



**APPROVED
BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
March 18, 2026 – 5:00 P.M.
101 NE 3rd Avenue, Tower 101,
11th Floor Conference Room,
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301**

Board Member	Attendance	10/2025 through 9/2026 Cumulative Attendance	
		Present	Absent
William Brown, Chair	P	4	0
Melissa Milroy, Vice Chair	P	4	0
Melinda Bowker	P	4	0
Olivier Cale	P	4	0
Rich DeGirolamo [via Zoom]	P	3	1
Jason Juffras	P	3	0
Anide Metellus-Thompson	A	2	1
David “Max” Ortolani	P	2	1
Samantha Perryman-Jones	P	3	0

Staff

Rickelle Williams, City Manager
 Christopher Cooper, Deputy City Manager
 Yvette Matthews, Assistant City Manager
 Ben Rogers, Assistant City Manager
 Quentin Pough, Assistant City Manager
 Ron McKenzie, Director of Information Technology Services
 Jerome Post, Director of Human Resources
 Milos Majstorovic, Director of Transportation and Mobility
 Colette Satchell, Director of Capital Projects
 Albert Carbon, Director of Utility Services
 Jerome Post, Director of Human Resources
 Linda Short, Director of Finance
 Enrique Sanchez, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation
 Porshia Garcia, Director of Community Services
 Brad Kaine, Director of Public Works
 Ella Parker, Deputy Director of Development Services
 Laura Reece, Director of Office of Management and Budget
 Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
 Charmaine Crawford, OMB Department and Board Liaison
 J. Opperlee, 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 5:00 p.m.

II. Roll Call

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

Motion made by Ms. Bowker, seconded by Mr. Cale to allow Mr. DeGirolamo to participate via Zoom. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 18, 2026

Motion made by Ms. Milroy, seconded by Mr. Juffras to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2026 meeting. In a voice vote, motion passed unanimously.

Chair Brown thanked the Police Department for handling an unruly crowd situation the previous evening.

IV. Floor Open for Neighbor Input

None

V. Old Business

None

VI. New Business

**Department Presentations – Fiscal Year 2027 Business Plan
Group A**

Milos Majstorovic, Director of Transportation and Mobility

Mr. Majstorovic discussed the department's responsibilities and noted they competed for resources with Public Safety and Public Works. He said they used data-driven methodology to prioritize and make decisions, relying on the City Commission's priorities. Mr. Majstorovic said the competition for funding required them to pursue grants, surtax funds, appropriations and interagency partnerships. He described their options for addressing traffic congestion and multi-modal demands. Mr. Cale asked about travel time improvement and Mr. Majstorovic noted that most of the times they monitored were on State roads, which the City did not administer. Mr. Cale asked for more data on City roadways and Mr. Majstorovic said they currently did not have many monitoring resources on City roads. Mr. Ortolani asked about e-bikes and e-scooters and Mr. Majstorovic said staff was working on an ordinance regarding their use. He noted that the Sidewalk Master Plan was concentrated on expanding the sidewalk network, not necessarily widening it.

Ron McKenzie, Director of Information Technology Services

Mr. McKenzie described the department's responsibilities and said cyber security was their most persistent challenge. He explained two new AI tools they would implement to increase security. The new Public Safety Division would work with Police and Fire

operations and Mr. McKenzie said their strategy included improving training and mentorship to enhance permanent staffing. They had identified aging systems that required replacement and he reported that the time and attendance upgrade would go live on April 12, 2026 and their overall replacement schedule was working. They were also expanding broadband at City parks and public facilities. Mr. Ortolani asked about changes to Ask FTL and Mr. McKenzie stated they were improving the user experience. Mr. Cale asked Mr. McKenzie to provide a report indicating how AI improved efficiencies and/or security. Ms. Bowker asked about the broadband in parks and residential areas and Mr. McKenzie said 35 parks provided wi-fi and they planned to expand it to other parks and public safety buildings. He stated they also needed to educate people regarding free and low-cost access to wi-fi. Chair Brown wished to see the ROI on Ask FTL and Mr. Cale wished to see how many people were subscribed to Ask FTL.

Jerome Post, Director of Human Resources

Mr. Post described the divisions within Human Resources and their functions. Mr. Ortolani asked how many new employees were coming from out of state. Mr. Post said they had a good balance, approximately 50/50 between internal promotions and external hires. Recruitment, which was online, was therefore national. Ms. Milroy asked about the impact of the lack of affordable housing in the City and Mr. Post said many employees lived in other communities. Mr. Juffras asked about coordination with departments when they needed positions filled and Mr. Post explained that some departments had liaisons that initiated the personnel actions. HR also had analysts assigned to some departments. Mr. Cale asked what the most challenging positions/departments were and Mr. Post stated because of the technical nature of the water plant positions, and the fact that private sector positions in the skilled trades were typically better paying, they were looking at professional organizations and outside the state. Ms. Bowker asked about open positions and Mr. Post stated they were typically at 7%. He said it was most challenging to find employees with specific certifications and licensing, such as for Public Works and Development Services. Mr. Post informed Mr. Cale they would have the initial Compensation Study report in the Fall. Chair Brown was thankful Mr. Post was anticipating new legislation's impact on the City's liability. Mr. Post said Risk was already calculating the possible impact on the budget.

Colette Satchell, Director of Capital Projects

Ms. Satchell described the department's responsibilities. She reported they were developing strategies and policies to address more than 100 projects and described progress on several. Chair Brown said Procurement had been an issue in the past and asked how they would work with Procurement to keep it moving and avoid additional costs. Ms. Satchell said they communicated with Procurement regularly to help them anticipate needs, and they also scrutinized contract descriptions to ensure more realistic timelines. Mr. Cale asked if there was monitoring for non-solicited bids versus RFPs for capital projects such as City Hall. Ms. Satchell stated she and her staff were involved in several of the projects on behalf of the City. She confirmed she had been included in negotiations of the unsolicited bids. Ms. Perryman Jones asked about project prioritization and Ms. Satchell described their process.

Brad Kaine, Director of Public Works

Mr. Kaine described the department's divisions. He said one major priority was to continue hardening the stormwater system. He said he anticipated having the funding to design the first few projects in Phase II a bit later in the year. He said the department had been realigned this year, splitting off Utilities and adding a City Engineer to staff. They had bond funding this year for road resurfacing and sidewalk projects and also anticipated the Prospect Lake project would be completed by the end of September. Ms. Bowker asked about park trash pickup and Mr. Kaine confirmed they were more involved in the Clean Team and beach maintenance. Mr. Cale asked why storm drain cleaning was decreasing in frequency and Mr. Kaine said they were bit thin on staff and they were working on programs to deliver more metrics. Ms. Milroy asked about Phase II and Mr. Kaine described the three projects going in for design this summer. Mr. Rogers said at the last City Commission meeting, they had approved the Melrose Park, Middle River Terrace and Lauderdale Isles projects. Chair Brown noted the work Public Works did with developers building new projects and wanted to track projects that developers had promised would coincide with their development but had not. Mr. Cooper said the City charged a capital expansion fee for any new development that had an impact on the overall public infrastructure system. When an improvement was made by a developer to a public piece of infrastructure, there was a condition that the improvement must be made prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy or there must be a project in the CIP to fund it.

Linda Short, Director of Finance

Ms. Short described her department's divisions and their functions. She remarked on the challenges regarding cyber security. Mr. DeGirolamo asked about the organizational chart and suggested listing salaries with the positions so the Board could compare them to the private sector. Ms. Matthews said they were looking at that in the compensation study but staff could share pay plan information with the Board. Mr. Juffras asked if the state was requiring additional financial information and Ms. Short said there was some additional information needed but it was information already in the annual financial report. Mr. Cale asked about investment returns and noted a decrease in performance and Ms. Short said the City had a \$1.5 billion portfolio and had earned approximately \$39 million on it last year. She explained that their investment policy was based on safety first, then liquidity, and then return. Their goal was always to be five basis points above the benchmark. Chair Brown asked if they paid the new Revenue Collector's office more to collect the City's portion of the property tax and Ms. Reece stated they had entered into an agreement with the Revenue Collector and were now paying up to 2%. They were not paying for the ad valorem revenue.

The Board took a brief recess.

Group B

Stephen Gollan, Fire Chief

Chief Gollan discussed the time it took to build and outfit new facilities in order to keep up with the City's growth. He said the cost of equipment had also increased dramatically in the past few years. Chief Gollan explained that there was a recent shortage of emergency room space, which led to backlogs in Rescue turnover, sometimes resulting in there being no rescue units available to respond. He stated they needed to prepare for the future with a more vertical City, which would increase response times. Mr. Cale asked about fire inspections and Chief Gollan stated they did not have sufficient fire inspectors or plans examiners and they would need additional staffing. Mr. Cale suggested differentiating between vertical and horizontal response times. Chief Gollan said the horizontal response time would shorten by having more, smaller stations. Mr. Juffras asked about response time in relation to patient outcomes. Chief Gollan explained that travel time was not controllable but they impressed upon firefighters that every second counted. Ms. Milroy was concerned about the lack of emergency beds and Chief Gollan said Broward Health had a plan to increase the size of their emergency rooms and free-standing emergency rooms were also being constructed. Mr. Ortolani asked the single biggest risk to service delivery and Chief Gollan said the City growing too fast for infrastructure to keep up. Mr. DeGirolamo asked about controlling overtime and Chief Gollan said having three on a rescue was helping.

William Schultz, Police Chief

Chief Schultz said they were almost fully moved into the new Police headquarters. He stated the verticality of the City was affecting Police response time as well and they were considering the district boundaries in order to be more efficient and respond faster. He remarked on the increase in public records requests and coming legislation that would allow them just 15 days to respond, which would present a challenge. Chief Schultz pointed out that visitors were significant drivers of calls for service. He stated they were also focusing on the ever-evolving threats to houses of worship. Chief Schultz said they would initiate new programs in the new building and looked forward to reporting back to the Board. He explained to Ms. Perryman Jones that they worked with houses of worship to improve their security. Mr. Ortolani asked about homeless programs and Chief Schultz stated they had refocused their efforts and increased partnerships to offer appropriate services. Ms. Milroy asked about implementation of the detail coordinator and Chief Schultz said this was moving forward quickly. Mr. Juffras asked about violence reduction programs and Chief Schultz said they had many partners in the Violence Interruption Program so they had many diversion options. Mr. Cale stated serious crime numbers were still "really high" and asked about a plan to address this. Chief Schultz informed the Board that they had changed how crime was reported to be more specific and said they were analyzing the reports to identify trends. Mr. Cale asked about getting more intelligence and Chief Schultz said AI would help, but there were considerable guidelines to which they must adhere. Ms. Bowker asked about the redistricting and Chief Schultz explained that staffing schedules were set for the calendar year and they were still analyzing the data. The earliest any change could be made would be 2027. Chair Brown wanted to consider ways to recoup some of the costs of aiding houses of worship and the port. Mr. Cale noted that houses of worship paid for their own security.

Enrique Sanchez, Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation

Mr. Sanchez described the department's functions and responsibilities. He said the budget this year would focus on protecting City assets, advancing sustainability goals and ensuring long-term operational reliability of City parks, facilities and environmental resources. He reported the City Commission had recently adopted an Urban Forestry Master Plan, which was intended to increase the tree canopy to 33% by 2040. Mr. Cale requested metrics on waterway testing. Ms. Williams said Public Works conducted that testing and they were currently recruiting for a Chief Waterways Officer. Ms. Bowker asked if there had been any negative impact related to allowing dogs in City parks. Mr. Sanchez said the issue was getting owners to keep their dogs on leashes. Chair Brown wondered if it was a wise use of parks funding to be responsible for maintenance of Police and Fire Rescue facilities and Mr. Sanchez said it made sense to have one expert in an area of expertise provide that service throughout the City. Ms. Matthews noted this provided economies of scale and described how the costs were allocated appropriately. Chair Brown asked if a cost analysis had been conducted to prove this was cost-saving and Ms. Matthews agreed to provide more information.

Porshia Garcia, Director of Community Services

Ms. Garcia said the department had been created in October 2025 to consolidate six divisions that comprised Community Services. She described each division's function. She stated they wished to expand nighttime Code Enforcement to every night. They also wanted to maximize disaster recovery funding and increase their ability to address homeless demands. Mr. DeGirolamo asked about performance measures and Ms. Garcia said they evaluated the quality of responses and call abandonment rate in the customer support center and there were also opportunities in the homeless initiatives program. Ms. Milroy wished to incorporate some public art in the new Police Department. Chief Schultz said he was in discussions with Joshua Carden, the City's Cultural Affairs Officer. Mr. Juffras asked what share of housing funding was non-City and Ms. Garcia said \$12.6 million came from various sources such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS (HOPWA), the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), and State Housing Initiatives Partnership Program (SHIP) funding. Mr. Cale asked if they could improve proactive Code Enforcement and Ms. Garcia said they were reimplementing the community enhancement projects, which usually increased proactive enforcement. Ms. Bowker asked about challenges with Fix It FTL and Ms. Garcia said there were minimal issues with system outages. She noted they had reduced the number of categories to make it more user-friendly. They also audited requests that someone reported were taking a long time in order to determine where the bottleneck was and address it. Mr. Cale asked about the users on app and Ms. Garcia said there were approximately 20,000. She informed Mr. Cale they could work with Strategic Communications to promote it more. Chair Brown discussed the vacation rental issue, which he said the State legislature was going to bring up again in the next session, and he wanted the City to pay close attention. Ms. Garcia said they worked with Daphnee Sainvil, Intergovernmental Affairs Manager, who advocated on behalf of the City.

Ella Parker, Deputy Director, Development Services

Ms. Parker described the department's responsibilities and activities and said key challenges included recruiting from the trades, losing long-term employees and their expertise, and higher salaries offered to attract new talent while existing employee pay lagged behind. She said they were addressing these issues by creating promotional pathways, standardizing procedures, benchmarking pay and making adjustments and using technology to improve operations. Ms. Parker said staff was currently planning for growth in the South Beach area and working on phase 1: the established vision plan. They were also developing a "Tactical Urbanism" design and streetscape beautification plan for the Himmarshee historic district, updating the Special Entertainment District ordinance and Historic District Zoning designation to allow for redevelopment while maintaining historic character. Ms. Parker said they would utilize AI to streamline reviews and comments. Ms. Perryman Jones asked if the City could fix up abandoned buildings for housing and Ms. Parker said they worked with people willing to invest and often provided flexibility with these projects because the existing buildings had non-conformities and were not up to current code. Mr. Ortolani asked about incentivizing businesses to locate in the City and Ms. Parker said they coordinated with Community Services and the Downtown Development Authority to identify opportunities. Mr. Cale asked about measuring the perception of the City compared to other cities and Mr. Cooper said they were working with the Strategic Communications Office and the marketing groups. Mr. DeGirolamo said the Planning Division should be as fast and easy as possible and if there were any budget issues he wanted the Board to know.

Albert Carbon, Utility Services Director

Mr. Carbon described the Utility Services Department's divisions and responsibilities. He said their challenges included succession planning, the Prospect Lake startup, weekend line breaks, and sewage treatment plant inflow and infiltration costs. Chair Brown said some residents were concerned about running "nice clean water" through old cast iron pipes, which they feared would mean there was no improvement in water quality. Mr. Carbon said there would be a transition period when the new treatment plant came online. Mr. Ortolani asked if it was more difficult to fill administrative or technical roles and Mr. Carbon said it was most challenging to hire licensed operators.

VII. Communications to/from the City Commission

None

VIII. Board Member Comments

None

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.