



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**APPROVED**  
**BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD HYBRID MEETING**  
**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE**  
**SEPTEMBER 15, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.**  
**COMMISSION CHAMBERS**  
**100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE, FORT LAUDERDALE,**  
**FL 33301**

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>10/2020 through 9/2021</b>	
		<b>Cumulative Attendance Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Brian Donaldson, Chair	P	10	0
Jeff Lowe, Vice Chair	P	10	0
Ross Cammarata	P	8	2
Catherine Graham	P	10	0
Michael Marshall	P	7	3
A. Abidemi Oladipo	P	8	1
Prabhuling Patel	P	10	0
Adam Sabin	P	8	2
Johnnie Smith	P	7	3
Christopher Williams	P	8	2

**Also Attending**

Tarlesha W. Smith, Assistant City Manager/Director of Human Resources  
Laura Reece, Director, Office of Management and Budget  
John Herbst, City Auditor  
Charmaine Crawford, Budget Department and Board Liaison  
Jamie Opperlee, Prototype Inc. Recording Secretary

**Communications to the City Commission**

None

**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 – August 4, 2021**

**Motion** made by Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mr. Lowe, to approve the minutes of the Board's August 4, 2021 meeting. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

Chair Donaldson recognized Mr. Smith's contribution to the Board over the years.

#### **IV. Floor Open for Neighbor Input**

None

Ms. Reece explained how the public could participate in the meetings virtually.

#### **V. Old Business**

Chair Donaldson announced the City Commission had passed the 2022 budget with a few modifications. He described some of the changes: the addition of 16 Firefighters; four additional FTEs for the Police Department Real Time Crime Center; additional funds to non-profits and some other Commission requests. The Commission had decided to finance \$1.7 million for defibrillators.

#### **VI. New Business**

##### **C. Reoccurring Items and Reports**

- i. Collective Bargaining Negotiations**
- ii. Overtime Expenditures**
- iii. Vacancy Reports**
- iv. Quarterly Projections**
- v. Budget Modification Status Reports**

Chair Donaldson thought the additional employees would cost another \$3 million per year and he felt 2023 would be challenging because three of five City Commissioners had indicated they did not want to increase the ad valorem rate. He requested a regular collective bargaining report, even if it was just a line item. Ms. Reece stated all but the Firefighters' contracts would last through the year, so she would provide updates for the firefighter negotiations. Chair Donaldson requested next month staff provide an early projection of recurring costs for 2023, since the Board would be working on that budget next.

Ms. Reece stated they could update the Stantec 10-year Revenue Sufficiency analysis with adopted budget numbers, and would continue to do so throughout the year as changes were made. Chair Donaldson asked Ms. Reece to highlight the changes as staff provided status reports. He also wanted to see ongoing overtime expenditure reports and vacancy reports describing changes.

Mr. Lowe liked the detail and format of the vacancy report. Ms. Reece agreed to send the most recent version with the Board's monthly materials prior to the October meeting.

Mr. Patel asked if the vacancy rates were baked into the budget. Ms. Reece said they budgeted for attrition in the Police Department only. She said they examined budgeted to actual expenses in personnel services over a period of time to see if there was capacity to budget for attrition. Mr. Patel said in 2023, they needed an “early warning system” for the increase in expenses.

Ms. Reece said they would update the Stantec modeling through the 2022 adopted budget and show the assumptions in future years. As contracts came through, they could update the contract amounts.

**A. Pros and Cons of FY 2022 Department Budget Packets and Meeting Format - Changes for FY 2023**

**B. FY 2022 Work Plan Discussion**

- vi. Laying the Foundation for FY 2023 Millage Rate Increase**
- vii. Allocate More Time for Budget Discussion**
- viii. Discussion of Dedicated Millage for CIPs**

**D. Updated Budget Advisory Board Recommendation Matrix**

Mr. Cammarata wanted to discuss ways they could make things better for the City. He was unsure they should be talking about the millage rate because that was up to the City Commission. He wanted to know the main mission of the BAB and thought they should concentrate on that.

Chair Donaldson stated the BAB was an advisory board. They represented taxpayers, and informed the Commission how a taxpayer would react to a change in the tax rate. In the past 15 years, the Commission had not been interested in increasing the ad valorem tax rate and Chair Donaldson said therefore, projects had gone away. He felt their biggest task this year would be having a conversation about ad valorem. Chair Donaldson believed their biggest impact in the past year had been the recommendation for a 5% reserve for a new water treatment plant, which the Commission had approved.

Mr. Camarata wanted to ensure the Board did not weigh itself down with issues that they could not make a change on.

Chair Donaldson asked Mr. Herbst where he thought the Board could improve next year. Mr. Herbst said the two areas to focus on were monitoring the current year, including the impact of new hires on overtime, and getting an early look at projections for expenses. He also felt that the Board’s work and that of the Infrastructure Task Force Committee [ITFC] should parallel each other regarding the CIP.

Mr. Marshall agreed with Mr. Herbst about coordinating with the ITFC on infrastructure. He was encouraged that the City Commission had taken the Board’s advice regarding

the water plant. He wanted to explore ways to increase revenues to offset the pressure to increase the millage rate, such as monetizing public assets and providing services for a fee.

Chair Donaldson had attended the recent joint meeting between the City Commission and the ITFC. He had reiterated that the BAB felt there should be a dedicated funding source for CIP projects. Mr. Marshall was the BAB's representative to the ITFC, and Chair Donaldson requested a monthly update from him.

Chair Donaldson requested Board members create a priorities list for next year to discuss at their October meeting.

Ms. Graham said her focus last year had been on revenues and expenditures. She wondered if the Board should go to their constituents and ask if they wanted additional Police and Fire.

Ms. Reece said the Board was tasked with providing taxpayers' perspectives on the development of the annual operating budget. The Board could decide areas on which to focus.

Ms. Graham thought the Board should remain high-level.

Chair Donaldson wanted to concentrate on the differences in expenses between 2022 and 2023. They could identify expenses that could not be cut, and provide a projection of where the shortfall would be.

Chair Donaldson said once the bids for the new water treatment plant became public, the Board should consider the pros and cons of a public private partnership, as opposed to the City owning the plant. He also wanted to discuss initiating a dedicated tax line item for CIP projects.

Mr. Herbst explained they could not bind a future Commission to a specific funding level for anything; this would require a referendum. The Commission could set a goal for a funding level, i.e., setting aside 5% of revenues for CIP. Chair Donaldson asked about a line item for CIP like there was for a Fire Assessment and Ms. Reece explained if there was voter approved debt, this would be part of the debt millage. She noted that Miami Beach dedicated a portion of their millage rate to CIP every year in their budget resolution. Mr. Herbst said he saw nothing wrong with the Commission adopting a policy, which could be waived. He explained the "line item" they were talking about was a line in the resolution adopting the ad valorem rate; there would be no line item on tax forms like there was for assessments.

### **E. Strategies for Vetting Non-Profit Organization Grants Discussion of Format**

Chair Donaldson thought they needed to streamline the non-profit review process to save time and effort. Perhaps they could only interview organizations requesting \$50,000 or more. If there were organizations that the City Commission wanted to fund regardless, these should be taken out of the Board's review process.

Ms. Graham was unsure the Board would conduct the non-profit reviews next year; she had noted some Commission members seemed to indicate they would not ask them to. Ms. Reece had not seen a consensus from the Commission and agreed they should discuss this with the Commission.

Mr. Williams thought the Board had devised a good process for objectively analyzing the applications. He felt the review process had taken too much of BAB members' time, and was disappointed that some of their input had been overruled by the City Commission. He suggested a different Board be handed this responsibility. He felt the Board could make a bigger impact on the budget if they no longer reviewed the non-profit applications.

Mr. Sabin agreed with Mr. Williams. He said if they were to evaluate the non-profits again next year, they should meet with the City Commission beforehand to discuss the funding issue. Chair Donaldson said he had attended the City Commission's agenda hearing last year, where the Commission had indicated they wanted the Board's input. He agreed they should have a conversation with the City Commission in November to discuss expectations next year.

Mr. Camarata wanted the Board to work to make the non-profit reviews better. He said the Board should insist that no organization that had not been through the review process should be granted funding.

Mr. Marshall shared everyone's frustration with how the non-profit review process had unfolded.

### **VII. Communications to/from the City Commission**

None

### **VIII. Board Member Comments**

Mr. Oladipo thanked the Board and staff and wished the Board well in the future.

Mr. Smith thanked Ms. Reece and Mr. Herbst for their work with the Board.

### **IX. Adjourn**

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Minutes prepared by J. Opperlee ProtoType Inc.