



APPROVED
BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
February 19, 2025 – 5:00 P.M.
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Tower 101,
11th Floor Conference Room,
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Board Member	Attendance	10/2024 through 9/2025 Cumulative Attendance	
		Present	Absent
William Brown, Chair	P	2	0
Melissa Milroy, Vice Chair	P	2	0
Norbert Belz	P	2	0
Melinda Bowker	P	2	0
Oliver Cale	A	0	1
Ross Cammarata	P	0	1
Rich DeGirolamo	P	2	0
Desorae Giles-Smith	A	0	1
Mildred Lowe	P	1	1
Prabhuling Patel	P	2	0

Staff

Laura Reece, Acting Assistant City Manager
Yvette Matthews, Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget
J. Oppерlee, Prototype Inc. Recording Secretary

Others

Kyle Stevens, Stantec Consulting Inc.
Andrew Burnham, Stantec Consulting Inc.
Laura Arturo, Stantec Consulting Inc.

Communications to the City Commission

Motion made by Mr. Cammarata, seconded by Ms. Milroy, to send the following communication to the City Commission:

The Board would like to know if the City Commission wishes the BAB's input establishing a process for nonprofit funding. In a roll call vote, motion passed 8-0.

I. Call to Order

The meeting of the Budget Advisory Board was called to order at 5:04 p.m.

New Board member Melinda Bowker introduced herself.

II. Roll Call

Roll was called, and it was determined a quorum was present.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 15, 2025

Motion made by Ms. Milroy, seconded by Mr. Cammarata to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2025 meeting. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

Chair Brown thanked staff for offering the training session to new members prior to the meeting. Ms. Matthews noted the session had been recorded so any member could access it.

IV. Floor Open for Neighbor Input

None

V. Old Business

None

VI. New Business

b) Commission Prioritization and Goal Setting Workshop Outcomes – Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

Ms. Matthews said Commission priorities helped drive budget discussions. She provided a presentation regarding the results of the Commission's Workshop on Priorities and Themes. The main priorities were: public safety; homelessness; infrastructure and resilience; public enjoyment of the waterways; public spaces and cultural initiatives; bolstering thriving communities.

Chair Brown asked about the build-out of the City jail and if this would be in the 2026 budget or come from reserves. Ms. Grant said the Police Chief was working on estimates and completion would probably take a couple of years due to new building requirements. It would be funded through grants, fund balance or debt. She explained this would be a triage facility for people who violated municipal ordinances.

d) Upcoming “What Keeps You Up At Night?” Discussion

Ms. Reece explained that the department directors would attend the next meeting to discuss challenges that kept them up at night. Board members would also receive a business plan from each department ahead of the meeting.

a) 10-year Revenue Sufficiency Key Funds Update – Stantec Consulting Inc.

Ms. Matthews introduced Kyle Stevens from Stantec Consulting. Mr. Stevens provided the presentation, focusing on the General Fund, the Water and Sewer Fund and the Stormwater Fund.

Ms. Matthews explained how the City budgeted for SAFER Grant positions and noted the City started contributing for these employees as soon as they started working.

Ms. Reece said Broward County would probably not continue with its CRA increments but would support the City spending down its CRA funds and continuing its increment. Ms. Grant said the City Commission had voted to continue their increment at 50% for 10 years and to revisit it every two years. Mr. Cammarata pointed out the Board had heard from staff under an agenda item and wanted to send a communication to the City Commission that they were upset that a decision had been made without their input. Ms. Reece said this had not been on the Board's workplan to come back for a vote.

Ms. Milroy recalled the Board had discussed looking at the nonprofit contributions. Chair Brown suggested they discuss this at their first workshop. He said the Commission had not had the time to discuss this at their priorities workshop. Ms. Reece suggested the Board discuss this on March 19, when they would review business plans. Then they could discuss it with the City Commission at the joint meeting. Mr. Cammarata recalled a couple of years ago when the Board had evaluated the nonprofit funding process and the City Commission had ignored their advice. Mr. Cammarata felt this would be a waste of the Board's time. Chair Brown was comfortable asking the City Commission how the Board should proceed regarding non-profit funding.

Chair Brown pointed out that property values potentially would not continue to increase at double digit rates and this would result in a deficit. Mr. Stevens agreed that sustained, significant increases in property values would be needed to avoid the deficit. Ms. Grant noted that new construction also fueled revenue increases. Mr. Cammarata recalled the Board advising the City Commission to raise taxes but they had repeatedly refused. As a result, the City could not absorb a down real estate market. Mr. Stevens said he had adjusted the revenue using ad valorem because this was the only revenue stream in the City's direct control. Mr. DeGirolamo wanted to know what the implementation of an ad valorem increase would look like. Ms. Reece described the process they City went through to arrive at a millage rate decision each year.

Ms. Bowker asked Mr. Stevens why he chose these particular years and amounts for the ad valorem increases. Mr. Stevens said the fund balance at the end of 2026 would still be within the City's policies. The cost increases would begin in 2027. Mr. Cammarata noted there would be a 15% tax increase in 2027 and wanted to increase the rate in 2026 instead of waiting. Ms. Reece said that it is a policy decision but typically the City has not wanted to raise the millage rate if they did not have to because it would be taxing residents and then saving it.

Ms. Grant said the City Commission has considered a General Obligation bond for some infrastructure, if that was successful in 2026, then the \$8.1 million for CIP in 2027 would not be required.

Ms. Grant said Parks and Recreation would make a presentation to the City Commission regarding increasing fees for events to use the beach.

Mr. Belz said residents wanted to understand the increases in their water bills and to be able to monitor their usage. Ms. Grant said the new water meter program would start rolling out in a few months and would be fully implemented in two years. She noted the new meters would be installed for multi-family homes as well. Ms. Grant recalled they had projected that in ten years water rates would double and this would happen in 2034.

Mr. Cammarata asked that the calculations on the Residential Household Annual Cost Forecast slide which are currently based on a \$300,000 home be updated and based on a \$580,000 home, and to update the millage increases to match the previous calculations. Ms. Reece agreed to send this to Board members after Mr. Stevens provided it.

Ms. Bowker asked the average return on the fund balance and Ms. Grant thought it was positive. Ms. Reece said it was very conservatively invested. Chair Brown asked how the Board should start communicating with the community about the possibility of a deficit over the next few years. Mr. Cammarata thought the Commissioners should communicate with the heads of homeowners associations. Mr. DeGirolamo noted how many people complained, compared to how many attended informational meetings.

c) Emergency Medical Services District Update – OMB

Ms. Reece said this was not moving forward for now.

VII. Communications to/from City Commission

Motion made by Mr. Cammarata, seconded by Ms. Milroy, to send the following communication to the City Commission:

The Board would like to know if the City Commission wishes the BAB's input establishing a process for nonprofit funding. In a roll call vote, motion passed 8-0.

VIII. Board Member Comments

Ms. Bowker was pleased the Board's meetings were now being recorded for the public to view.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:01 p.m.