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IN RE: AARON ZAHN - TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT  
AGREEMENT WITH JEA

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SWORN STATEMENT  
OF  
JORDAN POPE

DATE TAKEN: Monday, January 13, 2020  
 TIME: 9:38 a.m. - 11:47 a.m.  
 PLACE: Office of General Counsel  
 117 West Duval Street  
 Suite 480  
 Jacksonville, Florida

REPORTED BY: Marianne Branson, RPR, FPR  
 Court Reporter  
 - - -

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1 APPEARANCES FOR THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE:  
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5  
 6 APPEARANCE FOR THE OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL:  
 7 ROBERT LINSNER, INVESTIGATOR  
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I N D E X

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 3 WITNESS: JORDAN POPE  
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1 MR. LINSNER: This recorded interview is  
 2 being conducted at the Office of General Counsel,  
 3 City of Jacksonville. Today is January 13th, and  
 4 the time now is 09:38.

5 I'm Investigator Robert Linsner, employed by  
 6 the Office of Inspector General, City of  
 7 Jacksonville. The Office of Inspector General is  
 8 assisting the Office of General Counsel with its  
 9 investigation regarding Aaron Zahn, former CEO of  
 10 JEA.

11 Mr. Pope, you are being interviewed as a  
 12 witness in this investigation. If at any time  
 13 your status as a witness changes, you will be  
 14 notified. The attorney who will be interviewing  
 15 you today is Stephen Powell.

16 As a commissioned notary public in the State  
 17 of Florida, I am authorized to administer oaths.  
 18 Please be advised that any false statements made  
 19 during your interview or attempts to obstruct the  
 20 Office of General Counsel's investigation may be  
 21 used in a subsequent prosecution against you.

22 Would you please raise your right hand?  
 23 Do you, Jordan Pope, swear to tell the truth,  
 24 the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?  
 25 THE WITNESS: I do.

1 MR. LINSNER: Okay. And have any promises,  
2 threats, or inducements of any nature whatsoever  
3 been made by me in order to obtain your consent to  
4 this statement?

5 THE WITNESS: No.

6 MR. LINSNER: And do you understand that this  
7 recorded interview will be subject to public  
8 disclosure pursuant to the public records law and  
9 other laws of the State of Florida?

10 THE WITNESS: Yes.

11 MR. LINSNER: Okay.

12 JORDAN POPE,  
13 having been produced and first duly sworn as a witness,  
14 testified as follows:

15 EXAMINATION

16 BY MR. POWELL:

17 Q Good morning --

18 A Good morning.

19 Q -- Mr. Pope. Thank you for giving us your  
20 time this morning. My name is Steve Powell. I'm with  
21 the Office of General Counsel, and I appreciate your  
22 coming in to help us with our work.

23 This interview is solely related to and in  
24 furtherance of our assignment -- the Office of General  
25 Counsel's assignment from the JEA board of directors to

1 A Thank you.

2 Q All right. Additional kind of ground rules,  
3 all I ask is that you answer as completely as you can.  
4 And if I ask a question that is unclear, please let me  
5 know.

6 A Okay.

7 Q Otherwise, I will assume that you have  
8 understood the question and that your answer is  
9 responsive to my question. Is that okay?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q And, lastly, because in ordinary conversation  
12 we normally move pretty quickly back and forth and talk  
13 on top of one another, but that doesn't help our court  
14 reporter very much, makes her job harder.

15 So if you would do me the favor of trying to  
16 let me finish my question before you come in with an  
17 answer, that would help. By the same token, I'll try  
18 to let you finish anything you're answering to me  
19 without hopping in with another question.

20 A Sounds good.

21 Q It's just me asking questions, so I think we  
22 can probably not run into too many problems there, as  
23 opposed to the three or four other lawyers that are  
24 sometimes with me here.

25 All right. To get us started, if you would

1 investigate Mr. Zahn's tenure as CEO of JEA to  
2 determine whether grounds exist to support the  
3 termination of his contract for cause.

4 In the course of our work, we've identified a  
5 number of areas of interest and have asked you to come  
6 meet with us to let us inquire into those areas purely  
7 to see what you know, what you observed, anything you  
8 did in association with any of the issues that we're  
9 looking into, and, frankly, anything you might have  
10 heard about --

11 A Okay.

12 Q -- things along these lines.

13 You brought with you a statement of rights,  
14 Garrity warning. Have you had a chance to read that?

15 A Yes, sir.

16 Q Do you understand it?

17 A Yes, sir.

18 Q And you signed it at the bottom?

19 A Yes, sir.

20 Q And this was -- and you're here at the  
21 direction of Melissa Dykes, interim CEO; correct?

22 A Yes, sir.

23 Q All right. I'm going to sign it down here as  
24 investigator. And I will make a copy of it for you  
25 before we leave.

1 just identify yourself for the record and state your  
2 current -- identify your current employer and your job.

3 A Sure. I'm Jordan Pope with JEA. I'm the  
4 director of economic development and real estate.

5 Q How long have you been in that position at  
6 JEA?

7 A I've been the director of economic  
8 development and real estate since June of 2019.

9 Q Of '19. Thank you. And because we have  
10 moved into 2020, we do need to be careful about that.

11 And I will say that our area of -- our time  
12 period of interest is approximately the spring of '18,  
13 when Mr. Zahn became interim CEO, through December of  
14 '19.

15 So as we sit here today in 2020 -- if you're  
16 referring to last year, that might be confusing -- if  
17 you could use '19 and '18 so that we don't have any  
18 confusion down the road, I'd appreciate it.

19 A Yes, sir.

20 Q Prior to being the director of economic  
21 development and real estate, what was your position at  
22 JEA?

23 A I was the director of government relations.

24 Q And how long were you in that job, position?

25 A From October of 2018 to June of 2019.

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1 Q Were you employed by JEA prior to October of  
2 '18?  
3 A Yes, sir. As the manager of government  
4 relations.  
5 Q How long were you manager of government  
6 relations?  
7 A It was December or January -- December of  
8 '15, January of '16, I believe, when I took on that  
9 role.  
10 Q During your -- so when you were manager of  
11 government relations, who did you report to?  
12 A Nancy Kilgo.  
13 Q Could you spell her last name, please?  
14 A K-I-L-G-O. And I should actually note she's  
15 now married. Her married name is Veasey, V-E-A-S-E-Y.  
16 Q Is she still with JEA?  
17 A Yes, sir.  
18 Q In what capacity?  
19 A As the director of special projects.  
20 Q When you were director of government  
21 relations, who was your direct report?  
22 A Mike Hightower.  
23 Q And now, as the director of economic  
24 development and real estate, who is your direct report?  
25 A Steve McInall.

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1 Q I have a document -- pages from a document  
2 that were included in a draft report or some version of  
3 a report prepared by the McKinsey group.  
4 Is that -- McKinsey, are you familiar with  
5 who McKinsey is?  
6 A Yes, sir.  
7 Q Who do you understand McKinsey to be?  
8 A Other than their reputation as a worldwide  
9 consulting firm, they were brought on at JEA as a  
10 strategic planning consultant.  
11 Q Do you remember when McKinsey started its  
12 work for JEA?  
13 A No, sir.  
14 Q In any event, in these pages you were listed  
15 "among today's presenters" -- not quite sure what that  
16 means and it doesn't really matter -- and most of the  
17 folks on here are members of the senior leadership team  
18 or the executive leadership team.  
19 As far as I can tell, you're the only one who  
20 is not at that level in the agency. It lists you  
21 accurately as the director of real estate and economic  
22 development. But as of the time this was generated,  
23 they didn't have enough information for your bio.  
24 So could you just give me a quick rundown of  
25 your work career prior to becoming the manager of

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1 government relations at JEA in December '15 or January  
2 '16?  
3 A Yes, sir. Prior to taking on the role of  
4 manager of government relations, I spent about 13  
5 months as the manager of capital budget planning at  
6 JEA.  
7 Q Oh, I'm sorry, I thought you started with JEA  
8 in that -- okay, never mind.  
9 A Oh, no, sir. I'm sorry.  
10 Q All right. Let's roll back to that. What  
11 was that job?  
12 A Manager of capital budget planning.  
13 Q All right. 13 months, you say?  
14 A Yes, sir.  
15 Q And prior to that?  
16 A I was a real estate coordinator. And that  
17 was my first role at JEA.  
18 Q Do you remember when you started at JEA as a  
19 real estate coordinator?  
20 A August 2010.  
21 I would like to add that I did work as a  
22 contract employee for JEA.  
23 Q Before coming on board?  
24 A Before coming on board as a permanent  
25 employee. That was 2006, '07, and '08.

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1 Q What did you do in -- after you stopped doing  
2 that in '08 and through to 2010?  
3 A I worked for CSX until I came back to JEA.  
4 Q In what area of CSX?  
5 A Real estate.  
6 Q Ideally I would work in a chronological line,  
7 but it's probably not going to be quite that smooth, so  
8 I may be hopping back and forth during time periods,  
9 and I apologize. I'll try not to -- I'll try to at  
10 least be discrete in the topics so that we don't get  
11 merged up.  
12 So while I'm on this sheet, these pages have  
13 a check mark under a column for Negotiating Team, and  
14 Melissa Dykes is checked, Herschel Vinyard is checked,  
15 and you are checked.  
16 Can you tell me about this negotiating team?  
17 A Yes, sir. I was asked to participate on the  
18 negotiation team as part of the recently canceled ITN  
19 process.  
20 Q When were you asked to get -- when were you  
21 asked to take that on?  
22 A I believe it would have been late October or  
23 early November of 2019.  
24 Q Who asked you?  
25 A Aaron Zahn.

1 Q Can you recount the meeting with Mr. Zahn in  
2 which he asked you onto the negotiating team?

3 And, by the way, was it a request or was it a  
4 directive?

5 A I was asked to participate on the team. I  
6 was not told I had to participate on the team.

7 He asked me to come to his office. I -- when  
8 I got there, he asked if I would be willing to  
9 participate on the negotiation team. We had a  
10 subsequent conversation as to what that might involve  
11 as far as time commitment and so forth.

12 I asked him why he was asking me to  
13 participate on the team, and that was really -- it was  
14 just a fairly short conversation.

15 Q Was anybody else in -- was this in his  
16 office?

17 A Yes, sir.

18 Q Was anybody else in his office with you?

19 A No, sir.

20 Q When you asked why he asked you, what did he  
21 say to you?

22 A He mentioned that he had thought of other  
23 people to participate, but he felt like I brought a  
24 perspective the other two negotiators maybe didn't  
25 have.

1 Q Did he elaborate on that?

2 A No, sir.

3 Q And you said it was a short -- a fairly short  
4 meeting?

5 A Yes, sir.

6 Q What was your reaction to the request?

7 A Hesitant.

8 Q For what reason?

9 A The entire process up to that time was not  
10 without controversy, certainly, so I -- I wanted to be  
11 sure that the process moving forward -- because I  
12 didn't -- I didn't really know exactly what was going  
13 to be involved in participating in the negotiation  
14 team, I wanted to understand, you know, what is the  
15 process as far as -- just what are the rules and how  
16 was it going to go, and what is my role, and what is,  
17 you know, my liability at the end of the day.

18 Because there were so many other  
19 conversations taking place as far as, you know -- I'm  
20 saying publicly conversations taking place about how  
21 opposed people were to the whole process in general.

22 Q I'm not sure that it matters terribly, but  
23 would your calendar -- would you be able to go to your  
24 calendar and actually pinpoint the day that you met  
25 with Mr. Zahn about this? I know you say late October,

1 early November. Would that be noted on your calendar,  
2 do you think?

3 A It would not be noted on my calendar, but I  
4 do remember he texted me and asked me to come to his  
5 office, which is when the conversation took place. I  
6 could look it up on my phone right now, if you would  
7 like me to.

8 Q I'd appreciate that.

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q Thanks. And I appreciate your bringing your  
11 phone.

12 A October 21st, 2019.

13 Q At the time of the meeting where you were  
14 invited onto the negotiating team, I assume you were  
15 aware that there was a negotiating team. Is that -- is  
16 my assumption correct?

17 A I was aware that there would be a negotiating  
18 team.

19 Q That's a good point. Had the negotiating  
20 team been formed before you coming on and you were  
21 replacing somebody, or was it being formed at that time  
22 and you were going to be the original third member to  
23 the team, if you know?

24 A I don't know. I know I asked who the other  
25 two members were -- well, I asked who the other members

1 were, I should say, and --

2 Q Did he tell you Melissa Dykes and  
3 Mr. Vinyard?

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q Did the negotiating team meet thereafter?

6 A Yes, sir.

7 Q Do you recall when you first met?

8 A No, sir.

9 Q Do you recall whether you met before October  
10 31st?

11 A I don't recall.

12 Q The team did meet, however; yes?

13 A Yes, sir.

14 Q In person, around a conference table or  
15 something?

16 A Yes, sir.

17 Q And do you remember, was it in the board room  
18 or somebody's office, Mr. Vinyard's office, Ms. Dykes'  
19 office?

20 A It was on the 16th floor of the JEA tower in  
21 a conference room.

22 Q Just the three of you?

23 A No, sir.

24 Q Who else would have been in there?

25 A There was a court reporter. There was Lynne

1 Rhode, John McCarthy, Jenny McCollum. I believe that's  
2 all.

3 Q By any chance do you remember the name of the  
4 court reporter?

5 A No, sir, I don't.

6 Q Sometimes -- usually, often, almost always,  
7 court reporters hand out business cards. Did she --  
8 did this reporter hand out a card to you?

9 A If she did I don't have it. I can tell you I  
10 have seen this court reporter many times at City Hall,  
11 so she's familiar to someone around here. I just -- I  
12 could look at my calendar that had these meetings set  
13 up and see if she was on that request.

14 Q Oh, terrific. Can you do that?

15 A Sure.

16 Q Thanks. And, listen, if you don't mind -- I  
17 appreciate your offering that -- and if you would  
18 continue to do that as we move through here, rather  
19 than not offer that, that would move us along more  
20 quickly, and I'd appreciate it.

21 A Her name is not on this calendar request.

22 Q Do you have the date of the meeting now?

23 A I do, sir. October 29th, 2019.

24 If I could add something to that?

25 Q Sure.

1 Q Other than the training, so to speak, by  
2 Mr. Hosay regarding procurement law, was there anything  
3 else covered at the second meeting?

4 A No, sir, not that I recall.

5 Q Were you comfortable in this assignment from  
6 the standpoint of your experience and own assessment of  
7 your knowledge of JEA and its -- and its business  
8 lines?

9 A I was comfortable as it regarded my knowledge  
10 of JEA. I think uncomfortable would be a fair word --  
11 unfair word. Again, I think I was hesitant considering  
12 my knowledge of how the process was going to work was  
13 that we would be negotiating with, obviously, very  
14 large entities that were in the market to potentially  
15 purchase JEA.

16 So I think the -- I think hesitant is the  
17 better word, and really because, again, the process was  
18 never totally clear as to what the -- what the next  
19 steps were going to be, how was this all going to play  
20 out, how were we going to sit in the room, were we  
21 truly going to negotiate and what terms were  
22 negotiable.

23 Q Before the entire team was replaced, was the  
24 process ever confirmed to you in either writing or a  
25 discussion with anybody?

1 A We had a couple meetings scheduled that were  
2 canceled before they happened, and I assume those  
3 cancelations went off of my calendar. I have no reason  
4 to think this meeting is not the one -- or one that  
5 happened that is here on October 29th on my calendar.

6 Q Have you ever seen a transcript of that  
7 meeting?

8 A No, sir.

9 Q Do you recall generally -- so Aaron Zahn was  
10 not in this meeting?

11 A No, sir.

12 Q Do you recall the summary substance of the  
13 meeting?

14 A My recollection is I was in two meetings as a  
15 negotiator in total before I was replaced -- or -- the  
16 whole negotiating team was replaced.

17 The first meeting I seem to recall there was  
18 a consensus to move forward with accepting revised bids  
19 to the ITN. And the second meeting was a training by  
20 outside legal counsel regarding what I'll say is  
21 procurement law for the negotiating team process.

22 Q Do you remember who the outside counsel was?

23 A I believe it was Robert Hosay.

24 Q Is he with Foley?

25 A Yes, sir.

1 A We were certainly given -- I seem to recall a  
2 document that -- I seem to recall a document that  
3 perhaps came in the training session that I referenced  
4 earlier that sought to maybe outline the process. But  
5 I would say that still never gave me total clarity as  
6 to how the process was actually going to work.

7 Q Did you have any discussions with either  
8 Mr. Zahn or Ms. Dykes or Mr. Vinyard at any point from  
9 October 21 until the team was replaced about any  
10 further detail of what was expected from you and what  
11 contribution Mr. Zahn was looking for from you to make  
12 to the negotiating effort?

13 A No, sir, not me specifically.

14 Q Did you ever have a sit-down with Ms. Dykes  
15 and just say, Jeez, this is -- this did come as a  
16 surprise to you, I am assuming, yes?

17 A Yes, sir.

18 Q Did you ever sit down with Ms. Dykes and  
19 literally just the two of you have a conversation of --  
20 where you're essentially saying, Wow, this kind of came  
21 out of left field, what do you think about this, should  
22 I be doing this, something like that?

23 A Yes, sir. I had a conversation with a number  
24 of people after Mr. Zahn asked me to basically have  
25 that conversation, Ms. Dykes being one of them,

1 Ms. Rhode being another, my boss, Steve McInall, John  
2 McCarthy and Jenny McCollum, because I wanted to  
3 understand from as many people as I could -- try to  
4 understand the process.

5 And I wouldn't say it was such a "why me"  
6 conversation as it was, you know, asking -- help me  
7 understand the process, have all the Is been dotted the  
8 Ts been crossed, those sorts of questions.

9 Q Did -- I'm not going to ask you to try to  
10 remember the details of every single conversation with  
11 these five people, but did any of them offer any  
12 thoughts or guidance or advice that stands out among  
13 any of the discussions you had with these five?

14 A No, sir, nothing stands out.

15 Look, I know -- I know to follow the rules,  
16 and so the -- my goal in talking to these people was to  
17 make sure that a process which I don't understand and  
18 don't have the expertise to know if it had been done  
19 airtight -- you know, I wanted to understand that from  
20 the people who were working on it every day so that I  
21 could follow that process the way I needed to. That  
22 was my goal in talking to most of those people I just  
23 listed.

24 Q I get it, and I appreciate it.

25 One thing I forgot to mention at the

1 outset -- and by mentioning it now I don't mean to  
2 imply anything, right -- but as I did say at the  
3 beginning, this is part of the work that we were  
4 assigned to do by the board of directors, so when  
5 you're talking to me, you are effectively talking to  
6 the board of directors, and I just wanted to emphasize  
7 that.

8 Obviously the board of directors can only  
9 meet in the sunshine, but if in such a situation there  
10 could be a freewheeling conversation with the board of  
11 directors on Topics A to Z and your observations and  
12 experience at JEA, that is effectively what's happening  
13 here.

14 A Okay.

15 Q So I would ask you to keep that in mind. And  
16 at the end of the day, this will become a public  
17 record.

18 A Sure.

19 Q And so the sun will shine on it. Okay, good,  
20 appreciate that.

21 All right. So any other thoughts on this  
22 negotiating team assignment, short-lived as it was?

23 A I was happy it was short-lived.

24 Q I get that, too. All right.

25 As I got into this and learned of the comings

1 and goings of folks in the -- Mr. Zahn's tenure, I was  
2 struck by the number of departures in a fairly tight  
3 time frame.

4 So it appears to me that between March --  
5 February, March of '19 and for the most part just June  
6 of '19 -- one or two may have carried forward -- the  
7 following people left JEA, many of whom had been there  
8 for their careers and some -- and all of whom had been  
9 there for at least some period of time, all right.

10 A All right.

11 Q So the list includes Angie Hiers, yes, do you  
12 remember -- and let me just ask you, just confirm that  
13 you have a recollection of them leaving between, say,  
14 February, March of '19 and the end of '19.

15 A Yes, sir.

16 Q I'm sorry, before -- do you remember the --  
17 that there was a hearing at City Hall which was  
18 conducted by Councilmen Salem and Diamond on December  
19 16th?

20 A Yes, sir.

21 Q So let's just use that as the end point.

22 A Sure.

23 Q And I think I know the answer to it, but this  
24 is a matter of record, and it's important to get all  
25 the --

1 A Okay.

2 Q -- some of these Is dotted.

3 Angie Hiers?

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q And she was the VP of human resources?

6 A Yes, sir.

7 Q Mike Brost?

8 A The only reason I hesitate is I don't  
9 remember him leaving '19. Was it -- February '19, but  
10 maybe it was. I thought it was earlier than that.

11 Q He was VP of energy; right?

12 A He was, yes, sir.

13 Q And he was replaced by Caren Anders?

14 A Yes, sir.

15 Q Or succeeded by Caren Anders?

16 A Yes, sir.

17 Q Brian Roche?

18 A Yes, sir. But he would have been before  
19 February of '19.

20 Q All right. But in the -- how about after  
21 Mr. Zahn began as interim CEO?

22 A Yes, sir.

23 Q Okay. And would that be the same for  
24 Mr. Brost?

25 A Yes, sir.

1 Q Do you know whether Mr. Brost left after  
2 Mr. Zahn became permanent CEO or before? Permanent in  
3 November of '18, just to help you with that.  
4 A No, sir, I don't recall.  
5 Q Okay. And Mr. Roche was VP of water?  
6 A Water, yes, sir.  
7 Q Water/wastewater. Can't have one without the  
8 other.  
9 Paul Cosgrave?  
10 A Yes, sir.  
11 Q And he was the IT VP; correct?  
12 A Yes, sir.  
13 Q Julio Romero?  
14 A Yes, sir.  
15 Q And did he succeed Mr. Cosgrave?  
16 A Yes, sir. Not in title, but in function.  
17 Q In function.  
18 Mike Hightower?  
19 A Yes, sir.  
20 Q June of '19?  
21 A Yes, sir.  
22 Q Did you know a Scott Stackbine (phonetic)?  
23 A I know a Scott Strackbine.  
24 Q Oh, I'm sorry. Excuse me. That's correct,  
25 Strackbine. What was his function?

1 A I believe Scott worked in our human resources  
2 department. I -- I thought he was still at JEA, but  
3 perhaps I'm wrong.  
4 Q Oh, okay. So you weren't aware of his  
5 leaving?  
6 A I am not.  
7 Q Does that surprise you to hear that he's  
8 gone?  
9 A It only surprises me to find out in this  
10 room, that's all.  
11 Q So you were the manager of government  
12 relations for quite some time.  
13 A Yes, sir.  
14 Q And then you became director of government  
15 relations at Mr. Hightower's election --  
16 A Yes, sir.  
17 Q -- is that correct?  
18 Now, as I understand it, Mr. Hightower had  
19 been in his position since the spring of '15. I'm not  
20 asking a question, that's just my framework.  
21 So would you have had a pretty involved  
22 working relationship with Mr. Hightower for the entire  
23 period of time that you were the manager of government  
24 relations?  
25 A Yes, sir.

1 Q What was explained to you by Mr. Hightower  
2 for promoting you to director of government relations?  
3 And what was the difference between being the  
4 manager of government relations and the director of  
5 government relations?  
6 A So the reasoning was Ms. Kilgo, my boss as  
7 the -- she was the director of government relations,  
8 was moving on to be the director of special projects.  
9 She runs JEA's new corporate headquarters project.  
10 And I had worked under her for that period of  
11 time, and Mr. Hightower was promoting me to her  
12 position as the director of government relations.  
13 Q How had -- how did your job change from --  
14 when you went from manager to director?  
15 A I then had two additional direct reports and  
16 had responsibility for -- as the manager of government  
17 relations I mainly focused on local government  
18 relations, so that would include City Hall, City of  
19 Jacksonville, and outlying counties that JEA serves.  
20 As the director, both state and federal government  
21 relations fall under that purview, together with local.  
22 Q That's quite a portfolio, seems to me.  
23 A It's a lot.  
24 Q Yeah. So when you became director, you --  
25 I'm sorry. You're saying that when you became director

1 you now were responsible for the federal and state  
2 relations?  
3 A Yes, sir.  
4 Q Did your local government activity change  
5 when you became director in any respect?  
6 A As compared to what it was like when I was  
7 the manager of government relations?  
8 Q Correct.  
9 A No, sir, not that I can recall. There was no  
10 real big change.  
11 Q Okay. So when you were manager, would you  
12 have been the principal liaison between JEA and City  
13 Council, for example?  
14 A Yes, sir.  
15 Q And as director, did you continue to be the  
16 principal liaison between JEA and City Council?  
17 A I was.  
18 Q Did there come a time in Mr. Zahn's tenure  
19 that at least from Mr. Zahn's perspective there was a  
20 contention in your work with the City Council?  
21 A Yes, sir.  
22 Q Do you remember when that was?  
23 A I don't recall the exact time.  
24 Q Let's -- if we could, let me offer some  
25 chronological assistance points.

1 Do you remember if it was after Mr. Zahn  
2 became permanent CEO in November of '18? Or, better,  
3 do you remember if it was after you became manager of  
4 government relations?

5 A After I became the manager of government  
6 relations?

7 Q Yes, sir.

8 A It certainly would have been after that. I  
9 was the manager of government relations before  
10 Mr. Zahn.

11 Q Oh, I'm sorry. Excuse me.

12 A That's okay.

13 Q Was it after you became director of  
14 government relations?

15 A My best recollection is it was probably right  
16 after I became the director of government relations.

17 Q Can you tell me about the circumstances of  
18 this point of contention from Mr. Zahn's perspective?

19 A Yes, sir. The -- I was at a City Council  
20 committee meeting representing JEA on a bill. Mr. Zahn  
21 had given me -- he wanted me to say a particular line  
22 in the event I was called up to the podium.

23 When I was called up to the podium, the line  
24 that he had given me in no way really fit the nature of  
25 the question that I had been asked, and so I felt like

1 A My recollection is it was the bill regarding  
2 amending the JEA charter to call for a referendum in  
3 the event 10 percent or more of JEA is -- whatever the  
4 language is -- sold, leased, et cetera.

5 Q So this bill would have amended the charter  
6 to require a referendum up or down on whether to sell  
7 more than 10 percent of JEA --

8 A That's my recollection.

9 Q -- in a nutshell?

10 A Yes, sir.

11 Q So Mr. Zahn instructed you to come over and  
12 tell the City Council that JEA supported the bill; you  
13 didn't think that was the question you were asked.

14 Do you remember what you said to the City  
15 Council that got Mr. Zahn so upset?

16 A No, sir. I actually feel what I said was  
17 fairly benign, but I suppose that wasn't the case.

18 Q So when you say that Mr. Zahn spoke to you  
19 sternly, would that mean loudly?

20 A No, sir. He did not speak loudly to me. I  
21 am -- I am aware that Mr. Zahn spoke loudly before I  
22 reached the floor, at least that's what people told me.  
23 But he did not speak loudly to me.

24 Q Can you remember the words he used?  
25 Did Mr. Zahn speak profanely to you in

1 I needed to answer the question being asked instead of  
2 stating this line I had been given that didn't  
3 really --

4 Q Fit?

5 A -- fit. When I came back to the office,  
6 Mr. Zahn was not pleased.

7 Q How did he express his displeasure? Did he  
8 call you up to his office?

9 A Actually, it was Mr. Hightower who called me  
10 to his office, because Mr. Zahn had already spoken to  
11 Mr. Hightower about the matter. And I sat in  
12 Mr. Hightower's office and we spoke about it until  
13 Mr. Zahn came into Mr. Hightower's office and he --  
14 he -- he sternly told me that he had given me a line to  
15 say and that's what I needed to do.

16 Q All right. Let's -- do you remember the  
17 line?

18 A I don't, no, sir.

19 Q Do you remember the substance of the line,  
20 subject matter?

21 A Yes, sir. It was something to the effect of,  
22 JEA supports the bill, or -- it was something like  
23 that, basically just a generic --

24 Q Do you remember what the bill was? Not the  
25 number, but what the --

1 meeting with -- in this encounter where Mr. Hightower  
2 was present?

3 A Yes, sir. I apologize. If you'll give me a  
4 second. This was a little while ago.

5 I remember -- I remember him being very  
6 frustrated that I did not just simply repeat the words  
7 he had given me. Whether he spoke profanely, I'm  
8 sorry, I just -- I cannot completely recall.

9 Q Did he speak disparagingly of anybody else in  
10 the course of -- would you call this -- you know,  
11 sometimes we call these things a dressing down.

12 Would you consider this to have been a  
13 dressing down by Mr. Zahn?

14 A Yes, sir.

15 Q In the course of that, did he speak  
16 disparagingly of anybody else as -- in a comparative  
17 way, for example?

18 A No, sir, not that I recall.

19 Q So he's unhappy with you, and he says, You're  
20 just like X that's done X, Y, and Z, anything like  
21 that?

22 A No, sir, not that I recall.

23 Q So you said before you got to the 16th floor  
24 you later heard from people that he'd already been  
25 yelling about the situation. Who -- do you remember



1 who gave you that information?  
 2 A Mike Hightower.  
 3 Q Anybody else?  
 4 A I believe it was Brandi Taylor, B-R-A-N-D-I.  
 5 She was -- she was an executive assistant at JEA. She  
 6 still works there in a different capacity now.  
 7 Q Who was she the EA for at the time?  
 8 A I'm not certain.  
 9 Q Was this the only time that Mr. Zahn  
 10 addressed you in this fashion?  
 11 A Yes, sir.  
 12 Q Did you feel that his behavior was  
 13 appropriate to the position of CEO of JEA?  
 14 A No, sir.  
 15 Q Did you report it to anybody?  
 16 A No, sir.  
 17 Q Did you and Mr. Zahn have any further  
 18 discussions about the encounter?  
 19 A He apologized to me.  
 20 Q Did he apologize in person?  
 21 A He apologized through text, I believe.  
 22 Q Would you happen to still have that text?  
 23 A I will look.  
 24 No, sir, I don't see it here.  
 25 Q I'm sure you've been following all the news

1 since, let's say, early November. Do you recall that  
 2 in early November the council auditor issued a  
 3 memorandum that was, to say the least, informative  
 4 regarding what has come to be known as the PUP?  
 5 A Yes, sir.  
 6 Q And when I say PUP, I'm referring -- make  
 7 sure we're on the same page -- to the long-term  
 8 performance unit plan that was in play until it wasn't  
 9 in play in early November.  
 10 A Yes, sir.  
 11 Q At the time you were invited by Mr. Zahn to  
 12 join the negotiating team on October 21st of '19, had  
 13 you ever heard of the long-term performance unit plan?  
 14 A Yes, sir.  
 15 Q When did you first learn of the PUP?  
 16 A At the July 23rd board meeting. Whether it  
 17 was referred to as the PUP at that time I don't know,  
 18 but that's where it was discussed with the board.  
 19 Q Fair enough. And just so that we can be  
 20 clear and not have to use words unnecessarily, I use  
 21 the word PUP in substance, not in name. Okay?  
 22 A Very good.  
 23 Q What do you remember -- so obviously you  
 24 attended the board meeting, yes? Or no? Did you watch  
 25 it online or something?

1 A I can't recall. I was -- it was one of -- I  
 2 do believe I attended the July 23rd board meeting.  
 3 Q What was being said? What was shared that  
 4 informed you at that time of the PUP? Let me just back  
 5 up.  
 6 You said you learned of it there. In what  
 7 form or fashion did you learn of it and become aware of  
 8 the PUP?  
 9 A Sure. I simply recall there being a  
 10 discussion on long-term incentive compensation, and  
 11 then I -- I had the benefit of the board package. And  
 12 so I can't tell you whether what I learned was either  
 13 through me listening to the conversation or  
 14 subsequently reading all that was in the board package  
 15 regarding the PUP.  
 16 Simply to say, learning about the PUP that  
 17 day was -- could have been both through the  
 18 conversation at the board meeting and/or reading the  
 19 board package.  
 20 Q Would you have received the board package in  
 21 advance of the meeting?  
 22 A Generally as part of my role, we would  
 23 distribute board packages to council members in advance  
 24 of the meeting, that which was available.  
 25 I do not believe I was still -- I was not

1 still doing that at that point in July. I don't recall  
 2 if I got a package before the meeting in that month.  
 3 Q Do you recall whether you delivered a board  
 4 package in advance of the June meeting to members of  
 5 Council? And you're referring to City Council?  
 6 A Yes, sir. Sorry, yes, sir.  
 7 I don't remember, no, sir.  
 8 Q Did there -- so it sounds like you're saying  
 9 that there had been a practice in place of delivering  
 10 board packages to members of City Council in advance of  
 11 JEA board meetings, yes?  
 12 A Yes, sir. On the day that our board  
 13 packages -- I believe we have to publish an agenda at  
 14 least, or -- whatever has to be published in advance,  
 15 once it was made available, we would send that to the  
 16 members of the City Council in advance of the board  
 17 meeting.  
 18 Q Yeah. But you didn't do that in July?  
 19 A No, sir. But I was not in the government  
 20 relations role at that time.  
 21 Q Oh, I'm sorry. That's fair.  
 22 A That's okay.  
 23 Q That's fair. You moved over to economic  
 24 development and real estate. While we're on the topic,  
 25 was there any particular reason for that move?

1 A Yes, sir. The government relations role is  
2 quite time consuming as it relates to after-hours work,  
3 and I have three small children. And it got to the  
4 point where the gentleman who had run JEA real estate  
5 for many years was retiring, and I felt like that was  
6 maybe an opportunity for me to have what I'll call more  
7 of a normal schedule. And the people at JEA were kind  
8 enough to let me move into that role.

9 Q Were you -- was your position filled  
10 immediately?

11 A It was filled quickly, not immediately.

12 Q Who was -- who came in?

13 A The position was really filled by Sherry  
14 Hall. So she did not take on the title of director of  
15 government relations, but she essentially took on the  
16 function that I was performing.

17 Q As the director of economic and --

18 A Development and real estate.

19 Q Economic development and real estate. Well,  
20 let's see. So would this have been the first board  
21 meeting when you were in the position, or maybe the  
22 second one after the June meeting?

23 A It was the first or second, yes, sir.

24 Q Were the board packages provided to you in  
25 advance of the meeting because of your position?

1 A As my position of government relations?

2 Q No. Once you became director of --

3 A No, sir.

4 Q -- economic development and real estate.

5 A No, sir.

6 Q Do you nonetheless remember -- okay.

7 So was the July 23 board package distributed  
8 to you in advance of the meeting?

9 A Not that I recall, no, sir. And it was  
10 always electronic, just -- when we talk about  
11 distributing, it's an electronic distribution.

12 Q I understand. And I -- as an old-school guy,  
13 I understand that's the reality. Sometimes it's nice,  
14 when you have 300-and-some-odd pages, to have paper,  
15 though, isn't it?

16 A It is.

17 Q Do you remember when you first received the  
18 July 23 board package, or first had access to it? I  
19 guess that's a better way of putting it. Or first  
20 accessed it, looked at it?

21 A My recollection is the first time I accessed  
22 it was the Tuesday of the board meeting.

23 Q So if you were at the meeting -- and you seem  
24 to think you probably were -- you would have had your  
25 laptop, and the meeting is going on and you pulled it

1 up to look at it? Is that how you remember getting  
2 into it?

3 A I don't recall if I accessed it during the  
4 meeting or if I read it afterwards.

5 Q So your recollection is that's the first time  
6 you heard of this long-term incentive compensation  
7 plan; correct?

8 A Yes, sir.

9 Q Did it -- do you recall that it piqued your  
10 interest, so to speak?

11 A It did. And I --

12 Q How so?

13 A I wondered how it worked.

14 Q Did you dig into it at the time? Let me --  
15 no, stop, stop, stop.

16 What did you do with respect to your  
17 wonderment of how it worked?

18 A Again, I read the board package and gathered  
19 what I could. And I -- look, I probably had a bunch of  
20 conversations with colleagues and just said, Have you  
21 seen this long-term incentive plan?

22 I mean I -- you know, you have conversations  
23 with people in the course of work.

24 Q Okay. Let's -- and I appreciate that, and  
25 maybe we'll go into that. You know, I understand you

1 have conversations around the water cooler and stuff.

2 A Yeah.

3 Q But from the board package itself, do you  
4 remember what you were able to glean from the board  
5 package about the long-term incentive compensation  
6 plan?

7 A I gleaned that more details would become  
8 available. Then I decided that I would just wait until  
9 then to determine if I would be a participant or not.

10 Q And following that, do you remember having  
11 water-cooler-type conversations with colleagues about,  
12 What is this all about, what does it mean to us, how is  
13 it going to work, what's the timeline, things like  
14 that?

15 A Yes, sir. But not extensive.

16 Q In all those conversations -- and would those  
17 conversations have been with folks at the director  
18 level and below, as opposed to --

19 A Yes, sir.

20 Q Did you ever have any conversations with  
21 members of the senior leadership team about the  
22 performance -- the long-term performance plan, the PUP,  
23 after the July 23 board meeting?

24 A I hate to say no, because again --

25 Q You might have had a conversation in passing?

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1 A Yeah. It may have been, you know, This  
2 compensation plan thing is, you know, interesting,  
3 something like that.

4 Q Okay. Can I assume that you did not -- after  
5 the July 23 board meeting right through until the time  
6 the plan was pulled from the table, can I assume that  
7 you did not have a conversation with either Aaron Zahn,  
8 Herschel Vinyard, or Melissa Dykes about the PUP?

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q In all the conversations, then, that you had  
11 about it after July 23, whether it's with your director  
12 peers, your direct reports, members of the senior  
13 leadership team, did anybody, from your recollection,  
14 appear to have what you would consider to have been a  
15 good understanding of the PUP, the details of the PUP?

16 A No, sir.

17 Q Did anybody ever -- and when I say anybody,  
18 Mr. Pope, I -- in your case this would be an upward  
19 look.

20 So did anybody senior to you at JEA ever sit  
21 down and talk to you about whether you would be  
22 eligible to participate in the PUP?

23 A No, sir.

24 Q Did anybody senior to you -- I'm sorry. Go  
25 ahead.

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1 A My understanding -- I just want to be clear.  
2 My understanding of the PUP was that it was going to be  
3 available to JEA employees. So that was never like  
4 a -- it was never like a question in my mind.

5 Because my understanding of the program,  
6 again, from what I had seen and the discussion at the  
7 board meeting was the long-term incentive was for all  
8 employees to be able to participate in. I may have  
9 been wrong, but that was my understanding of it.

10 Q From the point of the July 23 board meeting  
11 forward, did you understand that participation by  
12 employees would require a deferred compensation  
13 investment in the plan, so to speak investment, that it  
14 would be a form of deferred compensation and therefore  
15 would require a financial commitment or contribution by  
16 the employees in order to participate in the plan?

17 A I'll answer this the best way I know how.

18 Q Sure. Probably not a very good question.

19 A I understood the -- I understood the employee  
20 would have to invest money in order to make money, so  
21 to speak. I did understand that much.

22 Q Did that element of this incentive plan give  
23 you any pause or cause you to give thought to how that  
24 would be consistent with an incentive plan?

25 A To be honest, I really thought that was just

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1 what had been designed in order to comply with all of  
2 the rules and laws that were -- that govern incentive  
3 and government.

4 That's what -- I mean that's just my -- it  
5 was my assumption, was that this was the way that  
6 someone has come up with in order to make sure we're  
7 complying with everything in order to provide a long-  
8 term incentive plan.

9 Q All right. JEA, of course, has a short-term  
10 incentive plan; correct?

11 A Yes, sir.

12 Q It's an annual program where employees  
13 receive a payment?

14 A Yes, sir.

15 Q Is it considered a bonus? I mean do you  
16 think of it as a bonus?

17 A We call it performance pay at JEA, so --

18 Q All right. And that payment is an annual  
19 payment, correct --

20 A Yes, sir.

21 Q -- if you get one?

22 A Assuming you earn it, yes, sir.

23 Q Right. And it's based entirely on the  
24 individual employee's performance over the course of  
25 the year, however the year is determined?

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1 A The fiscal year, yes, sir.

2 Q So at the end of the -- and the fiscal year  
3 at JEA is October/September; right?

4 A Yes, sir.

5 Q So toward the end of September, early  
6 October, every employee goes through some form of  
7 performance review; correct?

8 A Yes, sir.

9 Q And so that information, those results, go  
10 through a calculus, and however it gets to wherever and  
11 whoever does it, you get to the end and an employee is  
12 determined either to have performed well enough to be  
13 entitled to a payment or not, and then somebody figures  
14 out how much it is; correct?

15 A Yes, sir.

16 Q And employees don't have to pay anything into  
17 that program in order to be eligible to receive a  
18 performance payment; is that also correct?

19 A That's correct.

20 Q Did you ever learn from anybody senior to you  
21 at JEA, from them, from inside JEA, as to what the  
22 payment amount and structure, perhaps the mechanism was  
23 going to be for employees to buy into the PUP?

24 A No, sir, not that I recall.

25 Q Did you learn of that from outside sources,

1 the media, news report, Council proceedings, or did you  
2 ever learn what that was going to be?

3 A I apologize. When you refer to the  
4 mechanism, that --

5 Q Well, I threw that in there, probably  
6 shouldn't have.

7 Did you ever learn from anybody at JEA senior  
8 to you about what the amount was going to be required  
9 of employees to participate in the PUP, the investment,  
10 so to speak?

11 A I always remember hearing \$10 per unit. Now,  
12 that may have just -- I don't know where I heard that,  
13 but that's all I ever remember.

14 Q Did anybody senior to you at JEA ever sit  
15 down and talk to you about how many units you, Jordan  
16 Pope, would be eligible to purchase?

17 A No, sir. I do -- I want to tell you I do  
18 remember a member of the senior leadership team telling  
19 me that they -- they said they would probably purchase  
20 some. That's the way it was characterized to me. But  
21 it was -- it was never a, How many could I purchase? I  
22 don't recall that conversation.

23 Q And that interaction with the member of the  
24 senior leadership team, any discussion of how many  
25 units that senior leadership team member would be able

1 meeting, was that that list was used to estimate how  
2 many people might participate given a certain income  
3 threshold.

4 Q Have you had any conversations with anybody  
5 since the Council meeting that we're talking about  
6 regarding this list?

7 A No, sir.

8 Q Were you still the director of government  
9 relations when Mr. Hightower left JEA?

10 A No, sir. I had -- I believe I had officially  
11 moved over to the new role. It all -- that happened  
12 very quickly, my move to the new role and Mike exiting.

13 Q Have you ever talked to Mr. Hightower about  
14 the circumstances of his departure?

15 A Yes, sir.

16 Q Can you, then, share with me what you  
17 understand from Mr. Hightower of the circumstances of  
18 his departure?

19 A Mike told me he felt like it was time for him  
20 to go, that, you know, he had served JEA well for the.  
21 Time he had been there but that it was time for him to  
22 go. There's really no more, at least, detail than that  
23 that he shared with me. He just felt like it was his  
24 time to move on.

25 Q Did he tell you that he was leaving

1 to purchase?

2 A No, sir.

3 Q Have you ever seen a list of JEA employees  
4 who would be eligible to participate in the PUP?

5 A I heard about the list that was used to  
6 estimate how many employees might participate. I  
7 believe it was a list of -- it was a list of employees  
8 who made over a certain amount of money. And I heard  
9 about that through the -- I believe it was the Council  
10 members Salem and Diamond.

11 Q Had you heard of that before that meeting?

12 A No, sir.

13 Q And do you have any more information about  
14 that list --

15 A No, sir.

16 Q -- beyond having heard about it on December  
17 16?

18 A No, sir. That was the first time I had ever  
19 heard of that.

20 Q Are you saying that there would be a minimum  
21 amount that somebody would have to be earning at JEA in  
22 order to participate and so that only those above that  
23 income level would be able to participate?

24 A No, sir, I'm not saying that. My  
25 understanding of that list, again, from the public

1 voluntarily?

2 A He did not tell me that.

3 Q Did he tell you that he was leaving  
4 involuntarily?

5 A No, sir, he did not tell me that.

6 Q Did he share with you the event or any  
7 details of a -- the event of a meeting or any details  
8 of a meeting with Aaron Zahn regarding his departure?

9 A No, sir.

10 Q And that would be at any time since he left  
11 through today?

12 A What would be --

13 Q Whether you had any conversations with  
14 Mr. Hightower about his departure.

15 A Correct, yes, sir.

16 Q Did Sherry Hall get with you when she came on  
17 board to have a transition discussion, for want of a  
18 better way of describing it?

19 A Yes, sir.

20 Q Can you -- did you have more than one session  
21 with her?

22 A Sherry and I would speak frequently when she  
23 first came on board, just so she could understand, one,  
24 certain things that we did as a matter of the -- in the  
25 course of doing things in government relations,

1 understood that, and understood the issues, you know,  
2 going on in the different realms of government.

3 So I just hate to call them sessions as much  
4 as they were just frequent conversations.

5 Q Were you aware that in October JEA put out an  
6 RFP for a company to lobby in Tallahassee for JEA?

7 A Is the question was I aware or am I aware  
8 now? Sorry.

9 Q Well, let's see. Were you aware at the time  
10 the RFP was being issued that it was out there on the  
11 street?

12 A No, sir.

13 Q When did you become aware that that RFP had  
14 gone out and there had been an award?

15 A I don't -- I don't recall when I found out.

16 Q I think you've answered my question. It  
17 sounds to me like Sherry Hall did not discuss that RFP  
18 with you before it went out the door?

19 A No, sir.

20 Q During your tenure as director of government  
21 relations, did you have any interactions with an  
22 individual by the name of Deno Hicks?

23 A Yes, sir.

24 Q Well, first, tell me who you understand Deno  
25 Hicks to be.

1 A Deno is a lobbyist with the Southern Group.

2 Q What do you understand of his history with  
3 Mr. Zahn?

4 A That they are friends and apparent business  
5 partners in real estate.

6 Q And why do you say apparent? Is this just  
7 information you're picking up in the media?

8 A Yes, sir.

9 Q What were the -- if you could, what was the  
10 substance of your interactions with Mr. Hicks while you  
11 were director of government relations? So that would  
12 have been from October of '18 to June of '19.

13 A Sure. A lot of my interaction with Deno  
14 would be him asking questions on behalf of clients he  
15 represented regarding JEA matters.

16 So if I could give you an example from my  
17 current role. JEA is in the process of selling a piece  
18 property to Johnson & Johnson for an expansion project  
19 on the Southside of Jacksonville. Deno represented  
20 Johnson & Johnson and made the introduction to JEA as  
21 regarding their interest in the property to facilitate  
22 their expansion project. It was not a piece of  
23 property JEA had on the market at the time.

24 So those are the kinds of interactions I  
25 would be referring to, where Deno would be working for

1 a client not JEA, and connect that client with JEA.

2 Q Can you -- are you able to recall any other  
3 clients that Mr. Hicks contacted you about, either in  
4 your position as director of government relations or  
5 your current position --

6 A Yes.

7 Q -- regarding JEA --

8 A Yes.

9 Q -- opportunities or whatever?

10 A Johnson & Johnson is one. Steve Atkins is  
11 another, the --

12 Q Atkins with a T?

13 A Yes, sir. The gentleman doing the Barnett  
14 tower. Mr. Hicks has called us regarding some matters  
15 with his development -- developments.

16 I worked with Mr. Hicks on matters with --  
17 involving JEA in outlying counties, specifically  
18 St. Johns and Nassau County.

19 The only reason I didn't say this is you  
20 asked as part of my role as government relations. I  
21 actually worked mostly with Mr. Hicks on this issue  
22 with outlying counties. In my current role --

23 Q Actually, I mentioned both.

24 A Oh, I apologize.

25 Q Either one, either one, either one.

1 A So we -- so Mr. Hicks, he was not -- I  
2 apologize. Let me back up a little bit here.

3 Johnson & Johnson, Steve Atkins, those are  
4 the two, I'm recalling to mind, clients he represented.  
5 There may have been others. If I recall them, I'll  
6 mention them.

7 But Mr. Hicks was helping JEA as it regarded  
8 the outlying counties, Nassau and St. Johns  
9 specifically, and their right of first refusal in the  
10 interlocal agreements that JEA has with those counties.  
11 In the event that JEA were to, I guess, have a sale,  
12 those counties could exercise their right of first  
13 refusal, and so Mr. Hicks was assisting JEA with that  
14 matter.

15 Q In what capacity was he quote-unquote  
16 "helping JEA"? Was it pursuant to a contract or some  
17 form of engagement?

18 A I don't know. I was told to work with  
19 Mr. Hicks.

20 Q Who told you to do that?

21 A Mr. Vinyard.

22 Q Do you remember when you might have gotten  
23 that direction?

24 A My best recollection is August of 2019.

25 Q And was it prior to that or after that that

1 he approached you regarding his Johnson & Johnson  
 2 client or Steve Atkins and the Barnett tower?  
 3 A I believe both of those would have been  
 4 before that.  
 5 Q All right. Stepping back, you said that  
 6 Mr. Hicks was representing -- or came and talked to you  
 7 about Johnson & Johnson's interest in some JEA property  
 8 at a time when that property was not on the market;  
 9 is --  
 10 A Yes, sir.  
 11 Q -- that correct?  
 12 Did it surprise you that you were being  
 13 approached about some property owned by JEA that wasn't  
 14 even up for sale?  
 15 A No, sir. This particular piece is  
 16 unimproved, and actually it is -- there are only two  
 17 adjacent owners to this piece of land, JEA and  
 18 Johnson & Johnson. Johnson & Johnson's campus is space  
 19 constrained, and so they were inquiring as to our  
 20 willingness to potentially sell that parcel so that  
 21 they could expand.  
 22 So -- it's not atypical for JEA to be  
 23 approached about certain parcels that may or may not be  
 24 available for sale.  
 25 Q Is this a parcel that's in Duval or in

1 St. Johns County?  
 2 A Duval.  
 3 Q Was this parcel -- no, I'm sorry.  
 4 Can you describe the land to me, the size and  
 5 what was the condition of it?  
 6 A Yeah. It's a little over three acres. It's  
 7 unimproved. It's adjacent to a JEA water treatment  
 8 plant.  
 9 Actually, JEA bought that particular parcel  
 10 from Johnson & Johnson 15 plus years ago for our  
 11 expansion of our water treatment plant, which to date  
 12 has not happened. And so what ended up happening is  
 13 JEA now is only selling a portion of that unimproved  
 14 piece to Johnson & Johnson, and it's going to actually  
 15 facilitate an expansion of JEA's water treatment plant  
 16 and allow them to do their expansion of their facility.  
 17 Q Okay. So the -- the matter that Mr. Hicks  
 18 approached you on on behalf of Johnson & Johnson has  
 19 evolved into an agreement?  
 20 A Yes, sir.  
 21 Q Has it closed?  
 22 A It has not closed, but it has been approved  
 23 by the board.  
 24 Q Do you know if the board was aware of  
 25 Mr. Hicks' involvement in the matter at the time it

1 approved it?  
 2 A I don't know, no, sir.  
 3 Q Do you remember when the board approved the  
 4 deal?  
 5 A The December board meeting.  
 6 Q December of '19?  
 7 A Yes. Sorry. December of '19.  
 8 Q The hat that Mr. Hicks was wearing, so to  
 9 speak, at the time in this matter was Southern Group?  
 10 A Yes, sir, as far as I know.  
 11 Q And what can you tell me about the timing of  
 12 his contact -- contacts regarding Mr. Atkins and the  
 13 Barnett tower?  
 14 A The timing? As far as when --  
 15 Q Timing and, frankly, the substance of it. I  
 16 mean I just would like to ask about this contact and  
 17 the details of it.  
 18 A Two things with Mr. Atkins: One regards the  
 19 Barnett tower and some JEA equipment and a -- so the  
 20 overhang of the -- an awning over some JEA equipment in  
 21 the right-of-way, that was an issue that was -- needed  
 22 to be worked out; and then the other is inquiring about  
 23 a piece of property JEA owns, its motor pool lot in the  
 24 downtown area.  
 25 Q Was the motor pool lot up for sale?

1 A No, sir.  
 2 Q Did being approached by Mr. Hicks about  
 3 Mr. Atkins or his company's interest in the JEA motor  
 4 pool lot come as a surprise to you?  
 5 A No, sir.  
 6 Q Is this because people and groups  
 7 periodically just come in and say, Hey, I understand  
 8 JEA owns X, Y, and Z; is JEA interested in selling it?  
 9 A Yes, sir.  
 10 Q Has there been any movement forward on the  
 11 transaction facilitated by Mr. Hicks regarding the JEA  
 12 motor pool lot?  
 13 A No, sir. There's no -- there's discussions  
 14 regarding the potential to sell that lot, but  
 15 nothing -- no agreement has been made.  
 16 Q When's the last time you've had any contact  
 17 over the phone or in a meeting or by text or email with  
 18 Mr. Hicks?  
 19 A A couple weeks ago. I'll tell you.  
 20 Q Is it a text?  
 21 A Yes, sir.  
 22 January 2nd.  
 23 Q Can you read the text to me, please?  
 24 A Well, let me start on Sunday, December 29th:  
 25 Good morning, brother. Quick question. Steve Atkins

1 is about to go hard in purchasing two of the adjacent  
2 parcels to the JEA parking lot we discussed downtown.  
3 Before he does so, he wants to make sure you are still  
4 amenable to a sale so he doesn't lose money. Please  
5 let me know if you need any additional approvals  
6 internally before he commits. I hope you are doing  
7 well in light of all the things that have transpired  
8 recently. Look forward to seeing you soon, bud.

9 I replied Thursday, January 2nd: Hey, man,  
10 sorry for the late reply. We are still willing to move  
11 forward in negotiating a sale of that parcel. Any deal  
12 is subject to board approval, including the sole source  
13 sale to Steve's entity. I think there's not a  
14 rationale for not offering on the open market, just  
15 want to make sure everyone understands that this is at  
16 the board -- that -- well, everyone understands that --  
17 I meant to say this -- is at the board's discretion,  
18 not unlike Johnson & Johnson. Hope you had a good  
19 holiday with the family. Let's catch up soon.

20 He said: Happy new year, brother. No  
21 worries. That's what the holidays are for. That all  
22 sounds extremely reasonable, and I will make sure that  
23 Steve understands that in detail. I normally prefer  
24 someone hearing it from you directly before they commit  
25 to spending dollars, so if he needs that reassurance of

1 the process, I may have him reach out to you directly  
2 as well, if you don't mind. Look forward to a great  
3 2020 and seeing you soon. Take care, brother.

4 I said: Sounds good. Happy to chat with  
5 Steve.

6 He said: Steve is asking if possible to see  
7 a copy of the appraisal. Is that possible?

8 I said: I'll email it to you.

9 He said: Thanks, man.

10 Q And that was all on January 2?

11 A Except for the very first one, which was  
12 December 29th.

13 Q I appreciate that. And I'm sure I don't need  
14 to ask you not to delete that --

15 A Sure.

16 Q -- from your phone. It sounds to me like you  
17 keep all of your texts, good for you, that are  
18 business.

19 Is this a personal phone --

20 A Yes, sir.

21 Q -- or JEA phone?

22 I may or may not come back to you for some  
23 screenshots on that, but for now we're fine.

24 Given the -- I mean those texts sounded very  
25 friendly and familiar. Would you agree?

1 A Yes, sir.

2 Q What do you consider your relationship with  
3 Deno Hicks to be, or does he call everybody "brother"?

4 A I mean I would consider Deno a friend.

5 Q When did you first make his acquaintance?

6 A I don't recall.

7 Q Do you remember if it was before or after  
8 Mr. Zahn became interim CEO?

9 A I would almost certainly say it was before,  
10 as part of my role as the manager of government  
11 relations, being over here at City Hall.

12 And if I could --

13 Q Sure.

14 A -- Mr. Hightower and Mr. Hicks are friends,  
15 and Mr. Hicks was a consultant for JEA for -- on our  
16 environmental group side for some time, and so he would  
17 be around the building. That was a few years ago.

18 Q I have learned, as obviously you probably  
19 expect, of many things, including something called the  
20 Innovation Summit. I didn't pay much attention to it  
21 at the time in the press, but now I am.

22 The Innovation Summit was somewhere in the  
23 fall of '18; correct?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q Was the Innovation Summit -- did it take

1 place while you were manager of government relations or  
2 after you had become director of government relations?

3 A If I recall correctly, I was told I was being  
4 promoted at the Innovation Summit.

5 Q Perfect timing. What was your role in the  
6 development and staging of the Innovation Summit?

7 A Developing a list of people we should invite  
8 as it regards my role, so elected officials, appointed  
9 officials, et cetera.

10 Q Did you participate in -- I understand that  
11 there was a planning committee or a planning -- yeah,  
12 planning committee for this event. Did you participate  
13 in that?

14 A No, sir.

15 Q And there were representatives of that  
16 group -- in that group from JEA and JTA and the  
17 Chamber. And who else were major participants in the  
18 Summit?

19 A Those were the three I remember.

20 Q Did you ever go to a meeting of this planning  
21 meeting?

22 A No, sir, not that I recall.

23 Q I'm sorry, planning committee?

24 A Not that I recall, no, sir.

25 Q There was an article in the paper recently

1 about the Innovation Summit and a payment to Mr. Hicks.  
 2 Do you remember reading it?  
 3 A Yes, sir.  
 4 Q Do you know anything about the substance of  
 5 that article other than what's in the article?  
 6 A I will tell you that I was asked to -- that  
 7 invoice -- we were asked to pay that invoice in  
 8 government relations by -- by Mr. Hightower. We  
 9 were -- the invoice was brought down to us to process  
 10 and pay out of our budget.  
 11 Q And this was the invoice from the Chamber?  
 12 A Yes, sir.  
 13 Q Did you have any other involvement in that  
 14 invoice and payment?  
 15 A Other than declining to process it, no, sir.  
 16 Q All right. You declined to process it?  
 17 A Yes, sir.  
 18 Q Why was that?  
 19 A Because I didn't know what it was for. It  
 20 was my understanding at the time that JEA had made the  
 21 payments necessary for the Innovation Summit.  
 22 Q In other words, had contributed its share?  
 23 A Share. And so I didn't know what that one  
 24 was for and didn't want to process something I didn't  
 25 know what the payment was -- was for.

1 Q And this was an invoice -- I want to make  
 2 sure I'm correct on this -- as you recall, from the  
 3 Chamber?  
 4 A Yes, sir.  
 5 Q And do you remember what it -- what it was  
 6 invoicing, what services it was invoicing for?  
 7 A I will tell you that what I would tell you  
 8 now is what I read in the article. I --  
 9 Q Okay.  
 10 A -- am not remembering from then.  
 11 Q Would it help to get the article and go  
 12 through it to see if there's anything more that comes  
 13 to mind about it, or do you remember the article well  
 14 enough to have a conversation with me about everything  
 15 you know about the Summit, Deno Hicks, and the payment?  
 16 A Yeah, that's fine. I mean I don't need to  
 17 see the article.  
 18 Q Okay. I didn't think you did. So -- but I  
 19 will tell you I don't remember anything in the article  
 20 about -- maybe I'm just not remembering -- about  
 21 anybody, and certainly not you specifically, refusing  
 22 to pay that invoice.  
 23 A No.  
 24 Q So you declined to pay the invoice?  
 25 A Process the invoice, yes, sir.

1 Q Okay. What does that mean?  
 2 A Well --  
 3 Q And to me it's like get it paid, but --  
 4 A So we -- what we did is we did not -- if one  
 5 of my employees were to process an invoice, it would be  
 6 put into JEA's Oracle system, and then I would have to  
 7 hit an "approve" button in order for it to be paid and  
 8 go -- to go to accounts payable and be paid.  
 9 Q And you declined to do that?  
 10 A I didn't want to do that, and I didn't want  
 11 my employee to do that because I didn't want it coming  
 12 to me.  
 13 Q Did you ever with respect to that invoice hit  
 14 the "approve" button?  
 15 A No, sir.  
 16 Q Is it your understanding that, in fact, that  
 17 invoice was subsequently processed and paid?  
 18 A Yes, sir.  
 19 Q Do you know who gave the final approval?  
 20 A It's my understanding Aaron Zahn gave the  
 21 final approval.  
 22 Q Did you ever have any subsequent discussions  
 23 with Mr. Hightower about that? And when I say "that,"  
 24 I mean about the invoice and that it subsequently got  
 25 paid?

1 A No, sir, not that I recall.  
 2 Q And if you didn't talk to Mr. Hightower about  
 3 it, you probably wouldn't have talked to anybody else  
 4 about it; right? I'm just guessing.  
 5 Is there anybody else that you remember  
 6 having any discussions with about that invoice and the  
 7 payment?  
 8 A Other than to say I'm glad I didn't process  
 9 an invoice I didn't know -- I'm glad I didn't process  
 10 an invoice for which I didn't know it was being -- you  
 11 know, what was being paid.  
 12 Q Right. Or whether it was authorized or  
 13 approved or --  
 14 A Right.  
 15 Q -- budgeted or anything like that?  
 16 A Yes, sir.  
 17 Q And this was an invoice from the Chamber of  
 18 Commerce to JEA to reimburse the Chamber for a \$25,000  
 19 payment it had made to Southern Group or Mr. Hicks; do  
 20 you remember?  
 21 A According to the article.  
 22 Q What do you remember from the invoice?  
 23 A The invoice for us was from the Chamber for  
 24 \$25,000. So -- so \$25,000 to the Chamber is what we  
 25 had.



1 Q With no detail? You didn't --  
 2 A It said --  
 3 Q Did you understand why the Chamber was asking  
 4 for \$25,000?  
 5 A Well, no, that's exactly -- I didn't, which  
 6 is why -- I mean I know what it was labeled as, which I  
 7 think I recall in the article it was amended from  
 8 marketing or from something to marketing and  
 9 advertising, or something like that.  
 10 But that was my point in not wanting to  
 11 process it is I didn't know what the \$25,000 was for.  
 12 And I should also say, I had not processed  
 13 any invoice related to the Innovation Summit. It was  
 14 not in my role to pay any invoice for the Innovation  
 15 Summit, so I did not want to start then with something  
 16 I didn't know its purpose.  
 17 Q Do you know how much JEA contributed to that  
 18 summit?  
 19 A I --  
 20 Q Apart from what was in the newspaper or --  
 21 A I had always heard a rough number of  
 22 \$300,000.  
 23 Q And were you ever made aware of where the  
 24 budget approval, if you will, was for that  
 25 contribution?

1 A No, sir.  
 2 Q Do you know who approved a \$300,000 payment  
 3 toward -- JEA payment toward the Innovation Summit?  
 4 A No, sir.  
 5 Q From the outside looking in, it would seem to  
 6 me that something like this Innovation Summit would  
 7 classically be a public affairs or public relations  
 8 endeavor. Would you agree with that?  
 9 A It has elements of that, yes, sir.  
 10 Q And it also has elements of government  
 11 relations as well?  
 12 A Yes, sir.  
 13 Q Was there somebody else at JEA that was the  
 14 point person for the Summit?  
 15 A Yes, sir. Gina Kyle.  
 16 Q Gina Kyle. And I've seen the name, but I  
 17 just can't recall, where is she in the structure of  
 18 things?  
 19 A She is now JEA's media -- manager of media  
 20 relations. She worked in -- she was in the public  
 21 affairs office at the time.  
 22 Q And who was -- and ultimately Mr. Hightower  
 23 was in charge of that as well?  
 24 A Correct.  
 25 Q Who was the director of public affairs at the

1 time, at the time of the Summit?  
 2 A There was no director of public affairs.  
 3 Q And who did Gina report to at the time; do  
 4 you know?  
 5 A Gerri Boyce. I believe her title was  
 6 director of media relations.  
 7 Q This Chamber invoice for \$25,000 was given to  
 8 you by Mr. Hightower to approve after the Summit, I  
 9 take it; correct?  
 10 A Yes, sir.  
 11 Q And prior to that request, your group had had  
 12 no -- had nothing to do with any payments toward the  
 13 cost of that event; is that right?  
 14 A Yes, sir. I had not.  
 15 Q Do you mind if we take just a couple of  
 16 minutes so I can give the reporter a break here and --  
 17 A I would welcome it.  
 18 Q -- in case you want to take a spin. I don't  
 19 anticipate that we'll be a whole lot longer, but I  
 20 don't want to press to the end without taking a minute.  
 21 A Okay. Thank you.  
 22 (Recess from 11:22 a.m. to 11:29 a.m.)  
 23 BY MR. POWELL:  
 24 Q A couple of wrap-up things.  
 25 When you were invited to join the negotiating

1 team, what did you know about the ITN at that -- prior  
 2 to that? At that point, what did you -- what was  
 3 your -- how deep were you into the ITN process?  
 4 A I had been an evaluator of the initial bids.  
 5 There were five of us, and I was one of those five. So  
 6 I was aware of the responses and had graded those  
 7 responses.  
 8 So that's to say I was -- my knowledge was --  
 9 you know, I knew who had responded, and I knew what  
 10 their response was and had graded those responses, but  
 11 the process from that point forward was still unclear.  
 12 Q And you said you were one of five graders?  
 13 A Yes, sir.  
 14 Q Who were the other four?  
 15 A Juli Crawford, J-U-L-I Crawford; Joe Orfano;  
 16 Shawn Eads, E-A-D-S; and Jon Kendrick.  
 17 Q Did you-all grade the bids as a group?  
 18 A No, sir. We graded -- well, I'm sorry.  
 19 Could you clarify your question?  
 20 Q So how did that work? How did the grading  
 21 process work?  
 22 A We scored --  
 23 Q In comes the bid. It's a box; right? I  
 24 remember seeing all these boxes.  
 25 A Yes. We scored the bids individually, and

1 procurement tabulated the scores.

2 Q So this group never met to do the scoring as  
3 a group?

4 A We met in a publicly noticed meeting after  
5 our scores had been turned in to reveal the scores and  
6 affirm that they were -- accurately reflected our  
7 scores.

8 Q Did you-all have a scoring guideline, or  
9 matrix, or something that was prepared and presented to  
10 you to use to score the bids?

11 A Yes, sir.

12 Q And who prepared that?

13 A We received it from our procurement group.

14 Q Were there any changes made to the  
15 guidelines, I guess, after you initially received them  
16 before you started scoring?

17 A No, sir, not that I recall.

18 Q Did you ever have any conversations with  
19 Aaron Zahn during the scoring process?

20 A No, sir.

21 Q Mr. Vinyard?

22 A No, sir.

23 Q Mr. Wannemacher?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q And what would those -- what can you tell me

1 A There were different categories and -- I will  
2 say finance. I don't know that that's exactly what it  
3 was called, but finance.

4 Q And, again, I'm just going to be checking  
5 through some items and it's going to be random.

6 A Sure.

7 Q Not all are going to be connected. You know,  
8 I don't want to make really a deal of this, but would  
9 you describe yourself as a social friend of Deno Hicks?

10 A No, sir.

11 Q Which is to say that your only contacts with  
12 him would be in a business context?

13 A Yes, sir.

14 Q Have we fully exhausted your understanding  
15 and knowledge of the PUP?

16 A Yes, sir, you have.

17 Q All right. In 2019 did you have any contacts  
18 with Willis -- a firm by the name of Willis Towers  
19 Watson regarding any work they were doing for JEA?

20 A No, sir.

21 Q McKinsey, as we've already discussed, was  
22 brought on board to work with JEA to develop a long-  
23 term strategic plan; correct?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q Were you brought into that project along the

1 about that?

2 A There was a list of subject matter experts  
3 that the evaluators could discuss certain aspects of  
4 the responses with. And so there was a list given by  
5 procurement of those subject matter experts, and we  
6 would notify procurement that we wanted to speak with  
7 one of those subject matter experts to gain clarity,  
8 whatever it might be, on certain aspects of maybe a  
9 particular bid or what have you to help you evaluate  
10 appropriately.

11 Q So this would be you, Jordan Pope,  
12 individually seeing that, you know, you had a question,  
13 you needed some information, and so you went through  
14 the process of getting in touch with an SME?

15 A Yes, sir.

16 Q Right. What did Mr. Wannemacher have to do  
17 with any of that?

18 A He was a subject matter -- he was a listed  
19 subject matter expert.

20 Q Sorry. I was assuming that these SMEs would  
21 be outside of JEA.

22 A No, sir. There were some that were outside  
23 of JEA.

24 Q And what was Mr. Wannemacher's listed  
25 expertise, described expertise?

1 way?

2 A I believe I provided information for that,  
3 but not -- I don't recall really participating in that  
4 process.

5 Q Was some of that -- was there a time when you  
6 ever were asked to develop a budget for your  
7 operations, minus 15 percent or 20 percent?

8 A Yes, sir.

9 Q Would that be the sort of information you  
10 recall providing in connection with the McKinsey  
11 effort?

12 A That -- that exercise I assisted Mike  
13 Hightower with. So I wasn't clear where the ultimate  
14 ask was coming from. The ask for me came from Mike  
15 Hightower when I reported to him as to where we might  
16 reduce the government relations budget.

17 Q And since you left in early June, that would  
18 mean that you did that work with Mr. -- at  
19 Mr. Hightower's behest prior to June of '19?

20 A Yes, sir.

21 Q Do you recall that that work was in  
22 connection with a presentation of materials and  
23 information to be considered by the board at its June  
24 '19 meeting?

25 A Do I recall? I mean I don't know that I knew

1 at the time I was performing the exercise that's what  
 2 it was ultimately for. I mean I now know --  
 3 Q Is that ultimately --  
 4 A -- that's what it was for.  
 5 Q Did you ever have any direct contact with any  
 6 of the lawyers at Foley & Lardner about the work they  
 7 were doing for JEA in regard to either the PUP or the  
 8 strategic plan?  
 9 A Not the PUP, no, sir. I have had contact  
 10 with a gentleman by the name of David Cook at Foley &  
 11 Lardner on the real estate side in my current role  
 12 regarding real property considerations in the event JEA  
 13 were to be sold.  
 14 Q Did those discussions begin before or after  
 15 the July 23 board meeting?  
 16 A After.  
 17 Q Between the July 23 board meeting and  
 18 whenever the -- whatever date it was in December that  
 19 the ITN was stopped, were you -- was a substantial  
 20 amount of your time, or if you -- was any amount of  
 21 your time dedicated to the ITN?  
 22 A Yes, sir.  
 23 Q As a rough percentage of your day between  
 24 July 23 and the end of that process, would you be able  
 25 to estimate how much of your time was -- that you were

1 required to devote to the ITN?  
 2 A I believe it to be a low percentage. I'll  
 3 say 5 to 10 percent. But I don't know that that would  
 4 be the same for a couple staff members of mine.  
 5 Q Okay. Could you elaborate?  
 6 A So JEA, working with Foley, we were pulling  
 7 deeds for various parcels and running title work on  
 8 various parcels in support of the ITN process, and so a  
 9 couple people that work in JEA's real estate group were  
 10 working on that quite extensively for a period of time.  
 11 Q And are these people who were either direct  
 12 reports to you or reported to you through another  
 13 direct report?  
 14 A They are direct reports to me, yes, sir.  
 15 Q And are you suggesting a couple of people or  
 16 more than -- how many people are we talking about  
 17 having to really dive in and --  
 18 A Two.  
 19 Q Two. And would you say that -- what would  
 20 you estimate their percentage of involvement as a  
 21 matter of -- you know, as a percentage of their day  
 22 during that time period was required for the ITN?  
 23 A I would estimate it was approximately 50  
 24 percent of their time for a three- to four-week period.  
 25 Q And do you remember when that -- would that

1 period have been in October, September, right after the  
 2 IT -- or after the board meeting?  
 3 A September, October, somewhere in there.  
 4 Q Were you required during that time frame,  
 5 again July 23 board meeting to the end of the ITN, to  
 6 do any work on the topic of an IPO related to JEA?  
 7 A No, sir.  
 8 Q How about with respect to a community  
 9 co-op --  
 10 A No, sir.  
 11 Q -- acquisition of JEA?  
 12 A No, sir.  
 13 Q And would your answer be the same with  
 14 respect to your direct reports?  
 15 A Yes, sir.  
 16 Q Did you ever attend any off-site meetings at  
 17 Ponte Vedra with the senior leadership team in 2019?  
 18 A No, sir.  
 19 Q During your tenure as director of government  
 20 relations, do you recall any issues arising in the area  
 21 of responding to public records requests?  
 22 A No, sir. Not as far as I was involved.  
 23 Q Other than your direct involvement, are  
 24 you -- are you qualifying that because you know of  
 25 public records issues that you were not involved in

1 or -- I'm not quite sure I understand what your  
 2 qualification was for.  
 3 A I qualified that because I have heard before  
 4 of public records perhaps not being produced in a  
 5 timely manner. But I don't have direct knowledge of  
 6 that actually happening.  
 7 Q Is there anybody that you would suggest I  
 8 talk to to run down this question with respect to what  
 9 you have heard?  
 10 A Ted Hobson or Jasen Hutchinson.  
 11 Q To clarify -- actually not clarify, just to  
 12 restate: Is it -- is it your recollection that you had  
 13 never heard anything about a contemplated long-term  
 14 incentive plan for JEA employees prior to the July 23  
 15 board meeting?  
 16 A Yes, sir.  
 17 Q That's going to do it, Mr. Pope. Robert will  
 18 close this up in a little bit of a formal way. But  
 19 before he does that, I'm going to ask a question that's  
 20 going to sound like he's asking it again, but mine is a  
 21 little different.  
 22 So at the outset I -- not at the outset. I  
 23 eventually got around to putting this in context for  
 24 you that we're working for the board of directors and  
 25 you're essentially communicating to the board of

1 directors here.  
 2 So with that in mind, and given the  
 3 circumstances that bring us here, and as I guess -- as  
 4 I hope you appreciate the breadth of topics that we're  
 5 interested in, is there anything else that you would  
 6 want to bring to the attention of the board of  
 7 directors regarding Mr. Zahn's tenure at JEA, as it  
 8 would bear on his performance and considerations as to  
 9 whether he should be -- his contract should be  
 10 terminated for cause?

11 A No, sir.

12 MR. POWELL: Robert?

13 MR. LINSNER: All right. Mr. Pope, is there  
14 anything else additional to offer or add?

15 THE WITNESS: No, sir.

16 MR. LINSNER: Just be advised this is an  
17 ongoing Office of General Counsel investigation,  
18 so please don't discuss the case with others.

19 The interview has now concluded. It is  
20 11:47 a.m.

21 (Sworn statement concluded at 11:47 a.m.)

22 - - -

23  
24  
25

1 CERTIFICATE

2 STATE OF FLORIDA )

3 COUNTY OF DUVAL )

4 I, Marianne Branson, RPR, FPR, do hereby  
5 certify that I was authorized to and did report the  
6 foregoing proceedings, and that the transcript, pages 1  
7 through 78, is a true record of my stenographic notes.

8 I further certify that I am not a relative,  
9 employee, attorney, or counsel of any of the parties,  
10 nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties'  
11 attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I  
12 financially interested in the action.

13 Dated this 16th day of January, 2020.

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*Marianne Branson*  
Marianne Branson, RPR-CP  
Court Reporter



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