

City of Fort Lauderdale

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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 19, 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 order at 11:43 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present: Commissioner Steven Glassman, Commissioner Pamela Beasley-Pittman, Commissioner Ben Sorensen, and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

Commission Member Not Present: Vice Mayor John C. Herbst

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

Budget Advisory Board Members Not Present: Ross Cammarata and Desorae Giles-Smith

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** [25-0720](#)

Fiscal Year 2026 Tentative Budget Highlights - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Mayor Trantalis acknowledged and thanked the Budget Advisory Board (BAB) members for their work and commitment.

Mayor Trantalis recognized BAB Chair William Brown. Chair Brown announced that Ross Cammarata and Prabhuling Patel were completing their maximum terms of service allowed as a BAB member. BAB member Patel shared his positive viewpoint of staff during his six and one-half (6.5) years of service, cited examples, and expounded on his perspective. Mayor Trantalis acknowledged and thanked Mr. Patel for his service and contributions.

Chair Brown provided a report summarizing the BAB's efforts and highlighted the collaboration with staff, department heads, and City Manager Rickelle Williams. He remarked on public outreach and

engagement efforts and noted limited resident participation. Chair Brown confirmed the BAB's motion in support of City Manager Williams' proposed Fiscal Year 2026 (FY 2026) Budget.

Chair Brown discussed the BAB's recommendations including strong support for City Manager Williams' proposed government reorganization from ten (10) departments to sixteen (16) departments; endorsement of creating an emergency reserve fund from the per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) settlement; benchmarks to measure departmental accountability and efficiency; concern regarding Capital Improvement Project (CIP) delays and cost overruns; support of enhanced water quality testing and tracing; and concern regarding future millage rate increases associated with salaries and benefits and police and fire department contract negotiations. Chair Brown suggested gradual millage rate adjustments to avoid sharp increases. The BAB will continue its meetings in October through December 2025 to review revenue options, cost recovery, and fee structures.

City Manager Williams commented on efforts associated with the tentative FY 2026 Budget; confirmed no increase to the millage rate; the focus on capital projects; creation of six (6) new City departments to improve efficiency; plans to utilize AI and technology to enhance staff productivity; and the success of early union negotiations to avoid fiscal uncertainty.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Williams confirmed year-to-year expenditure increases driven by salaries and benefits. City Manager Williams confirmed the best practice of using one-time revenue sources exclusively for proposed capital projects versus operational expenses. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Williams explained plans for a proposed future budget amendment to utilize portions of the PFAS settlement to fund an emergency reserve and capital projects.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on his understanding of the revised organizational chart. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Williams confirmed the role of a new Assistant City Manager for the Capital Projects Department (CPD), who would have oversight of major projects such as City Hall. City Manager Williams explained that this was a preliminary launch of the CPD, with plans to transition personnel from the Public Works Department who are currently engaged in project management of public work projects. Mayor Trantalis commented that the CPD Assistant City Manager's purview would expand to oversee and facilitate the completion of all capital projects. City Manager Williams confirmed and explained that other departments

will become clients of the CPD to ensure proper oversight and project delivery.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Williams explained that the City Hall Project will be undertaken with a phased approach with the engagement of a development partner through the unsolicited proposal process. An Owner's Representative will be involved in contract negotiations, and the CPD Assistant City Manager will subsequently manage the City Hall Project.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Laura Reece, Office of Management & Budget Department Director. Ms. Reece narrated a presentation entitled *FY 2026 Tentative Operating Budget*.

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

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Ms. Reece commented that historically and compared to other similarly sized municipalities, the City has a lower percentage of ad valorem funds used for operating expenses and commented on related information. In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question regarding debt service, Ms. Reece remarked that the City's AAA bond rating allows low rates for debt service on bonds, and expounded on related details.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding requests for extra security by FIFA World Cup teams housed in hotels located in the City, City Manager Williams discussed her participation in a meeting with a FIFA team representative. The team requested City public safety resources, commented on the nature of the request, and noted upcoming discussions with Police Chief William Schultz. Mayor Trantalis said that the City would not fund those costs. City Manager Williams confirmed that should a related funding request be made, it would be presented to the Commission.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Yvette Matthews, Acting Assistant City Manager. Ms. Matthews presented the next portion of the budget presentation entitled *Vision 2025: Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale*, which focused on organizational restructuring.

Mayor Trantalis noted one (1) BAB member vacancy due to a recent resignation and two (2) members who are term limited. New appointments from Districts 1, 3, and 4 will be required.

Mayor Trantalis reviewed BAB comments and recommendations

regarding its involvement in setting a policy for use of the proposed emergency reserve fund; partnering with staff to pursue ways to enhance revenues and reduce expenses to address future potential budget shortfalls; identifying alternatives for balancing the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget; and partnering with staff to enhance and encourage resident communication and involvement in the budgeting process. He remarked on the 2026 Commission meeting schedule with the BAB.

Commissioner Sorensen remarked on his viewpoint and encouraged BAB members to engage with Commission Members. In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question regarding nonprofit funding, Ms. Matthews reviewed the allocations to nonprofit organizations and cited examples, including \$135,000 for the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society. Mayor Trantalis noted that the increased funding to the Historical Society would include funding for capital improvements to City-owned properties.

Commissioner Glassman commented on the need to monitor legislative efforts regarding a potential state ballot initiative to eliminate property taxes. City Manager Williams confirmed that Public Affairs staff and the City's contracted lobbyists are engaged and gearing up for the next legislative session and would provide Commission updates. Mayor Trantalis discussed budget consequences related to public safety should property taxes be eliminated and emphasized the importance of continued lobbying efforts to prevent such measures.

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question, Ms. Matthews reviewed all nonprofit funding items and the services they provide and expounded on related details.

Mayor Trantalis raised concerns regarding the annual \$100,000 funding allocation for Huizenga Park operations given its ongoing construction status. City Manager Williams explained that Huizenga Park is anticipated to reopen at the beginning of the 2027 calendar year. Carl Williams, Parks and Recreation Department Manager, confirmed he would research and provide an update to the Commission on the use of the annual \$100,000 funding from the City. Ms. Reece explained details of the City's long-term agreement with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) for that operational funding for Huizenga Park activation and programming. Mayor Trantalis requested input from the DDA to identify how the funding will be used in the next calendar year. Ms. Reece confirmed she would pursue this information and provide an update to the Commission. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Sorensen remarked on the City's contribution to the DDA for the capital portion of Huizenga Park. Ms. Reece commented on the

requirement for supporting documentation for capital expenditures for Huizenga Park and reiterated that the \$100,000 annual City funding is for operational expenses related to programming and activities.

Chair Brown commented on the importance of appointing BAB member vacancies prior to October 1, 2025, and expressed his positive viewpoint of the BAB's efforts and contributions to the City.

BUS-2 [25-0806](#)

Review of the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 - Presented by Patrick Reilly, City Auditor - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

City Auditor Patrick Reilly reviewed his office's Report on the FY 2026 Proposed Budget, confirming it is balanced, compliant, and addresses Commission priorities. He discussed areas of concern included in the backup materials, cited examples, and remarked on management's response.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, City Auditor Reilly said that audit staff worked with management and agreed upon and accepted management's responses to the areas of concern included in the Report.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 1:04 p.m.