



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**APPROVED
BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
September 17, 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	10	0
Melissa Milroy, Vice Chair	P	9	1
Norbert Belz	P	9	1
Melinda Bowker [arrived 5:06]	P	9	0
Olivier Cale	P	7	2
Ross Cammarata	A	6	4
Rich DeGirolamo	P	9	2
Desorae Giles-Smith	A	4	2
Prabhuling Patel	P	7	3

Staff

Christopher Cooper, Assistant City Manager
Ben Rogers, Assistant City Manager
Yvette Matthews, Acting Assistant City Manager
Susan Grant, Special Advisor
Laura Reece, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Marco Hausy, Senior Assistant City Auditor
Charmaine Crawford, OMB Department and Board Liaison
J. Opperee, Prototype Recording Secretary

Communications to the City Commission

None

I. Call to Order

The meeting of the Budget Advisory Board was called to order at 5:05 p.m.

II. Roll Call

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

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 13, 2025

Motion made by Ms. Milroy, seconded by Mr. Belz to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2025 meeting. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

IV. Floor Open for Neighbor Input

None

V. Old Business

None

Ms. Bowker arrived at 5:06.

VI. New Business

Ms. Matthews announced Parth Patel was the new Assistant Director, Office of Management and Budget. Ms. Reece had been appointed Chair of the Government Finance Officers Association [GFOA] Budget Committee.

A. Updated Budget Advisory Board Recommendation Matrix

Ms. Reece had distributed a spreadsheet tracking the status of the BAB's recommendations to the City Commission. Ms. Matthew confirmed the City Commission had approved the \$105 million bond for streets and sidewalks, \$45.5 million of which went toward the financing for the new Police headquarters. They would put \$27.9 million toward streets and sidewalks. The remaining funding would go toward Police Department communication equipment and additional seawalls and bridges.

Chair Brown asked about the reserves and Ms. Matthews said the City had a policy of maintaining 16.67% in reserves, representing two months, but they had set a target for three months, 25%. Ms. Reece reported the City's reserves were over 25% right now. Ms. Matthews stated once they hit the 25% mark, they began looking at capital projects or other one-time expenses to support.

Ms. Reece noted the City's diversified revenue base helped mitigate market risks. Chair Brown thanked staff for the work they did to maintain the City's bond rating.

B. Feedback on FY 2026 Department Budget Packets and Meeting Format

Ms. Milroy noted what a great job staff did keeping members prepared and said she liked the current format. Ms. Bowker agreed regarding the meeting format. She asked for a summary after the department head presentations comparing their requests and what made it into the budget with the reasons/an explanation. Ms. Reece said staff used to include that but people were confused about what was and was not funded, so they published only what was funded. Ms. Matthews said they could provide that information to the BAB.

Chair Brown pointed out that there would be more departments this year and Ms. Matthews said they could reduce presentations by not including departments whose budgets were not changing. Mr. Belz suggested allotting time based on the size of a department's budget.

Mr. Patel agreed with Ms. Bowker regarding unfunded requests. Mr. Belz suggested allowing the BAB members to see their comments on the Balancing Act app and Ms.

Reece said they needed to determine how to do that. Ms. Matthews said they could have the Board members provide their submissions live to keep them separate or they could create an environment specific to the Board.

Mr. DeGirolamo suggested limiting the time for the presentations and the Board's subsequent questions. Ms. Matthews said they intended to enforce time limits next year. Mr. Cale appreciated the staff assistance to the BAB to help them do their work. He wanted the meetings to be more interactive and to share more material. He recalled the presentation he had created that he intended the Board to interact with but they had not had time, and he hoped to do this in November. He said the presentation concerned revenue sources the Board felt they could explore to have a better balance. They should be able to present their own ideas to the City Commission, not just endorse others' ideas because this was the Board's job.

Chair Brown recalled Commissioner Glassman had asked the Board to "engage and come back." He noted the governor's proposal to eliminate property taxes and how the City would be forced to find other funding sources.

C. Calendar Discussion

Chair Brown noted the City's Light Up The Beach event conflicted with the Board's November meeting. Board members and Ms. Matthew discussed agenda items for upcoming meetings. Ms. Reece was unsure when the three new Board members would be appointed.

Chair Brown suggested giving staff a break and Board members discussed cancelling the October and November meetings. Ms. Milroy suggested moving up the December meeting.

Motion made by Ms. Milroy, seconded by Mr. Belz to cancel the Board's October and November meetings and to move the December 17 meeting to December 10. Mr. Cale's presentation would be scheduled for the December meeting. **In a roll call vote, Motion passed 6-0** with Mr. DeGirolamo out of the room.

VII. Communications to/from City Commission

None

VIII. Board Member Comments

Ms. Bowker said there was interest from District 4 neighborhood leaders to attend the BAB meetings. She said she was working to increase awareness of the Board's meetings and to increase public engagement. Ms. Matthews stated Strategic Communications had put out a video this year advertising the BAB meetings and encouraging public participation. This had been posted on the City's social media but she suggested that they should send it out to BAB members to share.

Mr. Cale felt BAB members should do a better job of enlisting community participation. Mr. Belz said Board members should represent their own communities' interests on the Board. Mr. Bowker advised BAB members to attend their Commission member's pre-agenda meetings and ask if they had any comments or questions. She noted it could be difficult to find the Board's meetings on YouTube.

Chair Brown provided an update on the new City Hall process. The City was evaluating six proposals, which would be reduced to three or four before the design was refined and proposals priced out. Ms. Matthews said all proposals were online for the public to review.

Chair Brown asked about funding for the Holiday Park surface parking lot and Ms. Matthews thought the surface lot was included in the Parks bond fund. She agreed to confirm and report back.

Mr. DeGirolamo said he was on the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee and someone from that board wished to attend a BAB meeting. Chair Brown advised Ms. Reece to find out.

Ms. Bowker was interested in seeing property taxes by district and/or neighborhood. She thought her District 4 residents would be interested to know that they were a large source of revenue for the City. Ms. Reece thought staff could provide this.

Board members thanked Mr. Patel for his service.

Ms. Reece thanked BAB members for their service this year.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:12 p.m.