

City of Fort Lauderdale

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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 20, 2024

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

STEVEN GLASSMAN Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District II

JOHN C. HERBST Commissioner - District I

PAM BEASLEY-PITTMAN Commissioner - District III

WARREN STURMAN Commissioner - District IV

SUSAN GRANT, Acting City Manager

DAVID R. SOLOMAN, City Clerk

THOMAS J. ANSBRO, City Attorney

PATRICK REILLY, City Auditor

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trantalis called the meeting to order at 11:44 a.m.

ROLL CALL

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

Budget Advisory Board Members Present: Chair Jeff Lowe, Vice Chair William Brown, and Prabhuling Patel

Budget Advisory Board Members Not Present: Ross Cammarata, Jeremiah Carter, Mildred Lowe, Melissa Milroy, and John Rodstrom

COMMISSION QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Also Present: Acting City Manager Susan Grant, City Clerk David R. Soloman, City Attorney Thomas J. Ansbro, and City Auditor Patrick Reilly

OLD/NEW BUSINESS**BUS-1** [24-0749](#)

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

Budget Advisory Board (BAB) Chair Jeff Lowe provided an overview and acknowledged the efforts of BAB Members and Staff who contributed to the development of the Tentative Fiscal Year 2025 Budget (Budget) that is unanimously supported by the BAB. Chair Lowe remarked on the BAB's discussion of unfunded Community Investment Projects (CIPs) and related funding options that the BAB will continue to focus on.

Chair Lowe discussed the BAB's Communication to the Commission regarding its recommendations for non-profit funding and delaying funding of the General Employees Retirement System (GERS) request for a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) until FY 2026.

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

Chair Lowe noted that the BAB also discussed special events and funding, which resulted in its recommendation to create a Sponsorship Committee working in partnership with the City for large City-funded events.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on delaying the GERS COLA for one (1) year and the possible use of remaining Northwest-Progresso-Flagler Heights Community Redevelopment Agency (NWPFH CRA) funds available when it sunsets in November 2026.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Chair Lowe remarked on his understanding of the NWPFH CRA amount available to the City when the NWPFH CRA sunsets and commented on the amount of funding necessary should the GERS COLA be amortized over seven (7) years.

BUS-2 [24-0565](#)

Fiscal Year 2025 Tentative Budget Highlights - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Acting City Manager Susan Grant narrated a presentation entitled *FY 2025 Tentative Budget* (Budget).

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

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question, Milos Majstorovic, Transportation and Mobility Department Acting Director, explained the roadways involved with the Reconnecting Communities Grant (Grant) coordinated with the Broward MPO. The Grant is to study the feasibility of roadway underpasses along major east-west roadway corridors that intersect FEC railway tracks (intersection underpasses).

Mayor Trantalis remarked on his understanding that this Grant match funding begins the process of studying the ramifications, logistics, and costs of intersection underpasses. Efforts will not be limited to the identified intersections, and there are plans for underpasses at all major intersections going north. Mayor Trantalis commented on related information.

Commissioner Herbst remarked on his opposition, noted the need to include major east-west corridor intersections in District 1, and expounded on his viewpoint. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's question, Ben Rogers, Acting Assistant City Manager, clarified information related to this Grant match funding. The intersection underpasses discussed were part of a counterproposal associated with the Bridge option for the New River Crossing. Further comment and discussion ensued. Commissioner Herbst confirmed that he did not recollect the Commission's identification of intersection underpasses. Mr. Rogers confirmed Staff would research and provide related information.

Commissioner Sturman noted that the Grant match is for feasibility studies and is not limited to the intersection underpass locations listed. Mayor Trantalis remarked on the context and his recollection of New River Crossing discussions related to this topic. Mayor Trantalis reiterated that this Agenda item represents the first phase of this effort, which requires the identification of specific intersection underpass locations as part of the grant application process. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question, Mr. Rogers remarked on challenges related to revising the locations to be studied and said that Staff would investigate that option.

Acting City Manager Grant continued the presentation.

Vice Mayor Glassman commented on his support of Staff's initial efforts to fund parental leave. In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's questions, Acting City Manager Grant commented on the City's ability to increase paid parental leave beyond two (2) weeks when funding is determined, follow policies of other municipalities, and include parental leave benefits in City contract negotiations. Extending parental leave benefits to non-represented employees could be done administratively.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Acting City Manager Grant confirmed that the amount budgeted in the presentation for Police Headquarters staffing would be around the clock during the month of September 2024.

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question, Acting City Manager Grant explained that enhanced Riverwalk Activation Funding is due to increased pass-through costs paid by the City.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question, Acting City Manager Grant noted that those pass-through costs are for Riverwalk's hard costs, such as electricity reimbursed by the City. Yvette Matthews, Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget, cited additional examples of Riverwalk funding associated with City-wide events.

Vice Mayor Glassman expounded on the extensive community involvement with the unfunded Sunrise Lane District Streetscapes Project (Project), remarked on related details, and questioned why there is no funding to move the Project forward. Acting City Manager Grant concurred with Vice Mayor Glassman's viewpoint regarding creating community expectations but noted that the FY 2025 Budget does not

have the capacity for the Project.

Mayor Trantalis noted that community outreach is part of the process for CIPs, cited examples, and discussed similar CIP projects without designated funding. Further comment and discussion ensued. Mr. Rogers remarked on the process for these types of projects that compete for funding. Mr. Rogers noted that the community indicated the need for adequate public parking in this area, and Staff is working on alternatives to address parking needs.

Vice Mayor Glassman concurred on the need for adequate public parking and remarked on the area of redevelopment before the Sunrise Boulevard Intracoastal bridge heading east.

Commissioner Sturman confirmed District 4's priority for traffic calming measures in numerous areas, including Cordova Road, and remarked on related information and costs.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Milos Majstorovic, Transportation and Mobility Department Acting Director. Mr. Majstorovic explained details of traffic calming measures and funding along Cordova Road. In response to Commissioner Sturman's questions, Mr. Majstorovic explained the costs for two (2) types of traffic calming measures installed on streets and expounded on related information and costs. Commissioner Sturman remarked on community feedback regarding the materials used for traffic calming measures along Cordova Road. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis commented on prior Commission discussions regarding traffic calming measures and sidewalk needs throughout the City. He noted the need for the Commission to consider a bond issuance to fund those costs. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman concurred with Commissioner Sturman's viewpoint and remarked on community input validating the need for traffic calming measures in District 3. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Commissioner Sturman explained modifications necessary for traffic calming measures along Cordova Road and remarked on the appropriateness of the newer type of traffic calming installation that has been removed. Mr. Majstorovic confirmed that Staff is in the process of installing speed feedback signs as a traffic calming measure.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Acting Assistant City Manager Laura Reece. Ms. Reece reviewed the Staff recommendation and options associated with a General Employees Retirement System (GERS) Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and expounded on funding information and related details.

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question, Ms. Reece explained information associated with Staff's recommendation to fund the GERS COLA via a lump sum, which would have the least impact on competing CIPs in the current Budget. Ms. Reece expounded on Staff recommendations to amortize a GERS COLA over five (5) or seven (7) years and explained related information.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman reiterated her opposition to delaying stormwater projects to amortize a GERS COLA. In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's questions, Acting City Manager Grant explained that GERS funding is based on the GERS employee department of origination that is funded from respective stormwater and wastewater funds (Enterprise Funds). Acting City Manager Grant confirmed the ability to fund an amortized GERS COLA from the General Fund or the Fund Balance and noted related impacts on the Budget. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Acting City Manager Grant explained that funding a GERS COLA from Enterprise Funds such as stormwater and wastewater is not mandatory. Commissioner Herbst confirmed.

In response to Ms. Reece's request for Commission direction, Mayor Trantalis noted the BAB recommendation to defer a GERS COLA until Fiscal Year 2026.

Mayor Trantalis recognized BAB Member Bill Brown. Mr. Brown confirmed the BAB's unanimous support for delaying a GERS COLA until next year, explained related information, and discussed related concerns, including the need for funds to address weather emergencies.

Commissioner Herbst explained that when States of Emergency involving the City are declared, both State and federal government financial assistance becomes available. He clarified and explained details related to the City's financial obligations that include the appropriation of funds, noted the City's pooled cash account, and expounded on related information.

Presented by Patrick Reilly, City Auditor - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

City Auditor Patrick Reilly explained the City Auditor's Office's (CAO) participation and review in the development of the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY 2025) Proposed Budget and the Fiscal Year 2025 - 2029 (FY 2025-2029) Community Investment Plan (CIP), Management's responses, and the CAO's ongoing audit approach. He expounded on information and their concerns associated with the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System and the impact of inflation on CIP projects.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Reece explained the timeline for the FY 2025 Budget and the need for Commission direction regarding a GERS COLA. Acting City Manager Grant explained the GERS COLA funding options and required Commission votes.

Vice Mayor Glassman confirmed his opposition to lump sum funding of a GERS COLA, discussed his viewpoint, and expounded on his perspective regarding the importance of funding infrastructure needs.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Lynn Wenguer, Pension Administrator. Ms. Wenguer confirmed that the GERS has exceeded its thresholds over the past five (5) years and her support of the Commission approving a GERS COLA. She noted that GERS retirees had not received a COLA since 2001, remarked on related information, and confirmed that a GERS COLA would not impact the public safety retirement system.

Commissioner Beasley-Pittman reiterated concerns related to amortizing a GERS COLA funded by stormwater and wastewater funds versus a lump sum GERS COLA funded from the General Fund.

Mayor Trantalis concurred with Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's viewpoint, discussed the ability to amortize funding of a GERS COLA annually from the Fund Balance, and remarked on the excess amount available in FY 2025. Acting City Manager Grant discussed information related to that option. Commissioner Herbst noted funding a GERS COLA would be a one-time annual expense over a five (5) or seven (7) year amortization period.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Acting City Manager Grant confirmed that after the Commission approves a Resolution to fund an amortized GERS COLA annually from the Fund Balance, the City would be required to continue regardless of whether there are future excess funds. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question, Chair Lowe

confirmed BAB's recommendation not to fund a GERS COLA in FY 2025.

Commissioner Herbst remarked on the unlikely scenario of the Commission increasing the millage rate in FY 2026 to fund a GERS COLA. He discussed his current support of a GERS COLA and noted his previous perspective as City Auditor to not grant a GERS COLA due to the need for the GERS to meet thresholds.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on the opportunity to amortize funding a GERS COLA over seven (7) years as a result of more precise Budget information that would not compromise existing CIPs. Mayor Trantalis noted a Commission consensus to move forward with that funding option.

Commissioner Sturman discussed his viewpoint in support of a GERS COLA and the City's obligation to former employees.

Mayor Trantalis confirmed his support of a GERS COLA amortized over seven (7) years and a Commission consensus. Acting City Manager Grant confirmed that Staff would bring forward an Agenda item for a GERS COLA an upcoming Commission Regular Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 12:57 p.m.