

City of Fort Lauderdale

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Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 20, 2023

11:30 AM

Joint Workshop with Budget Advisory Board

The Parker

707 Northeast 8th Street, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor

PAM BEASLEY-PITTMAN Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District III

JOHN C. HERBST Commissioner - District I

STEVEN GLASSMAN Commissioner - District II

WARREN STURMAN Commissioner - District IV

GREG CHAVARRIA, City Manager

DAVID R. SOLOMAN, City Clerk

D'WAYNE M. SPENCE, Interim 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: Commissioner John Herbst, Commissioner Steven Glassman, Vice Mayor Pamela Beasley-Pittman, Commissioner Warren Sturman, and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

Budget Advisory Board (BAB) Members Present: Chair Brian Donaldson, Vice Chair Jeff Lowe, William Brown, and John Rodstrom III

Budget Advisory Board Members Not Present: Ross Cammarata, Michael Marshall, Carlos Martin (Christian) Macellari, and Prabhuling Patel

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Also Present: City Manager Greg Chavarria, City Clerk David R. Soloman, Interim City Attorney D'Wayne M. Spence, and City Auditor Patrick Reilly

OLD/NEW BUSINESS**BUS-1** [23-0615](#)

Fiscal Year 2024 General Fund Preliminary Budget - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

BAB Chair Brian Donaldson provided an overview of BAB's work since the last Commission Workshop on May 2, 2023, which included meetings with Staff, individual meetings with Commission Members, and BAB Member meetings. He noted there will be an additional Workshop with the Commission on August 15, 2023, prior to the Budget Hearings on September 5, 2023, and September 13, 2023. Chair Donaldson said today's workshop meeting would be a high-level overview focused on setting the ad valorem rate at the July 5, 2023, Commission Meeting.

Chair Donaldson noted that the Stantec representative could not attend this workshop meeting due to an emergency. Laura Reece, Office of Management and Budget Department Director, and the BAB will provide information regarding Agenda item BUS-2.

City Manager Greg Chavarria presented the proposed preliminary budget for Fiscal Year 2024 (Budget) that aligns with Commission priorities. The BAB concurs that the 4.1193 millage rate can be

maintained for the 17th consecutive year. City Manager Chavarria narrated a presentation entitled *FY 2024 PRELIMINARY BUDGET*.

A copy of the presentation has been made part of the backup to this Agenda item.

City Manager Chavarria discussed proposed increases to the annual Fire Assessment Fee and Stormwater Assessment Fee. The increases are due to increased cost of labor, material, and equipment. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions, City Manager Chavarria confirmed the assessments are City-wide and apply to every structure in the City. The first tranche of stormwater assessment improvement funds is for the first eight (8) neighborhoods. Laura Reece, Office of Management and Budget Department Director, clarified the stormwater assessment funds both operating and capital costs.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question regarding the total amount per year, City Manager Chavarria confirmed the annual stormwater assessment amount is \$30,400,000.

City Manager Chavarria continued narrating the presentation.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Manager Chavarria confirmed and explained ongoing diversity efforts. Staff would segment the Chief Diversity Officer's responsibilities to different individuals within the Human Resources Department and outsource related programs to vendors with related best practices. Chair Donaldson confirmed efforts toward ensuring a culture of diversity. Mayor Trantalis noted the need for continued Staff diversity.

Chair Donaldson remarked on the Nighttime Economy Program that includes additional Code Enforcement Staff to assist Police Officers and commented on related details.

Ms. Reece continued narrating the presentation.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's question regarding the twenty-two (22) FY 2024 CIP-funded projects totaling \$22,492,888, Ms. Reece explained grant funds are not part of this funding. The operating budget transfers this amount to the General Fund, which pays for the projects on a pay-as-you-go basis. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Chair Donaldson highlighted several details of the proposed preliminary

budget and discussed BAB's support of maintaining the current 4.1193 ad valorem rate. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Chair Donaldson said the total number of new hires for the Police Department and Fire Department would be twenty-four (24), with the possibility of an additional six (6) new hires for the Police Department should the City receive the grant from the Department of Justice (DOJ). Chair Donaldson discussed the consideration of additional Staff hires that would not be funded from the General Fund, which include two (2) individuals associated with the Parking Fund, one (1) individual associated with the Airport Fund, three (3) individuals associated with the Building Permit Fund, and two (2) individuals associated with the Water and Sewer Fund.

Chair Donaldson discussed the \$2,100,000 in nonprofit funding and \$1,600,000 for special events. He commented that this funding could be used to enhance public safety.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Chair Donaldson said the full complement of police officer positions remains unfilled. Ms. Reece confirmed there are currently thirty-three (33) police officer vacancies. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Chair Donaldson said that the BAB would continue its efforts with Staff and Department Heads during the next six (6) to eight (8) weeks to finalize the proposed preliminary budget and meet Commission goals.

BAB Member John Rodstrom, III discussed the Police Department's desire to set up a fourth Police District in the downtown area, which is why the BAB is working towards providing related funding over the next several years.

BAB Member William Brown agreed with Chair Donaldson's summary that emphasizes public safety, infrastructure, and the need to address homeless outreach.

Commissioner Herbst provided his input regarding police staffing and remarked that it fluctuates due to retirements and new hires. He commented on constituent feedback and the goal to increase the number of fire and police personnel, which will require the Fire-Rescue Department, Police Department, and Human Resources Department to aggressively pursue recruiting. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor Beasley-Pittman agreed on the need to maintain a focus on increasing the number of public safety employees. In response to Vice

Mayor Beasley-Pittman's question, City Manager Chavarria explained the amount listed in the presentation is the total cost of a new fire engine and explained details. Payment is required when the City's places the order for the new fire engine, and delivery occurs two (2) years later. Vice Mayor Beasley-Pittman commented on public safety needs in District 3 and reiterated the need for additional staffing.

Commissioner Glassman concurred with the comments of Commissioner Herbst and Vice Mayor Beasley-Pittman regarding public safety. He discussed the importance of addressing homelessness, related feedback from District 2 residents, and ensuring resources and staffing are prioritized. Further comment and discussion ensued. Commissioner Glassman encouraged Staff to expand and accelerate CIPs for neighborhood stormwater needs and associated infrastructure projects. He expounded on related details and his viewpoint.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question, Ms. Reece clarified details related to the two (2) upcoming Fire Department Stations, Fire Station 88, located near the Rio Vista, and the Las Olas Garage Fire Station, referred to as the Heron Garage Fire Station. She commented on the timelines for both Fire Stations to become operational.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's questions, Chair Donaldson explained that twenty-four (24) new hires budgeted City-wide would be funded from the savings realized by shifting positions and eliminating positions. Chair Donaldson cited examples and explained this would not include the hiring an additional six (6) police officers should the DOJ grant be received or the hiring of personnel for Fire Station 88 and the Heron Garage Fire Station. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding Police Department vacancies. City Manager Chavarria remarked on the goal to become the employer of choice for public safety positions and focusing on additional nationwide marketing. He commented on implementing the Human Resources ERP system to streamline the recruitment and hiring process.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's questions, Chair Donaldson explained the cost savings associated with the new policy not to absorb credit card fees and expounded on related details.

City Manager Chavarria said that the Nighttime Code Enforcement Staff added four (4) new positions in FY 2023. The program being eliminated is specific to nighttime economy, and does not relate to the Code Enforcement of vacation rentals.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' comments regarding the School

Resource Officer reimbursement contributions from the Broward County School Board, Chair Donaldson said that new rates and amounts are incorporated into the FY 2024 Budget and remarked on related details.

BUS-2 [23-0616](#)

FY 2024 - FY 2034 Long Term Financial Plan Presentation, City Staff and Stantec Consulting Services Inc. - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Ms. Reece discussed the budget modeling and development process. She narrated a presentation entitled *Stantec - Fort Lauderdale - FY 2024 Financial Stability Plans*.

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

In response to Commissioner Sturman's questions, Ms. Reece explained the projected FY 2025 Fund Balance falls short of the City's twenty-five percent (25%) threshold and discussed related details.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Ms. Reece explained revenue from Bahia Mar listed in the presentation is comprised of taxes at the rate of seven to eight percent (7%-8%). Projections included in this presentation reflect information in the City's agreement with Bahia Mar. Mayor Trantalis commented on his viewpoint. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Ms. Reece continued narrating the presentation, providing a high-level summary of future financial budget modeling that includes increases to water and sewer rates.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 1:11 p.m.