

CITY OF LABELLE



MINUTES

City Commission Budget Workshop & Special Meeting

Monday, June 23, 2025, at 5:30 PM

LaBelle Commission Chambers
481 West Hickpochee Ave
LaBelle, FL 33975

CITY COMMISSION:

Julie C. Wilkins., Mayor
Kevin Holland, Commissioner
Jackie Ratica, Commissioner
Bobbie Spratt, Commissioner
Hugo Vargas, Commissioner

ADMINISTRATION:

Tijauna Warner, BAS, MMC, Deputy City Clerk
Derek Rooney, Esq., City Attorney
Mitchell Wills, Superintendent PW

Minutes

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Wilkins at 3:05 PM.

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Holland led the invocation, Commissioner Vargas led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

PRESENT

Mayor Julie C. Wilkins

Commissioner Jackie Ratica

Commissioner Kevin Holland

Commissioner Bobbie Spratt

Commissioner Hugo Vargas

City Attorney Derek Rooney via Teams

Deputy City Clerk Tijauna Warner

4. Additions of Emergency Basis From Mayor, Deletions and Approval of Agenda Items

None.

5. Non-Public Hearing Items for Consideration

(Limited to 15 minutes per item: 3-5 minutes optional presentation time with the remaining time for discussion by the Commission)

A. FY2025-2026 Proposed Budget - Utilities

Lilly Davenport provided a detailed overview of the Utility Department's financial position, focusing on revenue, expenses, and net cash flow. The department's overall financial outlook is positive, despite the sewer funds remaining in a deficit. Ms. Davenport emphasized that this is not an immediate concern, given the stability of the utilities as a whole.

Key Highlights:

Revenue Overview:

- **Presentation Structure:** Budget data is shown under Column D as "Actual*," which includes audit adjustments and accruals.
- **Data Provided:** FY 2024 actuals, FY 2025 six-month performance (ending March 31), and a 3-year budget comparison.
- **Grant Revenue:** Intergovernmental revenue includes federal and state capital improvement grants. These are largely offset by related capital expenditures, making them revenue neutral.

ARPA Funding:

- The city received \$1.1 million in ARPA funds (transferred from the general fund in FY 2023).

- These funds are reflected as deferred revenue until spent and will be released as expenses are incurred.
- Initial estimates suggest \$400,000 will be spent on water projects, but final numbers are pending from contractors and staff.

Charges for Services:

- Reflects previously approved rate increases for water, sewer, access fees, and reconnect charges.
- Revenue projection adjusted downward (~4%) due to a conservative approach regarding new development activity.
- The decline is offset by increased base rates that took effect in November.

Other Revenue:

- Interest income was conservatively projected due to market uncertainty.
- Deposits and prepayments are included as cash items, not revenue.

Expenditures Overview:

Capital Outlay:

- Includes both funded and unfunded portions of infrastructure and equipment needs.
- Funded improvements (e.g., lift stations and RCM upgrades) are offset by ARPA and DEP grant revenues.
- The unfunded portion will vary based on final grant awards and project costs.

Personnel Costs:

- Utilities personnel costs rose 47% over the prior year largely due to reallocating expenses from the Streets Department to reflect more accurate labor distribution.
- Net increase for utilities personnel: \$119,000 (a 16.7% rise).
- Includes:
 - 5% COLA (Cost-of-Living Adjustment) for all staff.
 - Management overrides for staff considered under-compensated or over-performing.
 - FICA, retirement (+2%), health (+2.5%), and workers' comp (+18%) cost increases.
 - Final figures for health and workers' comp are pending but expected to align with last year's rise.

Lilly Davenport emphasized a cautious and transparent budgeting approach, balancing realistic revenue projections with increasing operational and capital costs. The department remains financially stable, with positive cash flow and ongoing investment in infrastructure supported by grants and federal funds. Further clarification and updates are expected as project costs are finalized. A discussion ensued.

Mayor Wilkins advised she wants to consider assigning a staff to the LaBelle Muesum a few days out of the week. A discussion ensued. The LaBelle Muesum Donation letter was reviewed by the commission.

Motion made by Commissioner Ratica to approve donating \$7,500 to the LaBelle Muesum, Seconded by Commissioner Spratt. Mayor Wilkins called for the question.

Motion passed unanimously.

Voting Yea: Mayor Wilkins, Commissioner Ratica, Commissioner Spratt, Commissioner Vargas, Commissioner Holland

6. Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Spratt to adjourn the budget workshop/special meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Ratica. Mayor Wilkins called for the question. Motion passed unanimously.

Voting Yea: Mayor Wilkins, Commissioner Ratica, Commissioner Spratt, Commissioner Vargas, Commissioner Holland

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Wilkins adjourned the meeting at 4:06 PM.

Julie C. Wilkins, Mayor

ATTEST: Tijauna Warner, BAS, MMC, City Clerk