated to remove Public Service Grant Council funding from the schedule since the funding is appropriated in Ordinance 2022-509 and to reflect Cultural Service Grant funding as a lump sum inclusive of the 13.5% administrative allowance – **approved**.

Food and Beverage Expenditures

Motion: on p. 35 approve Auditor's recommendation to revise Attachment A to increase the figure for Police Services within the Office of the Sheriff from \$3,999 to \$4,000 to match the budgeted amount for food and beverages for assessors coming to Jacksonville from other agencies for accreditation and for promotional exams – **approved**.

Budget Ordinance Waivers

Chairman Bowman said he has reviewed council member postage expenditures over the past several years and wondered if, in the digital age, council members still need \$1,000 apiece for physical printing and postage for mailed notices. Council Member Carlucci said he had heard from one or two former council presidents that they did not get an invitation to the most recent council officers' installation ceremony. It's possible that they don't have current email addresses on record and need to have physical invitations

mailed. Mr. Bowman said he will have the committee address the question of council postage and a potential Code change regarding the amount and control of those funds at a future date, not in the budget.

Direct Contracts

Ms. Taylor reviewed a table comparing the list of agencies that received direct contract funding in this year's budget versus proposed for next year showing increases and decreases in funding.

In response to a question from Council Member Salem, Brian Hughes described the increase in funding for the Cure Violence initiative for a third site and said that the administration is doing much more data collection on the initiative's performance and will be happy to share that with the committee when appropriate. Mr. Bowman asked for that presentation at the next regular Finance Committee meeting.

Council Member Morgan posed several questions about funding for the Agape Community Health Center and the need for COVID-related services in the community. Mr. Hughes said that contracts for third party testing and vaccinations are running out and will not be renewed because there are so many options available for free at-home testing and so little use of the available centers. He said that the administration substantially increased Public Service Grant funding that should provide the capacity to fund many of the programs that will not continue to receive direct contracts. Mr. Bowman said that direct contract agencies that don't fit under PSG criteria could be assisted with council member-requested enhancements at the end of the hearing process.

Motion: on pp. 51-52 approve Auditor's recommendations to attach a revised Exhibit 2 (term sheet) for United Way of Northeast Florida – 2-1-1 program; correct Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless purpose of funding to \$86,551 for personnel and \$183,449 for security, temporary housing, utilities, supplies and administrative costs; reflect that the Cure Violence agreements shall be subject to the provisions of Chapter 118, Parts 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the Ordinance Code and attach revised Exhibit 5 (term sheet) for Cure Violence; correct Volunteers in Medicine purpose of funding to salaries and benefits, occupancy expenses, office supplies, printing and advertising, medicine and medical supplies; and attach revised Exhibit 7 (term sheet) to the Jacksonville University law school agreement – **approved**.

Fire and Rescue Department

Fire Chief Keith Powers thanked the Mayor and Council for their unwavering support for the department and public safety. Billable transports are up 2.5% due to staff training on proper coding for transport expenses and fire inspection fee revenues are up as well. Several new fire stations have either opened recently or are under construction now for opening within the next year. Jacksonville is now the largest ISO Class 1-rated city in the United States which saves property owners millions of dollars in insurance premiums. The department's apprentice program started in 2016 has resulted in 48 hires and hiring percentages for African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic candidates are all increasing. The department has 12% female employees, which is triple the national average. The department is starting 2 new critical care rescue units with specially trained personnel and a higher level of equipment, medications and blood products, the beginning of an expansion process to more stations in coming years. The Chief remembered the 3 firefighters who died in the line of duty in the past year.

Motion: on p. 96 approve Auditor's recommendation #1 that a provision be added to the budget ordinance to authorize the Mayor to enter into an agreement related to participation in the Public Emergency Medical Transportation program – **approved**.

Motion: on p. 96 approve Auditor's recommendation #2 that the B1b Schedule of Continuation Grants with a City Match be amended to reduce the match on the Hazard Analysis Agreement from \$30,000 to \$15,000 and that the over match requested be amended from \$30,000 to \$45,000 to better align the amounts with the actual award – **approved**.

In response to a question from Council Member Salem, Chief Powers described the process for billing for emergency transports via a private contractor. Council Member Morgan thanked Chief Powers and his department for their good work. She asked about the resumption of the Fire Safety Advocate's in-person community activity and how his work in the community is scheduled. She also asked about walk-in availability of fire stations to the community for blood pressure checks and other routine screenings; Chief Powers said the stations have been reopened to the public after the COVID peak passed. Chairman Bowman asked that council members be notified in advance of the Fire Safety Advocate's neighborhood walks so they can join in. Mr. Bowman asked about how surplus vehicles are disposed of and how much revenue is generated. Chief Powers said they are sold via online auction and the revenue goes to the General Fund, not directly to the department. Council Member Howland asked if 94 new employees are enough to meet the need and how JFRD stacks up against other large cities on staffing. Chief Powers said that the Curry administration has done a great job of adding employees and equipment and they are in a good place, with plans in place for further station construction and employee additions as the city continues its tremendous growth.

The committee was in recess from 11:42 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Pat Ivey said JSO has 3,247 full-time employees and is requesting 16 more. The department handled 1,456,382 calls in 2021 which generated 645,653 responses – approximately 475,000 dispatched and approximately170,000 initiated by officers on duty witnessing a need for service. The department operates with 5 departments – Patrol and Enforcement; Investigations and Homeland Security, Police Services, Internal Affairs, and Corrections.

Kim Taylor reviewed the overall JSO budget. There were 225 position vacancies as of July – 42 police officers, 109 corrections officers, 74 civilians. She noted that the Florida Legislature passed a law this session allowing sheriffs to reallocate funds within their budget at the sheriff's discretion after the governing body passes the budget. JSO has been adhering to the City's mayoral transfer authority provision thus far, and needs to process any budget changes through the City's 1Cloud system so there will be tracking and reporting of any transfers. JSO has reduced the number of officers assigned as school guardians from 60 to 40 per day. JSO took over the Misdemeanor Probation Program from the Salvation Army during this year and took over ankle and alcohol monitoring from the courts.

Council Member Salem thanked the Sheriff for the department's support of the Mental Health Offender program and expressed concern about the substantial number of vacancies in the Corrections Division. Sheriff Ivey said that the pay raises in the most recent collective bargaining agreement help somewhat, but there is steep competition from other jurisdictions that pay more. The shortage of communication officers (9-1-1 call takers and dispatchers) is equally daunting. The department is recruiting in every way it can think of to fill those spots. Mr. Salem asked for details about the mental health co-responder program. Sheriff Ivey recounted the mental health response training that every officer must have. There are 12 officers in the co-responder program (2 officers per zone) and 6 mental health co-responders paid for through a grant. There have been 306 mental health contacts since full staffing o the program was achieved in April, of whom 99% did not need to be arrested. In response to a question from Council Member Morgan about the takeover of the misdemeanor probation program, Sheriff Ivey said that that program is staffed by a sergeant, 3 officers and about a dozen civilians. They are in the Department of Corrections and are not displacing or diverting any patrol officers. JSO took over the program at the request of the courts, the State Attorney and the Public Defender.

In response to a question from Council Member Carrico about collection of fees and fines for the probation monitoring program, Chief Reuben Bryant of the Corrections Department said that JSO has

already been doing monitoring for criminal offenders and is just expanding to misdemeanor offenders. They will be purchasing a software system to collect fees in-house and save the offender the cost of paying a third-party contractor's management fee. Council Member Carlucci said that while he understands the need for efficiency, he has sympathy for the private vendor who has held the monitoring contract and faces the loss of his business and wondered if some sort of compromise could be found that would allow this vendor to keep at least a portion of that business.

Chairman Bowman asked how many more officers the City should have for our population size and the large geographic size of the city. Sheriff Ivey said that Jacksonville's consolidation makes us a very different kind of jurisdiction and his department is a combination of a traditional police department and a county sheriff's office. An average of 2.4-2.5 officers per 1,000 population is typical for cities, and Jacksonville is at 1.9 per 1,000. The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) did an audit of the department and it showed a need for an increase in staffing; because of the COPS grant the department did not ask for City funding for additional personnel this year, but that will be necessary in the future. Mr. Bowman asked about the new transfer authority granted to sheriffs by the Florida Legislature. Sheriff Ivey said he had no intention of making any large transfers in the short time that he is still sheriff and has met with the Mayor's Office and made that commitment. In response to a question from the Chair, Budget Officer Angela Moyer explained the current quarterly process for reporting budget transfers and said that a new form is being developed for reporting JSO transfers, which will include additional detail for transfers over \$50,000 so that there is full transparency for the Council and the public.

Council Member Boylan said the IACP report is illuminating and says that lots of things are going well along with some challenges. The report said that more officers are needed on the street, including by reassigning officers from non-patrol functions. Sheriff Ivey agreed with that finding, but said the report was not specific as to exactly how many officers should be moved from what functions. He described the various outreach programs JSO uses to make direct contact with citizens (Sheriff's Watch, Sheriff's Advisory Committees, apartment watches, bicycle units, community walks, walking beats, Police Athletic Leagues, One Cop liaisons with religious congregations, etc.). JSO Budget Officer Bill Clement said there is a Community Engagement Unit in the department with its own budget, but many of the community relations initiatives cited by the Sheriff have indirect costs spread over many functions and offices. Chairman Bowman said he would invite the JSO to a future Finance Committee meeting to discuss the IACP report and what it means for the department.

Council Member Howland asked about the reduction in the number of school guardians and whether the school system has hired new employees to fill those slots. Sheriff Ivey said that he is not aware of how many personnel the School Board has in that program, but the JSO has been very supportive of the school district's hiring process for those positions. Council Member Salem said he had met with former Sheriff Williams and School Superintendent Diana Green on this subject and understands that the JSO is reducing its staffing to 40 this year, 20 next year, and then none thereafter.

Council Member Salem advocated for an audit to be performed on JSO's probation management program to ensure that the fees for the program are being billed and collected appropriately after the program has been in place for 6 months. In response to another question from Mr. Salem, the Sheriff described the move of the Zone 2 substation from Regency Square to Merrill Road. The new space was offered to JSO at no cost by a landlord. The department also has about 50 stop stations scattered throughout the city. In response to a question from Council Member Carlucci about the last weekend's computer issues in the JSO network, Sheriff Ivey said the FBI investigated and found no ransomware or loss of service attack from the incident. JSO turned off some of the network as a precautionary measure but everything is back to normal now.

Council Member Carrico asked about the impact of homelessness on JSO's workload. Sheriff Ivey said that YTD 2021 there were 18,744 crime incidents; YTD 2022 there have been 19,186 incidents, of which 15, 905 are property crimes and only 320 or so are violent crimes. Mr. Carrico said that the 4 "blight unit" officers dealing with homeless camps are insufficient to deal with the volume of problems across the city. Sheriff Ivey said the job of the blight unit is to identify problem areas and coordinate responses by the appropriate parties (patrol officers, Public Works, Code Enforcement, etc.); those officers aren't entirely responsible for dealing with the problems themselves.

9-1-1 User Fee

Motion: on p. 113 approve Auditor's recommendation to correct the allocation to the Jacksonville Beach, Atlantic Beach, Neptune Beach, JSO General Fund/GSD, and JFRD General Fund/GSD for the reimbursement of the cost for call takers via a decrease in the Miscellaneous Services and Charges expense account that is used to pay the Beaches and Baldwin of \$16,525 and an increase in the Miscellaneous – Intra-departmental expense account that is used to reimburse JSO and JFRD of \$16,525. Due to adjustments the amount allocated to JSO will go down by \$85,062 and to JFRD will go up by \$101,587 to arrive at the net increase of \$16,525 producing a positive impact of \$16,525 to Special Council Contingency – **approved**.

The committee was in recess from 2:43 to 2:54 p.m.

Property Appraiser

Property Appraiser Jerry Holland said his office has 10 fewer employees now than when he was elected 7 years ago and has added about \$50 million in taxable value to the rolls through homestead exemption fraud audits and enforcement. They have also done unprecedented audits of tangible personal property to identify unpaid taxes. Jacksonville has about 380,000 parcels of property. Mr. Holland mentioned the availability of a deed fraud alert system into which you can register your name and which will alert you if any deed is filed with your name on it to identify attempted fraud.

In response to a question from Council Member Morgan, Mr. Holland said he is satisfied with the size and functionality of his office space in the Yates Building but it is an old building and in need of repair and upgrades for functionality and a good appearance. CAO Brian Hughes said there is some funding in the budget for public buildings but he did not recall any requests for improvements from the Property Appraiser during the budget preparation process.

In response to a question from Chairman Bowman about whether there is a hotline for reporting potential homestead exemption fraud, Mr. Holland said it is 904-255-7964 and tips can be reported anonymously. In response to a question from Mr. Bowman, Mr. Holland described his office's policies regarding recruitment and salaries to ensure successful employee recruitment.

City Council

Council Secretary/Director Peggy Sidman gave an overview of the Council budget of about \$10 million and 66 employees. She reported that a Jacksonville University graduate business class has performed an organizational assessment of the Council staff, the results of which will be presented shortly. Ms. Sidman requested an increase of \$32,000 in the salary account to fund sufficient salary to enable hiring 2 positions at the desired salary level. She also informed the committee that she will be authorizing renovation of the restrooms in the City Council suite, which will require a carry-over of current year funding to next year in a capital account.

Council Member Morgan asked how security for council meetings is budgeted, which is a combination of Council funds for part-time employees and the use of uniformed JSO officers from the Sheriff's budget. Ms. Sidman said she has been talking with JSO about possibly additional resources and additional

training for JSO and Council staff for safety at committee meetings. Council Member Salem said that he believes there should be a JSO presence at every public meeting in City Hall. Chairman Bowman asked Ms. Sidman for research on what it would take to provide a police presence at every meeting based on historical research on number and length of committee meetings in years past. Council Member Carlucci said it's important to keep the general public in the audience actually safe and feeling safe when attending meetings where divisive topics are discussed and heated debate takes place. Ms. Sidman said she has been meeting with the JSO officers who staff City Council meetings to talk about potential strategies and tactics to ensure the safety of City Hall meeting rooms.

Council Member Morgan asked about solutions to improve the general public's access to council meetings via cable television and online streaming. Ms. Sidman said that staff is researching how many viewers access meetings via the various options available. There is always a balancing act to be performed between providing the most access possible and being as responsible as possible in spending the public's tax dollars. CAO Brian Hughes noted that the calculation of the Council's salary line was done by the standard formula applicable to all departments; the proposed increase would represent an outlier from the normal procedure.

Motion: increase the salary line by \$32,000 from Special Council Contingency – approved.

Motion: authorize \$80,000 in capital carry-over to redo the Council restrooms with the work being done after working hours or during the Council's winter break in December – **approved**.

Tourist Development Council

TDC Executive Director Carol Brock thanked the administration, the Council Auditor's Office and the staff of Visit Jacksonville Inc. for their assistance in helping her develop her first TDC budget as the new Executive Director. She is proposing the addition of a TDC Administrator position to provide a second employee in the office. Assistant Council Auditor Phillip Peterson said that the projected TDC bed tax revenue for the current year is on track to be the highest revenue ever collected.

Motion: on p. 118 approve Auditor's recommendation #1 to increase Travel Expense by \$750, Employee Training Expenses by \$750, and Office Supplies – Other by \$498 and increase the Transfer from Fund Balance by \$1,998 to align the TDC Administrative budget with the amounts approved by the TDC – **approved**.

Motion: on p. 118 approve Auditor's recommendation #2 to revise Budget Ordinance Schedule W to reflect the changes above and reflect the plan components as amended through bill 2022-515 – **approved**.

Motion: on p. 118 approve Auditor's recommendation #3 to move the funding for the Visit Jacksonville contract from the three activities it is currently budgeted under to a new single activity since the three contracts are being consolidated into a single contract – **approved**.

General Counsel

General Counsel Jason Teal thanked his staff for their assistance in helping him develop his first budget as General Counsel. The office currently has 45 attorneys and 28 support staff; he is asking for 2 attorneys (1 to replace a second attorney assigned exclusively to JEA) and 1 support staff to handle special assignments and to service the needs of the Planning and Development Department. Challenges include recruiting and retaining employees in a very competitive hiring market; the administration has helped by allowing some salary increases. Mr. Teal said the office's billing rates have not been adjusted in many years and that is problematic for their budget. Council Member Salem asked for a description of how many attorneys are based outside of City Hall at other agencies. Mr. Teal said there are 7 - 3 at JEA, 3 at the School Board, and 1 at JEA. He has great trust in those attorneys who regularly come to City Hall for staff meetings, and he retains the right to bring them back to City Hall at any time if he feels that is needed. Council Member Carlucci asked if the OGC has considered proposing increases to the hourly billing rates to help retain good attorneys. Mr. Teal talked about the difference between public and private sector attorneys and the difference in work/life balance that the two fields offer. He believes he has to tools to appropriately manage the office at present but will consider suggesting changes if conditions change and make that necessary.

The Special Council Contingency fund stands at \$5,644,525 to the positive at the end of the first day.

Public Comment

Marie McGrath Wood suggested adding funding to the budget for incentives to attract grocery stores and pharmacies/walk-in clinics to areas without those amenities. She recommended using federal ARP funds to put police and fire stations in underserved areas.

Carnell Oliver said he wants to see funding pulled from the Chamber of Commerce contract and reallocated to other more useful needs. He would like to see a limitation on Public Service Grants going to council members' employers. He would like to know how many appointed officials there are compared to civil service employees. JSO has too many special unit undercover officers that need to be back in uniform and back on the streets patrolling.

Meeting adjourned: 4:21 p.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division jeffc@coj.net 904-255-5137 8.12.22 Posted 9:00 a.m.