

City of Fort Lauderdale

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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

11:30 AM

Joint Workshop with Budget Advisory Board

City Commission Chambers

100 North Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP

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 11:36 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Commission Members Present: Vice Mayor Heather Moraitis, Commissioner Steven Glassman, Commissioner Robert L. McKinzie, Commissioner Ben Sorensen and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

Budget Advisory Board Members Present: Chair Brian Donaldson, Vice Chair Jeff Lowe, Ross Cammarata, Catherine Graham, Michael Marshall, Prabhuling Patel, Adam Sabin and Christopher Williams

Budget Advisory Board Members Not Present: A. Abidemi Oladipo and Johnnie Smith

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

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

OLD/NEW BUSINESS**BUS-1** [21-0826](#)**FY 2022 Proposed Budget - Review and Recommendations**

Chair Donaldson discussed Budget Advisory Board (BAB) review and approval of the Budget and subsequent modifications brought forward by City Manager Lagerbloom included the following:

- 1) additional rent funding related to relocation of a portion of the City Clerk's Office to allow expansion of Commission Offices;
- 2) an additional marine asset allowing Code Enforcement to address properties from the water; and
- 3) request for additional non-profit funding in addition to what was previously supported by the BAB.

Chair Donaldson said BAB supported items 1 and 2 but did not support item 3 because those non-profits organization requests did not address Commission priorities.

Commissioner Sorensen discussed his concerns with the recent COVID surge. He explained the need to require masks in enclosed settings as recommended by the *Center for Disease Control (CDC)* and recommended

requiring wearing masks at City Hall. Comment and discussion ensued. Mayor Trantalis concurred with Commission Sorensen's concerns.

Mayor Trantalis confirmed his willingness to entertain resuming Commission Meetings via communications technology, allowing participation from another location. He said he understood if Commissioner Sorensen wished to leave the meeting for COVID reasons.

Commissioner McKinzie recommended addressing this topic during the Commission Conference Meeting.

Commissioner Sorensen departed the meeting at 11:45 a.m. due to health risks related to COVID.

Commissioner Glassman said he recommended additional non-profit funding requests related to arts, culture and historic preservation. He expounded on his perspective regarding this topic and information included in the Agenda backup.

Commissioner McKinzie commented on his perspective related to this topic, the budget process and BAB addressing non-profit funding.

In response to Commissioner McKinzie's question, City Attorney Boileau explained procedural details regarding Commission input for City Manager Lagerbloom's proposed fiscal year budget.

Mayor Trantalis explained the role of the BAB. He confirmed the importance of Commission members bringing budget items of District importance to City Manager Lagerbloom. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Vice Mayor Moraitis' question, City Manager Lagerbloom explained the budget items delivered on July 6, 2021 allow the setting of the FY 2022 Millage Rate. He confirmed the ability to address and modify the approved FY 2022 Budget based upon Commission Member input. Subsequent adjustments would be recommended between the September 8, 2021 and September 13, 2021 Budget Hearings, prior to final adoption.

Mayor Trantalis said subsequent Commission Member budget recommendations could be individually discussed with City Manager Lagerbloom and presented to the Commission. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor Moraitis commented on her perspective and support of current non-profit funding. She confirmed she would have a different position should future non-profit funding require increasing the Millage Rate.

Vice Mayor Moraitis discussed Fire-Rescue Department (FRD) staffing needs and noted related dialogue with City Manager Lagerbloom. City Manager Lagerbloom explained details related to FRD staffing and noted additional FRD staff funding would require a Millage Rate increase. He commented on

related funding opportunities in FY 2022, i.e., grants.

Commissioner McKinzie commented on concerns related to First Responders and COVID, noting the importance of addressing this topic.

Vice Mayor Moraitis confirmed her support of addressing FRD staffing needs.

Fire-Rescue Chief (Chief) Rhoda Mae Kerr explained details related to FRD staffing needs. She explained the need to fill eighty-six (86) FRD seats per day accomplished via a *Staffing Factor*.

Chief Kerr explained the request for an additional sixteen (16) FRD positions ensures minimum levels of staffing to address stresses on the department. Previous requests in prior years have not been approved. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner McKinzie's question, Chief Kerr explained details related to FRD staffing requests.

Vice Mayor Moraitis confirmed her position to fund FRD staffing needs in lieu of non-profit organizations.

Commissioner Glassman noted the importance of funding both FRD staffing needs and non-profits, expounding on his perspective.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question regarding the cost of funding the sixteen (16) FRD additional staffing requests, City Manager Lagerbloom explained the FY 2022 cost would be approximately \$1,700,000 in the first year and \$2,100,000 in the second year.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Chief Kerr explained recruitment details allowing the hiring of the 16 additional FRD personnel, including a federal grant opportunity entitled *Staffing for Adequate Fire And Emergency Response (SAFER)* available in January 2022.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, Chief Kerr explained details regarding the *SAFER* grant allocation over four (4) years.

In response to Vice Mayor Moraitis' question, City Manager Lagerbloom explained federal COVID funding could not be used to fund the requested FRD staff positions.

Vice Mayor Moraitis reiterated her support of funding Police Department and Fire-Rescue Department needs.

Chair Donaldson commented on review of FRD contractual obligations going forward to address FRD staff funding.

BUS-2 [21-0827](#)

New Water Treatment Plant - Discussion and Recommendations

Chair Donaldson commented on *Stantec* water rate increase

recommendations and the importance of informing citizens in advance of water rate increases to fund a new water treatment plant. The BAB approved a five percent (5%) percent water rate increase recommendation to be allocated into a special account strictly for a new water treatment plant initial costs.

Mayor Trantalis commented on the immediate need of a new water treatment plant.

In response to Commission McKinzie's question, Chair Donaldson explained details regarding the additional 5% water rate increase.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Laura Reece, Management and Budget Office Director, explained details related to aspects of the proposed 5% water rate increase to leverage bond funding.

City Manager Lagerbloom explained financial details associated with replacing the *Fiveash Water Treatment Plant (Fiveash)* from the perspective of the City building a replacement water treatment plan or pursuing a Public/Private Partnership (P3). Should the P3 proposals received be deemed unacceptable or withdrawn, the BAB funding recommendation enables the City to build a replacement water treatment plant on its own. Further comment and discussion ensued on moving forward should the Commission decide to move forward with a P3. Should a P3 be utilized for a new water treatment plant, funding would be required further into the future.

Commissioner McKinzie commented on the importance of informing citizens regarding rate increases for water and sewer utilities.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Lagerbloom explained should a decision be made to move forward with a P3, the funding strategy would change, and funding would be needed further into the future.

Mayor Trantalis noted the need to make a decision soon, explaining related concerns.

Vice Mayor Moraitis commented on utilizing a P3 and associated increased water costs. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed.

Chair Donaldson clarified the proposed 5% water rate increase over five (5) years would not pay for a new water treatment plant, estimated between \$250,000,000 to \$400,000,000. It would allow the City to move forward during the ramp up period towards building a new water treatment plant and would increase bonding capacity.

Chair Donaldson reiterated the need for an intensive public relations campaign informing citizens about water rate increases along with transparency, i.e., the placement of rate increase revenue into a dedicated account for improving water quality with building a new water treatment plant.

Commissioner McKinzie commented on concerns related to the impact of underground water pipe infrastructure on water quality.

City Manager Lagerbloom explained a new water treatment plant would remedy concerns regarding water color from *Fiveash*. He cited the membrane filtration system of the *Peele Dixie Water Treatment Plant* as an example.

Commissioner McKinzie expounded on his concerns regarding underground water pipe infrastructure. Chair Donaldson expounded on efforts over the past four (4) to five (5) years to address infrastructure needs.

Commissioner McKinzie requested Staff provide the percentage of underground infrastructure completed to date.

Vice Mayor Moraitis noted District 1 residents are replacing underground pipes beneath their residences due to age.

In response to Vice Mayor Moraitis' question, City Auditor Herbst confirmed the ability set aside the 5% rate increase in a reserve fund sufficient to recoup operational costs and anticipated replacement, explaining related details. He said it is a reasonable cost to include in the rate structure.

City Manager Lagerbloom said should a decision be made to engage a P3 versus the City building its own replacement water treatment plant, *Stantec* would be reengaged to model water rate revenues differently.

Chair Donaldson explained the BAB recommendation for a 5% rate increase beginning in FY 2022. It is related to the Commission decision regarding *Fiveash* replacement. He noted the BAB does not meet with the Commission again until March 2022.

BUS-3 [21-0824](#)

Review of FY 2022 Budget and FY 2022 - FY 2026 Community Investment Plan - Presented by John Herbst, City Auditor

City Auditor Herbst explained the Office of the City Auditor review of the FY 2022 Budget, expounding on criteria and details. He confirmed all criteria had been met.

City Auditor Herbst discussed concerns related to the continuing impact of COVID. The FY 2022 Budget was predicated on 2022 being a typical year, not being impacted by COVID.

In response to Commissioner McKinzie's question, City Auditor Herbst explained his perspective related to not knowing whether there would be federal reimbursement of future unanticipated COVID expenditures.

City Auditor Herbst made the Commission aware of the following items impacting the FY 2023 Budget:

1. ERP implementation is behind schedule and expenses over budget.

There is a new ERP implementation proposal which is different from the original proposal in terms of scope and increased costs over the next twelve (12) years.

2. Employee overtime and vacancies that need to be filled. He recommended budgeting accordingly and management is addressing.
3. Collective bargaining with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) and the budget impact is not yet known.

BUS-4 [21-0828](#)**FY 2021 Budget Advisory Board Work Plan**

Chair Donaldson commented on ways BAB can improve efforts going forward and maintaining the current ad valorem rate. Revenues are anticipated to increase based on accelerated home values and new projects.

He discussed setting aside a separate ad valorem dedicated to address unfunded Community Investment Plan Projects (CIPs) similar to other municipalities. Chair Donaldson expounded on his perspective regarding the need to inform the public on rate increases. The BAB would return with related recommendations.

The BAB will develop an improved strategy to address non-profit funding that would include better parameters and informing applicants. Further comment and discussion ensued on non-profit funding requests and BAB recommendations.

Commissioner Glassman commented that non-profit funding was not a good use of BAB time. Vice Mayor Moraitis concurred and said non-profit funding is not a good use of Commission or BAB time. Comment and discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor Moraitis noted issues of importance to District 1 residents include reasonable water rates, adequate funding for excellent Police and Fire Departments, District 1 CIPs and addressing homelessness.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 12:53 p.m.