



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

117 WEST DUVAL STREET, SUITE 425
4TH FLOOR, CITY HALL
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202
904-255-5151

FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARING 5 MINUTES

August 21, 2025
9:00 a.m.

Location: City Council Chamber, City Hall

In attendance: Committee Members Arias (Chair), Howland (Vice Chair), Salem, Diamond, J. Carlucci, Lahnen and Pittman; Council president Carrico; Council Members Boylan, Gay, Carlucci, Gaffney Jr., Johnson, Miller and White

Also: Kim Taylor, Brian Parks, Phillip Peterson, Heather Reber - Council Auditor's Office; Mary Staffopoulos - OGC; Mike Weinstein - Mayor's Office; Angela Moyer - Budget Office; Colleen Hampsey - Council Research

Meeting Convened: 9:00 a.m.

Chairman Arias convened the meeting, and the attendees introduced themselves for the record. He reviewed the rules of procedures for the budget hearings. Ms. Taylor reported that after the fourth hearing, the budget stands at +\$ 6,108,510.

There was discussion about the progress taken thus far, including the actions taken on Telehealth and the food insecurity program for homebound seniors. Council Member Lahnen asked about the length of those service contracts. Mr. Weinstein, Mayor's Office, said the contracts run through March 2026, but are funded through October 1, 2025. Council Member Diamond advocated for a standard length of all contracts aligned with the City's fiscal year. Council Member Pittman asked about the meals for seniors and what will be offered with the funds approved by the committee. Council Member Carlucci spoke in opposition to reducing the millage rate, providing historical context about when it was done previously and how that impacted services.

The committee revisited the discussion about proposed salaries for the Mayor's Office.

Motion/2nd (Howland/Diamond): to cut the funding for the listed part-time positions and redirect that amount to the meals for seniors' program.

Council Member Salem talked about how the Mayor's overall budget must be balanced but individual funds can run at a deficit to be made up through other departments.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Howland): to amend the motion and reduce the overall salary line by \$135,000.

Approved 6-1 (Pittman in opposition)

Council Member Pittman spoke in opposition to the reductions to the Mayor's budget, particularly for her staff salaries. Mr. Weinstein concurred.

Motion/2nd (Howland/Diamond): to approve the motion as amended, with a \$135,000 reduction to Mayor's salaries redirected to the Meals on Wheels/Food Insecurity Program. **Approved 6-1** (Pittman in opposition)

Debt Affordability Presentation by Finance Department

Mr. Cicero, Treasurer, presented an overview of the Debt Affordability Study used to explain the relative impact of borrowing over time. Mr. Cicero said that all debt ratios are currently within targets. He spoke about other cities and counties as comparisons. Council Member Lahnen extended kudos to the Treasury staff. Council Member Howland noted that there is roughly \$3000 of debt per resident.

CIP/Debt Management Fund

Ms. Taylor reviewed the Debt Management Fund, and expressed concern related to debt funded projects. Council Member Salem mentioned large projects on the horizon, like a new jail.

Auditor's recommendations:

1. To correct the prior all years budget for the Capital Improvements on Schedule B4 by \$12,000,000 to \$2,110,209,290 to reflect Ordinance 2025-362-E and adjust all corresponding amounts.

2. Increase the amended All Years Budget for the City's Debt Management Fund in Section 1.7 of the Budget Ordinance by \$12,000,000 to reflect the impact of recommendation #1 above.

These recommendations will have no impact on Special Council Contingency.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Howland): to approve the Auditor's recommendations. **Approved unanimously.**

Better Jacksonville Plan Fund

The various projects and programs funded by The Better Jacksonville Plan are administered by the City of Jacksonville, the JEA, and the Jacksonville Transportation Authority in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Art in Public Places

Ms. Taylor reviewed this fund, for which 50% of the art auction sales proceeds derived from the Joan Mitchell Art shall be held in this fund pursuant to Ordinance 2018-193-E. The annual interest earnings on the principal amount of \$1,404,000 shall be appropriated each year in the annual budget for the maintenance of the City's public art.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Art in Public Places Trust Fund

Ms. Taylor explained that 0.75% of the budgeted cost for vertical construction of a public facility is appropriated to this fund.

Auditor's recommendation: that the transfer from the General Fund/GSD be increased by \$135,000 to correctly account for the Art in Public Place allocation for FY 2025/26 related to CIP projects with vertical construction to an amount of \$327,273. This will then increase the amount for administration of art and maintenance of art to \$32,727 each and increase the capital amount for public art to \$261,819. This will have a negative impact to the special council contingency of \$135,000.

Motion/2nd (Howland/Salem): to approve the Auditor's recommendation. **Approved unanimously.**

There was discussion about pausing/cancelling/relocating the art exhibit planned for the courthouse lawn, opposed by members of the judiciary because of security risks. The committee talked about the art in public places selection, and the level of council control over the process.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Heather Reber, Auditor's Office, spoke about the CIP.

Auditor's recommendation #1 Debt Management Fund funded general capital improvement projects: that the de-appropriated amount of \$950,000 for the Railroad Crossings project be removed from the budget due to there not being that amount available in debt to de-appropriate within this project. To offset the increase in Debt Management Funds, we recommend that the Cecil Mega Site Rail Spur project in the amount of \$1 million be funded from the Cecil Commerce Center Fund instead of Debt Management Funds. This will reduce borrowing by a net \$50,000 (reduction of \$1 million in debt for Cecil Mega Site Rail Spur offset by an increase of \$950,000 for the Railroad Crossings by undoing de-appropriation of Debt Management Funds). This will have no impact on total project cost, special council contingency, or operating reserves.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Howland): to approve Auditor's recommendation #1. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor's recommendation #2 Prior Years Revenue: these projects are not eligible mobility fee projects or there is not available funding in the proposed mobility zone. If City Council intends to fund these projects, we recommend the projects be funded with Debt Management Funds. Collins Road/Blanding to Pine Verde, 11th St, 12th St Connector, Townsend Rd. New Sidewalk, Duval Rd Sidewalk, Main Street Bridge Pedestrian Ramp. This will reduce the Prior Year Revenue funding source amount by \$4,654,620 and increase Debt Management Funding by the same amount. This will have no impact on total project cost, special council contingency, or operating reserves.

Motion/2nd (Howland/Salem): to approve Auditor's recommendation #2. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor's recommendation #3 Grant Funding: that the 5-year General Project Schedule correctly reflects the appropriated amount of \$3,310,563 for the CDBG Right of Way and Stormwater Maintenance project as approved by Ordinance 2025-389-E. This will have no impact on total borrowing, special council contingency, or operating reserves.

Motion/2nd (Salem/Lahnen): to approve Auditor's recommendation #3. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor's recommendation #4 Pay Go Transfers from other Funds: The proposed budget includes using \$1,160,347 of Solid Waste Facilities Mitigation funds (FD 43301) while only \$160,347 is available and includes \$1,533,716 in Solid Waste Class III Mitigation funds (FD 43302) while no funds are available at this time for the area. We recommend the amounts not available totaling \$1 million be de-appropriated for the Solid Waste Facilities Mitigation fund (FD 43301) and the budgeted remaining funds for the Solid Waste Class III Mitigation Funds (FD 43302) be placed in a cash carryover. To offset the reduction in Solid Waste Mitigation Funds, debt funding for the Chaffee Road project needs to be increased by \$2,533,716 if City Council determines that this project needs the additional funding. This will have no impact on total project cost, special council contingency, or operating reserves.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Salem): to approve Auditor's recommendation #4. **Approved unanimously.**

Motion/2nd (Salem/Lahnen): to add \$14 million of debt to FY 25/26 for UF Health Capital improvements. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor's recommendation #5 Pay-Go: Transfer from Better Jacksonville Plan: that the Hodges Blvd Improvements project funding of \$335,000 be removed from the capital improvement plan to reflect the intent of Ordinance 2025-337-E, which fully funded this project, removed this project from the BJP Work Program, and reduced the planned FY 2025/26 BJP project funding to an amount of \$78,354,000. This project will also need to be added to the Projects Removed list in the CIP book. This will have no impact on borrowing, special council contingency, operating reserves, and will be consistent current planned funding for the project.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Howland): to approve Auditor's recommendation #5. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor's recommendation #6 Pay-Go: Transfer from Better Jacksonville Plan: that the BJP Work Program be updated to remove the Halsema Road Extension project from the list of eligible projects funded by the Better Jacksonville Trust Fund. Language will need to be included within the budget ordinance and a revised list of eligible projects attached. Additionally, with the project listing being updated, we recommend the amounts for the other project changes also be reflected. This recommendation is a schedule change only and will have no impact the total project cost, proposed borrowing, special council contingency, or operating reserves.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Howland): to approve Auditor's recommendation #6. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor's recommendation #7: that the 5-year schedule be updated to remove the "Current Year" column and add those amounts to the "Prev. Approved" column to show a total previously approved amount. This column was supposed to show changes made during the fiscal year, but it is inconsistent and either shows changes made during the fiscal year or the initial approved budget.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Howland): to approve Auditor's recommendation #7. **Approved unanimously.**

Council Member Arias asked about funds for the Symphony and improvements to Jacoby Hall.

Motion/2nd (Arias/Lahnen): to switch \$500,000 from operational to Jacoby Happ CIP for ADA related items and add \$500,000 to FY 26/27. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor's recommendation #8: that Fire Station #66 – New be removed from the 5-year Schedule. This project is fully funded, and the schedule shows no additional capital funding for the five years in this capital improvement plan. This will have no impact on project funding, total borrowing, special council contingency, or operating reserves.

#9: correcting the Previous Funding amounts on the 5-year General Capital schedule. This will have no impact on project funding, total borrowing, or special council contingency.

#10: that the Acree Road project funding in FY 26/27 be reduced by \$1,250,000, from \$11,000,000 to \$9,750,000 to keep the project cost at \$15,000,000 when combined with previously authorized amount of \$1,500,000. The \$3,750,000 proposed in FY 25/26 is for a 25% City matching contribution to a total construction cost of \$15,000,000. This will have no impact on borrowing, special council contingency, or operating reserves.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Howland): to approve Auditor's recommendations #8,9,10. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor's recommendation #11: the Emerald Trail – Hogans Creek to Riverwalk project include \$4,000,000 in debt funding in FY 28/29 on the 5-year schedule. This was inadvertently removed. This will have no impact on special council contingency or operating reserves and will restore the total project cost to \$30,000,000.

This item was tabled to allow staff from Groundworks time to arrive for the meeting. Kay Ehas, CEO of Groundwork, explained the prioritization of portions of the Emerald Trail, in light of the lost federal grant funds. Council Member Howland encouraged a modification of the plan based on available funds.

Motion/2nd (J. Carlucci/Lahnen): to approve Auditor's recommendation #11. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor's recommendation #12: correcting the expense account for the Household Hazardous Waste Facility from Other Construction Costs to Engineering and Design. This will have no impact on project funding, total borrowing, special council contingency, or operating reserves.

#13 combining the UF Health Trauma Center project with the UF Health Capital Improvements project. There is one contract and should be maintained as one CIP project. This will have no impact on project funding, total borrowing, special council contingency, or operating reserves.

#14 making changes to the CIP Book listed.

Motion/2nd (Howland/Lahnen): to approve Auditor's recommendations #12,13,14. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor recommendation #15: projects be added to the projects with a substantial change list in the CIP book as well as the Council District funding pursuant to the Community Benefits Agreement for those that are added back to the CIP. The Bay Street Corridor Utility Relocation project needs to be moved from the Projects with Substantial Change list to the Projects Remove list.

#16 correcting the project named Seat Replacement – 121 Financial to Seat Replacement – Baseball Stadium. This will have no impact on project funding, borrowing, special council contingency, or operating reserves.

#17 request the ability to correct project names, project numbers, and prior years funding amounts for schedule presentation purposes as necessary for continuity if subsequently discovered during our review. None of these corrections will impact project funding or the intended purposes of the project.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Howland): to approve Auditor recommendations #15, 16, 17. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor's recommendation re Community Benefits Agreement: Council District funding and the \$4 million included in non-departmental expenses for Out East funding be moved to a new "all years fund" so that the funding can automatically carry forward each year consistent with the Community Benefits Agreement.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Howland): to approve Auditor's CBA recommendation. **Approved unanimously.**

CIP District Projects

Ms. Reber reviewed the list of council district CIP projects.

District 1 - Arlington Sportsplex. CP Carrico explained the project. There was discussion about the location. CP Carrico spoke to the anticipated positive impact on the neighborhood.

Motion/2nd (Carrico/Howland): to move \$2 million from FY 26/27 to FY 25/26, bringing total planned in FY 25/26 up to \$4 million and funded with debt. **Approved unanimously.**

District 2 - Close, Cancel, and Repurpose funds for the Baisden Rd. Bicycle Blvd. project. Council Member Gay talked about the need for the reallocation of \$1,866,857 towards other various sidewalk, resurfacing and drainage projects.

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Lahnen): to approve the reallocation. **Approved unanimously.**

Council Member Gay proposed another CIP reallocation from Nungezer Road and Baisden Rd. Bicycle Blvd, with new additional debt, for an improvement project for the Starratt and Yellow Bluff Road intersection. The committee opted to save that consideration for meeting 6.

Lunch recess 12:04 pm to 12:45 pm.

District 3 - No Projects Added that were Funded in Prior CIP Plans and No Projects with Changes.

District 4 - **Motion/2nd** (Carrico/Lahnen): to remove Beachwood Park from CIP which was planned for FY 28/29. **Approved unanimously.**

District 5 - Council Member Joe Carlucci talked about improvements to the Southside Tennis Complex.

Motion/2nd (J. Carlucci/Howland): to add Southside Tennis Complex of \$6,292,210 to FY 25/26 using capacity from other completed projects, others that had available funding, and \$750,000 of District Council member Community Benefits Agreement funds. **Approved unanimously.**

Motion/2nd (J. Carlucci/Lahnen): to add \$3.5 million to Southside Tennis Complex bringing total \$9,792,210 for FY 25/26 from the Fuller Warren Bridge Park. **Approved unanimously.**

District 6 - No Projects Added that were Funded in Prior CIP Plans and No Projects with Changes.

District 7 - There was discussion about the MaliVai Washington Tennis project and library structural repairs. This item was tabled to permit time for Tim Rogers, Library Director, to arrive. Upon arrival, Mr. Rogers explained that the library repairs were identified through an assessment of existing buildings, and that the libraries (Murray Hill Branch Library Roof Replacement, Replacement of the Bill Brinton Murray Hill and Brown Eastside branches) identified in District 7 are among the oldest in the city.

District 8 – Council Member Gaffney Jr. talked about a sidewalk project in Dinsmore. This item was paused until the end of the meeting.

District 9 - No Projects Added that were Funded in Prior CIP Plans.

District 10 - No Projects Added that were Funded in Prior CIP Plans and No Projects with Changes.

District 11 - No New Projects Added. No Projects Added that were Funded in Prior CIP Plans. No Projects with Changes. There was discussion about roof replacement at the Southeast Regional Library. Roy Birbal, Chief of Public Buildings, said that the life of a roof is roughly 20-25 years.

District 12 - No New Projects Added.

District 13 - No New Projects Added.

District 14 – No discussion.

Downtown CIP – There was discussion about the Veteran’s Memorial Shade Structure project. Council Member Lahnen expressed a desire to re-name the name of the project for greater flexibility.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Howland): to change name of Veterans Memorial Wall Shade Structure to Veteran Infrastructure Initiatives. **Approved unanimously.**

Council President Carrico talked about the need for improvements to the Florida Theatre. Numa Saisselin, President, spoke about the Theatre’s needs and described a shared 50-50 funding structure for renovations. This item was tabled until meeting 6.

Kids Hope Alliance

The Kids Hope Alliance is responsible for comprehensively developing, overseeing, managing, and implementing an Essential Services Plan for Kids in 5 essential categories: 1) Early Learning, Literacy and School Readiness, 2) Juvenile Justice Prevention and Intervention Programming, 3) Out-of-School Programming, 4) Pre-teen and Teen Programming, 5) Special Needs, including but not limited to Mental Health, Behavioral Health, Emotional Health, and Physical Disabilities Programming.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Jacksonville Upward Mobility Program - The City designates an amount equal to one percent of the approved economic development agreement incentives approved during a calendar year for projects located outside of the geographical boundaries of an established Community Redevelopment Area for inclusion in the next annual budget to deposit in the Jacksonville Upward Mobility Program Special Revenue Fund.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Kids Hope Alliance Trust Fund - No recommendations from the Auditor.

Youth Travel Trust Fund - No recommendations from the Auditor.

Jacksonville Journey Forward - There was discussion about direct contracts for children's services, as related to Jacksonville Journey Forward, and how all such services should run through KHA instead. Members of the newly formed JJF Board, including the Chair W.C. Gentry, and Mr. Griggs, Mayor's Office, were in attendance to speak on behalf of JJF's work this far.

Motion/2nd (Salem/Arias): to place funding for the contracts with Angel Kids Foundation - The Children's Initiative and Angel Kids and Cathedral Arts Project - Brave HeARTs below the line. **Approved unanimously (Pittman abstained).**

City Venues

Kim Taylor reviewed the budget for City Venues. ASM Global has been retained to manage seven public facilities which include EverBank Stadium, VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena, VyStar Ballpark, Performing Arts Center, Prime Osborn Convention Center, Ritz Theatre and Museum, and the Flex Field. A contract between the City and ASM Global was approved by Ordinance 2022-321-E. The contract has a term of October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2027 with one additional five-year renewal period. This fund contains the costs directly paid by the City related to the venues.

Auditor's recommendation: No investment pool earnings were proposed to be budgeted for FY 2025/26. We recommend budgeting \$200,000 for investment pool earnings and decreasing the transfer from the General Fund/GSD by the same amount. This would have a positive impact of \$200,000 on the Special Council Contingency.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/J. Carlucci): to approve the Auditor's recommendation. Approved unanimously.

Auditor's recommendations City Venues – ASM - This fund contains ASM's costs related to the operation and management of the venues:

1. We recommend reducing contractual services – JSO & JFRD by \$443,120 to adjust for the number of Jaguar games at the stadium in the fiscal year. This was due to timing of when the budget was submitted and the schedule being approved by the NFL. JSO and JFRD are in agreement with this recommendation. This will be offset with corresponding adjustments to the transfers and to overtime in the applicable areas. This will have a positive impact on Special Council Contingency of \$443,120.

2. Per ASM, the funding for 24/7 security at the VyStar Ballpark was budgeted in the incorrect account. We recommend moving \$142,000 from the Security Guard Service to Other Professional Services. This will have no impact on Special Council Contingency.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/J. Carlucci): to approve both of the Auditor's recommendations. Approved unanimously.

Auditor's recommendation City Venues – Surcharge (budgeted ticket surcharges authorized by Section 123.102 of the Municipal Code, which can only be used for capital expenditures and capital maintenance): increasing the rental of City facilities by \$59,034 and increasing other construction costs by \$57,558 at VyStar Ballpark (for building systems) and the administrative fee by \$1,476. Additionally, the existing funding for VyStar Ballpark needs to be changed to Building Systems as reflected above. This will have no impact on Special Council Contingency.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/J. Carlucci): to approve the Auditor's recommendation. Approved unanimously.

City Venues – Debt Service: No recommendations from the Auditor.

Sports Complex Capital Maintenance Enterprise Fund- No recommendations from the Auditor.

Veterans Memorial Arena Trust Fund - No recommendations from the Auditor.

Office of Sports & Entertainment - No recommendations from the Auditor. There was discussion about the process of distributing tickets issued to the City for various events through lease agreements with City venues.

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Howland): to remove \$38,664 for Jacksonville Jaguar Suite Tickets. **Approved 6-1 (Pittman in opposition)**

Office of Special Events - No recommendations from the Auditor.

Public Works

The Office of the Director and six other Divisions: Development Services, Engineering and Construction Management, Mowing & Landscape Maintenance, Real Estate, Right-of-Way (R-O-W) & Stormwater Maintenance, and Traffic Engineering.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Tree Protection and Related Expenditures Trust Fund -

Auditor's recommendation: to add the allocation from the Vehicle Replacement fund for \$7,596 to account for the allocation for the three new proposed vehicles to be purchased. This will be offset with an increase to contributions from private sources. This will have no impact on Special Council Contingency.

Motion/2nd (Howland/Lahnen): to approve the Auditor's recommendation. **Approved unanimously.**

Beach Erosion - Local fund: primarily governed by the Local Cooperation Agreement (established in 1978) between the Federal Government (Army Corps of Engineers) and the City of Jacksonville. The agreement provides for periodic renourishment of the County's beaches and to maintain the design profile for a total of 50 years. No recommendations from the Auditor.

Stormwater Services - No recommendations from the Auditor.

Public Buildings- No recommendations from the Auditor.

Building Inspection

Accounts for the finances of the Building Inspection Division within the Public Works Department, and to a lesser degree, the finances of the Fire Plans Review section of the Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department.

Auditor's recommendations:

1. We recommend reducing the allocation from the Information Technologies Fund (53101) by \$315,425 to correct the billing. This will be offset with a reduction in transfer from fund balance in this fund and the billings will need to be charged to the General Fund/GSD instead. This will have a negative impact to Special Council Contingency of \$315,425.

2. We recommend that the \$100,000 in renovations for the Building Inspection spaces in the Ed Ball building be switched to a capital improvement project. This will have no impact on Special Council contingency.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Salem): to approve the Auditor's recommendations. **Approved unanimously.**

Office of Ethics, Compliance & Oversight

There was discussion about the role of the Ethics Office. No recommendations from the Auditor.

Inspector General

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Ms. Taylor said the budget sub-total is now at +\$ 6,339,869.

Meeting adjourned: 4:52 p.m.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

champsey@coj.net 904-255-5151 Posted 8.29.25 5:00 pm