

FINAL
BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
8th Floor Conference Room
Fort Lauderdale, Florida, 33301
May 19, 2010 - 6:00 p.m.

Board Member	Attendance	10/2009 through 9/2010 Cumulative Attendance	
		P	A
Keith Cobb, Chair	A	6	1
June Page, Vice Chair	P	7	0
Bud Bentley [6:26]	P	6	1
Marc Dickerman	P	5	2
Nadine Hankerson	P	3	0
Sam Monroe	A	3	4
Fred Nesbitt	P	7	0
Alan Silva	P	7	0
Anthony Timiraos	P	5	2
Ray Williams	P	4	3

City Staff

Norm Mason, Staff Liaison, Assistant Budget Director
John Herbst, City auditor
Shonda Singleton-Taylor, Acting Director, Office of Management & Budget
Parks and Recreation presenters:
Phil Thornburg, Director, Parks and Recreation
Terry Rynard, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation
Davie Miller, Recreation Supervisor, Parks and Recreation
Kim Clifford, Parks and Recreation Budget Analyst
J. Opperlee, ProtoType Services

Guests

Marilyn Markus, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board member
Joe Bellavance, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board member
Frank Garofalo, Chief Union Steward for Parks and Recreation Department

Communications to the City Commission

None

PURPOSE: To Provide the City with input regarding the taxpayers' perspective in the development of the annual operating budget; to review projections and estimates from the City Manager regarding revenues and expenditures for upcoming fiscal year; to

advise the City Commission on service levels and priorities and fiscal solvency; and to submit recommendations to the City Commission no later than August 15 of each year regarding a budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Vice Chair Page called the meeting of the Budget Advisory Board to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. Review of Meeting Minutes from April 21 and April 29, 2010

Mr. Williams indicated his attendance record was incorrect.

Mr. Dickerman stated a question he had asked regarding morale had not been included in the minutes. Mr. Mason said the recording had been checked and this remark was inaudible.

Motion made by Mr. Nesbitt, seconded by Mr. Williams, to approve the minutes of the Board's April 21, 2010 meeting as amended. In a voice vote, motion approved 6 – 1 with Mr. Dickerman opposed.

Mr. Nesbitt noted corrections to the 4/29/10 minutes.

Motion made by Mr. Nesbitt, seconded by Mr. Williams, to approve the minutes of the Board's April 29, 2010 meeting as amended. In a voice vote, Board unanimously approved.

3. Parks and Recreation Activity Based Presentation

Members of Parks and Recreation staff gave a Power Point presentation, a copy of which is attached to these minutes for the public record.

4. Questions and Answers

Ms. Page asked what percentage of the budget went to recreation and what percentage went to parks. Mr. Thornburg said the recreation budget was approximately \$9 million; the parks maintenance budget was approximately \$16 million.

Mr. Nesbitt asked if non-residents were charged more for programs. Mr. Thornburg said their practice was to charge 50% more for non-residents for any program for which one signed up. He added there was a Youth Enrichment Scholarship fee for kids on reduced or free lunch that was reduced by 75%. These children must be residents to

qualify. Mr. Nesbitt asked how much the City saved per year by utilizing volunteers. Mr. Miller said they saved “six figures easily.”

Mr. Nesbitt pointed out that the pools were losing approximately \$1.2 million and he wondered if there was a way to reduce the loss. Mr. Thornburg explained that pools did not make money; the programs were very low cost. He believed there was a community benefit to teaching kids to swim to prevent drowning.

Mr. Thornburg said the pools were open year round and were therefore heated. He explained that user numbers dropped when the weather was cool, but the pools were still used for classes during the cooler months.

Ms. Page asked if they had considered partnering with the local YMCA. Mr. Thornburg explained that there had been discussions with the Y regarding cooperative programs, but the Y was not interested in collaborating in programs that did not make money.

Mr. Silva had been a City Administrator in a city that had only passive parks; any programs were either contracted or franchised out. Mr. Silva thought Parks and Recreation must think in terms of changing the recreation side and he wondered how they could be considering 17 new parks in the next few years. Mr. Thornburg said these new parks would be passive. Regarding programs, he stated this was a decision for policy makers and the people of the community. He was concerned about those who could not afford to use facilities if the City charged for all of them. He stated, “That’s the challenge, and the community has to make that decision: how important it is for the people in your community to recreate, to have a quality of life and how important is it for those individuals that can’t afford to pay to have that same opportunity.”

Mr. Silva said he consider swimming to be an individual benefit, not a community benefit. He questioned whether it was the City’s responsibility to teach kids how to swim. He suggested partnering with the YMCA rather than having City staff teaching kids to swim.

Ms. Hankerson stated not every community had access to a YMCA or a country club. She said she had worked at Parks and Recreation when she was a teen and she felt it provided opportunities to learn skills. She added that Parks and Recreation programs also kept kids off the streets and reduced crime.

Mr. Dickerman believed the reduction of County park services could increase the City’s fee-generating activities.

Mr. Herbst referred to the spreadsheet comparing costs in several cities and said it lacked a budget per acre column. He reported Tampa spent \$10,000 per acre and Fort Lauderdale spent \$40,000 per acre. Mr. Herbst felt they should analyze the cost differences. Mr. Thornburg guessed that one reason for the difference was that Tampa had many natural areas. He agreed they should separate developed from undeveloped parks.

Mr. Silva remembered a suggestion the Board had made to reduce layers of management. He questioned specific staff positions in recreation he believed could be reduced. Ms. Rynard explained that when they had been filling vacancies, they evaluated the best use of that person and considered how the person could be cross-trained. The employees now had multiple responsibilities across the department.

Mr. Herbst noted positions in administration that he felt were redundant because the City already had employees for these functions, such as Grants Coordinator, Accountant and Public Information Office. Mr. Thornburg explained that the Public Information Office position used to be centralized but there was so much for the person to do that it made sense for her to be in the Parks and Recreation office. Mr. Nesbitt remarked that Parks and Recreation was very heavy on marketing whereas other departments were not.

Mr. Timiraos asked for a cost comparison for lawn mowing and tree services that had been contracted out versus services done by staff. Mr. Thornburg said they had contracted out the median mowing and a few parks. Ms. Rynard stated the cost for the City to perform the work was a little higher, but she noted that the City employees did much more than just mow the parks they maintained. Contract mowing cost approximately \$69 per acre and City mowing cost approximately \$76 per acre.

Mr. Williams said the concerns about centralized/decentralized services could be effectively addressed by developing a matrix overlay. He said it generated very good efficiencies because it ensured they were getting the best product out of an employee. Mr. Thornburg said they were doing a little bit of both now.

Mr. Williams asked for examples of how they had saved money or improved customer service through the You Can Make a Difference program. Mr. Thornburg said he could send Board members a list. Ms. Rynard noted the bag-less trash carts, the truck used in tree services and the winches on chippers were all suggestions that had come from on-line staff.

Ms. Rynard informed Mr. Silva that the Parks and Recreation Department collected its own trash. She noted that they not only picked up trash but also performed several

other duties such as picking up loose litter, trimming suckers from trees, raking playground material, and cleaning drinking fountains and grills.

Mr. Williams thought it would be helpful to know the number of individuals using the programs to know the real value of the programs.

Mr. Silva asked how the fees were costed out for calculating cost recovery. He also wanted to know to what extent some of the programs were competing with the private sector. Mr. Thornburg said the City Commission was currently considering what factors to include under the program costs. He explained that right now, they only included things directly associated with the program, including all employee costs.

5. Communication to the Commission

None

Other Items

Mr. Nesbitt asked Ms. Singleton-Taylor to share with the Board the information she had presented to the City Commission the previous day. He also requested a summary of the status and the Commission's response.

Mr. Nesbitt felt they must look at the capital improvement budget and the Business Enterprises Department in the general fund budget. He requested details of the "other government" line item in the budget.

Mr. Williams wanted to discuss the analysis of the cost impact of the new contracts for Fire and Police. He also wanted to discuss more aggressive rewards for cost saving ideas. Mr. Herbst said they already had an incentive program and HR had been tasked with drafting a recommendation for how to implement it.

Chair Page had drafted a document called "Budgeting for Outcomes and Quality Management" for a quality assurance program that she wanted to discuss at their next meeting. She distributed copies of the document to Board members and agreed to email it as well.

Mr. Mason reported they had drafted a list of the Board's recommendations that the City Manager and staff would address at their next meeting.

Mr. Silva asked about the actuarial report. Mr. Mason said the report should be available on June 1.

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With no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at **8:03** p.m.

Next meeting: May 27, 2010

[Minutes prepared by J. Opperlee, Prototype, Inc.]