

# City of Fort Lauderdale



## Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

1:30 PM

City Hall - City Commission Chambers  
100 North Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

<https://fortlauderdale.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

[www.fortlauderdale.gov/fltv](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/fltv)

[www.youtube.com/cityoffortlauderdale](http://www.youtube.com/cityoffortlauderdale)

Cable Television - Comcast Channel 78 and AT&T U-verse Channel 99

## City Commission Conference Meeting

### *FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION*

*DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor*

*HEATHER MORAITIS Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District I*

*STEVEN GLASSMAN Commissioner - District II*

*ROBERT L. McKINZIE Commissioner - District III*

*BEN SORENSEN Commissioner - District IV*

*CHRIS LAGERBLOOM, City Manager*

*JOHN HERBST, City Auditor*

*JEFFREY A. MODARELLI, City Clerk*

*ALAIN E. BOILEAU, City Attorney*

## CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trantalis called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.

Mayor Trantalis recessed the meeting for a break at 1:34 p.m.

Mayor Trantalis reconvened the meeting at 2:05 p.m.

## QUORUM ESTABLISHED

**Commission Members Present:** Vice Mayor Heather Moraitis (participated via communication technology), Commissioner Steven Glassman, Commissioner Robert L. McKinzie, Commissioner Ben Sorensen and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

**Also Present:** City Manager Chris Lagerbloom, City Clerk Jeffrey A. Modarelli, City Attorney Alain E. Boileau and City Auditor John Herbst

## CONFERENCE REPORTS

**CF-1**    [21-0481](#)

Quarterly Investment Report for Period Ending March 31, 2021 - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Susan Grant, Finance Department Director, provided a brief overview of the Quarterly Investment Report for the Period Ending March 31, 2021, noting the impact of a rising interest rate environment. Securities will not realize losses if held to maturity. Future anticipated interest rate increases would produce better yields.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Richard Pengelly, PFM Asset Management LLC Director. Mr. Pengelly commented on the slight increase in interest rates and its impact on market value. The longer-term portion of the portfolio generates approximately \$5,500,000 in interest earnings annually, reflecting higher yields before the pandemic and lowered interest rates. Mr. Pengelly explained the benefits of higher interest rates on investment yields.

In response to Mayor Trantalis, Mr. Pengelly said the portfolio is most impacted by two-year (2) treasury bond interest rates, expounding on details related to the associated impact on corporate bonds. Overnight interest rates set by the Federal Reserve are close to zero and are anticipated to continue until 2023.

Commissioner Glassman inquired about performance earnings on page

22 of 26 in Memo Exhibit 1 - *Investment Performance Review for the Quarter Ended March 31, 2021*. Mr. Pengelly confirmed an increase in two-year (2) *United States Treasury Bond (Treasury Bond)* interest rates negatively impacted performance earnings. At the end of the first calendar quarter, there was an increase to corporate bond yields relative to *Treasury Bonds*. Mr. Pengelly noted significant portfolio gains when interest rates dropped last year. He confirmed his satisfaction with portfolio results and did not recommend portfolio changes. Mr. Pengelly said the City is well-positioned.

### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

**BUS-1** [21-0640](#)

Addressing Diversity Recruitment Hiring for Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue Discussion - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

City Manager Lagerbloom provided an overview of this item, Diversity Recruitment Hiring for the Fort Lauderdale Fire-Rescue Department.

Tarlesha Smith, Assistant City Manager - Human Resources Director, said this item is a continuation of June 1, 2021 Commission Conference Meeting discussions addressing diversity recruitment hiring within the Fort Lauderdale Fire-Rescue Department and the *U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)* request to dissolve the remaining portion of the *1980 DOJ Consent Decree (Consent Decree)*.

Ms. Smith explained Fire-Rescue Department hiring goals are currently two percent (2%) away from the eleven percent (11%) goal set in the *Consent Decree*. Current recruitment efforts have yielded twenty-two (22) applicants, and eleven (11) are qualified. Six (6) African-American applicants are in the pipeline for hiring.

Ms. Smith reviewed proposed recruitment and hiring strategy recommendations included in the Commission Agenda Memo (CAM) towards meeting the spirit of the *Consent Decree* going forward. The Human Resources Department would play a more active role in monitoring the Fire-Rescue Department hiring process.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, Ms. Smith explained that costs associated with paramedic certification would be funded by the City and apply to all applicants. The duration of classes would depend on the agency holding the course. Ms. Smith commented on achievement of diversity hiring goals based on the *Consent Decree*, and hiring four (4) current recruits. She emphasized the overarching goal to effectuate administrative change in the Human Resources Department and

Fire-Rescue Department moving forward and utilizing recommendations included in the Memo.

Mayor Trantalis concurred on the need for an ongoing process to ensure continued diversity. Ms. Smith explained a finite plan with additional initiatives being developed with the Fire-Rescue Department. Once created, the goal is to include these recommendations in permanent policies and procedures.

Ms. Smith commented on conversations with an outside organization interested in a program similar to the *Explorer Program* that could include scholarships. She commented on the need for a level playing field. Ms. Smith noted the existing Fire-Rescue Department Public Safety Program mentoring community high school students.

Vice Mayor Moraitis recommended pursuing more African-American students for the *Junior Lifeguard Program* to address the swimming requirement. She suggested taking the *Explorer Program* to children's agencies, i.e., the *YMCA*, *Boys and Girls Club*, and *Sea Cadets*, and consulting with Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer. Ms. Smith confirmed an upcoming meeting with Ms. Saunders next week.

Commissioner Glassman recommended consulting with the *Education Advisory Board* and the *International Swimming Hall of Fame's Every Child a Swimmer Program*.

Commissioner McKinzie commented on his perspective and the paradigm shift on diversity hiring, conversations with Police Department personnel, the impact of Staff changes and the need to continue the spirit of diversity hiring.

In response to Commissioner McKinzie's question, Ms. Smith explained accreditation concerns brought to her attention regarding relaxing the Fire-Rescue Department paramedic certification requirement hiring standard and said the cost of paramedic certification should not be a barrier to candidates. Ms. Smith noted the availability of tuition reimbursement for City Staff and discussions with City Manager Lagerbloom to fund the cost of paramedic certification.

In response to Commissioner McKinzie's questions, Ms. Smith noted Fire-Rescue Department personnel staff is currently 375 of the 393 full complement of which 38 are African-American and 29 are women.

Commissioner McKinzie noted the need for documentation to be in place

to address diversity hiring. Further comment and discussion ensued on the opportunity to continue moving forward.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Fire-Rescue Department Chief Rhoda Mae Kerr confirmed agreement and importance of increasing diversity in the Fire-Rescue Department.

Ms. Smith noted operational, Human Resource and legal issues to be addressed and the need to move forward with initiatives.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question, Keith Costa, *International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local 765* Representative, concurred with Chief Kerr's comments and support of diversifying the organization and fine-tuning aspects of recommendations.

In response to Commissioner McKinzie's question, Ms. Smith confirmed the need for a dedicated Fire-Rescue Department Recruitment Team and funding for a valid cadet program. She expounded on additional needs including advising the community about the numerous roles, disciplines and responsibilities within the Fire-Rescue Department. Ms. Smith noted the need to move forward to address upcoming personnel attrition. Further comment and discussion ensued.

City Attorney Alain Boileau noted the positive feedback from *DOJ* Staff based upon Commission discussion and the amount of attention given to remaining aspects of the *Consent Decree*.

In response to City Attorney Boileau's question regarding moving forward with the *DOJ* to dissolve the *Consent Decree*, comment and discussion ensued. Ms. Smith confirmed the goal to incorporate diversity hiring recommendations into policies and procedures that would replace the Consent Decree. There was consensus to join with the *DOJ* to dissolve the remaining portion of the *Consent Decree* and incorporate diversity hiring recommendations into policies and procedures.

#### **EXECUTIVE CLOSED DOOR SESSION - 4:30 P.M. OR AS SOON THEREAFTER AS POSSIBLE**

[21-0643](#)

The City Commission will meet privately pursuant to Florida Statute, Section 286.011(8) concerning:

James Smith v. City of Fort Lauderdale, et al.  
Case No.: CACE 19-004547 (03)

## **CITY MANAGER REPORTS**

[21-0644](#)

### **Tour of Commission Office Space on 8th Floor (If Needed)**

City Manager Lagerbloom provided an update regarding efforts associated with Commission Office space on the 8th Floor of City Hall. Based upon Commission Member input, City Manager Lagerbloom proposed providing additional Commission Member workspace on the 7th Floor of City Hall to provide dedicated conference room space to each Commission Member. This would require relocation of a portion of 7th floor Staff to the 101 Building. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Sorensen confirmed his willingness to relocate to the 7th Floor. Vice Mayor Moraitis expressed her openness to relocate to the 7th Floor. She noted 8th Floor Commission Conference Room scheduling conflicts and confirmed her need for a dedicated conference room rather than a small office. Commissioner Glassman discussed his perspective, commenting on previous office space plans, costs and the need for a final configuration decision. Further comment and discussion ensued.

City Manager Lagerbloom said he would move forward with the relocation of Commissioner Sorensen to the 7th Floor. Commissioner McKinzie's office would remain on the 7th Floor. Mayor Trantalis, Vice Mayor Moraitis and Commissioner Glassman's office space areas would stay on the 8th Floor.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, City Manager Lagerbloom explained three (3) members of the City Clerk's Office would relocate to the 101 Building. The estimated cost is \$65,000. Further comment and discussion ensued.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 2:46 p.m.