



**BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
JULY 19, 2023 – 5:00 P.M.  
Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport  
Red Tails Conference Room  
6000 NW 21st Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309**

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>10/2022 through 9/2023 Cumulative Attendance</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Brian Donaldson, Chair	P	5	0
Jeff Lowe, Vice Chair	P	5	0
William Brown	P	4	1
Ross Cammarata	P	4	1
John Rodstrom	P	4	0
Christian Macellari	A	2	3
Michael Marshall	P	5	0
Prabhuling Patel	P	4	1

**Staff**

Greg Chavarria, City Manager  
Susan Grant, Assistant City Manager  
Anthony Fajardo, Assistant City Manager  
Laura Reece, Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Yvette Matthews, Assistant Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Stephen Gollan, Fire Chief  
Charmaine Crawford, OMB Department and Board Liaison  
J. Opperlee, Prototype Inc. Recording Secretary

**Communications to the City Commission**

- *FY 2024 Proposed Budget*

**Motion** made by Mr. Cammarata, seconded by Mr. Rodstrom to inform the City Commission that the BAB approves the budget as presented this evening. In a roll call vote, motion passed 7-0.



**DRAFT**  
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**Others**

Dorshia Edmond, CEO of the R.O.N.G. Youth Program, Inc.  
Sue Colton, R.O.N.G. Youth Program board member

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**I. Call to Order**

The meeting of the Budget Advisory Board was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

## **II. Roll Call**

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

## **III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – June 15, 2023**

**Motion** made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Mr. Brown to approve the minutes of the Board's June 15, 2023 meeting. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

## **IV. Floor Open for Neighbor Input**

Dorshia Edmond, CEO of the R.O.N.G. Youth Program, described their program and distributed documentation. She requested the Board's support to sustain the program. Chair Donaldson asked how many kids they would serve and Ms. Edmond stated they would serve 40 kids in four specific City zip codes, with their \$87,000 budget. Mr. Cammarata encouraged Ms. Edmond to speak with Pamela Beasley-Pittman, District Commissioner for the zip codes targeted by this program, regarding City support.

Mr. Patel wondered if some of the kids would be eligible for the Guardian Ad Litem program. Ms. Edmond confirmed for Mr. Brown that she was requesting the City fund the program's shortfall. Mr. Brown suggested approaching more local foundations for funding as well.

Chair Donaldson recalled when the Board had considered the charitable contributions two years ago, they had discovered that there was match funding available. He thought Vice Mayor Beasley-Pittman's office may be able to help with that. He noted that leveraging matching funds was something the City Commission considered when awarding its funds. Chair Donaldson suggested the City produce a resource guide for organizations seeking help. He agreed to speak with Vice Mayor Beasley-Pittman himself regarding this request. Sue Colton, board member, introduced herself.

## **V. Old Business**

Chair Donaldson recalled the Board had recommended Funding Scenario 3 for the Water Treatment Plant, but the City Commission had chosen Scenario 1 because it would save more money over time. Ms. Grant stated this fall, water rates would increase 22.5% and sewer rates would increase 9%. The average would be an approximately 14% combined increase in bills.

Chair Donaldson said their next joint meeting with the City Commission had been moved from August 15 to September 5.

## **VI. New Business**

- **Presentation of FY 2024 Proposed Budget and Community Investment Plan to Budget Advisory Board – Greg Chavarria, City Manager**

Mr. Chavarria provided the Power Point presentation, a copy of which is attached to these minutes for the public record.

Ms. Grant confirmed that all tiers would experience the same approximate 14% rate increase in water/sewer charges. She recalled that every five years, the City considered the tiers' rate structure and this was scheduled for the next year.

Chair Donaldson remarked that only 20% of the City's \$1.1 billion budget was from ad valorem property taxes and noted this helped keep the millage rate low.

Mr. Brown talked about large projects such as the Four Seasons Hotel, which was sold out and appeared to be completed, but was operating under a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy [TCO], allowing them to avoid paying taxes. Mr. Fajardo said there had been a change to the State Statute language in 2016 or 2017 from specifying a time period to issue a TCO to this being at the Building Official's discretion, with no limitation. He said the Building Official focused on life safety issues. He did not believe there were a lot of buildings operating under a TCO. Mr. Chavarria agreed to come back to the Board with more information and suggestions for ways they could encourage a property to get on the tax roll sooner.

Chair Donaldson asked about the partnership with other cities on a County incinerator. Ms. Matthews said they had built into the budget the costs for the consulting fees and recurring costs directly related to the incinerator project.

Mr. Cammarata thought the employee to population ratio was better today than in the past and asked Mr. Chavarria if they needed more employees in certain areas, aside from the Police force. Mr. Chavarria stated the City was open to taking advantage of innovation, technology, and competitive pricing to improve cost efficiency. Chair Donaldson noted Fort Lauderdale had many fewer homesteaded properties than other municipalities in Broward County.

Mr. Chavarria said the Fire Chief alerted him whenever they ran out of rescues and those instances were becoming more common. They were investigating how to receive more mutual aid from the rest of the County and whether they were offering more mutual aid than they received. Mr. Brown thought they would need additional stations in the future to address additional needs. Mr. Chavarria agreed to bring back statistics on calls for service for Police and Fire over the years.

Ms. Grant said the stormwater bonds had just come in at 4.15% interest. They would also use Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loans at approximately 2%.

- **Collective Bargaining Update – Susan Grant, Assistant City Manager**

Ms. Grant said they had come to an agreement in principle with FOP and she anticipated they would ratify four agreements on August 22. They would have a one-year agreement and a three-year agreement taking them through 2026. As part of the agreement, the annual COLA would be based on the Social Security Consumer Price Index (CPI) from

the previous year and would be limited to between 3% and 4%. Regarding the restoration of Tier 1 pension benefits, the City had agreed to restore them, but for Tier 2 people hired 2014 and later, instead of being eligible for retirement at 20 years regardless of age, they would be eligible at 25 years regardless of age. The pensionable overtime had increased from 40 hours per year to 80 hours. Ms. Grant noted the pension changes would not impact the budget until 2025.

Ms. Grant said the City gave Police \$600,000 per month to cover the costs of their health insurance and would get two premium holidays over the course of the second contract, saving \$1.2 million.

Chair Donaldson said the Commission would meet next on August 22 when they returned from summer break. The BAB would have the joint meeting with them at the Commission's September 5 meeting, which was also the date of the first public budget hearing. The second public budget hearing and vote on the budget would be on September 13. The BAB would subsequently meet on September 20.

Chair Donaldson had heard from Commissioners, whose constituents had informed them that they had not allocated enough money for sidewalks. He said one Commissioner had asked him to address HOA presidents but Chair Donaldson had replied that residents could attend a BAB meeting. He had reminded the Commissioner that their priority had been for Police and Fire funding and they could shift CIP funding for sidewalks.

## **VII. Infrastructure Task Force Update**

Mr. Marshall said there had been no meeting.

## **IX. Board Member Comments**

Chair Donaldson asked if the Board wished to cancel their August 8 meeting.

**Motion** made by Mr. Cammarata, seconded by Mr. Patel, to cancel the August 8 meeting.

Ms. Reece said the Board needed to send a communication to the City Commission regarding the budget tonight if they did not meet in August. Mr. Cammarata withdrew his motion. Board members then addressed agenda item VIII.

## **VIII. Communications to/from the City Commission**

**Motion** made by Mr. Cammarata, seconded by Mr. Rodstrom to inform the City Commission that the BAB approves the budget as presented this evening. In a roll call vote, motion passed 7-0.

**Motion** made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Mr. Brown, to cancel the August 8 BAB meeting. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

## **X. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.