



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED
BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
VIRTUAL MEETING
MARCH 17, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.

Board Member	Attendance	10/2020 through 9/2021	
		Cumulative Attendance Present	Absent
Brian Donaldson, Chair	P	5	0
Jeff Lowe, Vice Chair	P	5	0
Ross Cammarata	P	5	0
Catherine Graham	P	5	0
Michael Marshall	P	3	2
A. Abidemi Oladipo	P	4	0
Prabhuling Patel	P	5	0
Adam Sabin	P	5	0
Johnnie Smith	P	5	0
Christopher Williams	A	3	2

Also Attending

- Chris Lagerbloom, City Manager
- Tarlesha Smith, Assistant City Manager/Director of Human Resources
- Laura Reece, Director, Office of Management and Budget
- Susan Grant, Director of Finance
- Patrick Lynn, Interim Police Chief
- Andrew Parker, Chief Information Officer
- Phil Thornburg, Director of Parks and Recreation
- Rhoda Mae Kerr, Fire-Rescue Chief
- Raj Verma, Director of Public Works
- Aneisha Daniel, Deputy Director of Public Works
- Ben Rogers, Director of Transportation and Mobility
- Anthony Fajardo, Director of Sustainable Development
- Charmaine Crawford, Budget Department and Board Liaison
- Jamie Opperlee, Prototype Inc. Recording Secretary

Communications to the City Commission

None

Purpose: To Provide the City with input regarding the taxpayers’ perspective in the development of the annual operating budget; to review projections and estimates from

the City Manager regarding revenues and expenditures for upcoming fiscal year; to advise the City Commission on service levels and priorities and fiscal solvency; and to submit recommendations to the City Commission no later than August 15 of each year regarding a budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

I. Call to Order

The meeting of the Budget Advisory Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

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

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes A. February 24, 2021

Motion made by Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Lowe, to approve the minutes of the Board's February 24, 2021 meeting. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

IV. Floor Open for Neighbor Input

None

VI. New Business

- Department Presentations - FY 2022 Business Plans and FY 2022 Accomplishments and Challenges

i. Tarlesha Smith, Assistant City Manager/Director of Human Resources

Ms. Smith reviewed her accomplishments with her team. In Risk Management, they had upgraded all City Hall security cameras and implemented an online employee benefits enrollment program. In Talent Management, they had filled 347 positions, out of 36,737 applications. In Organizational Development and Learning, they had taken advantage of an online employee training program called Open Sesame during the pandemic. She noted they were on track for 100% completion with compliance training.

Ms. Smith said challenges to the Organizational Development and Learning Division included employee training [due to the pandemic]. Challenges in Talent Management included revising job descriptions pursuant to the 2018 Classification and Compensation Study. She anticipated the revisions would be complete by the year's end.

Ms. Smith stated one of their budget requests would be a software program to complement NeoGov for performance evaluations and succession planning.

Ms. Smith informed the Board that the City had implemented Second Chance protocols, which gave prospective employees the opportunity to secure a job with the City. They had also initiated exit interviews to glean why an employee was leaving and perhaps retain the employee by transitioning him/her to another position.

Ms. Smith discussed challenges for Talent Management, including updating the payroll management system, which they believed the ERP project implementation would solve. The biggest challenge to the talent management pool was that 600 employees were eligible for retirement, the bulk of whom were in public safety.

Ms. Smith stated they would make three budget requests: the software to complement the NeoGov program; a senior administrative assistant for Employee Relations and reallocation of funds from an outsourced FMLA employee to a part-time employee.

Regarding hiring and employees working from home during the pandemic, Ms. Smith said they had conducted virtual interviews and the goal was to bring employees back into the office when it was appropriate. She said the City already had a telework policy/program they could utilize if needed.

Mr. Lowe asked about trends in workers compensation claims. Ms. Smith described the types of claims she had seen this year and stated she had not noted any trends. She said they were conducting exit interviews on 80-90% of exiting employees but it was not mandated.

Ms. Smith agreed to provide statistics on the Second Chance and Apprenticeship Programs.

ii. Susan Grant, Director of Finance

Ms. Grant stated they supported all City departments, employees and neighbors. Their number one goal, per the strategic plan, was, "Building a leading government organization that manages all resources wisely and sustainably." They were directly involved in COVID relief: tracking expenses and ensuring the City received the fullest reimbursements.

Regarding her concerns, Ms. Grant said many programs the City used were obsolete and they intended to address this next year. This year, they were converting City employees to the Florida Retirement System. They were issuing \$200 million in stormwater permanent financing. They had qualified for the EPA's WIFIA funding program, which would provide approximately \$98 million of the \$200 million the City needed. They were also refinancing some water and sewer bonds that would provide \$5.5 million in savings. Ms. Grant informed the Board that they processed 26 bi-weekly payrolls. They also processed monthly payrolls for Police and Fire and General Employee pensions. They

were moving to outsource these pension payments, which would allow staff to focus on the ERP conversion.

Ms. Grant said in fiscal year 2022, the ERP conversion would be their biggest project. They would partner with Public Works on financing automated meter technology. They would coordinate the financial analysis for the joint governmental center and for the Fiveash Water Plant. When they had the Parks and Recreation plan for the parks bond, they would bid another tranche of general obligation bonds for parks.

iii. Rhoda Mae Kerr, Fire Rescue Chief

Chief Kerr said they had worked aggressively to mitigate the risks of working in person to provide uninterrupted service. Some things they had done were: established a COVID-19 task team, which included designating an infectious disease officer; creating a research group; procuring critical PPE; conducting incident and exposure tracking and creating a quarantine housing plan.

Chief Kerr described how they had addressed the pandemic in terms of PPE, disinfection, continuity of care, community risk reduction strategies, test/vaccination site set-up, and daily antigen testing for personnel. She reported these procedures had resulted in a low percentage of COVID infected firefighters. She thanked Fort Lauderdale Fire/Rescue and Ocean Rescue members for their dedication and hard work.

Mr. Cammarata asked about staffing issues. Chief Kerr stated there were 21 vacancies now and they anticipated three more in the immediate future and they were working on filling them. In order to maintain the current level of service and minimize overtime, they needed to add 15 personnel.

Chief Kerr reported they had not mandated personnel get vaccinations and she estimated 65% were currently vaccinated. She said the State was currently paying for the daily antigen tests.

iv. Andrew Parker, Chief Information Officer

Mr. Parker said he had transitioned the department from a siloed, expanded organization into an organizational structure that could more effectively meet the demands for all departments' and charter offices' technology services. He had created six divisions, per best practices, to deliver services. He described the six divisions: Project Management; Cybersecurity; Centralized Application Services; Technology Infrastructure; Public Safety and Administrative Services.

He thanked team members who had pulled together to overcome the major challenges the pandemic had presented.

Mr. Parker said the thing that kept him up at night was cybersecurity. He remarked that attacks were sustained and increasingly sophisticated. The City had a cybersecurity foundation, but it was not as mature as it could be. Solving the security issue required implementing a formal security framework; protecting the Police Criminal Justice Information System [CJIS] and protecting the City's Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition [SCADA] system. Mr. Parker said they must shore up ageing technology, both hardware and software. Aside from software that was outdated, most vendors stopped supporting software more than three years old, including security patches. He wanted to create a plan for getting the City's infrastructure to a supported level so they could call the vendors for support and security patches when needed.

Mr. Parker stated all four of the City's data centers were also ageing and his plan was to consolidate these down to two centers.

Mr. Smith asked about the ERP system implementation and Mr. Parker stated the budget module had already been implemented. He explained that the implementation had been put on hold last year due to issues with the vendor, but they were moving forward now with a planning phase to determine the funding and resources they needed for a successful implementation.

Mr. Oladipo asked how many applications were no longer supported by a vendor and Mr. Parker estimated it was 50%. He agreed this was a vulnerability.

Mr. Parker stated the City had spent approximately \$6 million for ERP so far for various components, including infrastructure. He described progress in various modules.

vi. Phil Thornburg, Director of Parks and Recreation

Mr. Thornburg said during the pandemic, recreation had been rehabilitating facilities, helping with food distribution and testing/vaccination sites. He stated they had one of the few licensed school aftercare facilities in Broward County. They had created e-learning pods where parents dropped kids off for lessons.

Mr. Thornburg stated one of the Commission's top priorities this year was parks and public places. The parks bond would ramp up in the next month. He recalled they had held community outreach to receive public input for use of the bond funds. Mr. Thornburg estimated there would be three to four phases to implement \$200 million.

Mr. Thornburg remarked on the good relationship the City had with the Broward County School Board and how they had begun opening school recreation sites to the general public on weekends and after school.

Mr. Thornburg reported they were converting two tennis courts to six pickleball courts at Sunrise Middle School.

Chair Donaldson asked Mr. Thornburg how much more money they would need for next year. Mr. Thornburg said they would still be in planning and design, and they would not need more money until construction began.

vii. Raj Verma, Director of Public Works

Mr. Verma reported they had kept water running, toilets flushing and trash picked up all through the pandemic. Regarding the consent order, he said phase one had been completed on time and they were 40-50% of the way through phase 2 which had a deadline of 2026.

Mr. Verma thanked project managers, and those who worked at the treatment plant and on sanitation trucks who had worked through the pandemic.

Regarding what concerned him, Mr. Verma stated, "Trying to fix a plane while it is in flight." He noted the number of infrastructure projects ongoing and that still needed to be done. He said their biggest challenge was meeting the expectations of the community regarding how quickly infrastructure issues could be addressed. He said high priority items demanded attention while they were in the midst of the daily routine, so resources must be spent on both. Mr. Verma requested "trust and patience" while they addressed all these things.

Mr. Cammarata asked about the ongoing Bayview Drive project and poor temporary paving. Mr. Verma explained they had asked the contractor to make the temporary patches better, but he explained that the sub-base in that area had a tendency to deteriorate quickly.

Mr. Verma informed Mr. Patel that the reconstruction of the South Ocean Drive bridge in Harbor Inlet was included in the list of County surtax projects and must wait for the County to finalize it. He said they had just been authorized by Broward County to advertise the project for bidding.

ix. Ben Rogers, Director of Transportation and Mobility

Mr. Rogers described how they had responded to the pandemic to help businesses, food distribution and parking.

In the General Fund, Mr. Rogers stated there were two major challenges: neighborhood traffic calming demand and large projects such as the Las Olas Mobility Plan, Breakers Avenue, and LauderTrail. He noted transportation was a City Commission priority for 2021.

Mr. Rogers reported Transportation and Mobility was overseeing the surtax efforts.

Regarding the parking fund, Mr. Rogers said they needed to build back up the balance, address some capital needs and improve public-facing technology and equipment.

Mr. Cammarata asked about golf cart traffic and licensing fees for rental scooters. Mr. Rogers replied the golf cart issues would need to be addressed by multiple departments. Regarding the scooter licensing, he said this was on hold during the pandemic but if scooter services resumed, they were creating a model to ensure the fees would cover operational costs.

Mr. Marshall asked what Mr. Rogers had to balance regarding neighborhood traffic calming. Mr. Rogers said they worked with the civic associations regarding perceptions and experience versus the technical requirements that a lot of the speed calming took into consideration. They also needed to consider the costs.

v. Patrick Lynn, Interim Police Chief

Chief Lynn discussed his major concerns: safety for officers, employees and the public. Regarding traffic safety, he reported the DUI officers were still operating, and they had applied for traffic initiatives through FDOT. He acknowledged this had been a challenging year for law enforcement, but said they had an excellent department with phenomenal people.

Chief Lynn said crime overall was decreasing, but they had noted an increase in homicides and shootings. They had been using technology such as “shot spotter,” license plate readers and real time crime center camera monitoring to help address these issues. They also had a new device to analyze gun casings and enter them into a national database. Chair Donaldson asked for statistics on the shot spotter technology and wanted to know if the City would expand its use. Chief Lynn agreed to provide that data.

Mr. Cammarata asked for shooting statistics this year compared to last year. He asked about the three-wheelers and four wheelers driving around the City without licenses. Chief Lynn said officers were assigned to this and had issued over 1,000 citations in the past month.

viii. Anthony Fajardo, Director of Sustainable Development

Mr. Fajardo said their basic function was to manage the growth of the City through application of the Code of Ordinances, the Unified Land Development Regulations and the Florida Building Code and enforcement through the Community Enhancement and Compliance Division.

Mr. Fajardo stated some of their recent accomplishments included purchasing the Greg Brewton Center, implementing e-permitting, and initiating a landlord/tenant registration program. They were working on affordable housing recommendations to present to the

City Commission in April and had implemented software that created 3-D modeling of the City.

Mr. Fajardo's concerns included the pandemic, a possible economic recession and funding General Fund positions. He noted how they had addressed interaction with the public for safety during the pandemic. Mr. Fajardo reported the Building Fund was flush with cash and they had plan for spending it down to meet State requirements. He stated they had noted a downturn in activity related to General Fund processes.

Chair Donaldson asked how Code Enforcement was faring during the pandemic. Mr. Fajardo stated Code Enforcement was back to pre-pandemic levels. He stated Code Enforcement had positive responses on neighbor surveys for that past couple of years. Chair Donaldson asked about expanded staffing for Code Enforcement and Mr. Fajardo explained that one position related to "nighttime economy" was currently vacant and after-hours code enforcement was on a voluntary basis.

VII. Communications to/from the City Commission

None

VIII. Board Member Comments

Chair Donaldson recalled the Board had spent a lot of time working on the non-profit rankings. He wished to provide the City Manager with a list of the Board's priorities for funding. He said in order to make the top priority list, eight of ten Board members must feel the organization was in the top tier. Six of ten members must agree on the second tier, and any with fewer than six would not be on the list. At their joint meeting, Chair Donaldson had noted that some Commission members did not feel providing funding to non-profits was a priority.

Chair Donaldson asked Board members' impressions of the joint meeting. Mr. Lowe agreed there was no consensus among Commission members regarding non-profit funding. He felt the Board needed another meeting to discuss the non-profits. Mr. Cammarata agreed, and noted how important it would be going forward that they had established a procedure for ranking the non-profits. Mr. Marshall agreed, and thanked Chair Donaldson for his leadership.

Chair Donaldson agreed they needed one additional meeting to talk about non-profits and the Board agreed on April 27.

Chair Donaldson announced Mr. Patel would represent the BAB at the Revenue Estimating Conference Committee meetings.

IX. Adjourn

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Minutes prepared by J. Opperlee ProtoType Inc.