



CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, July 13, 2026 * 3:00 PM

MINUTES

Present

Nash Shook-Chairman
John Evertson Vice Chair
Chad Rocheford
Kirk Leff
Sharon Harkey
Nate Davenport

Absent

District 4 - OPEN

Also present: City Manager Rick Rudometkin, Chief Grimm, DC Millis, Finance Manager Tracy Richardson, Public Works Director Phil Price, and City Clerk Yolanda Quiceno.

1. **Call to Order and Confirmation of Quorum**

Chairman Shook called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm. City Clerk Quiceno confirmed quorum.

2. **Citizen Comments**

Chairman Shook opened for public comment. There being none, he closed the public comment section.

3. **Agenda Items**

a. Discussion on Funding Options and Review of Draft Budget FY 2026/2027

Chairman Shook called the meeting to order after confirming a quorum. Chairman Shook opened discussion on the process for submitting budget questions, with members expressing a desire to avoid duplicate requests while ensuring compliance with Florida's Sunshine Law. It was agreed that questions should be submitted through staff for distribution to the committee. CM Rudometkin noted that he will consult the City Attorney on the appropriate process before the next meeting. The Chair also thanked staff for their work in preparing the proposed budget and the budget summary, noting that the summary provides a helpful starting point for the committee's review.

CM Rudometkin reviewed funding options in response to the proposed property tax reform, noting that municipalities across Florida are evaluating potential impacts on future revenues. He explained that Belle Isle could experience an estimated reduction in property tax revenue and discussed possible options, including adjusting the millage rate, creating a separate fire assessment, reducing expenses, and identifying alternative revenue sources. CM Rudometkin advised that an ordinance would be presented to the City Council to preserve future funding options, including a fire assessment feasibility study, while allowing the City flexibility to respond to future state actions. Additional updates were provided on grant funding, appropriations, FEMA reimbursements, utility rate planning, and ongoing capital projects. Staff will continue evaluating these funding strategies as part of the budget process.

The Budget Committee reviewed the proposed Fiscal Year budget and discussed the potential impacts of the Governor's proposed property tax reform on municipal revenues and services. Board and staff acknowledged the uncertainty surrounding the proposed legislation and agreed the City should continue planning for multiple funding scenarios while monitoring developments at the state level. The Board discussed potential impacts of property tax reform on City finances and the need to evaluate essential services, revenue sources, and expenditures.

The Committee's significant portion of the discussion focused on the continued increase in Orange County Fire Rescue costs and the effect those increases have had on the City's budget over the past several years. Staff explained that the proposed 0.2155 millage rate increase would complete the millage adjustment previously recommended by the Budget Committee and would partially offset the increased fire service costs. The Board also discussed potential long-term

strategies to reduce costs, including a fire assessment study, an annexation study, evaluating shared services with neighboring municipalities, and reviewing other opportunities to improve operational efficiencies.

Staff provided updates on several budget items, including increases in solid waste disposal costs, grant-funded transportation and stormwater projects, staffing changes within Administration, and planned capital improvements. They discussed maintaining the City's police department, with committee members expressing strong support due to the level of service provided despite higher costs.

After discussion, the Committee recommended:

- Retaining funding in the budget for professional service studies, including the fire assessment and annexation studies, so the City is prepared to proceed if needed.
- Continuing to explore alternative revenue sources and cost-containment opportunities.
- Supporting the proposed 0.2155 millage rate increase included in the FY budget, which completes the previously recommended increase to help offset escalating fire service costs.

Budget Committee unanimously recommended that the City Council approve the proposed 0.2155 millage rate increase as included in the proposed Fiscal Year budget. The Committee also expressed support for retaining funding for the proposed fire assessment and annexation studies so they may proceed if determined appropriate by the City Council. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Committee Comments

CM Rudometkin updated the Board on staffing changes, including the transition of Code Enforcement to Code Compliance under Administration. He further discussed capital planning, vehicle inventory reporting, City Hall capital improvements, and stormwater infrastructure planning. The Board emphasized maintaining respectful public discourse regarding committee participation.

5. Next Meeting Schedule – August 10, 2026

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 4:41 pm.