

City of Fort Lauderdale

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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

1:30 PM

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

City Commission Conference Meeting

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor

BEN SORENSEN Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District IV

HEATHER MORAITIS Commissioner - District I

STEVEN GLASSMAN Commissioner - District II

ROBERT L. McKINZIE Commissioner - District III

CHRIS LAGERBLOOM, City Manager

DAVID R. SOLOMAN, City Clerk

ALAIN E. BOILEAU, City Attorney

PATRICK REILLY, Interim City Auditor

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trantalis called the meeting to order at 1:37 p.m.

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Commission Members Present: Commissioner Heather Moraitis, Commissioner Steven Glassman, Commissioner Robert L. McKinzie (arrived at 2:01 p.m.), Vice Mayor Ben Sorensen (appeared via communications technology) and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

Also Present: City Manager Chris Lagerbloom, City Clerk David R. Soloman, City Attorney Alain E. Boileau and Interim City Auditor Patrick Reilly

COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COMMISSION

[22-0476](#)

Communications to the City Commission - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

***Planning and Zoning Board (P&Z Board) Meeting
Wednesday, April 20, 2022***

Communication to the City Commission

***Motion made by Mr. Weymouth and seconded by Mr. Cohen to
return City Hall Chambers to pre-pandemic conditions and layout.***

In a voice vote, the motion passed 8-0.

Mayor Trantalis said the Commission requested COVID barriers in Commission Chambers remain. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

BUS-1 [22-0412](#)

Discussion of Requested Cost of Living Adjustment for the General Employees Retirement System - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

City Manager Lagerbloom said this Agenda item addresses the General Employees Retirement System (GERS) request for a cost of living adjustment (COLA).

Nicholas Schiess, General Employees' Retirement System (GERS) Pension Administrator, requested favorable Commission consideration

of a three percent (3%) COLA for GERS retirees.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Mr. Schiess confirmed it would be a one (1) time three percent (3%) increase going forward for all retirees through July 2021.

Mr. Schiess narrated a slide presentation entitled *General Employees' Retirement System -The Case For Cost of Living Adjustments*.

A copy has been made part of the backup to this Agenda item.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding the impact of the current stock market and general market conditions on the GERS fund, Mr. Schiess said the marking point is September 30, 2021. He explained investment returns are a moving five (5) year average and expounded on related details. The annual cost of the three percent (3%) would be met by maintaining funding requirements of the previous year, plus approximately \$300,000. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the related impact of a downturn in the economy.

Mr. Schiess reviewed the history of the COLA and said the last one occurred in 2002. He commented on the mechanism for granting a COLA. There are three (3) requirements and two (2) of the requirements had been met.

Commissioner Glassman commented on his viewpoint and support of granting a three percent (3%) COLA for GERS retirees and remarked on related details. In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed that GERS retirees is the only group that has not received a COLA.

Commissioner Moraitis discussed her understanding of GERS participants when they were City employees. Mr. Schiess explained a mechanism in the related Ordinance regarding a performance-based ad hoc COLA achieved through collective bargaining and commented on related details. There is an additional requirement from the pension bond obligation requiring any benefit improvement for an ad hoc COLA would require a unanimous vote if amortized or a majority vote if funded upfront. The one (1) time amortized cost would \$13,500,000. Further comment and discussion.

Susan Grant, Finance Director, explained there would be a \$2,000,000 budget reduction across multiple funds related to pension plan funding. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding COLA funding.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's questions, Laura Reece, Office of Management and Budget Director, explained the 2021 year ending drives these costs in the FY 2023 Budget. Commissioner Glassman remarked that this does not impact the current 2022 budget.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, Ms. Reece explained a three percent (3%) COLA is not included in budgets currently under development, and noted funding would come from several funding sources. She confirmed the practice of using Enterprise Funds for retirement compensation. Mr. Schiess clarified that required funding would decrease by \$1,900,000. Should prior plan year contributions be maintained, the COLA would be funded.

Vice Mayor Sorensen confirmed his support for exploring the possibility of approving the COLA request.

Mayor Trantalis said the COLA request is not being voted on today and remarked on the need for the Budget Advisory Board to provide feedback on the COLA request.

Commissioner Moraitis commented on her opposition to funding the COLA request.

Commissioner Glassman disagreed with Commissioner Moraitis. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding funding options and related details.

City Attorney Boileau discussed details of Commission options moving forward. A Commission supermajority is necessary for lump sum funding of this COLA, and a Commission unanimous vote would be needed to amortize this COLA. Further comment and discussion ensued.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

CF-1 [22-0494](#)

Joint Governmental Center Campus (JGCC) Discussion -
(Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Mayor Trantalis provided an overview of efforts towards a Joint Governmental Center Campus (Project) with Broward County (County). The previous Commission initiated a working group addressing the Project, which consisted of Assistant City Manager Chris Lagerbloom, Assistant Broward County Administrator Alan Cohen, and County Commissioner Chip LaMarca. Mayor Trantalis explained details of subsequent actions and commented on the City's efforts to meet with the

County. He remarked on discussions during the May 5, 2022, County Project Workshop, which the City was not a participant. Mayor Trantalis expounded on details related to space needs, building management, and Project costs.

Mayor Trantalis noted the need for Commission discussion regarding the Project's \$828,000,000 cost estimate. The City would be responsible for forty-three percent (43%) or approximately \$356,000,000, which equates to roughly \$2,000 per square foot for City Staff. He requested Commission feedback and confirmed his opposition to the high cost.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Assistant Broward County Administrator Alan Cohen. Mr. Cohen said the Project's recent cost estimate was conservative and commented on rising construction costs and possibly increasing Project costs.

In response to Commissioner Moraitis' question, Mayor Trantalis explained the genesis of a Project was to allow the County and the City to benefit from cost efficiencies and related savings. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding County efforts to decentralize its operations.

Commissioner Moraitis commented on her viewpoint regarding moving forward with the Project or the City building a separate City Hall facility. She confirmed support for the Commission's ultimate decision and recommended Staff determine a cost estimate associated with the City building its own facility on City-owned property.

Mayor Trantalis concurred and requested City Manager Lagerbloom provide alternatives for a separate City facility.

Commissioner McKinzie commented on his perspective and his need for a complete understanding to make an informed decision before discontinuing Project efforts with the County.

City Manager Lagerbloom commented on a recent conversation with County personnel. Should the City wish to move forward with the County on this Project, the cohabitation agreement currently in outline form as an abbreviated term sheet (Agreement) between the City and the County needs to be finalized before the County Commission's Summer Recess.

Commissioner Glassman commented on his viewpoint regarding Project discussions at the May 5, 2022, County Project Workshop and remarked on possibly adding additional floors to the Project to generate revenue

and offset costs. He concurred on the need for other options for a new City Hall facility.

City Manager Lagerbloom noted consideration of numerous factors related to alternative facility options. He discussed the square footage cost for the Project on existing City land and input from the development community estimated at approximately \$900 per square foot. City Manager Lagerbloom said Staff could provide a Commission update soon. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Glassman commented on continuing forward with the Project, the amount of effort and funding spent thus far on the Project, and his understanding of views of County Commission discussions at its May 5, 2022, Broward County Commission Project Workshop. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's questions regarding the Agreement, City Manager Lagerbloom explained it was nearing completion and discussed interaction between the City and County as occupants.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's questions, City Attorney Boileau explained the mediation process would be used to resolve disputes between the City and County. City Attorney Boileau cited examples of the County's position as the superior governing entity when deciding issues related to the City and County. He noted that the process of mediation is not an option in emergencies, commented that the County would have the ability to make the decision and cited examples.

City Attorney Boileau discussed outstanding aspects of the Agreement and cited examples that would impact the role of the City and the County related to policy decisions. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding related operational and legal details and dispute resolution.

Mayor Trantalis concurred with City Attorney Boileau's comments and remarked on the need for policy decisions regarding the role of the City and County. He commented on the County's review of its needs assessment and concerns about spending additional funds on the Project until those issues are resolved.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Susan Grant, Finance Department Director. Ms. Grant remarked on the timeline and efforts to address the governance structure and policy decisions. She cited general examples and explained details of what is currently under consideration. Further

comment and discussion ensued on possible scenarios and meeting the County's deadline for completing the Agreement.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Alan J. Cohen, Broward County Assistant County Administrator. Mr. Cohen confirmed the County's request for an Agreement focused on governance and dispute resolution.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Grant said Agreement negotiations are close to completion and remarked on the ability to meet the County's deadline.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's questions, Mr. Cohen explained his understanding of the process following the resolution of the Agreement. The County would be ready to proceed and issue the Request for Proposal (RFP). City Manager Lagerbloom explained that the City would be part of discussions before the RFP is issued and remarked on related details. City Attorney Boileau commented on City obligations associated with the Agreement, which does not have the formalities of a contract.

Vice Mayor Sorensen's explained his viewpoint and suggested moving forward on parallel paths that would include exploring other alternatives for the City and related costs.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's questions regarding the specific needs of the City and County included in the RFP, City Manager Lagerbloom said issuing the RFP is a huge step forward. He commented on the significant RFP work of Staff over the past several years and the large amount of additional Staff work necessary following the issuance of the RFP. There are RFP clauses offering stipends to firms participating in the process.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's questions, Mayor Trantalis reiterated the City's portion of the Project cost is \$356,000,000 or \$2,373 per square foot based on the City's needs assessment of 150,000 square feet of dedicated office space. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding usable and unusable space.

In response to Commissioner Moraitis' questions, City Manager Lagerbloom commented on an estimated square foot cost of a new, separate City Hall facility and noted a maximum charge of \$180,000,000 on the existing City Hall site with the use of existing adjacent parking.

Vice Mayor Sorensen requested Mr. Cohen provide as much specific

information as possible regarding square footage and related information.

Mayor Trantalis commented on related County Commission discussions, Staff efforts, opposition to the Project's high cost, and costs associated with moving forward on two (2) parallel tracks that are moot due to cost considerations. He recommended the Commission direct City Manager Lagerbloom to return to the Commission with options and recommendations towards making a comparative analysis of what is in the City's best interests, including building a new City Hall on real estate owned by the City or seeking options in existing buildings. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed.

Commissioner Moraitis and Commissioner Glassman concurred.

Commissioner Glassman commented on and inquired about Commission action before the June 7, 2022, City Commission Meeting. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis recommended putting the Project and related efforts on hold. Commissioners Moraitis and Glassman concurred.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question regarding the Agreement, Mayor Trantalis said there was no need to review. Commissioner Moraitis concurred there is no need for the Agreement.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS continued

BUS-2 [22-0374](#)

Solid Waste Working Group Update - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Commissioner Glassman introduced this Agenda item focused on developing a regional Solid Waste Authority to manage Broward County (County) solid waste. He commented on high costs and upcoming decisions regarding collecting materials from homes and businesses. The efforts of the Solid Waste Working Group (Working Group) are to develop a collaborative Solid Waste Authority focused on improving, maintaining, and expanding cost-efficient, post-collection solid waste infrastructure, including processing, recycling, and disposal. Solid waste holding activities will remain the responsibilities of the City.

He acknowledged and thanked Melissa Doyle, Program Manager Public Works Department, for her support and contributions towards meeting Working Group goals.

Ms. Doyle narrated a slide presentation entitled *Solid Waste Working Group-UPDATE*.

A copy is part of the backup to this Agenda item.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Doyle explained that a sample is extrapolated to represent the total solid waste generated throughout the County for the purpose of the Composition Study.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding commercial businesses separating recyclable solid waste, Ms. Doyle explained City retail businesses are currently not required to recycle though many participate. Commercial companies that participate in recycling must have a contract with one (1) of the fourteen (14) City's licensed haulers (Haulers) that are required to deliver recyclable materials to a recycling processing facility. A number of the Haulers do not currently accept glass due to costs. Commercial solid waste recycling could become a policy decision, and a related Ordinance could be brought before the Commission or be required and included as part of Hauler licensing agreements.

Commissioner McKinzie discussed his understanding of commercial businesses recycling efforts and related costs. He remarked on his support of Commission policy requiring commercial recycling. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on the recycling efforts of large and small businesses. Ms. Doyle explained that small business solid waste not separated for recycling is incinerated.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's questions regarding solutions to commercial recycling, Mayor Trantalis remarked on the need to work with the Haulers and noted related pushback and prior efforts to ship recyclable materials overseas.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Darrin Hinderliter, Republic Services Division Manager. In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, Mr. Hinderliter explained details and challenges related to Republic Services' recycling efforts. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding developing a methodology to secure more recycling products from commercial businesses, Mr. Hinderliter discussed aspects of Republic Services' recycling efforts. He confirmed it is working through municipal partners to

continue to drive the recycling market.

Commissioner Moraitis left the meeting at 3:27 p.m.

BUS-3 [22-0118](#)

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

Tarlesha Smith, Assistant City Manager - Human Resources Director, provided an overview of this Agenda item.

Ms. Smith explained details related to diversity recruitment efforts. She cited examples that include adding two (2) Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) per unit that would entail moving forward with related Collective Bargaining, community engagement, and commented on aspects related to the EMT swimming requirement. No EMT candidates have been eliminated due to the swimming component. Swimming training is offered during the four (4) month window from a conditional offer to a final hiring offer. Diversity recruitment hiring is at fifteen percent (15%) versus the Consent Decree's eleven percent (11%).

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's questions, Ms. Smith explained details of required EMT emergency staffing models in the City, Broward County, and the State. Ms. Smith explained the City's EMT hiring details that will be built into its staffing model over the next several years. She confirmed a positive trajectory for increasing Fire-Rescue Department diversity hiring. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding the timeframe for a new EMT hire to become certified, Ms. Smith commented that it would not exceed one (1) EMT class cycle.

CITY COMMISSION REPORTS

Vice Mayor Sorensen discussed outreach from the *Fort Lauderdale Woman's Club (Woman's Club)* for financial aid for a new roof on its building (Building) and noted the estimated cost of approximately \$130,000. He inquired about Commission consideration of funding assistance. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Vice Mayor Sorensen's questions, City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed the *Woman's Club* is located on land City-owned land in Stranahan Park. The Woman's Club owns the Building.

City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed the *Woman's Club* contacted him. He said funding assistance would be a Commission policy decision and

remarked on the possible related impact.

Commissioner Glassman inquired about the Building qualifying for State historic designation and remarked on its qualifying and applying for related grant funding. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed its historic designation and confirmed he would inquire. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner McKinzie's question, City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed he would update the Commission on other available alternatives including grants for historic buildings.

Vice Mayor Sorensen inquired about the current status and efficacy of the *Red Light Camera Program (Program)* and requested Commission input.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Attorney Boileau explained past lengthy litigation regarding the related *Program* statute, staffing requirements and costs, the need to revamp the City's *Program* to ensure compliance and past discussions with the previous City Manager. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding benefits, the process and associated details.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' comments regarding concerns about traffic safety and perpetual, costly litigation, City Attorney Boileau said *Red Light Cameras* are legal and enforceable and confirmed the caveat to ensure enforcement is compliant. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding Staff ramping up a *Program*, which would include purchasing equipment, ways to ensure safe driving and additional items.

In response to Commissioner McKinzie's questions, City Attorney Boileau confirmed the *Program* is legal and enforceable, and explained details regarding the previous vendor and the need for equipment upgrades. Vice Mayor Sorensen confirmed his desire to pursue, and City Attorney Boileau said he would review other *Programs* in Florida jurisdictions and update the Commission.

Vice Mayor Sorensen discussed challenges related to residential dock rentals in District 4, including the influx of people turning backyards into mini marinas. He remarked on the impact on traffic and safety.

City Attorney Boileau commented on dock rentals throughout the City and enforcement, including zoning districts that prohibit dock rentals and legal arguments related to zoning districts that are silent on this subject. The

Commission would need to address dock rental concerns from a policy standpoint. He remarked on an issue related to how Code defines marinas. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding details related to resident concerns. City Attorney Boileau confirmed specific cases brought to the attention of Staff would be addressed and enforced with the Special Magistrate. He suggested particular restrictions in all zoning districts and redefining marinas.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on homes owned by limited liability companies operating as commercial marinas in the Middle River area and the limited success of Code Enforcement efforts. Further comment and discussion ensued. City Attorney Boileau explained the details of ongoing enforcement efforts.

Commissioner McKinzie concurred with Mayor Trantalis and Commissioner Sorensen's viewpoint and explained his perspective regarding enforcement efforts. He suggested tweaking the related Ordinance by associating a docked vessel's registration to the owner of the residence.

City Attorney Boileau explained associated challenges, i.e., mega yachts owned by corporations for tax purposes. Further comment and discussion ensued. City Attorney Boileau confirmed he would research related Florida statutes.

Vice Mayor Sorensen commented on the need to holistically improve consistent enforcement efforts and discussed registering a vessel at a homesteaded property. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner McKinzie concurred with Commissioner Sorensen's comments and remarked on indicators of inappropriate dock rentals.

Mayor Trantalis requested City Attorney Boileau research how to address dock rental concerns. City Attorney Boileau confirmed. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor Sorensen discussed resident concerns regarding vacation rentals and the need to be proactive. He requested City Manager Lagerbloom and City Attorney Boileau provide an update regarding how other municipalities manage vacation rentals and action allowable under State statute. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed and commented on placing this as an Agenda item on a future Conference Agenda to update the Commission on how Staff is addressing this issue.

Vice Mayor Sorensen remarked on City Manager Lagerbloom's upcoming departure and acknowledged his exemplary work for the City. Mayor Trantalis recommended scheduling an Agenda item at a forthcoming Conference Meeting to determine how to proceed, including a review of pending issues and projects. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis commented on *Fleet Week* activities, including special events and efforts to welcome service members.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on the City's growth and the influx of residents and businesses from other areas of the country.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, City Attorney Boileau confirmed he would provide a Commission update regarding the ability to regulate loud noise emanating from vehicles. Discussion ensued regarding a radar gun device that can detect decibel levels used by police in California and another jurisdiction. City Attorney Boileau noted that Governor Ron DeSantis had not received legislation focused on loud music emanating from vehicles.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question about costs incurred by other municipalities instituting its own *911 Emergency Call Dispatch Center (911 Dispatch Center)*, City Manager Lagerbloom commented on the inability of other Broward County municipalities to absorb the needs of the City for a *911 Dispatch Center*. He requested public safety consultant *Fitch & Associates (Fitch)* to update its 2015-2016 cost study on this subject, which ranged from \$10,000,000 to \$12,000,000. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Police Chief Patrick Lynn explained details of his outreach to *Fitch* to provide a final cost for a City *911 Dispatch Center*. *Fitch* will provide this information following the conclusion of its work with the *Broward County Sheriff's Office*. The City of Plantation does not have the capacity to cover the City. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Chief Lynn confirmed he would provide details regarding costs incurred by other municipalities instituting a *911 Dispatch Center*. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding related history.

Commissioner McKinzie commented on a recent update regarding the new *Police Public Safety Headquarters Building (Building)*, its anticipated Fall 2022 groundbreaking, and value engineering efforts to

reduce costs. He inquired about the opportunity to house a *911 Dispatch Center* in the new *Building*. Chief Lynn said he was unaware of any plans for an architectural review to determine whether the *Building* could accommodate a *911 Dispatch Center*. Further comment and discussion ensued. Commissioner McKinzie commented on the opportunity to address both needs simultaneously.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Attorney Boileau provided an update on panhandling and explained details related to the promising nature of a recent *United States Supreme Court (Supreme Court)* decision impacting a previous case causing challenges to the City's existing Ordinance. The City remains under an injunction related to two (2) panhandling Ordinances. City Attorney Boileau explained details related to amending the *Road Canvassing Ordinance*. Mayor Trantalis recommended pursuing that option. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis commented on his trip to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and attendance at a World's Fair exhibit, where he experienced a science fiction exhibit from the United States. He remarked on the exhibit's opportunity for the *Museum of Discovery and Science* to house the exhibit and explained related efforts and details. Further comment and discussion ensued.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

City Manager Lagerbloom commented on feedback from Rachel Williams, Housing and Urban Development Manager, related to a 2016-2017 Community Development Block Grant used to fund roof repairs at the Woman's Club. He remarked on anticipated costs for replacing the Woman's Club roof.

City Manager Lagerbloom commented on his departure and confirmed efforts to formulate a transition plan.

City Manager Lagerbloom requested Commission feedback regarding questions from the recruitment firm selected for the City Auditor search. Further comment and discussion ensued. There was a Commission consensus to pursue this in an open forum. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed this would be scheduled at the next Commission Conference Meeting.

ADJOURN

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 4:37 p.m.

