

Detailed Minutes - Final

City Commission

Rex Hardin, Mayor

Alison Fournier, Vice Mayor

Audrey Fesik, Commissioner

Beverly Perkins, Commissioner

Rhonda Sigerson-Eaton, Commissioner

Darlene Smith, Commissioner

Gregory P. Harrison, City Manager

Mark Berman, City Attorney

Kervin Alfred, City Clerk

Tuesday, June 24, 2025

5:00 PM

Commission Chamber

Budget Workshop

CALL TO ORDER

The Honorable Rex Hardin, Mayor called the City Commission Budget Workshop to order at 5:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Audrey Fesik
Commissioner Beverly Perkins
Commissioner Rhonda Sigerson-Eaton
Commissioner Darlene Smith
Vice Mayor Alison Fournier
Mayor Rex Hardin

INVOCATION

Mayor Hardin asked all attendees to stand as he offered the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Kervin Alfred, City Clerk

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Hardin inquired with City Manager Harrison about any changes to the Agenda, and Mr. Harrison affirmed that there were none.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Fournier, seconded by Commissioner Sigerson-Eaton, that the Agenda be APPROVED. The motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.

A. REGULAR AGENDA

1. [25-391](#) Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2026 Estimated General Fund Budget.
(Fiscal Impact: N/A)

(Staff Contact: Joshua Watters)

Mayor Hardin introduced the item, stating that this is a presentation of the Fiscal Year 2026 Estimated General Fund Budget. He then turned the floor over to Greg Harrison, City Manager, for further comments.

Mr. Harrison introduced Mr. Joshua Watters, the newly appointed Budget Director, and informed that he will be presenting the recommended fiscal year 2026 General Fund budget, and he will provide an overview of projected General Fund revenues and expenditures.

Mr. Watters began by thanking department directors and their staff and the City Manager and his team. He gave a special thanks to his Budget team for their professionalism, dedication, and support. Mr. Watters then stated that the primary objectives of his presentation were to review the preliminary revenue and expenditure projections for the City's General Fund budget and to discuss ad valorem tax rates and fire assessment fee considerations. Mr. Watters explained some budget highlights that included significant nondiscretionary budget pressures, the proposed operating millage rate remaining the same as FY 2025, a decrease in the aggregate millage rate, increasing Fire Assessment fees to cover rising costs of fire services, and the increase in the budget for police services. A copy of Mr. Watters' full presentation is available with the City Clerk's office. To conclude the presentation, Mr. Watters went over the next steps in the budget process.

Mayor Hardin opened the floor to Commission discussion.

Comr. Fesik wanted to highlight that the NW CRA and East CRA cover approximately 23% of the City's land area, and with that the City incurs a lot of additional cost. Comr. Fesik requested a review of the TIF (Tax Increment Financing) split between the City and CRAs to see if it can be adjusted for the City to receive a higher percentage.

Vice Mayor Fournier agreed with Comr. Fesik on the need to review the TIF split and see how that additional tax revenue could assist the City. She then inquired if the City is assuming no material changes to the Fire pension plan during the ongoing contract negotiation. Brian Donovan, Assistant City Manager, stated that the City is not expecting any new pension enhancements with this new contract.

Vice Mayor Fournier asked what is driving the increase in cost of electricity and water at City facilities. Mr. Watters stated that it is higher cost and usage. Vice Mayor Fournier requested that staff provide a breakdown of these increases. She then stated that she still believes that the City's leased vehicles are expensive and not all are needed and asked that this be looked into before the next budget workshop to see how the City fleet can be leaner.

Vice Mayor Fournier inquired if the homeless outreach services the City provides are part of the Public Safety - Other Services noted during the presentation. Mr. Watters replied that those services do fall into that category. Continuing, she requested that in regard to the Lauderdale-by-the-Sea (LBTS) contract, that the Fire

Department should charge LBTS for everything they are costing the City, to include overtime coverage.

Lastly, Vice Mayor Fournier asked how the Fire Assessment Fees were changed this year without a study being done. Mr. Donovan explained that the ability to change the fees is always allowed; however, an increase in fees has to be proportional between residential and commercial properties.

Comr. Smith asked why the Fire Assessment fees were being brought to 79 instead of 90, which is considered a healthy level. Mr. Watters responded that a higher amount can be considered by the Commission, but when putting together the budget, they were looking to balance the revenues and expenditures, and this was the number they proposed. He reiterated that the Commission can consider a higher fee if they want to.

Comr. Perkins asked if the City is required to give a certain percentage increase every year to police services. Mr. Watters explained that the increase does include compensation adjustments and that this year is different because BSO did a compensation study, and it was determined that BSO deputies are paid less than peer jurisdictions, which is why the increase in the contract is so high. Comr. Perkins inquired if this budget included the 28 new positions that were being asked for, to which Mr. Watters replied that it does not.

There being no further Commission discussion, Mayor Hardin adjourned the workshop.

B. ADJOURNMENT

The workshop adjourned at 5:33 PM.

Rex Hardin, Mayor

Kervin Alfred, City Clerk