



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED
BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
JUNE 9, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.

Board Member	Attendance	10/2020 through 9/2021	
		Cumulative Attendance Present	Absent
Brian Donaldson, Chair	P	8	0
Jeff Lowe, Vice Chair	P	8	0
Ross Cammarata	A	7	1
Catherine Graham	P	8	0
Michael Marshall	P	6	2
A. Abidemi Oladipo	P	7	0
Prabhuling Patel	P	8	0
Adam Sabin	A	6	2
Johnnie Smith	A	7	1
Christopher Williams	P	6	2

Also Attending

- Chris Lagerbloom, City Manager
- Laura Reece, Director, Office of Management and Budget
- John Herbst, City Auditor
- Susan Grant, Director of Finance
- Ben Rogers, Director of Transportation and Mobility
- Charmaine Crawford, 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 Last Meeting Minutes – May 12, 2021

Motion made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Mr. Patel, to approve the minutes of the Board's May 12, 2021 meeting. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

IV. Floor Open for Neighbor Input

The Board had received an email from a group of HOA presidents in four districts requesting the BAB consider the part time position requested in Neighbors' Support.

V. Old Business

None

VI. New Business

A. City Manager's Update and Initial Recommendations - FY 2022 Budget

Chair Donaldson said the BAB would inform the City Commission the following week whether or not they agreed with Mr. Lagerbloom's recommendation to maintain the current ad valorem rate. Mr. Lagerbloom's recent memo included the information that new construction worth \$1.1 billion had generated \$4.5 million in general fund revenue. Their contractual obligations were still higher than revenue, but due to federal funding and the new revenue, Mr. Lagerbloom felt they could maintain the ad valorem rate.

Mr. Lagerbloom confirmed that their property tax revenue was even higher than anticipated. He would not recommend an increase to the current millage rate of 4.1193%.

Mr. Lagerbloom reported over the next two years, the CARES Act would provide the City \$39 million. He had built \$19.1 million into the budget this year. From the onset of the pandemic, the City had received just over \$49 million from the CARES Act. In this budget, they would use funds for one-time capital expenses. These expenses included restoration of seawalls, completion of Fire Station 13, bridge repair/replacement, beach nourishment, roadway and sidewalk repair/replacement, facility repair/replacement, Parker Playhouse rehabilitation, Las Olas signalized crosswalks, and ADA complaint bus stops.

Chair Donaldson asked about the City's relationship with Parker Playhouse and Mr. Lagerbloom said it was a City facility; they provided parking and made contributions on an annual basis. Ms. Reece stated there was a multi-year contract to assist Parker Playhouse with their capital needs. Mr. Lagerbloom explained that some parks bond funds would be used for a multi-story parking structure between Parker Playhouse and the War Memorial Auditorium.

Mr. Lagerbloom reviewed budget highlights, including revenue and expenditure changes. He stated one disparity he was becoming concerned about was the increasing costs of salary and wages, City health, life and disability contributions and the pension and special obligation bond payments. They needed to ensure these costs did not get too far "out of whack" with ad valorem revenues.

Mr. Patel asked if salary increases would continue at the current rate. Mr. Lagerbloom said a lot of this concerned how they negotiated contracts. The Fire contract would be negotiated this coming year and everything else was up next year.

Chair Donaldson said he would remind the City Commission that if the City had not received the additional federal funds, the Board would not be supporting a flat ad valorem rate. Mr. Patel said the real question was how to bring employee costs under control. Chair Donaldson noted that contract negotiations were beyond the Board's purview. Mr. Lagerbloom pointed out that they must maintain a balance between paying well enough to attract and retain good staff and staying within what they could afford.

Chair Donaldson intended to remind the City Commission that the City's ad valorem rate was lower than many nearby cities.

Ms. Graham asked why the pension costs had increased. Ms. Reece explained that the Police and Fire actuary calculated the City's contribution every year based on assumptions and investment earnings. Ms. Grant said the debt service on the pension obligation bonds remained flat.

B. Discussion of FY 2022 Department Budget Presentations

Mr. Lagerbloom continued his presentation, discussing strategic enhancements, replacement plans, and non-profits.

Ms. Graham asked about the Cultural Affairs Manager position and Mr. Lagerbloom explained they had been discussing cultural affairs and public art and there was a code requirement for 2% of spending on public projects be dedicated to public art.

Mr. Lowe asked about the Las Olas Marina privatization and Mr. Lagerbloom explain that in the short term, there would be additional costs, but in the long term, the City would recoup the costs and make money. Ms. Reece said during construction, the developer

would pay the City a certain amount, which was less than they would have received from patrons. The revenues would come back up in the second year.

Mr. Lowe asked about auditing the Community Shuttle Program and Mr. Rogers explained they were required to audit that program once every 10 years.

Chair Donaldson appreciated the funding for Fire Rescue and Police equipment and computer infrastructure, as well as examining vacant positions. Regarding another public holiday, Chair Donaldson said he would rather reward a department that may be understaffed but was working hard all day with more staff to share the workload than to give another holiday to all departments.

Mr. Lagerbloom had included the following in the Board's packet: a City Commission Priorities cross reference, information on the American Rescue Plan Act, CARES Act COVID relief funds, the Fleet Replacement Plan, the annual PC Replacement Plan, the Information Technologies Services Infrastructure Upgrade Plan, Police Department Animal, Bulletproof Vest and other Equipment Replacements, the License Plate Reader Replacement Program, the Fire Rescue Equipment Replacement Plan, and the Amended and Proposed Five-year Community Investment Plan.

Mr. Lagerbloom explained how he had classified the non-profit funding requests. He said the Board's recommendations would be presented to the City Commission as the Board had presented them. He had also added Riverwalk Magazine, the Historical Society, Winterfest, Stranahan House, the STEM program at the Museum of Discovery and Science and the Nova Southeastern Art Museum to the funding recommendations. He said Mayor Trantalis indicated he had identified matching funds for the Nova Art Museum donation. Mr. Patel stated in most large cities, the arts were supported by the wealthy and he felt the City Commission should push the rich people of the City to donate.

Mr. Herbst explained how and when he and his staff analyzed the proposed budget.

C. Joint City Commission Workshop Preparation

Ms. Reece announced the joint meeting was scheduled for August 17.

The Board discussed meeting dates and had consensus to move the Board's August 11 meeting to August 4.

Motion made by Mr. Lowe, seconded by Mr. Patel to approve a maximum millage rate of 4.1193% for fiscal year 2022. In a roll call vote, motion passed 7-0.

Chair Donaldson asked Ms. Reece to reply to the email from the HOA presidents informing them that the subject of their request was never presented to the BAB.

VII. Communications to/from the City Commission

None

VIII. Board Member Comments

None

IX. Adjourn

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

Minutes prepared by J. Opperlee ProtoType Inc.