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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 15, 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 11:38 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

Budget Advisory Board Members Present: Chair William Brown, Vice Chair Melissa Milroy, Norbert Belz, Melinda Bowker, Oliver Cale, Rich DeGirolamo, Desorae Giles-Smith, Mildred Lowe

Budget Advisory Board Members Not Present: Prabhuling Patel, and Ross Cammarata

COMMISSION QUORUM ESTABLISHED

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

OLD/NEW BUSINESS**BUS-1** [25-0417](#)

Budget Advisory Board Communication to the City Commission - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

*Budget Advisory Board (BAB)
February 19, 2025*

Communication to the City Commission

A copy of the BAB communication is attached to this Agenda item.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on his understanding of the BAB communication. BAB Chair William Brown provided an overview of BAB's discussions and past involvement in funding non-profit organizations (non-profits) and subsequent Commission non-profit funding decisions. Chair Brown requested Commission direction for Fiscal Year 2026 non-profit funding during the budget process.

Commissioner Glassman remarked that it is not appropriate for BAB to be involved in non-profit funding requests, remarked on the need for

a process and noted that a group has volunteered to vet non-profit funding requests, and expounded on related information. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis remarked that previous BAB non-profit rankings and subsequent BAB recommendations did not align with Commission priorities. He expounded on his viewpoint and concurred with Commissioner Glassman's recommendation that BAB not involve itself with non-profit funding.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman remarked on the associated benchmark criteria for funding non-profits with Commission priorities and expounded on her perspective. Mayor Trantalis commented on providing Staff with recommendations and expounded on the availability of funds to subsidize non-profit organizations.

Chair Brown said that Staff salaries and benefits are outpacing projected City revenue and remarked on the current percentage of revenue allotted to non-profits.

Vice Mayor Herbst discussed his past experience with non-profit grant funding and his perspective regarding City non-profit funding not including measured outcomes, and cited examples. Vice Mayor Herbst said that the effectiveness of non-profit funding must be determined, and noted that additional non-profit organizations should be allowed to participate. Vice Mayor Herbst confirmed his support of BAB's prior involvement in non-profit funding and the need for an improved process. He suggested that the BAB provide its input.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Laura Reece, Acting Assistant City Manager, explained Staff's approach to allocating funding to non-profits that align with Commission priorities, which include services the City does not provide to the community, accountability reports, and cited related information. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Reece explained details of non-profit performance goals and cited examples.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, Ms. Reece said that non-profit agreements differ based on the services provided and reiterated that outcomes are measured. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor Herbst remarked on the difference between non-profit activities and measured outcomes, expounded on those differences, and cited examples. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Reece explained tracking information related to child care. Vice Mayor Herbst emphasized and clarified the difference between measuring activities and outcomes. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, Ms. Reece noted challenges related to tracking long-term outcomes and reiterated details regarding Staff's level of monitoring non-profit funding.

City Manager Rickelle Williams discussed the opportunity for Staff to assist BAB in developing a non-profit funding application procedure and funding placeholders. Mayor Trantalis concurred with the merit of this recommendation, noted that non-profit funding would vary yearly based upon revenue, and expounded on related details.

Commissioner Sorensen remarked on analyzing and evaluating the outcomes of non-profit funding, both short-term and long-term. He noted that other Broward County (County) municipalities utilize the services of organizations that assist in ensuring that their non-profit funding is tracked and aligns with their priorities.

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question regarding the approximate cost of those services, City Manager Williams confirmed that Staff would research.

BUS-2 [25-0418](#)

Budget Advisory Board Business Updates / FY 2026 Budget Development - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Chair Brown remarked on efforts to ensure BAB transparency, explained that broadcasting BAB meetings live was not an option due to other Meetings being broadcast live at the same time, and confirmed that BAB Meetings are now available on YouTube. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding public input at BAB Meetings.

Chair Brown requested Commission guidance regarding the millage rate. Mayor Trantalis noted a consistent current millage rate over the last eighteen (18) years. Chair Brown said that Staff salaries and benefits are outpacing the current millage and remarked on the likelihood that General Fund property tax revenue will not increase enough to meet future expenses. Chair Brown commented on related property tax revenue projections, cited examples, and requested Commission direction.

Mayor Trantalis confirmed similar data presented by Staff to the Commission, illustrating an ever-increasing gap between City revenue and expenses, and cited examples of future contract negotiations with

Police Department and Fire-Rescue Department unions. Further comment and discussion ensued. Mayor Trantalis said the Commission would welcome BAB recommendations related to cost-cutting and noted the opportunity to rethink Commission priorities and reduce the amount of future expenses for Community Investment Plan (CIP) capital improvements.

Chair Brown discussed BAB's review with Staff for additional revenue opportunities other than the millage rate. Further comment and discussion ensued. Mayor Trantalis remarked on discussions at the State Legislature about reducing property and sales tax revenue. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Chair Brown requested Commission guidance on BAB meetings with Staff department heads during the budget review process to discuss additional resources needed.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman confirmed the need for broadband communication infrastructure in District 3 to ensure City-wide equity. She discussed her perspective and remarked on numerous previous requests to provide this critical communication infrastructure. Commissioner Beasley-Pittman confirmed the importance of continuing to fund public safety efforts, which should remain a priority.

Vice Mayor Herbst commented on resident feedback to increase funding for sidewalks and confirmed the need for a holistic review of the CIP. He echoed Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's comments that public safety should remain a top priority and remarked on current challenges related to Police Officer (Officer) overtime that has consistently been underbudgeted. Vice Mayor Herbst expounded on his perspective regarding the need to appropriately fund the amount of Officer overtime needed to manage and address public safety and homelessness.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Vice Mayor Herbst noted that increasing taxes does not need to be the starting point and recommended cutting back on services that do not involve public safety. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question regarding the two (2) options to address Officer overtime, increasing the overtime budget or hiring additional Officers, Vice Mayor Herbst confirmed the need to begin with increasing the overtime budget, which has historically been underfunded, and expounded on his viewpoint. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding Officer vacancy rates, recent successful Officer recruiting, and events driving Officer overtime. Vice Mayor

Herbst reiterated the need to budget Officer overtime expenses adequately.

Mayor Trantalis discussed his perspective regarding budgeting for a full complement of Officers, noted factors such as attrition, and expounded on related information. He confirmed the need to assess costs associated with recruiting and training Officers versus budgeting for temporary overtime costs. Mayor Trantalis requested BAB do a related analysis.

Vice Mayor Herbst discussed his previous study on this topic, which stated that it is less expensive to use overtime than to hire additional Officers. He commented on related details and cited examples. Further comment and discussion ensued. Vice Mayor Herbst explained that his recommendation to hire additional Officers relates to his primary concern about the negative impact of excessive overtime.

Chair Brown pointed out that most Officer overtime costs are associated with City-sponsored special events, cited examples, and remarked that additional funding to address this has not been allocated to the Police Department budget in the past. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the proper management of City-sponsored events.

Mayor Trantalis commented on the cost recovery system for other special events and discussed information related to the outstanding costs of the Stanley Cup parade.

Mayor Trantalis requested that Laura Reece, Acting Assistant City Manager, present a line item in a future budget presentation that would accommodate Officer overtime costs.

In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's question regarding Officer participation in State and federal task forces and overtime revenue reimbursements to the City being allocated to the Police Department, Ms. Reece explained Staff's approach and cited examples. Further comment and discussion ensued. Yvette Matthews, Office of Management and Budget Acting Director, said that those reimbursements are posted directly to the Police Department, noted there is no related budget amendment because salary savings offset overtime increases, and explained the analysis and tracking of associated trends over a three-year average.

In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's question, Police Department Chief William Schultz confirmed there are currently thirteen (13) Officer

vacancies, explained the approximate one (1) year ramp-up time for Officer recruits before working on their own, which contributes to overtime costs. Chief Schultz discussed Officer overtime at City-sponsored events and Officer private duty assignments at non City-sponsored special events. Further comment and discussion ensued.

City Manager Williams suggested that Staff explore leveraging resources from outside agency mutual aid agreements for events, discussed the impact of off-duty Officer details on Officer availability, and managing cost reimbursements from other agencies. Chief Schultz concurred, discussed related information, and cited examples.

In response to Vice Mayor Herbst's question, City Manager Williams explained her experience and understanding that most mutual aid agreements provide services at no cost to the home agency. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Chief Schultz confirmed he would meet with City Manager Williams to discuss what is in the best interest of the City regarding off-duty Officer details and regular-duty Officer assignments. He remarked on the large number of special events in the City that require Officer staffing and noted that numerous off-duty Officers work at hospitals, private schools, and bars, which serve as a force multiplier for regular-duty Officers. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Chief Schultz confirmed there are five hundred seventy-one (571) sworn City Officers and discussed his viewpoint. Commissioner Sorensen recommended increasing the number of Officers and remarked on contributing factors to his recommendation. Further comment and discussion ensued. Chief Schultz reiterated he would meet with City Manager Williams to analyze and pursue this recommendation. City Manager Williams confirmed.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Chair Brown said that BAB would pursue funding new Commission initiatives and return with related recommendations regarding revenue and expenditures at the Joint Workshop on June 17, 2025. These recommendations will include reductions to non-essential public safety services such as CIP projects. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the budget process timeline and BAB recommendations.

Commissioner Glassman commented on his perspective on today's discussion, funding concerns, and the large amount of Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) funding from the General Fund. He

expounded on his viewpoint and requested an update regarding the status of Invest Fort Lauderdale, Inc.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question regarding BAB's viewpoint on the CRA, Chair Brown remarked on BAB efforts, Commission feedback, and possible State legislation impacting CRAs. The BAB would review CRA funding and make related recommendations.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 12:43 p.m.