

Pinellas County

*333 Chestnut Street, Palm Room
Clearwater, FL 33756*



Minutes - Final

Thursday, June 22, 2023

9:30 A.M.

Budget Information Session

Palm Room

Board of County Commissioners

Janet C. Long, Chair

Kathleen Peters, Vice-Chair

Dave Eggers

René Flowers

Charlie Justice

Chris Latvala

Brian Scott

ROLL CALL - 9:31 A.M.

Present 6 - Chair Janet C. Long, Vice-Chair Kathleen Peters, Commissioner Dave Eggers,
 Commissioner René Flowers, Commissioner Chris Latvala, and Commissioner Brian Scott

Absent 1 - Commissioner Charlie Justice

Others Present: Barry A. Burton, County Administrator; Don Crowell, Chief Assistant County Attorney;
 and Katie Poviones, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

1. Human Services

Referring to a document titled *Human Services*, Budget and Financial Management Analyst Toni Merrill, Office of Management and Budget, reviewed the Department's budget summary, Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget drivers, topics for discussion, decision packages, and proposed changes to user fees. Human Services Director Karen Yatchum introduced Business Services Division Director Clark Scott and noted that he will be retiring this year after 30 years of employment with the County; and that Section Manager Keri Vizandiou will be succeeding Mr. Clark after working with him for many years.

Ms. Yatchum provided information regarding the Department's work plan, performance measures, and FY23 accomplishments, indicating that staff remains committed to several high profile multi-year work plan items; that staff acquired over \$7 million in benefits for veterans in the past year; and that the Department's grant-funded Street Medicine Van has provided critical lifesaving services to 1600 unsheltered individuals in Pinellas; whereupon, she presented a video showcasing the van's work in the community.

In response to queries by the members, Ms. Yatchum, with input from Mr. Burton, provided clarifying comments regarding long-term funding sources for three positions proposed in the budget to support the Department's efforts on the Opioid Settlement funds, impacts of legislative changes regarding Medicaid eligibility on participation in the Department's programs, the Department's efforts to increase enrollment in the County's Health Care for Homeless Program, and other topics.

2. Health Department

Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County Director Dr. Ulyee Choe referred to a document titled *Health Department Support* and discussed the partnership between the Department of Health and the County, the Department's top health priorities, FY23 accomplishments, and the budget summary. He elaborated on the Department's progress towards placing a nurse in every school, opioid overdose prevention, and capital projects, including plans to relocate the St. Petersburg headquarters; whereupon, Mr. Burton noted that the capital project expenses will not be a part of the County's internal capital funds, as the Department saves up money to pay for its own building repair costs.

3. Office of Human Rights

Referring to a document titled *Office of Human Rights*, Budget and Financial Management Analyst Belinda Amundson, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), reviewed the Department's budget, FY24 budget drivers, and topics for discussion; whereupon, Office of Human Rights Director Jeffery Lorick provided information regarding the Department's purpose and FY23 accomplishments, including the continued support of County departments, grant procurements, the recovery of \$36,628 on behalf of Pinellas County residents via the Department's wage theft program, and ongoing employee education and learning.

In response to queries by Chair Long, OMB Director Chris Rose, with input from Mr. Lorick, provided clarifying comments regarding the Department's ability to secure federal grant funds in FY24 for various expenses.

4. Emergency Management

Referring to a document titled *Emergency Management*, Budget and Financial Management Analyst Toni Merrill, Office of Management and Budget, reviewed the Department's budget summary, FY24 budget drivers, topics for discussion, and decision packages. Thereupon, Emergency Management Director Catherine Perkins provided information regarding the Department's FY23 accomplishments, work plan, and performance measures. Responding to queries by Commissioners Scott and Eggers, Ms. Perkins elaborated on the proposed decision packages and projections for this year's hurricane season.

5. Animal Services

Referring to a document titled *Pinellas County Animal Services*, Budget and Financial Management Analyst Belinda Amundson, Office of Management and Budget, reviewed the Department's budget summary, FY24 budget drivers, topics for discussion, and proposed fee changes. She noted that the number of dogs being surrendered to Animal Services has increased to levels not seen since before the COVID-19 pandemic; that the Department is opening an additional facility to shelter dogs due to the increased population and a reduction in available space in the main shelter caused by renovations; and that decreases in animal populations are due to the Department's concerted adoption efforts. Animal Services Director Doug Brightwell elaborated on renovations to the main facility and provided information regarding the Department's FY23 accomplishments, performance measures, and workplan initiatives. In response to queries by Commissioner Scott and Chair Long, Mr. Brightwell provided clarifying comments regarding the Department's mobile medical units, the declining number of cats being received by Animal Services, and other topics.

6. Safety and Emergency Services

Referring to a document titled *Safety and Emergency Services*, Budget and Financial Management Analyst John Ondrovic, Office of Management and Budget, reviewed the Department's funding sources, budget summary, FY24 budget drivers, and topics for discussion; whereupon, Mr. Burton, with input from Safety and Emergency Services Director Jim Fogarty, provided information regarding an increase of \$8.8 million or 13.5% to the Department's Ambulance Contract, noting that staff predicts for the contract to increase in cost by another \$8 million next year due to rising call volume, the cost of medical supplies, and changes to employee wages.

Mr. Ondrovic elaborated on the Department's potential First Responder System enhancement requests and the associated millage rates that could be implemented to include the enhancements. Responding to queries by Chair Long, Mr. Fogarty provided clarifying comments regarding the enhancement request associated with the Medic 52 Safety Harbor pilot program, including its timeline and purpose. Thereupon, Mr. Ondrovic discussed the Department's FY24 decision packages and proposed user fee changes.

Mr. Fogarty discussed the Department's FY23 accomplishments, performance measures, and work plan. Responding to comments and queries by the members, he provided information regarding employee turnover, efficiency improvements to emergency response calls, and the First Care Ambulance Program.

7. Office of Management and Budget

Deviating from the agenda, Mr. Burton indicated that at this time, the members could address the General Fund and General Government item scheduled for tomorrow's meeting in place of the Office of Management and Budget item, which was moved to a previous meeting; whereupon, the members agreed to do so.

General Fund and General Government

Management and Budget Manager Jim Abernathy, Office of Management and Budget, provided information regarding the various primary governmental functions and funding sources pertaining to the General Fund and reviewed the budget summary, FY24 budget drivers, and topics for discussion. In response to queries by Chair Long, Mr. Burton indicated that recent significant cost increases, such as the mandated raise to the County's contributions to the Florida Retirement System, will be covered by the General Fund; that staff is working to balance the budget amidst rising costs while identifying opportunities to utilize one-time funding via reserves for non-recurring expenditures; and that internal discussions are taking place to find ways to reduce turnover and recognize the County's skilled employees.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Burton provided clarifying comments regarding previously approved millages for the Transportation Trust Fund to complete road, bridge, and sidewalk improvements; whereupon, Mr. Abernathy provided information regarding the General Government category's funding and purpose and reviewed its FY24 budget drivers, topics for discussion, and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fund expenditures which are included in the General Government budget.

In response to queries by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Burton, with input from Mr. Rose, provided clarifying comments regarding the use of ARPA funds, including a timeline for their utilization to fund projects and requirements for the funds to be used.

Deviating from the agenda, Chair Long remarked on new dues for the Mayor's Council, and discussion ensued regarding the Council's funding sources and whether to comply with the Council's request to increase the BCC's contribution from \$400 to \$1,000; whereupon, the members agreed to maintain the budgeted amount of \$400.

ADJOURNMENT - 12:07 P.M.