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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

11:30 AM

Joint Workshop with Budget Advisory Board

**Broward Center for the Performing Arts - Mary N. Porter Riverview
Ballroom - 201 SW 5th Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33312**

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor

JOHN C. HERBST Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District 1

STEVEN GLASSMAN Commissioner - District 2

PAM BEASLEY-PITTMAN Commissioner - District 3

BEN SORENSEN Commissioner - District 4

RICKELLE WILLIAMS, City Manager

DAVID R. SOLOMAN, City Clerk

D'WAYNE M. SPENCE, Interim City Attorney

PATRICK REILLY, City Auditor

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trantalis called the meeting to order at 11:44 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present: Vice Mayor John C. Herbst (arrived at 11:53 a.m.), Commissioner Steven Glassman, Commissioner Pamela Beasley-Pittman, Commissioner Ben Sorensen (participated via communications technology), and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

Budget Advisory Board Members Present: Chair William Brown, Vice Chair Melissa Milroy, Norbert Belz, Melinda Bowker, Olivier Cale, Rich DeGirolamo, Desorae Giles-Smith, and Prabhuling Patel

Budget Advisory Board Members Not Present: Ross Cammarata and Mildred Lowe

COMMISSION QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Also Present: City Manager Rickelle Williams, City Clerk David R. Soloman, Interim City Attorney D'Wayne Spence, and City Auditor Patrick Reilly

OLD/NEW BUSINESS**BUS-1** [25-0592](#)

Fiscal Year 2026 Preliminary Budget Information - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Budget Advisory Board (BAB) Chair William Brown provided an overview of the BAB's efforts to develop the FY 2026 Preliminary Budget (Budget) based on the January 2025 Commission Prioritization Workshop. Chair Brown noted that BAB input would follow staff's Budget presentation.

City Manager Rickelle Williams acknowledged the work of the BAB and staff in developing the Budget, noted that the presentation is preliminary, and confirmed higher than anticipated property tax revenue from the Office of the Broward County Property Appraiser.

City Manager Williams provided an overview of goals to address unfunded capital projects, including Fire Station 88, Fire Station 13, Heron Garage, and Information Technology to address public safety. She noted one-time revenue generators to fund one-time expenditures, the need for additional public safety full-time employment (FTE) positions

and personnel at the Prospect Lake Water Treatment Plant and creating an adequate fund reserve for emergency management. City Manager Williams highlighted funding for Commission Priorities, cited examples, and remarked on the need to address Police Department overtime for City-sponsored events. City Manager Williams confirmed the ability to maintain the current 4.1193 Ad Valorem millage rate.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Laura Reece, Acting Assistant City Manager. Ms. Reece narrated a presentation entitled *FY 2026 GENERAL FUND PRELIMINARY BUDGET*.

A copy of the presentation is part of the backup to this Agenda item.

Commissioner Sorensen discussed providing a Fire Assessment Fee exemption for disabled veterans. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Reece confirmed that a related analysis was completed and the exemption would result in an approximate \$150,000 decrease in General Fund revenue. Commissioner Sorensen remarked on full and partial veteran property tax exemptions. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Reece confirmed that the Fire Assessment consultant had confirmed that Fire Assessment Fees can be used for capital expenditures. Vice Mayor Herbst remarked on his understanding of the related methodology. In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's question, Ms. Reece explained that the Fire Assessment Fee would fund the cost recovery of Fire Station 13 and Fire Station 88 over three (3) years. Vice Mayor Herbst cited an example and remarked on his understanding. Ms. Reece explained the cash-funded portion is recovered over three (3) years, not over the useful life of the building. Further comment and discussion ensued. Vice Mayor Herbst remarked on recouping costs over the anticipated useful life of the Fire Station buildings. In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's question regarding accelerated cost recovery, Ms. Reece explained it was the recommendation of the Fire Assessment Fee consultant. Vice Mayor Herbst requested the consultant to contact him. Ms. Reece confirmed.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Williams explained details of the PFAS (per and polyfluorinated alkyl manufactured chemical substances) settlement in FY 2025 and FY 2026. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Yvette Matthews, Office of Management and Budget Acting Director. Ms. Matthews explained details of future PFAS

settlement revenue the City is expected to receive, which is in addition to the \$14,800,000 the City is receiving in FY 2025.

Vice Mayor Herbst remarked on staffing concerns related to the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System. Ms. Matthews explained that ERP line-item transactions require additional staff and provided related information. Vice Mayor Herbst remarked on his viewpoint.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Chris Cooper, Acting Assistant City Manager, expounded on details of the Neighborhood Support Division's Homeless Supportive Shelter Services that will extend an existing grant program funded through the State of Florida (State) for substance abuse recovery services, emergency shelter needs, and mental health services through the end of FY 2026.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Mr. Cooper discussed the Neighborhood Support Division's Safe Parking Pilot Program, which aims to serve as a transition to supportive services and permanent housing.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Ms. Matthews explained the purpose of funding community celebrations for the FIFA World Cup (World Cup) and the United States' 250th Anniversary, which provides opportunities for the City to establish an international brand.

Mayor Trantalis shared his perspective on the World Cup, noting that Broward County does not host any games and the need to update the planned funding. Vice Mayor Herbst concurred and expounded on his perspective. Mayor Trantalis discussed attendance concerns at another FIFA event. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis commented on discussions with Live Nation representatives regarding hosting an expanded New Year's Eve Event at Chase Stadium in Lockhart Park and elaborated on related efforts.

City Manager Williams clarified aspects of World Cup funding and its economic development opportunities when leveraged with Broward County (County) and Visit Fort Lauderdale. Mayor Trantalis expressed his understanding of related County funding requests, elaborated on his perspective regarding declining attendance, and recommended careful consideration of the funding. Chair Brown confirmed related BAB concerns and discussions. Mayor Trantalis remarked that the County's revenue from the event does not benefit the City. Further comment and discussion ensued. Commissioner Sorensen requested that he be included in ongoing discussions. City Manager Williams confirmed.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on public safety innovations displayed at the Museum of Discovery and Science, commented on the possible need for additional funding, and involving staff in related opportunities.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, City Manager Williams confirmed that staff is conducting an ongoing analysis to determine additional deployment of the ShotSpotter technology.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question about reducing Police Department overtime costs at City-sponsored events, City Manager Williams confirmed efforts to mitigate those costs and reduce the number of City-sponsored events. Police Chief William Schultz concurred and confirmed the number of events in the City had increased exponentially in recent years and expounded on related staffing efforts. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Sorensen discussed the need to consider reducing the number of events in the City and expounded on his viewpoint. In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, City Manager Williams provided an update on the anticipated timeline following the Commission Summer Break to provide the Commission with recommendations from the Parks, Recreation, and Beaches Board regarding limiting the number of special events and increasing related permit fees.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Matthews confirmed the funding discussed relates to City-sponsored special events and cited examples.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, Carl Williams, Parks and Recreation Department Director, provided an update on the anticipated timeline to address the Wave Wall lighting. In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding product selection, Mr. Williams confirmed that staff received an unsolicited proposal and will be updating the specifications for a Request for Proposal.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding the status of addressing the mesh covering and lighting of the Las Olas Garage, Milos Majstorovic, Transportation and Mobility Department Acting Director, discussed available funding and confirmed a solicitation for related repairs, which the evaluation committee is considering. Staff will then bring forward a recommendation to the Commission following the Summer Break. Mr. Majstorovic noted parallel efforts by the Office of the City Attorney regarding the mesh and lighting warranties. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding the status of those warranties, Interim

City Attorney D'Wayne Spence confirmed the required Florida Statute Chapter 558 Construction Defect Claim (Claim) process is ongoing. Mayor Trantalis emphasized the need to move forward and take aggressive steps toward determining a resolution. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, Interim City Attorney Spence confirmed the Claim addresses both the mesh covering and lighting. Further comment and discussion ensued. Interim City Attorney Spence noted the complex nature of the Claim and expounded on related efforts to date. Upon expiration of the July 12, 2025, Claim deadline, pre-suit mediation will occur.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Interim City Attorney Spence confirmed that the statute of limitations has not been exceeded and discussed related information. Mayor Trantalis requested the Commission be presented with a timetable at the June 30, 2025, Conference Meeting. Interim City Attorney Spence confirmed he would request outside counsel representing the City on the Claim, Gary Brown, Esq., provide an update to the Commission at the June 30, 2025, Conference Meeting. Mayor Trantalis expounded on his viewpoint and reiterated the need for a resolution. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Glassman concurred with Mayor Trantalis' remarks, commented on ongoing development in the area and the need for a resolution.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Matthews confirmed that the Fund Balance had been previously used to address emergency weather-related event needs, with the expectation that the City would be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Mayor Trantalis remarked that FEMA reimbursement may not be an option in the future.

Vice Mayor Herbst remarked on his opposition to the twenty-five percent (25%) Fund Balance, explained his viewpoint regarding overtaxing residents, remarked on the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) sixteen-point seven percent (16.7%) recommended reserve requirement, and expounded on the history of the City's reserve requirements. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the source of the twenty-five percent (25%) Fund Balance, the option to lower the millage rate, whether FEMA will remain in existence to cover costs of future emergency weather events, pursuit of PFAS class-action settlement funds, the ability to use excess revenue to pay down City debt,

and the need for the City to be self-sufficient.

Mayor Trantalis commented on Commission policy decisions in response to community needs, noted that a millage rate reduction is not appropriate at this time, and elaborated on his viewpoint. Further comment and discussion ensued. Vice Mayor Herbst recommended using the Fund Balance for infrastructure needs and cited examples.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Williams explained that a recent BAB communication would be discussed verbally with the Commission. Chair Brown explained the BAB's support of three (3) recommendations: 1) establishing an emergency reserve to include strong guidelines; 2) Fire Assessment Fee for full cost recovery; and 3) no change to the millage rate. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Chair Brown confirmed BAB support of the preliminary balanced budget, which is anticipated to be fine-tuned. Chair Brown commented on BAB concerns regarding the number and cost of City-sponsored special events and the budget process for City funding of non-profit organizations. The BAB will review and provide its recommendations.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, BAB Vice Chair Melissa Milroy remarked on the impact of the upcoming Stantec presentation, the large number of capital projects, and the importance of public safety, which will require a decision on the millage rate over the next ten (10) years.

Mayor Trantalis recognized BAB Member Desorae Giles-Smith. Ms. Giles-Smith discussed her positive viewpoint regarding City-sponsored events and the resulting benefits to local businesses.

Mayor Trantalis recognized BAB Member Olivier Cale. Mr. Cale remarked on City-sponsored special events and noted the need to be more selective and pursue sponsorship opportunities. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Glassman remarked on Chair Brown's extensive experience in emergency management response to severe weather events. In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, Chair Brown confirmed he is a member of FEMA's Urban Search and Rescue Incident Management Support Team deployed at federally declared disasters. Chair Brown noted his understanding regarding future plans for FEMA and commented that it would be rebranded. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor Herbst remarked on his twenty-five (25) years of experience

with FEMA and pointed out that FEMA's role is to reimburse the City for costs associated with emergency responses to declared emergencies. First responders and vendors with pre-positioned contracts address immediate responses to severe weather events. Vice Mayor Herbst noted his understanding that FEMA will be shifting its cost-reimbursement responsibility to the states and commented on related details and information.

Mayor Trantalis emphasized the need for sufficient funds to address future emergency response needs. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's questions, City Manager Williams confirmed the FY 2026 Budget could accommodate his request for a Fire Assessment Fee exemption for disabled veterans and explained the need for an update to the related Ordinance.

Mayor Trantalis recessed the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

Mayor Trantalis reconvened the meeting at 1:56 p.m.

BUS-2 [25-0593](#)

FY 2026 - FY 2036 Long Term Financial Plan Presentation, City Staff and Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Yvette Matthews, Office of Management and Budget Acting Director, provided an overview of this Agenda item. Kyle Stevens, Stantec Project Manager, narrated a presentation entitled *FY 2026 Financial Sustainability Plans*.

A copy of the presentation is part of the backup to this Agenda item.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Mr. Stevens explained that rent reductions would be realized upon completion of a new City Hall.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Ms. Matthews explained anticipated Bahia Mar rent revenue reduction at the end of 2025 as a result of its closure and demolition, and until the new Bahia Mar development is operational. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Susan Grant, Assistant City Manager, confirmed Bahia Mar's base rent had increased as a percentage of revenue, and there will be a short-term reduction when the existing hotel closes. The remaining Bahia Mar revenue includes the marina and other rental areas.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Matthews explained the

anticipated demolition date for the Bahia Mar Hotel is December 2025, following the Boat Show.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Grant clarified funding for the International Swimming Hall of Fame.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Matthews explained details regarding the ability to reapply for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant that would only be available to new full-time first responder employees.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Mr. Stevens confirmed this presentation reflects the current financial forecast for FY 2026.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding a cash flow deficiency listed in the presentation, Ms. Reece explained that it was for the FY 2025 budget and noted it was balanced using the Fund Balance.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, Mr. Stevens clarified aspects of percentage increases in property value revenue and the \$15,000,000 delta between staff feedback and revenue listed in the presentation. City Manager Williams explained the FY 2025 deficit related to the Commission's decision to approve the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) contribution for retirees and increased capital transactions. Mayor Trantalis remarked on his recollection of COLA funding. Ms. Grant noted the use of the Fund Balance that exceeded twenty-five percent (25%).

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, City Manager Williams and Mr. Stevens provided an overview of future budget projection deficits.

Mayor Trantalis commented on the potential impact of future Commission policy decisions, including millage rate adjustments or expenditure reductions, as well as future public safety contract negotiations, which will affect the budget projections listed in the presentation. City Manager Williams concurred with Mayor Trantalis' comments. She noted the ability to revisit discussions regarding potential revenue sources, including business tax fees, revised permitting fees for special events, and sponsorships for City-sponsored special events.

Commissioner Sorensen confirmed his opposition to increasing the millage rate and the need to be cost-conscious.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Williams

confirmed anticipation of feedback from Commission Members regarding the use of PFAS settlement funds to offset costs for future capital projects.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on Stantec's positive budget projections and acknowledged the efforts of the BAB.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 2:38 p.m.