CITY OF BELLE ISLE

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Rick J. Rudometkin
City Manager
rickr@belleislefl.gov

City Hall
1600 Nela Avenue
Belle Isle, FL 32809

Office of the City Manager
Administration
407.851.7730 x105
407.240.2222 fax

Finance Department
407.851.7730 x104

Public Works
689.500.3473

Code Compliance
407.849.8450

Police Department (PD)
407.240.2473 Office

407.836.4357
non-emergency

Website:
www.belleislefl.gov

November 4, 2026

RE: Amendment 3 Passing - Fiscal Responsibility and Spending Pause

Dear Everyone,

Amendment 3 has passed. We are immediately protecting the organization's financial position, preserving essential services, and taking a disciplined approach to every dollar until we understand the full financial impact. **This is a *Fiscal Responsibility and Spending Pause*** that shows leadership, prudence, and control without creating unnecessary alarm among our employees and residents.

Florida's Amendment 3 is particularly significant for local governments because it increases the homestead exemption for non-school property taxes to $150,000 in 2027 and $250,000 in 2028. It also changes the assessment cap for non-homestead properties and restricts how local governments may use property tax revenue. The changes take effect January 1, 2027.

I am recommending and implementing an immediate temporary spending pause, with clearly defined exceptions for public safety, essential operations, legal obligations, and emergencies. This includes distinguishing between pausing new discretionary spending and stopping payments or work that the organization is already legally obligated to perform.

Team:

Following the passage of Florida Amendment 3, we must take immediate steps to protect our organization's financial stability and prepare for the potential impact on future revenues.

Effective immediately, we are implementing a temporary pause on all nonessential and discretionary spending until further financial review and direction.

This pause includes:

- New purchases and equipment requests.
- Nonessential travel, conferences, and training.
- New contracts and consulting engagements.
- Discretionary projects and expenditures.
- All capital purchases and projects that have not already been contractually committed or can be paused or eliminated.

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- Any new spending on any item that can reasonably be deferred or eliminated.

Essential operations, public safety, emergency needs, payroll, and existing contractual or legal obligations will continue, subject to approval requirements.

What I need from everyone:

1. Do not initiate any new purchases or financial commitments without prior authorization from the Finance Director or the City Manager.
2. Review your department's current spending and identify opportunities to reduce/defer/pause expenses.
3. Identify projects, purchases, and initiatives that can be delayed or eliminated without affecting essential services.
4. Direct questions about spending approvals and authorization to the Finance Director or the City Manager.

This is a precautionary measure. We do not yet have a complete picture of the financial impact Amendment 3 will have on our future revenues. However, we have a responsibility to act prudently now rather than wait until financial pressures force more difficult decisions.

Our priority is to protect essential services, maintain financial stability, and ensure we are making thoughtful decisions with the resources entrusted to us.

Mayor and Council Members:

Following the passage of Florida Amendment 3, I believe it is imperative that we take immediate and responsible action to protect our organization's financial position.

While the full financial implications are still being evaluated, we know that changes to property tax revenues could have a significant impact on our future operating revenues and long-term financial capacity.

As a result, I recommend implementing an immediate temporary pause on nonessential and discretionary spending as stated above.

I also have recommended that staff undertake an immediate financial review that includes:

1. Projected revenue impacts resulting from Amendment 3.
2. Current operating expenditures and available reserves.

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3. Capital projects that will be deferred.
4. Potential cost-saving measures across all departments.
5. Long-term strategies to maintain service levels while adjusting to a potentially reduced revenue base.

My intention is not to make premature decisions about service reductions or eliminate projects that may still be necessary. Rather, I believe we have a responsibility to exercise caution, preserve financial flexibility, and avoid making new financial commitments until we have a clearer understanding of our fiscal position.

I would like to bring forward a more comprehensive financial assessment and initial recommendations for Council's consideration, starting with a workshop on November 17th, 2026.

In the meantime, I believe a temporary spending pause is a prudent and necessary first step.

Our responsibility is to protect the financial health of this organization, maintain the services our residents depend on, and ensure that we are prepared for the financial realities ahead.

City Manager:

I appreciate everyone's cooperation, professionalism, and understanding as we navigate this important period.

I want everyone to understand that we are entering a different financial environment. Amendment 3 has passed, and we cannot continue making spending decisions as though nothing has changed.

We don't know the full extent of the financial impact yet, but what we do know is that we need to be proactive.

For now, spending is going to be paused unless it is absolutely essential, legally obligated, or specifically authorized.

I am asking every department head to take ownership of their budgets. Look at what you can pause, what you can delay, and what you can do differently.

This isn't about pointing fingers or asking departments to stop providing services. It's about protecting our organization, our employees, and our residents.

We need to be disciplined, transparent, and responsible. We will get through this by working together, but we have to start making different decisions today.

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Sincerely,

Rick J Rudometkin
City Manager
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