



**MEETING MINUTES
BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
January 21, 2026 – 5:00 P.M.
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Tower 101,
11th Floor Conference Room,
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301**

Board Member	Attendance	10/2025 through 9/2026 Cumulative Attendance	
		Present	Absent
William Brown, Chair	P	2	0
Melissa Milroy, Vice Chair	P	2	0
Melinda Bowker [via Zoom]	P	2	0
Olivier Cale	P	2	0
Rich DeGirolamo	P	1	1
Ronald Goff	A	0	1
Jason Juffras [via Zoom]	P	1	0
Anide Metellus-Thompson	P	1	0
David “Max” Ortolani	P	1	0
Samantha Perryman-Jones	P	1	0

Staff

Rickelle Williams, City Manager
 Christopher Cooper, Deputy City Manager
 Yvette Matthews, Assistant City Manager
 Quentin Pough, Assistant City Manager
 Laura Reece, Director, Office of Management and Budget
 Carl Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation
 Linda Short, Finance Director
 Porshia Garcia, Community Services Director
 Ella Parker, Deputy Director, Development Services
 Stephen Golan, Fire Chief
 Susan Grant, Special Advisor
 Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
 Charmaine Crawford, OMB Department and Board Liaison
 J. Opperee, Prototype Recording Secretary

Communications to the City Commission

Motion made by Mr. DeGirolamo, seconded by Mr. Cale, to request the City develop a Certificate of Use pilot program that would include benchmarks, and implement it for one year, after which it would be evaluated. In a roll call vote, motion passed 9-0.



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I. Call to Order

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

II. Roll Call

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

Motion made by Ms. Milroy, seconded by Ms. Perryman-Jones to allow Mr. Juffras and Ms. Bowker to participate via Zoom. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 10, 2025

Motion made by Ms. Milroy, seconded by Mr. Ortolani to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2025 meeting. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

IV. Floor Open for Neighbor Input

Esthel Brennan, President of Riverside Park Residents' Association, requested the City add Public Service Aides to the budget for traffic control at schools. She discussed issues with parents who were circumventing the proper pick up/drop off process causing traffic in neighborhoods near schools. She suggested starting with one aide that could be used as a test case. Ms. Matthews said the Police Department was running a pilot program now using existing employees and was noting success. They would evaluate the program and its costs when creating the next budget. Ms. Brennan said neighborhood members had informed her that this had been 90% effective in deterring turnaround traffic. Chair Brown asked if funds from the School Zone Camera Program could be used to pay for the aides. Ms. Matthews said the funds were first used for crossing guards but would also go into the General Fund.

New Board member Jason Juffras introduced himself. Quentin Pough, Assistant City Manager introduced himself.

V. Old Business

Suggested Budget Advisory Board Assignment List - Drafted by Olivier Cale

Mr. Cale explained to Board members not present at the last meeting the purpose of the assignment list he had drafted after the Board's previous discussion. Ms. Matthews said staff could also provide data and research they had already done. Mr. Cale thought the key was for Board members to look at the data in a resident-centric way, not a municipal organization way. Ms. Reece confirmed that meetings any Board members wished with City staff should be arranged through Ms. Crawford.

Mr. DeGirolamo asked what was expected of Board members and Ms. Reece said staff could share information and then Board members would report back to the full Board. Chair Brown advised Board members to communicate through staff and not directly with each other. Ms. Reece confirmed that if two Board members met with staff at the same time, it would need to be a publicly noticed meeting. Ms. Williams suggested some larger

topics could be bifurcated for two Board members to cover separately. Ms. Reece stated Mr. Cale currently had two topics: budget reduction scenarios and revenue trends. Mr. Juffras agreed to take on budget reduction scenarios so he was not partnering with another Board member.

Ms. Milroy asked the timing for deliverables and Mr. Cale suggested a progress report in February and reminded Board members that they wanted to form an overall consensus and vision at their March meeting, in time for the April joint meeting with the City Commission. Chair Brown asked for an update at the Board's February meeting on possible property tax changes from Daphnee Sainvil, Intergovernmental Affairs Manager.

Stephanie Provo asked if the Board would investigate waste, fraud and abuse and if there were targets for spending cuts. Chair Brown said this was not the Board's responsibility. Patrick Reilly, City Auditor, described the various audits City departments regularly underwent to identify issues and invited Ms. Provo to contact him with any information regarding waste, fraud or abuse.

VI. New Business

A. Performance Measures and Outcomes for New Departments/Re-organizations

Ms. Reece explained how to find the performance measures for the new departments in the 2026 budget book that Board members had received.

B. Community Redevelopment Agency Benchmarks and Invest Fort Lauderdale Update

Vanessa Martin, Acting CRA Manager, and Christopher Cooper, Deputy City Manager, provided the presentation, a copy of which is attached to these minutes for the public record. Mr. Cooper explained that the way the CRA increment rate was structured, per the State, was that it could be either 0% or between 50% and 99% of the tax increment collected in that district now. Chair Brown asked Ms. Williams to find out when the City Commission anticipated reviewing the contribution and would want input from the Board.

Mr. DeGirolamo recalled Board members had expressed concerns about projects that were not progressing, as well as hospitality development projects that received mixed support from the Board. Mr. DeGirolamo also wanted to know exactly what was spent and where during the initial two-year extension period.

Mr. Cale wanted data indicating jobs attached to investments and was concerned about commercial projects that received incentives and then abandoned their projects. He said the vetting process and project metrics should be available for the Board. He also wished to know projects' return on investment. Mr. Cooper agreed to bring that level of detail back.

Ms. Milroy had attended the Arcadian project opening recently and said she was "beyond impressed." She wished to see a graph showing projects in progress, with anticipated

completion dates. Ms. Bowker asked about the affordable housing projects and Ms. Martin said the projects in the presentation had been approved and approximately five were open. She agreed to provide a more descriptive chart that would break down the affordable housing units. Mr. Juffras wanted more information on the City's affordable housing goals to know if the projects were making significant contributions.

Mr. DeGirolamo suggested communicating with the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee [on which he also serves].

C. Review of General Fund Revenue Enhancement Opportunities

Ms. Reece provided a presentation on the ad valorem taxes and fees. Porshia Garcia, Community Services Director, continued the presentation, discussing Vacation Rental and Business Tax fees. Ella Parker, Deputy Director, Development Services, discussed Development Services fees. Carl Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation, addressed recreation fees and events fees. Stephen Golan, Fire Chief, discussed ambulance transport fees. Linda Short, Finance Director, explained lien search fees. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes for the public record.

Ms. Parker said the City wished to implement a Certificate of Use fee that would be required prior to a business applying for a Business Tax Receipt, which would help applicants understand if their use was appropriate and permitted in that location, thereby reducing after-the-fact denials of Business Tax Receipts and preventing applicants from incurring substantial costs up front. Mr. Cooper discussed how this would be implemented. Mr. DeGirolamo asked if the City had received feedback from businesses and Ms. Parker said they had and they intended to get more. Mr. Cale thought this was an excellent opportunity and advised staff to market it properly to businesses. Ms. Milroy asked how this would affect a mall and how long the process would take. Ms. Parker thought there would be opportunities to continue to evaluate the methodology to make the process more seamless. Ms. Garcia believed implementing the Certificate of Use would significantly speed the issuance of Business Tax Receipts.

VII. Communications to/from City Commission

Motion made by Mr. DeGirolamo, seconded by Mr. Cale, to request the City develop a Certificate of Use pilot program that would include benchmarks and implement it for one year, after which it would be evaluated. In a roll call vote, motion passed 9-0.

VIII. Board Member Comments

Mr. Cale wished Board members to be provided with the amount of money in each revenue "bucket." Regarding taxes and fees, he asked how they defined "reasonable" and how often the City could raise them. Ms. Reece explained that taxes were governed by State statute and each had its own rules. Fees the City set had no limit on how often they could be raised, but that must be done by ordinance. Ms. Reece agreed to add to the presentation information regarding the requirements for changes and an estimate of how much additional revenue could be generated.

Ms. Metellus-Thompson asked if Parks and Recreation had a Special Needs Division and Mr. Williams said they had a subdivision that assessed individuals that required special care, but they did not have a Special Needs Division. Ms. Metellus-Thompson noted if they had dedicated special needs programs and coaches, the City could keep more revenue from those programs. Ms. Williams noted they offered wheelchair adaptations of sports. Chair Brown asked to see the hardship case policy for recreation facilities.

Chair Brown asked staff to bring the film permit fee recommendation back to the Board to review prior to it going back to the City Commission. He then discussed the vehicle for hire process and encouraged staff to look at all permit fees. Chair Brown said the City Commission had held its goal setting session recently and he thought their priorities were the same as last year: homelessness, public safety, and infrastructure.

Ms. Williams discussed the City Hall project and said the City Commission had a target budget of approximately \$200 million. Ms. Williams addressed the possibility of a fourth Police district and said the City Commission had given direction to continue investigating. She did not anticipate this would result in a significant increase in personnel.

Ms. Matthews said the City wished to continue to expand broadband and to ensure residents had access to available programs. She agreed that otherwise, the Commission's goals had remained consistent.

Ms. Reece said she would send an email regarding changing the meeting dates in June and August.

Ms. Bowker thanked Ms. Matthews for providing the data she had requested regarding taxable revenue comparing District 4 and the other three districts. She asked for a breakdown by district, and to share that information with the entire Board.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.