



## OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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### FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARING 3 MINUTES

**August 14, 2025**  
**9:00 a.m.**

**Location:** City Council Chamber, City Hall

**In attendance:** Committee Members Arias (Chair), Howland (Vice Chair), Salem, Diamond, J. Carlucci, Lahnen and Pittman; Council President Carrico; Council Members Boylan and Peluso

**Also:** Kim Taylor, Brian Parks, Phillip Peterson - Council Auditor's Office; Mary Staffopoulos - OGC; Mike Weinstein - Mayor's Office; Angela Moyer - Budget Office; Colleen Hampsey - Council Research

**Meeting Convened:** 9:01 a.m.

Chairman Arias convened the meeting, and the attendees introduced themselves for the record. He reviewed the rules of procedures for the budget hearings. Chair Arias asked about the 14 district allocations for the CIP. Ms. Taylor indicated that those will be discussed at the fifth budget meeting. Ms. Taylor reported that after the second budget hearing, the budget stands at +\$1,988,240.

#### United Way

Ms. Taylor reviewed the United Way 211 budget.

Technical Amendments: Attach Revised Exhibit 1 (Term Sheet) to correct Scrivener's

**Motion** (Diamond/Lahnen): to approve the technical amendment. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor's Recommendation: Reduce the appropriation from \$400,000 to \$250,000 to match proposed grant request, which will have a \$150,000 positive impact on Special Council Contingency.

**Motion** (Diamond/Lahnen): to approve the recommended amendment. **Approved unanimously.**

Ms. Taylor reviewed the United Way 988 budget.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Melanie Patz, United Way CEO, spoke on behalf of the program. There was discussion among the committee as to the source of funding for this program. Chair Arias contended that the funds should be secured through the Public Service Grant program. Council Member Howland asked how the funds will be used, primarily for staffing with the goal of answering 90% of calls locally. Council Member Pittman spoke about the service as essential human infrastructure.

Ms. Taylor mentioned the United Way Eviction Diversion Program, noting that it was removed from the budget in the previous meeting and that no further action was required.

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget for the United Way “State of Jax” Initiative. There was discussion as to the need for the data platform, the usefulness of the program, and whether there was duplication with a similar platform available to the public through the Nonprofit Center of NE Florida. Council Member Diamond verbally requested records from the Administration/Mr. Weinstein related to all emails exchanged about the Catalyst dashboard through the Nonprofit Center that offers similar information as the State of Jax dashboard. Council Member Arias took issue with the request for funds for an initiative that is already built.

**Motion** (Diamond/Salem): to remove the funds (\$237,300) for the “State of Jax” Initiative. **Approved 6-1** (CM Lahnen in opposition)

**Motion** (Howland/Diamond): to reconsider the motion for further discussion. **Approved unanimously.**

**Motion** (Diamond/Salem): to remove the funds (\$237,300) for the “State of Jax” Initiative. **Approved 6-1** (CM Pittman in opposition)

#### MHOP

Ms. Taylor reviewed the MHOP budget. Council Member Salem spoke on behalf of the program and provided history on its inception.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Council Member Diamond offered an amendment to 2025-504, that would prohibit City funds being used for activities or programs related to diversity, equity and inclusion. He spoke about his motivation for the amendment. There was discussion about inserting policy into a budget ordinance, exempting children’s services, and other unintended consequences. CM Diamond requested an opinion from the General Counsel regarding the feasibility of the amendment in the budget ordinance.

**Motion** (Diamond/Carrico): to approve the Diamond amendment.

**Motion** (Howland/Salem): to amend the above motion to exempt children’s services. **Tabled** until meeting #6.

Council Member Salem talked about proposing a percentage of each department’s operating budget (except public safety) being put below the line, made available by council approved request. This will be contemplated at meeting 6.

#### Courts (General Fund, Courthouse Trust Fund, Teen Court, and Consolidated \$65 Court Fines)

##### General Fund

Ms. Taylor reviewed the Courts’ General Fund budget. No recommendations from the Auditor. There was discussion about Driver’s License Court program that assists litigants with regaining their driver’s licenses. Chief Judge Lance Day spoke on behalf of the Courts’ budget, and he expressed opposition to a planned public art exhibit in front of the courthouse, noting the security risks and extended maintenance costs. The committee talked about the importance of security at the courthouse, mechanisms by which the courthouse art could be cancelled, and the potential installation of bollards around the exterior.

##### Courthouse Trust Fund

Ms. Taylor reviewed the Court Cost Courthouse Trust Fund budget.

Auditor’s Recommendation: to increase the revenue projection by \$600,000. This is to increase the projected collections by \$128,532 for FY 25/26 to \$2,700,000 and to appropriate \$471,468 in revenue that has been collected in prior years. This will be offset with an increase in the courthouse complex internal

service allocation and a decrease in the allocation within the General Fund/General Services District. This will have a positive impact of \$600,000 on Special Council Contingency.

**Motion** (Howland/Lahnen): to approve the recommended amendment. **Approved unanimously.**

#### Teen Court

Ms. Taylor reviewed the Teen Court budget, funded through a \$3 court fee. There was discussion about methods by which to increase the court fee, established through state statute, to create more revenue for this program. Council Member Diamond shared his support for this diversion program.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

#### Consolidated \$65 Court Fines

Ms. Taylor reviewed the Court budget related to the \$65 fee on felony, misdemeanor, or criminal traffic offenses, for which the revenue is split into four separate activities which receive 25% of the total revenue: Legal Aid, Duval County Law Library, Juvenile Drug Court, and Judicial Support.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

#### Court System Technology Subfund (Courts, Public Defender & State Attorney)

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget for this subfund, that receives \$2 for each page recorded by the Clerk into the Official Record, to be used on the technology costs for the State Courts, State Attorney, and Public Defender.

**Motion** (Salem/Diamond): to approve the Departmental request to approve of the amounts shown on the summary page. All expenditure amounts were agreed to by the three parties. This would have a negative impact of \$482,348 on Special Council Contingency. **Approved unanimously.**

#### Public Defender

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget for the Public Defender's Office for office space, utilities, maintenance, security, and communication services. Charlie Cofer, Public Defender, was in attendance for questions.

Auditor's Recommendation: to amend Schedule AF to remove the capital outlay carryforward of \$7,204. The Department expects to encumber \$7,204 for a computer system firewall in the current year. This will have no impact on Special Council Contingency.

**Motion** (Howland/Diamond): to approve the recommended amendment. **Approved unanimously.**

#### State Attorney

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget for the State Attorney's Office, for office space, utilities, maintenance, security, and communication services. Steven Siegal, SAO, was in attendance.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

#### Clerk of the Courts - Operations

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget for the Clerk of Courts Clerk, for County operations and Clerk Court-related costs that are a County obligation. Jody Phillips, Clerk of Courts, was in attendance.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

#### Clerk of the Courts – General Fund

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget for the Clerk of Courts – General Fund budget, for a portion of the Courthouse complex building costs.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

#### Tax Collector

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget for the Tax Collector's budget for three divisions identified as branch agencies, current and delinquent taxes, and supervision and general collection. Sherry Hall, CAO Tax Collector, was in attendance. No recommendations from the Auditor.

#### Supervisor of Elections

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget for the Supervisor of Elections Office. Jerry Holland, SOE, was in attendance to speak about the functions and needs of the office.

Auditor's Recommendation: to add to Schedule AF (capital outlay expenditures not lapsed), \$40,000 for computer and software costs. This will have no impact on the special council contingency.

**Motion** (Lahnen/J. Carlucci): to approve the recommended amendment. **Approved unanimously.**

**Motion** (Lahnen/Howland): to increase permanent and probationary salaries by \$300,000 and reduce part-time salaries by \$300,000. **Approved unanimously.**

**Motion** (J. Carlucci/Lahnen): to increase advertising funding by \$20,000. **Approved unanimously.**

#### Solid Waste

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budgets for the Solid Waste Division. There was discussion about the cost for downtown pickup, bin repair and replacement and vendor contract terms.

Auditor's Recommendation – Solid Waste Disposal Fund: to reduce the Professional and Contractual Services by \$669,728 to reflect the correct CPI increase for Service Area III and to match the estimated fuel price per gallon to the in the Fleet Management amount. This will be offset with a reduction in the loan from the General Fund/GSD by a corresponding amount. These recommendations will have a positive impact on the Special Council Contingency of \$669,728.

**Motion** (Howland/Lahnen): to approve the recommended amendment. **Approved unanimously.**

Lunch recess 12:02 pm to 12:40 pm.

#### Parks, Recreation and Community Services

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget for the Parks Department. Daryl Joseph, Director, spoke on behalf of the department.

**Motion** (Arias/Diamond): to remove the enhancement for Food Insecurity Program totaling \$2,210,000. There was discussion about the food delivery program for homebound seniors, and the proposed increase intended to serve all of the seniors on the program's waiting list. Council Member Pittman advocated for the full proposed funding request. The committee talked about Public Service Grant funding.

**Motion** (Carrico/Lahnen): to amend the above motion to increase the funding for Meals on Wheels from the previous year's budget of \$ 159,836 by \$308,164 to \$468,0000. **Approved unanimously.**

**Motion** (Salem/Lahnen): to approve the amended motion. **Approved unanimously.**

Auditor's Recommendation: to reduce land and building rental costs by \$64,845 to accurately reflect anticipated need. This will have a positive impact to the Special Council Contingency of \$64,845.

**Motion** (Howland/Lahnen): to approve the recommended amendment. **Approved unanimously.**

There was discussion about Riverfront Park management and maintenance, and funding sources. Mike Zaffaroni, Jax River Alliance, spoke about a potential management partnership with the City. There will be a presentation on this item at the 6<sup>th</sup> budget meeting.

#### Huguenot Park

No recommendations from the Auditor.

#### Hanna Park

The committee talked about how this fund is self-sufficient, with revenue meeting expenses.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

#### Florida Boater Improvement Program

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Cecil Field Commerce Center

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Equestrian Center

Auditor's Recommendation: that the transfer from the General Fund/GSD be decreased by \$100,000 and replaced by a transfer from fund balance of \$100,000. This will have a positive impact of \$100,000 to the Special Council Contingency.

**Motion** (Howland/J. Carlucci): to approve the recommended amendment. **Approved unanimously.**

Administrative Services (Includes Animal Care & Protective Services, Procurement, Office of Ombudsman, 630-CITY)

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget for the Administrative Services Department.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Animal Care & Protective Services

There was discussion about possibly increasing the pet licensing fee, requiring license renewals, and providing the division with more resources.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Spay and Neuter Trust Fund

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Veterinary Services

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Air Pollution Tag Fee

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Hazardous Waste Program

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Fleet Management (Includes Vehicle Replacement)

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget for Fleet Management. There was discussion about fuel charges for independent agencies.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Vehicle Replacement

The committee talked about electric City vehicles, and the surplus of replaced vehicles.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Copy Center

There was a discussion about the cost for, and usage of, postage and copying services, and the council allocation of funds for each district member. Council Member Arias suggested providing funds for a council communication fund under the PIO division to be used in part to manage council's social media.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

**Motion** (Salem/Lahnen): to reduce City Council postage related costs in the Copy Center by \$50k and moved to a professional services line in City Council Staff Services. **Approved unanimously.**

Employee Services (Including Group Health & Wellness Program)

Ms. Taylor reviewed the budget for the Employee Services Department.

No recommendations from the Auditor.

City Fitness and Wellness Fund

No recommendations from the Auditor.

Group Health

Council Member Diamond asked about City insurance funds used for abortion care. Council Member Salem mentioned the upcoming consultant's study of the Group Health fund, to be conducted by the Bailey Group.

Auditor Recommendation: to reduce the transfer in from the General Fund by \$1,793,629 and offset it with transfers into the Group Health Fund from a number of different funds. This was offset within each fund by transfers from fund balance or reductions in cash carryover, as applicable, except for the Solid Waste Fund (43101), which will require an increase in the transfer from the General Fund/GSD by \$498,527.

**Motion** (Lahnen/Howland): to approve the recommended amendment. **Approved unanimously.**

Council Member Salem requested a list of all of the items slated to be discussed in budget meeting 6.

Ms. Taylor said the budget sub-total is now at +\$ 6,504,703.

**Meeting adjourned:** 3:24 p.m.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research

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Posted 8.19.25 5:00 pm