

RESOLUTION NO. 2025- 23

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA AUTHORIZING THE EXPENDITURE OF COMMISSIONER DISTRICT OFFICE BUDGET FUNDS ON CERTAIN COMMUNITY EVENTS PURSUANT TO PINELLAS COUNTY CODE § 2-145; MAKING LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS OF PUBLIC PURPOSE SUPPORTING SAME; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, Section 2-145 of the Pinellas County Code (the “Code”) authorizes the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (“Board”) to expend public funds for “incentives, awards and recruitments,” listing multiple examples of such authorized expenditures; and

WHEREAS, Section 2-145(c)(11) of the Code states that the Board may specifically approve other expenditures similar to the nature of expenditures expressly enumerated; and

WHEREAS, the Board wishes to specifically approve the expenditure of funds in support of certain non-public civic and community events under certain circumstances;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA, AT A DULY ASSEMBLED MEETING HELD ON THIS 25TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2025, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.

A. The Board makes the following legislative findings:

- i. The expenditure of public funds to provide financial support to certain non-public civic or community events by means that include but are not limited to purchasing tickets, tables, or sponsorships in compliance with the policy below serves a proper and valid public purpose for the following reasons:
 - a) Participation in and support of such community events by Commissioners fosters public engagement and facilitates open and honest communication between elected officials and constituents, resulting in the valuable exchange of ideas regarding community policy goals, priorities, and needs.
 - b) Outreach at such community events demonstrates the Commissioners’ commitment to the causes that matter to the community and can raise

awareness of and attract more support to important local issues.

- c) Attendance at community events provides Commissioners the opportunity to counter mistrust or loss of faith in local government, and to correct misinformation about local government and its policies in an informal setting, ultimately making it more likely that residents will trust and engage in the democratic processes that impact their lives.
 - d) Such community events are designed to primarily benefit the community, and therefore by nature benefit the public, or a specific local sector of the public.
- ii. These civic or community events are similar in nature to the other expenditures outlined in Section 2-145(c) Pinellas County Code in that they engender a spirit of community cooperation, understanding, and goodwill and may also serve to recognize and encourage significant contributions to the welfare of the County by individuals or organizations.
 - iii. The Board further finds that any private benefit accruing from such funding is only incidental and is outweighed by the primary public benefit, and the requirements set forth in the policy below provide controls to guard against abuse and assure accountability to the taxpayers and the public.

SECTION 2. COMMUNITY EVENT EXPENSE POLICY.

Effective as of the date indicated below, the Board adopts the following policy, pursuant to Section 2-145(c)(11) of the Pinellas County Code:

- A. The Board of County Commissioners specifically authorizes the expenditure of County Commissioner District Office budget funds in support of a Civic Club or Community Event including but not limited to sponsorships or seats at such event, at the discretion of each Commissioner, subject to the limitations set forth herein.
- B. “Civic Club or Community Event” means a private community event hosted by a not-for-profit group or organization that has as one of its primary purposes the provision of services to the local community for educational, charitable, scientific, literary, or community welfare purposes, as evidenced by the organization’s governing documents and activities in the community. While not required, it is preferred that the host of such an Event be an exempt organization qualified as charitable under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

C. “Civic Club or Community Event” specifically EXCLUDES:

- a. Partisan events, including events presented or hosted by a political party or affiliated organization, or in support of or against any political position, issue, candidate, or elected official.
 - b. Religious events, including events presented or hosted by any church or religious organization, or in support of a church, religious organization, or religious personage. Notwithstanding this, a non-religious organization hosting a non-religious event at a church venue will not be excluded from funding if they otherwise meet the requirements above.
 - c. Entertainment events, including but not limited to sporting events, theater productions, concerts or other music events, and festivals, unless the entertainment is ancillary to the event’s primary purpose (such as for a charity fundraiser).
 - d. Any event that is primarily a profit-making event for any person or entity.
- D. Expenditures under this policy must not exceed \$1,000 for any individual event unless a public policy purpose for a higher amount is documented in writing by the Commissioner.
- E. Any Commissioner expending funds under this policy must, at the reasonable request of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, provide a written statement explaining how that specific expenditure meets the requirements of this policy and/or the public purpose objectives stated in the legislative findings above.
- F. This Resolution will be incorporated into the County Administrator’s policy for expenditures required by Section 2-145(d) Pinellas County Code; and all expenditures approved under this Resolution will be placed on the Board’s consent agenda on a quarterly basis and filed with the clerk of the circuit court for placement in board records pursuant to Section 2-145(e) of the Pinellas County Code.

Commissioner Flowers offered the foregoing Resolution and moved its adoption, which was seconded by Commissioner Eggers, and upon roll call the vote was:

AYES: Scott, Eggers, Flowers, Latvala, Nowicki, Peters, and Scherer.

NAYS: None.

Absent not voting: None.

APPROVED AS TO FORM

By: Donald S. Crowell
Office of the County Attorney