

Pinellas County

*333 Chestnut Street
Clearwater, FL 33756*



Minutes - Final

Wednesday, June 15, 2022

9:30 A.M.

Budget Information Session

Palm Room

Board of County Commissioners

Budget Information Session

Charlie Justice, Chairman

Janet C. Long, Vice-Chair

Dave Eggers

Rene Flowers

Pat Gerard

Kathleen Peters

Karen Williams Seel

ROLL CALL - 9:33 A.M.

Present 7 - Chairman Charlie Justice, Vice-Chair Janet C. Long, Commissioner Dave Eggers, Commissioner Rene Flowers, Commissioner Pat Gerard, Commissioner Kathleen Peters, and Commissioner Karen Williams Seel

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

1. Introduction and Budget Overview

Mr. Burton indicated that the budget sessions are intended to provide the members an opportunity for an in-depth budget review and discussion with staff in order to set the framework for the next year's budget priorities; and that the final budget recommendation, scheduled to be presented on July 19, will be reflective of the members' feedback on the matter. He noted that the priorities considered over the last several months include implementing the Coordinated Access Model for mental health services, providing competitive compensation for the County employees, addressing infrastructure such as roads and bridges, and keeping property taxes as low as possible.

Office of Management and Budget Director Chris Rose underscored the importance of the annual budget policy document adoption and discussed the budget components, preparation process, and this year's budget session format; whereupon, he remarked that much of the upcoming discussion may be devoted to the General Fund, noting that it is the County's largest fund; and that property tax is its single largest source of revenue.

Pinellas County Property Appraiser Mike Twitty referred to a document titled *FY23 Budget Information Session Kickoff* and discussed the property value trends, taxable value of new construction, residential housing market and sale statistics, active listings, residential homestead vs. non-homestead properties, the "recapture rule", and informational resources for the public. He indicated that the just/market property value for the County is up over \$179 billion and taxable value is up to \$110 billion for 2022, which is an upward increase of 20% and 12%, respectively, from last year; and that single-family home sales hit a new high watermark with approximately 16,0700 homes sold at a median price of \$345,000. Responding to queries by the members, he noted the challenges relating to local first-time home buyers resulting from the supply pressure created by the continuing influx of out-of-state cash buyers.

2. FY23 - FY28 Budget Forecast

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Chris Rose pointed out that while budget forecasts have in the past been presented in the month of February, the forecast is now being presented as part of the budget sessions due to additional data available later in the year.

OMB Budget and Financial Management Analyst Jim Abernathy referred to a PowerPoint presentation and a document, both titled *Budget Forecast: FY23 - FY28*, and presented the budget forecast, including its purpose and development, the forecast document, local economic outlook, potential impacts to the forecast, and the forecasts specifically for General Fund, Tourist Development Tax Fund, and Transportation Trust Fund; whereupon, he responded to queries by the members regarding fund forecasts, reserve levels, and other matters, and Mr. Burton provided input.

3. Utilities

Referring to a document titled *Pinellas County Utilities*, Budget and Financial Management Analyst Veronica Ettel, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), discussed the Department's purpose, proposed user fee changes for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 2023), total budget summary and FY 2023 request, revenues and expenditures, staffing, various initiatives, budgets by program, and the budget forecast. She noted that one of the budget recommendations is to waive a reclaimed water meter installation fee for existing system users, as part of the Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) project; and that the recommendation is based on the availability of funds resulting from the American Rescue Plan Act grant partially funding the Water and Sewer programs. Capital Improvement Program Budget Manager Jacqueline Trainer referred to the aforementioned document and provided the program highlights.

Utilities Director Megan Ross discussed the Department's priorities, key initiatives, and accomplishments, including major projects and programs, efforts in efficient project delivery, improvement in customer satisfaction, support of employee leadership and development, and other matters; whereupon, she noted that the Department sought and received one of the largest infrastructure funding grant awards received in its recent history.

In response to comments and queries by the members, Ms. Ross discussed the purpose of reclaimed water metering, the proposed meter installation fee waiver, private sewer system inspection, addressing sanitary sewer overflow issues, customer bill payment options, and other matters, and Mr. Burton provided information regarding reallocating staffing resources from the OMB and the Department of Administrative Services to Utilities to better fit the Department's needs.

4. Solid Waste

Office of Management and Budget Director Chris Rose referred to a document titled *Solid Waste Department* and discussed the Department's purpose, budget summary, staffing changes, proposed user fee increases, and potential impacts of Waste-to-Energy service fee agreement renegotiation with Covanta and the expiration of the Energy Power Purchase Agreement with Duke Energy on the budget; whereupon, with input by Mr. Burton, he responded to queries by Commissioner Eggers, and Capital Improvement Program Budget Manager Jacqueline Trainer provided the program highlights.

Solid Waste Department Director Paul Sacco reviewed the Department's accomplishments, performance measures, reserves, the goal of zero waste to landfill by 2050, and other matters, noting the efforts to utilize every opportunity to increase revenues and reduce costs in light of the expiring Power Purchase agreement in 2024. Responding to queries by the members, he provided information pertaining to municipal recycling, waste volume shifts, recycling contamination, incineration of electronics, recyclables market, and Materials Recovery Facility; whereupon, Messrs. Burton and Rose provided input regarding the Department's sustainability initiatives, and Mr. Rose updated the members on the Lealman Solid Waste program, and discussion ensued.

Meeting Recessed: 12:35 P.M.

Meeting Reconvened: 1:03 P.M.

5. Communications

Referring to a document titled *Pinellas County Communications*, Budget and Financial Management Analyst Yana Matiyuk, Office of Management and Budget, discussed the Department's purpose and budget summary, noting that the major proposed budget increase is attributed to personal services, growing cost of which may present future challenges to the Department budget.

Communications Department Director Barbra Hernandez discussed the Department's accomplishments, performance measures, and work plan strategies, highlighting the successful efforts in continuing community connection and support, development of a new pre-registration form for public participation in the Commission meetings, ongoing crisis and emergency communications response, virtual renter education program, the Department's website update, tax-saving solutions utilizing the latest technological trends and repurposing equipment, and more; whereupon, Chair Justice expressed appreciation of the Department staff's great support of the community events.

6. County Attorney

Referring to a document titled *County Attorney Office*, Budget and Financial Management Analyst Yana Matiyuk, Office of Management and Budget, discussed the Department's purpose, budget summary, and the FY23 budget request, noting that the major proposed increase is attributed to personal services; and that there is a potential for a significant budget impact associated with Senate Bill 620, should substantial litigation materialize, requiring hiring of additional staff.

Chief Assistant County Attorney Don Crowell provided information regarding the County Attorney's Office representation responsibilities, recent staffing changes, and salary adjustments related to market pressures; whereupon, he responded to queries concerning staff retention, recent trends in the law profession, various areas of law covered by the Office, basis for the budget increase, and related matters.

ADJOURNMENT - 1:32 P.M.