

From: [Robert Novatin](#)
To: [BCC Agenda Comments](#)
Subject: Public Comment Submission for May 20, 2025 BOCC Meeting – Robert Novatin
Date: Sunday, May 11, 2025 3:17:54 PM
Attachments: [my questions.pdf](#)

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To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Robert Joseph Novatin, and I am submitting public comment for the May 20, 2025, Board of County Commissioners meeting. As someone directly impacted by the opioid epidemic and deeply concerned with public transparency, I've taken time to review the full agenda and prepared the attached/public statement.

Please include my comment as part of the official record and forward to the appropriate commissioners and departments.

Thank you for your time and commitment to community voices.

Respectfully,

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Public Comment & Accountability Review for the May 20, 2025 Pinellas County Board of Commissioners Meeting *Prepared and Submitted by Robert Joseph Novatin*

INTRODUCTION

My name is **Robert Joseph Novatin**, and I submit this report as a concerned citizen, a person in long-term recovery from opioid addiction, and someone deeply invested in the fair, transparent, and ethical use of public funds across Pinellas County. I may not have formal titles or credentials, but I do have lived experience, eyes that read every line, and a voice ready to be heard.

The May 20, 2025 Board agenda is not just packed—it's strategically dense. Below are issues of serious concern that demand transparency, public oversight, and accountability. This submission aims to support your leadership in making ethical, community-first decisions.

1. Opioid Abatement Funding (Items 33 & 34)

- As someone personally affected by the opioid crisis, I ask:
 - What percentage of these funds are going to direct services vs. administration and executive pay?
 - What accountability exists for organizations like Operation PAR and Recovery Epicenter Foundation?
 - Will individuals with lived experience have any role in guiding or reviewing these programs?

Let's not let this class action money—**my class action money**—become another line item lost in bureaucracy.

2. Cyber Response Legal Services Amendment (Item 38)

- You raised the self-insured retention from **\$250,000 to \$500,000**. Legal billing rates increased to \$350/hour for partners.
- Where is the transparency on past incidents and billables?
- Why now, and who benefits from these escalated rates?

Cyber defense is vital, but cost inflation with vague justification isn't.

3. County Asset Disposal Audit (Item 19)

- This item mentions reconciling “**scrapped, junked, stolen, unaccounted, and cannibalized**” county assets.
- You state the fiscal impact is *unknown*.

I respectfully request a full audit and public explanation. If assets are disappearing, the public deserves to know why and who is responsible.

4. Waiver of Indigent Care Fee (Item 35)

- \$25 million bond for St. Mark Village, a nonprofit.
- You're waiving a fee designed to support medically indigent residents.

If nonprofits want public funds and tax exemptions, they must contribute to public health obligations. This fee waiver sets a dangerous precedent.

5. Housing Finance Bonds (Items 24, 25, 39–42)

- Millions in bonds are being issued for multifamily projects.
- How long are affordability covenants in place?
- Are any of these properties being managed by for-profit entities through shell organizations?

Housing is a human right. Bond-financed properties should stay affordable and accessible.

6. Cyber Risk Assessment Contract (Item 23)

- A contract valued at **\$499,325** is being awarded to CliftonLarsonAllen LLP.
- 23 firms applied—what transparency exists on scoring, and will findings be publicly released?

Let's not confuse "security" with secrecy.

7. Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) - Tarpon Springs (Item 51)

- You're declaring blight and transferring redevelopment authority.
- What guarantees exist that low-income or long-term residents won't be displaced?
- Who benefits most from this redevelopment and TIF structure?

CRAAs must be for **community resilience**, not gentrification.

CLOSING STATEMENT

You don't need a degree to care about your county. You don't need a title to speak truth. You don't need a salary to notice when something stinks.

I'm standing up not just for myself, but for everyone who's been told they don't belong in rooms like this. I've read your contracts. I've followed the money. And I'll keep showing up, because when no one else does—I **will**.

Thank you for your time, and for the opportunity to speak truth to power.

Respectfully submitted,

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