



**APPROVED
BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
May 14, 2025 – 5:00 P.M.
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Tower 101,
11th Floor Conference Room,
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301**

Board Member	Attendance	10/2024 through 9/2025 Cumulative Attendance	
		Present	Absent
William Brown, Chair	P	5	0
Melissa Milroy, Vice Chair	P	5	0
Norbert Belz	A	4	1
Melinda Bowker	P	4	0
Olivier Cale	P	3	1
Ross Cammarata	P	4	1
Rich DeGirolamo [arrived 5:05]	P	5	0
Desorae Giles-Smith	P	1	0
Mildred Lowe [arrived 5:13]	P	3	2
Prabhuling Patel	A	3	2

Staff

- Rickelle Williams, City Manager
- Susan Grant, Assistant City Manager
- Christopher Cooper, Acting Assistant City Manager
- Laura Reece, Acting Assistant City Manager
- Ben Rogers, Acting Assistant City Manager
- Stephen Gollan, Fire Chief
- William Schultz, Police Chief
- Carl Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation
- Milos Majstorovic, Acting Director of Transportation and Mobility
- Yvette Matthews, Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget
- Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
- Charmaine Crawford, OMB Department and Board Liaison

Communications to the City Commission

Motion made by Mr. Cammarata, seconded by Mr. Cale to send a communication to the City Commission to support the extension of the Northwest CRA for 10 years at 50% TIF with a review every two years. The Budget Advisory Board (BAB) would recommend the creation of CRA benchmarks to be reviewed by the BAB. In addition, the BAB would like additional information to be presented on Invest Fort Lauderdale and how it complements the CRA. In a roll call vote, motion passed 8-0.

I. Call to Order

The meeting of the Budget Advisory Board was called to order at 5:04 p.m.

II. Roll Call

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

Motion made by Ms. Bowker, seconded by Ms. Milroy, to hold this special meeting. In a roll call vote, motion passed 7-0.

IV. Floor Open for Neighbor Input

None

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 16, 2025

Mr. Cale requested a change to the minutes.

Motion made by Ms. Milroy, seconded by Mr. Cammarata to approve the minutes of the April 16, 2025 meeting as amended. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

IV. Floor Open for Neighbor Input

None

V. Old Business

None

VI. New Business

- **NW Progresso Flager Heights Community Redevelopment Area Extension**

Chair Brown said the City Commission proposed extending the CRA for 10 years with 50% of the TIF and revisiting the funding formula every two years. Chair Brown wished to discuss and make a recommendation.

Mr. Cale thought they should consider the CRA as an area of concern of the budget that they should look at holistically. Ms. Milroy noted there had been a lot of growth in the CRA but she thought continuing it for 10 years was excessive, considering the budget times we're in. She thought they could extend it just for two years.

Mr. Cooper explained that funds were identified for CRA projects but the funds were doled out at intervals per milestones. He noted how long a project could take between approval and construction. He reminded everyone of the success in the past 30 years in the Flagler Village area. Mr. Cooper explained that there was a process involved with extending a CRA and going through that process every two years would be cumbersome. That was why the Commission had decided on 10 years with review every two years.

Chair Brown said the community had been told that Invest Fort Lauderdale was created to replace the CRA but Director Clarence Woods had indicated this was not why it was created. Chair Brown wanted Invest Fort Lauderdale to be fully operational in the next two years. Mr. Cooper stated staff would present that to the City Commission at an upcoming meeting. He said there were projects that included a provision that at some point, money would be returned to Invest Fort Lauderdale or some successor of the CRA.

Mr. Cammarata said he had researched people involved in receiving CRA funds. He did not see the value in improving a restaurant or creating a pub or bar. Mr. Cooper had provided the 2016 amended report to Board members and stated the extension would require an amended plan. Mr. DeGirolamo said having a CRA in an area where land sold for \$15 million per acre made no sense. He did not feel it was necessary to subsidize businesses.

Mr. Cooper said whatever funds were unencumbered each year were returned to the taxing authority. Mr. Cooper said the City Commission could then decide whether or not to return those funds to the CRA. Ms. Bowker asked if the City Commission could decide not to fund the CRA one year. Ms. Reece said the contribution was not set yearly, it was set up once and became part of the budget process.

Ms. Lowe felt there should be benchmarks and said the CRA had been a blessing for her business. It offered education and opportunities for entrepreneurs. She said Sistrunk was just getting to the point where it could be a business district.

VII. Communications to/from City Commission

Motion made by Ms. Giles-Smith, seconded by Ms. Lowe, to send a communication to the City Commission that the BAB approves the 10-year CRA extension with 50% funding from the City and a review every two years.

Chair Brown wished to amend the motion to include the creation of benchmarks within the next two years that incorporated Invest Fort Lauderdale as the transition started occurring of the CRA.

Mr. Cooper said the statute required the minimum contribution to the CRA was 50% of the TIF. The current proposal was the minimum funding amount.

Ms. Bowker said she did not understand Invest Fort Lauderdale well enough to agree with Chair Brown's amendment. She stated Flagler Village was 15% of the CRA area and the large portion that extended west along the Sistrunk corridor had not enjoyed the development yet that Flagler Village had. Mr. Cooper noted that most of the development was housing and most included workforce/affordable housing. Ms. Bowker stated this was very important and was a great need right now.

In a roll call vote, Ms. Giles-Smith's original motion **failed** 4-4 with Ms. Milroy, Mr. Cale, Mr. Cammarata, and Mr. DeGirolamo opposed.

Motion made by Mr. Cammarata, seconded by Mr. DeGirolamo, to send a communication to the City Commission that the BAB recommends stopping the CRA funding, as stated 30 years ago, on November 7, 2025. Motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Cale wanted to include benchmarks. Mr. Cooper said if this was approved, the City Commission would have two years before the next review and in that time, the Board could recommend benchmarks be developed within one year so they could be solidified and Invest Fort Lauderdale could be discussed further.

Motion made by Mr. Cammarata, seconded by Mr. Cale to send a communication to the City Commission to support the extension of the Northwest CRA for 10 years at 50% TIF with a review every two years. The Budget Advisory Board (BAB) would recommend the creation of CRA benchmarks to be reviewed by the BAB. In addition, the BAB would like additional information to be presented on Invest Fort Lauderdale and how it complements the CRA. In a roll call vote, motion passed 8-0.

VIII. Board Member Comments

None

IX. Adjourn (Regular Meeting)

The regular meeting was adjourned at 5:59 p.m.

Special Meeting - FY 2026 Departmental Budget Review Presentations

- Fire Rescue, Parks and Recreation, and Transportation and Mobility

Stephen Gollan, Fire Chief

Chief Golan said he requests this year were toward supporting the 28 firefighters they had hired under the SAFER Grant and daily operations. He noted the importance of training younger staff to be competent to fill positions left by those retiring. Pursuant to this, his first request was for an Officer Development Training Program. The next priority was for a Timekeeping Administrative Support position, a civilian position, which would provide more continuity. His third priority was for the Whole Blood Program, which increased survivability of traumatic events. Priority four was Equipment Enhancement, such as for underwater SONAR for the dive team, which they did not currently have. The next priority was an Emergency Management Administrative Support position, another civilian position. This person would schedule, collect and disburse funds for special events and apply for fund reimbursement after an emergency declaration. Priority six was Fire Rescue Uniform Enhancement for special events for all personnel. Priority seven was for a Fleet Coordinator civilian position to ensure the vehicles were maintained properly and ensure longevity. Priority eight was for a Public Educator position, which had been recommended by their accreditation five years ago.

Ms. Milroy asked how much these requests would increase Fire Rescue's budget over last year and Ms. Reece stated there was an approximately \$4.2 million increase to maintain level of service. Chief Golan said the 28 firefighters would be on the City's books in three years as of March 1. Ms. Matthews stated the cost for the City to support those firefighters was approximately \$1 million per year. The City was building the future cost into the long-range financial model and they anticipated it would cost an additional \$4.6 million the first year after the grant ends. A portion would be covered by the Fire Assessment.

Ms. Lowe asked what percentage of firefighters were hired locally. Chief Golan said the cost of living locally was a challenge but due to firefighters' schedules, they could commute farther. He said a majority of staff lived north of Palm Beach County because it was more affordable. Chief Golan stated he and Police Chief Schultz were looking at affordable housing possibilities with new development that would allow staff to live and work in the same area, which he said would give them more ownership in the community they were serving.

Ms. Matthews explained that the \$1.3 million indicated in the decision package represented enhancements to the base budget, in addition to the \$4.2 million increase. Mr. Cammarata asked about a new training facility and Chief Golan said he and Chief Schultz had discussed the need for a public safety training facility and had plans to make such a facility as cost neutral as possible. This could be in the budget as early as next year.

Mr. Cale asked about the performance measures in Ocean Rescue and Chief Golan explained and suggested a different way to express the data that would be more accurate. Chief Golan then discussed response times to high rise incidents and the positive impact a third person on the rescues would have. He explained how the Fire Rescue Plan Review Business Intelligence Reporting would identify and hopefully increase revenue from plan review and fire prevention.

Chair Brown felt the Emergency Management Administrative position was critical. He pointed out that other departments had positions on hold year after year and suggested staff look at "right sizing" all departments and concentrate on critical positions on the civilian side of public safety. Ms. Matthews stated they reviewed all vacancies as part of the budget development process every year.

Carl Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation

Mr. Williams said his decision package was aimed at improving operational efficiency and effectiveness. The first request was for a Comprehensive Facility Asset Management and Work Order Platform, which would identify a software system that would eliminate duplication of efforts in work orders. The second request was to rent a Beach Dozer that would provide a new vehicle when needed. If they purchased a new one, it would need to be replaced every three to five years and be less cost effective. The next request was for 15 part-time positions for Public Restroom Cleanliness Enhancement to Optimize High

Traffic Locations. The next request was for Smart Irrigation Controller Program Median Expansion to improve the efficiency of irrigation and save money over time. This was a continuation of what began as a pilot program in 2016. The next request was for Recreation Transportation Service Enhancement, to identify another large bus and a full-time driver for the youth programs. The next request was the Implementation and Maintenance of Dog Stations at City Parks, which would including changing signage and dog waste stations.

Mr. Cale asked about revenue decreases and the capital and maintenance costs for medians. Mr. Williams said the City had \$1 million in revenue from the marina as part of the Public Private Partnership agreement. They also had dockage fees revenue. He remarked that many programs were highly subsidized in order to make them accessible and affordable, especially for kids in challenged socioeconomic areas. He stated their mission was to provide a service rather than generate revenue. Regarding medians, Mr. Williams said they had initially installed 61 smart controllers in parks, which had resulted in a water savings of 44% annually. This request would provide controllers to approximately 30 more medians.

Mr. Williams said the new restroom employees would be dedicated to certain restrooms, allowing them to be more proactive. Ms. Giles Smith asked if the City had considered transporting kids to football and track and Mr. Williams said they were already struggling to provide drivers for City programs. Ms. Giles Smith wanted the City to consider taking over the track and football programs. Mr. Williams said this would require significant staff. Mr. Cammarata asked about drilling wells for irrigation instead of paying for City water and staff said this was not possible in all medians. Mr. Williams stated the additional restroom employees would allow them to address issues in real time. Ms. Lowe suggested the City provide more recognition and support to the athletic volunteers. Ms. Milroy favored keeping the after-school activities affordable to keep kids out of trouble. Chair Brown was unsure if 15 part time employees would address the restroom issues. He also felt they were missing opportunities for sponsorships. Mr. Williams stated they were in the process of bringing in a third party to operate the sponsorship program. Chair Brown wanted to hear information on whether the private contractors working on the medians were fulfilling their contracts.

Milos Majstorovic, Acting Transportation and Mobility Director

Mr. Majstorovic said their first request was the Transfer of MOT Code Compliance Officer from TAM to DSD which would improve efficiency. The second request was for funding for a Citywide Transportation Master Plan to establish a long-term vision. This would also help with funding. The next request was for a Program Manager II position for Traffic Engineering, Monitoring, and Management. This would help with traffic engineering, safety analysis, congestion mitigation, strategy planning and public communications. The next request was for Breakers Avenue and Birch Road Improvements. He described the funding structure and said they needed \$2.5 to \$2.8 million to close the gap. The next request was for the NE 15th Ave. Mobility Project that would provide safety improvements. He said FDOT would help with design and construction funding. The next request was for

Sunrise Lane and NE 8th Ave. Streetscape Enhancement, for which they were currently drafting design plans. There were two parking projects, the first was expanding Smart Technology sensors and cameras in parking garages to better inform the public about parking availability. The second was for Parking Lot Signage Replacement [25 signs] to improve aesthetics and branding.

Chair Brown appreciated that traffic problems were being addressed. Mr. Cale asked about performance measures for traffic congestion and Mr. Majstorovic stated there was a metric for travel time along certain corridors and the Project Manager II position employee would examine day-to-day travel times and coordinate with Broward County. They had already installed 16 devices that were providing travel times and speeds. And they were coordinating with Broward County on lobbying for transit service improvements. Mr. Majstorovic said a true Citywide Transportation Master Plan Study had not been conducted and he said their expected outcome was to establish a mobility hierarchy by corridor. Ms. Milroy said it was frustrating when issues that should be addressed by the County were falling to the City, such as inspecting County roads. She asked the completion date for Breakers Ave. and Mr. Majstorovic stated per their agreement with FDOT, it was scheduled to be completed by December 2027. Ms. Milroy noted that the Smart Technology in the airport parking garages never worked and she would rather wait until the technology was perfected. Mr. Majstorovic said there were different technologies used and the technology was evolving.

Chair Brown thanked staff for their participation.

Mr. Cale created a presentation considering the growing gap between revenues and expenditures and possible areas for optimization. This had been distributed to Board members. Board members and staff discussed scheduling discussion of Mr. Cale's presentation. Chair Brown recommended postponing this until later in the year for the next budget cycle. Mr. Cale suggested Board members could share their feedback at the next meeting. Ms. Matthews invited Board members to come in and hear more about the City's budget process. She said initial training was available online.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.