CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FL

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Tuesday, July 21, 2026 * 6:00 PM

MINUTES

Present:
Mayor – Jason Carson
District 2 Commissioner – Holly Bobrowski
District 4 Commissioner – Bobby Lance
District 5 Commissioner – Beth Lowell (conf call)
District 6 Commissioner – Christopher Oller
District 7 Commissioner – Jim Partin

Absent:
District 1 Commissioner – Ed Gold
District 3 Commissioner – Karl Shuck

1. **Call to Order and Confirmation of Quorum**
   Mayor Carson called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm, and the Clerk confirmed quorum.
   City Manager Rick Rudometkin, Chief Grimm, Deputy Chief Millis, Public Works Director Phil Price, Finance Director Tracey Richardson, and City Clerk Yolanda Quiceno were also present.

2. **Review Draft Budget FY 2026/2027 Budget Highlights, Certified Taxable Value, Rollback Rate, Maximum Proposed Millage Rate and Key Budget Assumptions**

   City Manager Rudometkin (CM) gave a preliminary overview of the FY 2026–2027 draft budget in preparation for the budget workshops scheduled in August and the public hearings in September. He stated that the City's certified taxable value increased by approximately $42 million, which is projected to generate approximately $190,000 in additional revenue at the current millage rate. The draft budget proposes increasing the millage rate from 4.78 mills to 5.00 mills. The proposed increase is intended to help offset the continued increase in the City's cost for Orange County Fire Rescue services and is not being requested for general operations. The annual fire service cost has increased to approximately $3.076 million. He noted that the Budget Committee unanimously recommended establishing the maximum millage rate at 5.00 mills.

   CM Rudometkin discussed the potential impact of future property tax reform. If the proposed amendment is approved in November, staff will review non-critical budget items and identify opportunities to reduce expenditures and preserve funding for future years. The budget may be amended as necessary based on the outcome of the referendum and future revenue projections. Staff also noted that recent state legislation includes additional requirements related to millage rate approvals and the preparation of a hypothetical 10% reduced budget. These requirements will be reviewed further during the August budget workshops. He asked for the Council to discuss and set the proposed millage rate, which will represent the maximum rate that may be considered during the budget process. Council may adopt a lower rate during the public hearings but may not increase the rate above the maximum established. The maximum millage rate must be submitted by the required deadline.

   Mayor Carson asked for discussion and noted that the Public Works budget reflects a 27% decrease, largely because the previous year included approximately $600,000 in ARPA-funded curb and sidewalk projects. He expressed concern that showing the decrease without additional context could be misleading because the related ARPA funding and expenditures were both one-time items and had a net-zero impact. Mayor Carson requested that the budget include a note explaining the decrease and that increased expenditure in the current budget be attributed to the approved employee compensation adjustments. Staff noted that an explanatory note to the budget summary will be added. Mayor Carson added that the budget appeared sound overall and supported providing additional context to improve transparency.

   The key highlights discussed were,
   - Budget Committee recommended retaining $50,000 in the professional services budget for a future annexation study rather than transferring the funds to the unrestricted fund balance.
   - CM Rudometkin stated that the draft budget remains relatively flat, with overall increase attributed to salary adjustments resulting from the compensation study

- City received a $350,000 legislative appropriation for the Police Department's marine program and vessel replacement, eliminating the need to include that expense in the Capital Improvement Plan.
- Add a note to the public works budget explanation clarifying that the apparent spending decrease is offset by ARPA-funded curb and sidewalk work and note that higher expenditures are largely due to compensation-study-related payroll increases.
- CM to bring forward the two recently passed laws to the August meeting and explain their impacts on millage voting rules and the hypothetical 10% budget reduction requirement.

3. Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor Carson called for a motion to adjourn the meeting, which passed unanimously at 6:25 pm.