



DRAFT
BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
July 17, 2024 – 5:00 P.M.
Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport
Red Tails Conference Room
6000 NW 21st Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

Board Member	Attendance	10/2023 through 9/2024 Cumulative Attendance	
		Present	Absent
Jeff Lowe, Chair	P	6	0
William Brown, Vice Chair	P	6	0
Jeremiah Carter	P	3	0
Ross Cammarata	A	5	1
Mildred Lowe	A	2	1
Michael Marshall	A	2	4
Melissa Milroy	P	6	0
Prabhuling Patel	P	5	1
John Rodstrom [arrived 5:25]	P	5	1

Staff

Susan Grant, Acting City Manager
 Anthony Fajardo, Assistant City Manager
 Laura Reece, Acting Assistant City Manager
 Yvette Matthews, Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget
 Charmaine Crawford, OMB Department and Board Liaison
 J. Oppertlee, Prototype Inc. Recording Secretary

Communications to the City Commission

Motion made by Mr. Brown, seconded by Mr. Rodstrom to recommend putting a placeholder of \$1.1 million in the budget for non-profit funding, and between now and February 2025 the BAB and staff will develop parameters for the FY 2026 budget to present to the City Commission at a joint meeting/workshop. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Ms. Milroy, seconded by Mr. Carter, to recommend deferring to the FY 2026 budget the COLA for the General Employee retirees until we have more information based on fund balance, potential CRA decisions, property value changes and ad valorem changes. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

I. Call to Order

The meeting of the Budget Advisory Board was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Roll was called, and it was determined a quorum was present.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 29, 2024

Motion made by Ms. Milroy, seconded by Mr. Brown to approve the minutes of the May 29, 2024 meeting. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

IV. Floor Open for Neighbor Input

None

V. Old Business

- Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) NW Progresso Flagler Heights Area - Financial Impact of Sunsetting versus Extending – Follow Up

Ms. Reece requested additional questions from the Board. She said the City Commission would make a decision regarding the CRA in January 2025. Board members had no additional questions.

VI. New Business

a) Presentation of FY 2025 Proposed Budget and FY 2025 – FY 2029 Community Investment Plan – Susan Grant, Acting City Manager

Ms. Grant provided the presentation, copy of which is attached to these minutes for the public record.

Ms. Reece said the City's total contribution to both CRAs was approximately \$12 million.

Chair Lowe said he did not see the purpose of the Chief Waterways Officer position and did not support it. Ms. Grant said this position would be part of the City Manager's Office and would coordinate interdepartmental workings related to the City's waterways. This would provide the City a unified approach to the waterways.

Mr. Brown asked about the bed shelter program and Ms. Grant said a homeless shelter in the City of Hollywood would provide 20 dedicated beds to Fort Lauderdale. This would provide the City's Hot Team somewhere to bring or send people. Regarding the new law, she had attended the County meeting the previous week and reported there were no plans for a certified homeless camp site by the County or any of the municipalities so the City would probably use some people in administrative positions to comply with the new State statute. She stated there would be lots of paperwork and resources spent that would do nothing to help the homeless. Ms. Grant explained that the shelter in Hollywood provided wrap-around services and a person could stay there for 60 days.

Mr. Brown asked about full cost recovery for events and Ms. Reece stated two things were moving through Parks and Recreation regarding full cost recovery. Licensing for beach events such as Tortuga would be addressed when the contracts came up for renewal.

Regarding the Florida Panthers' celebration, Ms. Grant said the City Commission had authorized \$100,000 but spent a total of \$400,000 including staffing. The City had sent the Panthers a bill for \$300,000.

Ms. Reece explained the discretionary fund Commission members and Mayor were given that they used to fund their offices. They could also use the funds for special events in their districts or to fund a non-profit. In the case of giving it to a non-profit, this would be a public purpose and the process must be followed for the entire Commission to agree to spend public funds that way.

Mr. Brown wanted to discuss sending a Communication to the City Commission discussing "weaning off a large amount for the non-profit funding of taxpayers' dollars so that they don't feel like it's obligated to them every year."

Ms. Grant stated there was a request from retirees in the General Employees Retirement System for a Cost of Living Increase [COLA]. If the requested 2.75% COLA were funded up front, the cost would be \$12.5 million spread across funds, paid out of fund balance. If financed over seven years, it would be \$1 million per year from the General Fund and \$500,000 from the Water and Sewer Fund.

Ms. Reece said to avoid cutting into public safety, salary and wages, she recommended utilizing the General fund balance, which would bring them slightly below the three-month reserve target. She would not recommend utilizing the Water and Sewer fund balance, since it was already too far below the target. Instead, she would recommend delaying the Comprehensive Water and Sewer Master Plan Update from the upcoming budget. Ms. Grant they could also add 0.125 mills to the ad valorem to fund the COLA.

b) Discussion of a Joint Meeting with the Northwest Progresso Flagler Heights CRA Advisory Board and the Budget Advisory Board

Ms. Reece said Mayor Trantalis had suggested this at the Commission's joint meeting with the Northwest Progresso CRA. Staff could coordinate this if the Board wished.

Chair Lowe had met with four of five Commission members and asked about what input they wanted from the BAB. They did not want input regarding the CRA right now, since they would make their decision in January 2025. He suggested the BAB make a recommendation in November or December 2024.

Chair Lowe said he had also discussed not-for-profits with Commission members and there had been a suggestion to put a placeholder in the budget for \$2.5 million and the City could form a committee to review the requests to ensure they aligned with the City Commission's priorities. Mr. Rodstrom feared the City Commission would not heed the advice from the committee, just as they had not heeded the BAB's recommendation when they reviewed the requests. Ms. Milroy suggested limiting the amount any one

organization could receive. Mr. Carter thought they could set such a limit and an organization could provide a good reason to request more. He also suggested requiring organizations that had received funding to provide information about how the funds were spent and the outcomes. Chair Lowe also wanted to know how the organization used the funds to benefit residents of Fort Lauderdale.

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Chair Lowe said the City Commission had also requested BAB input regarding the General Employees' COLA. Ms. Reece explained that in the past, the General Employees had met the criteria and requested the COLA but had been denied. Ms. Grant said it had been 20 years since they had received a COLA. Mr. Brown was concerned about the General Fund balance dipping below the three-month target reserve and having to cut infrastructure projects from the Water and Sewer Fund. He would be willing to consider 2026 ad valorem increase to fund the COLA.

Ms. Milroy noted that if the City Commission decided not to continue funding the CRA, there would be \$12 million available that they could use to fund the COLA. Mr. Brown said a delay would also allow the BAB to weigh in on the next budget cycle knowing the City Commission's priorities for that year.

Motion made by Ms. Milroy, seconded by Mr. Carter, to recommend deferring to the FY 2026 budget the COLA for the General Employee retirees until we have more information based on fund balance, potential CRA decisions, property value changes and ad valorem changes. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

Chair Lowe said the City Commission had requested the BAB's input regarding Special Events and funding them. Board members discussed events and sponsorships. Mr. Rodstrom thought the Board could recommend creating a sponsorship committee for some of the large events.

Mr. Carter wanted information on event attendance to help determine what needed funding.

Ms. Reece confirmed that the Board wanted staff to provide a plan for sponsorships and data on event attendance/participation.

Mr. Brown suggested moving the Loop Activation and Riverwalk Activation out of events because the funds were used for salaries and promoting the venue site; these were not

events. Ms. Reece stated Winterfest was not a special event because the City did not produce it.

Chair Lowe advised Board members to send any further budget questions to Ms. Reece. Mr. Brown wanted to discuss the Community Investment Plan. He wished staff to address how they could pay for the “wish list” Mr. Dodd had presented.

VII. Communications to/from City Commission

[discussed earlier]

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VIII. Board Member Comments

None

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.