



OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

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FINANCE COMMITTEE BUDGET HEARING 6 MINUTES

August 22, 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, Gay, Carlucci, Gaffney Jr., Johnson, Miller, Clark-Murray and White

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

Meeting Convened: 9:02 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. Ms. Taylor reported that after the fifth hearing, the budget sub-total stands at + \$6,339,869.

There was discussion about capital improvements to the Florida Theatre. CM Salem expressed support for the 50-50 split between the Theatre and the City. CM Howland shared frustration that he found out about this request at the last minute.

Motion/2nd (Salem/Carrico): to increase funding to the Florida Theatre to provide \$2.5 million each of the next four years which is an increase of \$9 million over the proposed \$500,000 for FY 25/26 and FY 26/27. **Approved 5-3** (CMs Lahnen, Howland and Diamond in opposition)

The committee talked about capital projects in District 2 and the possibility of sharing \$1 million per district CIP funds. Mary Staffopoulos, OGC, explained that those funds were district specific, and couldn't be shared across districts. CM Gay spoke about the need for intersection improvements at the Starratt Road/Yellow Bluff Intersection.

Motion/2nd (Salem/Lahnen): to redirect funds from these projects Nungezer Road (Pay-Go) - \$2,445,906, Baisden Road Bicycle Blvd. (Debt) - \$1,733,143, Separate legislation for \$2,474,039 to the Starratt Road/Yellow Bluff Intersection improvements.

Motion/2nd (Howland/Salem): to amend the motion to remove the funds that required Separate legislation for \$2,474,039. **Approved unanimously.**

Motion/2nd (Howland/Salem): to approve the motion as amended. **Approved unanimously.**

The committee considered improvements to Ed Austin Regional Park, to include a turf field.

Motion/2nd (J. Carlucci/Salem): to provide \$600,000 from the New Regional Rowing Center (identified by the DOGE special committee) to the Ed Austin Park Turf project.

Motion/2nd (J. Carlucci/Salem): to add \$500,000 CBA District 2 funds for a total of \$1.1 million to the Ed Austin Park Turf project. **Approved unanimously.**

Motion/2nd (J. Carlucci/Lahnen): to approve the motion as amended. **Approved unanimously.**

CM Gaffney Jr. talked about sidewalks in the Dinsmore neighborhood, for which the full request for the project will be \$5 million additional funding needed. CM Gaffney Jr. said that \$1million is needed in year 1, and that \$500,000 will come from his D 8 CIP funds.

Motion/2nd (Salem/Lahnen): provide funds for the Dinsmore Sidewalks project, \$500,000 from the New Regional Rowing Center project. **Approved unanimously.**

Ms. Kendrick, Technology Solutions Director, spoke about public safety and the Radio Tower Antenna Infrastructure Project. There was discussion on whether to move \$1,006,251 planned for FY 2026/27 into FY 2025/26. Technology Solutions has suggested a reduction to the amount for additional to \$985,413 and used various projects to cover the cost to avoid additional debt.

Motion/2nd (Salem/Lahnen): to move \$1,006,251 planned for FY 2026/27 into FY 2025/26. **Approved unanimously.**

Chair Arias spoke briefly about the composition and appointing authority of some boards and commissions, particularly ones for entities for which council approves budgets. Some boards, such as KHA, are appointed solely by the Mayor. CM Arias noted that he intends to file future legislation to reallocate some of the appointments on boards to which the Mayor is the sole appointing authority, to give some seats to the Mayor and some to the Council President.

Designated Contingencies Lobbying Firms

There was discussion about the different lobbying firms contracted by the City and the roles of, and necessity for, each firm.

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Carrico): to cut \$300,000 from lobbying fees, leaving just the \$60,000 for the Fiorentino Group.

Motion/2nd: (Carrico/Howland): to amend the motion to remove total funding of \$185,000 related to Langton Associates (\$115,000 related to grant writing services and \$70,000 related to public policy). This left \$115,000 for federal advocacy with Langton Associates and \$60,000 for state advocacy with Fiorentino Group, LLC. **Approved 5-2** (Pittman and Lahnen in opposition)

Motion/2nd move to approve the motion as amended. **Approved 5-2** (Pittman and Lahnen in opposition)

Municipal Dues and Affiliations

There was discussion about the fee paid annually to JaxChamber related to JAXUSA. Aundra Wallace, President of JAXUSA Partnership, spoke about the economic development, business recruitment and marketing they do for Jacksonville. CP Carrico asked why there were no representatives from the other Chambers to which the City pays dues in attendance. Council Member Salem spoke in opposition to JaxChamber taking policy positions on items before council.

The committee talked about the dues for the Government Finance Officer's Association, that offers annual best practices forums, certifications and other training.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Diamond): to move \$7,500 for Government Finance Officer's Association funding in the Dues and Affiliations line previously placed in a designated contingency back above the line.

Approved unanimously.

Mayoral Travel and Training

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/J. Carlucci): to bring Employee Travel of \$291,460 and Training Expense of \$174,325 previously placed in a designated contingency back above the line. **Approved unanimously.**

Health Department

Antonio Nichols, Health Officer and Administrator, spoke about services provided by the Department of Health and their partnerships with safety net health providers.

Motion/2nd (Salem/Lahnen): to move Health Department programs of \$1,205,535 previously placed in a designated contingency back above the line. **Approved unanimously.**

Direct Contracts

FSCJ Burn Building –

Ms. Taylor reviewed the revised term sheet. Taylor Mejia, FSCJ, spoke on behalf of this item. There was discussion about the use agreement that expires September 30th, and the inclusion of language that specifies that JFRD will continue to utilize the building. The committee also discussed terms with Ms. Mejia, and agreed that FSCJ will hold maintenance responsibility, City funds will be dispersed on a reimbursement basis, and clawback language will be added to the agreement if the building is not used for its intended purpose.

Motion/2nd (Howland/Salem): to approve amended direct contract term sheet for the FSCJ – Burn Building including the items agreed to above, contingent upon joint use agreement needing to be executed. **Approved unanimously.**

Historical Society, Old St. Luke’s Hospital Restoration –

There was discussion about the revised term sheet for the Old St. Luke’s Hospital Restoration project, that includes language about the performance schedule, reimbursed funds, JHS responsibility for cost overruns, clawback requirements.

Motion/2nd (Salem/J. Carlucci): to approve the amended direct contract term sheet. **Approved unanimously.**

MOCA, Sculpture Acquisition –

The committee talked about the revised term sheet for the grant agreement with MOCA. Carol Brock, TDC Executive Director, advocated for using funding from the operating fund balance.

Motion/2nd (Carrico/Lahnen): to approve the amended term sheet for MOCA – Stacked Stars Sculpture, using TDC operating funding balance instead of previously identified contingency funding. **Approved 6-1** (Diamond in opposition)

Motion/2nd (Salem/Lahnen): to amend to include waiver to allow MOCA to still apply for Cultural Service Grants. **Approved 6-1** (Diamond in opposition)

Planning Department

Helena Parola, Planning Director, explained the request for \$100,00 for a sidewalk inventory of the city. She explained the purpose and usefulness to plan for repairs, in coordination with Public Works. CM J. Carlucci emphasized the importance of prioritizing areas near schools.

Motion/2nd (Salem/Lahnen): to add back the proposed enhancement of \$100,000 for the Sidewalk Inventory in the Planning and Development Department budget. **Approved unanimously.**

DIA

There was discussion about the need for a dedicated attorney assigned by OGC to provide services for DIA, funded through the General Fund and CRA funds.

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Howland): to add one position in OGC dedicated to DIA – Salary and Benefits of \$187,403. General Fund/GSD - \$28,110; Northbank CRA - \$46,851; Southbank CRA - \$112,442.

Approved unanimously.

Lunch recess 11:45 am to 12:30 pm

Animal Care and Protective Services – CM Diamond request for \$950,000 increase

There was discussion about the need for a larger staff to enable Animal Care and Protective Services to provide better services. Chief Bricker talked about the need for additional staff, to include field officers for enforcement (with vehicles), veterinary staff and administrative support. He noted that Animal Control receives more than 30,000 calls per year. This item was tabled.

Special Council Contingency

Emergency Reserves and Operating Reserves –

There was discussion about reserve funding goals and moving additional funds to the reserves.

Motion/2nd (Salem/Lahnen): to approve sending \$780,000 to the Emergency Reserve bringing up to 7% target. **Approved unanimously.**

FOP – There was discussion about the funds provided last year to the FOP through enhancement dollars for Fallen Officers Families.

IAFF – There was discussion about repairs needed at the JFRD drill tower on Stockton Street, a local landmark previously used for training purposes.

Motion/2nd (Arias/J. Carlucci): to add funding that was placed in designated contingency for FOP \$200,000 for Fallen Officers Families & IAFF \$245,320 for drill tower. **Approved unanimously.**

Ms. Staffopoulos, OGC, noted the need for term sheets and contracts.

Telehealth – CM Boylan advocated for restored funding for Telehealth (\$2,185,000) and Jax Care Connect (\$1.25 million). CM Lahnen spoke about the countywide benefits of Telehealth and offsets to costs for UF Health. CM Salem talked about the role of hospitals in funding ER diversion.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Pittman): to restore full funding request for Telehealth (\$2,185,000) and Jax Care Connect (\$1.25 million). **Withdrawn.**

Motion/2nd (Carrico/Lahnen): to amend the motion to add back \$1.5 million for Telehealth (in previous action enhancement request of \$2,185,000 was eliminated). **Approved 5-3** (Howland, Salem, Diamond in opposition)

Motion/2nd (Carrico/Lahnen): to approve the motion as amended. **Approved 5-3** (Howland, Salem, Diamond in opposition)

Jax Care Connect – There was discussion about the services and benefits of the Jax Care Connect program. Angela Strain, We Care, spoke on this item.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Salem): to provide \$45,000 to each of the 6 safety net clinics. **Approved 6-2** (Diamond and Howland in opposition)

Motion/2nd (Salem/Lahnen): to amend motion to provide \$100,000 for each of the 6 safety net clinics. **Withdrawn.**

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Salem): to adjust the original term sheets for these amounts. **Approved unanimously.**

Riverfront Parks

There was discussion about maintenance and programming for Riverfront Parks. Daryl Joseph, Parks Director, and David Sweeney, president of the JAX Riverfront Alliance, spoke about a plan and framework for maintenance and programs.

Motion/2nd (Carrico/J. Carlucci): to place \$2.6 million in designated contingency related to Downtown Riverfront Parks related to enhanced programming and maintenance for new parks. **Approved 6-1** (Diamond in opposition)

Animal Care

This item was previously tabled.

Motion/2nd to add nine positions (with no new vehicles) to Animal Care and Protective Services for \$514,260. **Approved 6-1** (Howland in opposition)

Youth Empowerment

CP Carrico briefly spoke about his strategic initiatives, specifically \$5 million for the special committee on youth empowerment.

Motion/2nd (Carrico/Lahnen): to move \$5 million from designated contingency for City Council Strategic Priority funding and placed in a designated contingency for Youth Empowerment Special Committee. **Approved unanimously.**

Food Insecurity

Motion/2nd (Carrico/J. Carlucci): to add funding for Meals on Wheels/Food Insecurity Program of \$1.1 million from City Council Strategic Priority designated contingency bringing total funding up to \$1,703,000. **Approved 6-2** (Howland and Diamond in opposition)

Strategic Priorities

CP Carrico talked about strategic priorities, and he listed several for which he was requesting funding.

Motion/2nd (Carrico/Lahnen): to move \$525,000 from designated contingency for City Council Strategic Priority to designated contingencies for the following direct contracts: Florida Black Expo - \$100,000 Child Guidance Center - \$75,000 Elevate Jax for two vans - \$100,000 Salvation Army - Job Placement - \$150,000 Salvation Army - Emergency Bed Shelter - \$100,000. **Approved unanimously.**

Budget Stabilization

Motion/2nd (Salem/Lahnen): to designate \$2,778,000 to a City Budget Stabilization Account with \$801,439 from Special Council Contingency and \$1,977,361 from the designated contingency for City Council Strategic Priority funding. **Approved unanimously.**

DOGE

CM Salem talked about placing a 2% lapse excluding public safety and constitutional offices.

Motion/2nd (Salem/Lahnen): to place across the board 2% lapse on General Fund/GSD controllable costs in the amount of \$5,868,505, excluding KHA, public safety and constitutional offices. **Approved unanimously.**

Council Auditor's Office Clean-Up Items

a) B1a – Continuation Grants with no City Match

i) Correct scrivener's on schedule

ii) Add authorization of two positions related to "Monitoring Demonstration Study – Air" Grant that were left off the schedule

iii) Reflect end date of "Mobile Air Monitoring" grant as 9/30/29

b) B1b - Continuation Grants with City Match – Fix Ordinance number on schedule

Motion/2nd (Howland/Diamond): to approve these items. **Approved unanimously.**

Diamond Amendments

1. DEI: **Motion/2nd** (Diamond/Carrico): to add provision to budget related to prohibiting expenditures or use of City funding related to DEI with certain exceptions. **Approved 5-3** (Pittman, Arias, J. Carlucci in opposition)

Reconsidered (Howland/Lahnen) **Motion/2nd** (Diamond/Carrico): to add provision to budget related to prohibiting expenditures or use of City funding related to DEI with certain exceptions. **Approved 6-2** (Pittman and Arias in opposition)

2. Undocumented individuals: **Motion/2nd** (Diamond/Carrico): to add provision related to requiring the mayor to report on certain funding for unauthorized aliens with same limitations outlined in 2025-138. **Approved 5-3** (Pittman, Arias, J. Carlucci in opposition)

3. Abortion Services: **Motion/2nd** (Diamond/Salem): to add provision to budget that no City funding in budget will be used for abortion with exceptions consistent with Hyde amendment. **Approved 5-2** (Pittman and Arias in opposition)

There was discussion about the number of votes required to pass the budget bills, and the Mayor's veto power related to the budget.

Meeting adjourned: 4:21 p.m.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research
champsey@coj.net 904-255-5151
Posted 9.4.25 5:00 pm