

Exhibit B

Testimony Before Lake Park, FL Commission 9/04/2025:

Public Comment on Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget Considerations

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I want to thank the Commissioners, Town Manager, and Finance Director for their work spent preparing a proposed budget. Concurrently, I sense you are aware of the growing resident resentment specifically around department head salaries and any considered increases in that sector.

Your responsibility is to be **good stewards of taxpayer dollars**. Every dollar we approve for salaries cannot be used for maintaining infrastructure, supporting public safety, or providing essential services. When many residents are facing **rising costs of living**, from groceries to property taxes, it simply feels burdensome to increase spending on already excessive administrative salaries.

Many hardworking families in this community haven't seen raises that keep pace with inflation, yet we're being asked to approve increases upon residents who feel tapped out.

Furthermore, outside of union contracts, salary increases should be tied directly to **individually measurable performance**. Before considering giving every single town employee a merit increase of 3%, across the board, (and how is that action individualized?), we need clear benchmarks showing how a raise will improve efficiency, accountability, or the quality of services delivered. Otherwise, we risk approving spending without evidence of benefit. Something you never do. The excuse about having to pay excessive wages to attract and retain quality people is old and unproven.

Two ideas come to mind. One, to **freeze all town expenses of any kind for a one-year period** and live off the budget we have had this past year. With Forest Development's future lease and tax payments now uncertain, we cannot plan budget projections around this revenue stream. We lived well enough under the current budget terms. And we can better study competitive salary ranges with more accurate and relevant research, than the one D'Agostino used to justify his generosity to earn loyalty.

Second, I could advocate for **no merit or COLA increases for all employees making above \$100,000**. We would witness a substantial savings for the town with a one-year freeze. No employee making over \$100,000 will resign in protest and find better paying employment.

These ideas position us for a stronger fiscal house, with more accurate budget projections, and to have saved money for projects like a mixed use community center, for example.

Thank you.