

City of Fort Lauderdale

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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 18, 2024

11:30 AM

Joint Workshop with Budget Advisory Board

NSU Art Museum - Horvitz Auditorium

1 E Las Olas Blvd, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

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 11:42 a.m.

ROLL CALL

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

Budget Advisory Board (BAB) Members Present: Chair Jeff Lowe, Vice Chair William Brown, Mildred Lowe, Melissa Milroy, Prabhuling Patel, and John Rodstrom

Budget Advisory Board Members Not Present: Ross Cammarata, Jeremiah Carter, and Michael Marshall

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** [24-0404](#)

Fiscal Year 2025 Preliminary Budget Information - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Mayor Trantalis provided brief opening remarks.

Mayor Trantalis recognized BAB Chair Jeff Lowe, who read from a prepared statement that provided an overview of BAB's work preparing the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget (FY 2025 Budget) since its last Commission Workshop.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on the thoroughness of the BAB's work and FY 2025 Budget enhancements in response to Commission objectives and cited examples. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Laura Reece, Acting Assistant City Manager. Ms. Reece commented on the intent of this presentation, which is for the Commission to understand the proposed FY 2025 Budget and set the proposed millage rate at the July 2, 2024, Commission Meeting. Ms. Reece narrated a presentation entitled *FY 2025 PRELIMINARY BUDGET CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE*.

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

Mayor Trantalis remarked that the Fire Assessment Fee (FAF) was reduced in FY 2025. In response to Commissioner Sturman's questions, Ms. Reece explained that the lower FY 2025 FAF represents the cost per single-family home. Two (2) aspects related to this calculation in FY 2024, which included a one-time appropriation for Fire Station 13 and equipment that required funding from the General Fund in FY 2024. There was an aggregate \$750,000 funding decrease from FY 2024.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Milos Majstorovic, Transportation and Mobility Department Acting Director. In response to Commissioner Sturman's question, Mr. Majstorovic explained the \$49,000 budget allocation listed in the presentation relates to request for placing Las Olas Riverwalk signage on the Henry E. Kinney Tunnel (Tunnel), which represents signage for one (1) Tunnel portal. Staff is investigating other private equity funding.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question, Ms. Reece explained information included in the \$74,000 allocation for splash pads, including eliminating an existing splash pad contract, adding one (1) Staff person to maintain all splash pads and related maintenance costs. In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, Carl Williams, Parks and Recreation Department Director, explained there are nine (9) splash pads and fountains throughout the City that Staff maintains, which were part of the Parks Bond.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's questions regarding the \$200,443 budget allocation for the School Zone Speed Enforcement Program and Detail Office Administration (Program), Police Department Chief William Schultz, explained how this Program differs from the Red-Light Camera Program. The Program's budgeted amount represents costs associated with administrative Staff who are certified Public Safety Aides who will review Program citations and attend related court proceedings. Mayor Trantalis recognized Yvette Matthews, Office of Management and Budget Acting Director. Ms. Matthews expounded on Program costs and revenue. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Herbst noted similar programs pay for themselves. Chief Schultz clarified the need to complete traffic studies related to the Program, which will assist Staff in generating accurate vendor proposals, costs, and revenue estimates. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question, Commissioner Herbst

remarked on the need for data to determine a budget projection, which could be available in the FY 2025 mid-year budget cycle. Commissioner Herbst noted the importance of this Program and concerns from neighborhoods regarding speeding in school zones. Chief Schultz expounded on additional details.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question, Ms. Reece explained the amount allocated for a Public Works Department Resilience Outreach Coordinator that includes salary, marketing, and office rent.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding the \$204,000 budget allocation for the Community Court Initiative, Ms. Matthews clarified that this amount represents the ongoing operating costs, which includes a full-time employee and program operating costs. When a grant is received, Staff offsets ongoing operating expenses from the General Fund for items such as renting a facility, bus passes, and the community shower program.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding grant-funded homelessness initiatives, Assistant City Manager Anthony Fajardo said those program initiatives are temporary and are used to stabilize homeless individuals. Ms. Reece clarified that Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program funds are used for permanent housing vouchers.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question regarding the \$330,000 budget allocation for the Shelter Bed Access Program, Ms. Reece provided a breakdown, noting it is a new program for homeless shelter beds temporarily committed to the City. Mr. Fajardo expounded on related information.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question regarding the \$330,000 budget allocation for the Mobile Integrated Health Program (MIHP), Ms. Reece explained that the General Fund funds this Program, which involves sworn firefighters who go out into the community to provide care that reduces the number of repeat 911 emergency calls. Mayor Trantalis recognized Jeff Lucas, Fire-Rescue Department Fire Marshall, who explained details of the MIHP. Firefighters address needs of individuals experiencing homelessness and residents in an effort to reduce the number of 911 emergency calls. In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question, Fire Marshall Lucas reiterated the purpose of MIHP is to prevent repeated calls to 911 for transport to a hospital. It includes follow-up interaction with patients to ensure they have their medications, guidance to proper physicians, and counseling. Commissioner Beasley-Pittman remarked on the benefits

and savings associated with this Program and cited examples.

Commissioner Herbst remarked on the significant amount the City is spending on homeless programs, expressed concern that there is not adequate information relative to their effectiveness, requested related data, and expounded on his viewpoint regarding the need to understand their effectiveness. Further comment and discussion ensued. Mr. Fajardo confirmed that Staff would meet with each Commission Member to discuss this topic.

Vice Mayor Glassman noted his support for arts and culture and remarked on the reduction in State funding for non-profit organizations. He expounded on his perspective in favor of determining FY 2025 Budget funding for non-profit organizations, including arts and cultural organizations.

In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's request for clarification regarding the \$200,000 in Community Investment Projects (CIP) for the Central City CRA Streetscape Project (Streetscape Project) and street markings and signage needed throughout the City, Mr. Majstorovic said that the scope of work for the Streetscape Project has not been defined. Ms. Reece noted that the \$200,000 in CIP funding is a placeholder, and the Central City Advisory Board is defining the scope of work.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, Ms. Reece explained that the FY 2025 Budget includes \$1,500,000 for sidewalk replacement (Annual Concrete and Paver Stones Contract) and \$1,500,000 (Annual Asphalt Resurfacing). Ms. Reece explained information related to future funding for these items.

Mayor Trantalis commented on previous Commission discussions regarding the need for increased funding for sidewalks, which could include the issuance of bonds. He requested that Staff provide an update on the cost of completing sidewalk needs included in the Sidewalk Master Plan. Further comment and discussion ensued. Mr. Majstorovic noted Staff's ongoing work to complete the Sidewalk Master Plan, which is estimated to be finalized in early 2025. Mr. Majstorovic confirmed that he would research and verify sidewalk funding available from the Broward County (County) Surtax.

In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's question, Mr. Majstorovic confirmed that Staff would meet with him to discuss correspondence from Middle River Terrace regarding transportation-related needs in that community.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Commissioner Sturman noted his recollection of Broward County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) meetings and discussions about using County Surtax funds for sidewalks, noting that it would be for specific programs. Ms. Reece pointed out that \$870,000 in CIP funding was budgeted for existing sidewalk gaps. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Beasley-Pittman's question, Chief Schultz explained information related to the approximate five (5) to seven (7) years of horse and canine service in the Police Department. Chief Schultz noted the length of service is dependent on numerous factors.

In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's question regarding \$376,000 in Transportation and Mobility Department funding for a security presence at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts (BCPA) Garage (Garage), Ben Rogers, Acting Assistant City Manager, explained that Garage operations during COVID were scaled back. Staff is working with the BCPA and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to restore pre-COVID service levels and expounded on related details, including the City's cost and revenue sharing. Further comment and discussion ensued.

BUS-2 [24-0405](#)

FY 2025 - FY 2035 Long Term Financial Plan Presentation, City Staff and Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Yvette Matthews, Office of Management and Budget Acting Director, provided an overview of this Agenda item,

Andrew Burnham, Stantec, narrated a slide presentation entitled *FY 2025 Financial Sustainability Plans*.

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

In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's questions, Mr. Burnham explained information regarding the Northwest-Progresso-Flagler Heights Community Redevelopment Agency (NWPFH CRA) and the financial scenarios for maintaining the NWPFH CRA, allowing it to sunset, or taking a hybrid approach.

Ms. Reece explained the economic implications of funding the General Employees Retirement System's request for a cost-of-living (COLA) increase, and expounded on related information that included ways to amortize the COLA or funding the COLA in a lump sum.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding FY 2024 Budget deficits, Ms. Reece discussed the unexpected FY 2024 mid-year budget appropriations necessary to fund Fire-Rescue and Police Department collective bargaining agreements and other items, which the Commission approved through the budget amendment process. Ms. Reece noted the Commission policy regarding the Fund Balance and confirmed that it exceeds the target. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Herbst remarked on his understanding of the Commission Fund Balance policy to ensure a AAA bond rating, and commented that the Fund Balance policy is for two (2) months of operating expenses. Linda Short, Finance Department Director, explained the Commission policy regarding the Fund Balance and the Enterprise Funds. The Fund Balance has two (2) months of operating funds in reserve. The Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund has a ninety (90) day reserve, other Enterprise Funds have a forty-five (45) day reserve, and the General Fund has a sixteen percent (16%) reserve. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the prior policy. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Short confirmed that the City's Fund Balance policy is the industry standard. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Herbst explained the City's debt policy and noted his opposition to maintaining twenty-five percent (25%) of operating funds in reserves. He expounded on his viewpoint regarding his recommendation for industry-based standards and using the Fund Balance for one-time payments versus ongoing operating expenses. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding budgeting for unknown expenses related to collective bargaining agreement compensation packages.

Mayor Trantalis provided comments regarding the structurally balanced FY 2025 Budget and the Fund Balance. Commissioner Herbst reiterated his viewpoint on the appropriateness of using the Fund Balance for one-time expenditures and noted that the FY 2024 Fund Balance was used to fund the previous years of Fire-Rescue and Police Department collective bargaining agreements.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on Commission discussions regarding continuation of the CRA. In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, Mr. Burnham explained possible CRA scenarios. If the CRA sunsets, its funds would go into the General Fund. Mr. Burnham explained scenarios should the CRA be extended into the entire ten (10) year forecast illustrated in the presentation and cited examples that include millage rate increases. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the

basis for these calculations. Mayor Trantalis remarked on anticipated tax base increases next year. Mr. Burnham noted Stantec's forward-looking approach to numerous budget projection variables.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Acting City Manager Grant explained budget scenarios for the International Swimming Hall of Fame from a break even standpoint or worst-case scenario. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mr. Burnham continued narrating the presentation. In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Mr. Burnham confirmed that the future structurally balanced General Fund Forecast includes revenue from Bahia Mar.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Mr. Burnham explained information regarding the ability to lower water and sewer rates in 2031 through 2034, noting the need to consider future variables for Prospect Lake infrastructure financing.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 1:18 p.m.