City of Jacksonville

117 W. Duval Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Meeting Minutes

Budget Hearing - Meeting #1

Thursday, August 13, 2026

9:00 AM

Council Chamber,
1st Floor, City Hall

Finance Committee - Budget Hearings

Will Lahnen, Chair
Chris Miller, Vice Chair
Rory Diamond
Terrence Freeman
Mike Gay
Rahman Johnson
Randy White

Legislative Assistant: Barbara Ireland Hobson
Council Auditor's Office: Phillip Peterson, Council Auditor
Council Auditor's Office: Brian Parks
Council Research: Colleen Hampsey, Chief
Office of General Counsel: Mary Staffopoulos, Deputy
Administration: Mike Weinstein

COUNCIL RULE 4.505 DISRUPTION OF MEETING
Any person who disrupts a regular meeting of the City Council, standing committees, special or select committees, sub-committees or any other public meeting presided over by a City Council Member may be forthwith barred, removed, or otherwise ejected, in the discretion of the presiding officer, from further attendance at that meeting. If necessary, due to the nature of the disruption, the audience may be cleared from the Council Chambers or meeting location in the discretion of the presiding officer.

Any person who refuses to leave the City Council Chamber may be subject to arrest.

Disruption of a meeting includes the following types of behaviors:

1) Any form of political campaigning or electioneering regarding a specific candidate or group of candidates in City elections;
2) Impeding the orderly progress of the meeting by shouting, yelling, whistling, chanting, singing, dancing, clapping, foot stomping, snapping fingers, cheering, jeering, using artificial noise makers or musical instruments, waving signs of any size, or engaging in any other display of excessive noise, sounds, or movement;
3) Displaying or waving signs of any sort, except where used to support the speaker's presentation at the podium, and only where the sign is 21 inches by 21 inches or smaller in size and cannot be displayed in a manner which unreasonably obstructs the view of the dais for any member of the audience, regardless of message;
4) Audible noise from cellphones or other electronic devices;
5) Consumption of alcohol or controlled substances;
6) Making vulgar or offensive remarks or gestures, or using threatening language or gestures, including but not limited to pantomiming discharging a firearm, choking, or throat-cutting;
7) Refusing to stop speaking when his or her time has expired or is otherwise directed by the presiding officer to do so due to disruptive behavior as described herein;
8) Returning to the meeting after having been removed or ejected, or attempting to do so.

Meeting Convened: 9:00 am **Meeting Adjourned: 4:52 pm**

Attendance: Finance Committee Members Lahnen, Miller, White, Gay, Diamond, Freeman, and Johnson; Council President Howland; CMs Carlucci, Boylan, and Salem

Also: Brian Parks and Phillip Peterson, Auditor's Office, Mary Staffopoulos, OGC, Angela Moyer, Budget Office, Mike Weinstein, Mayor's Office

Item/File No. Title History

1. Presentation by Administration - 15 Minutes

Mr. Weinstein, Mayor's Office, provided an overview of the proposed budget. He highlighted the City's financial ratings. Mr. Weinstein also mentioned the potential impact of the property tax referendum, to be decided by voters in November.

Council President Howland welcomed the committee and attendees. He emphasized funding City core services in a time of economic uncertainty. Council President Howland said he'd like this year's budget to be less than last year's budget. Chair Lahnen said that current financial circumstances as related to the property tax referendum make new programs and associated spending proposed in the budget undesirable.

CM Carlucci talked about the importance of discretionary public services, funded through tax revenue.

Mr. Peterson, Council Auditor, told the committee that the budget in its current form will require a 2/3 vote by Council for approval due to certain contingency items. He said that options for the committee during the budget hearings include taking no action, amending, removal, placing items below the line, and placing items into a contingency based upon the outcome of the property tax referendum.

2. Budget Overview (includes Public Service Grants Council, Cultural Services Grants Council, Direct Contracts, and MHOP)* - 180 Minutes

Mr. Peterson reviewed the various budget bills and the budget timeline. He offered an overview of the proposed millage rates, independent agency budgets, employee caps, and the schedule of revenues.
Mr. Peterson listed three recommendations from the Auditor's Office related to the General Fund:

1. Decreasing Miscellaneous Revenue by $585,415 to better align with revenue related to inmate telephone systems consistent with the new contract to be compliant with FCC changes enacted November 6, 2025. This would have a negative impact on Special Council Contingency of $585,415.
2. Removing the transfer-in from the Local Hospital Tax Fund of $10 million based on the advice from OGC. Additionally, the amount appropriated in and transferred out of the Local Hospital Tax Fund should also be removed. This will have a negative impact on Special Council Contingency of $10 million.
3. Increasing Sales Tax - Municipal Revenue Sharing Program revenue by $10,719,366 to better align with the current actuals.

(This would have a positive impact on Special Council Contingency of $10,719,366. Overall, if approved these will have a net positive impact of $133,951)

Motion/2nd (Miller/Freeman) to approve the 3 recommendations. Approved unanimously.

Mr. Peterson spoke about the history of Reserve usage, of which there was none proposed last fiscal year nor this year. He said the Reserves are healthy, and CP Howland likened the status to having 3 months of cash on hand.

Mr. Peterson talked about the Schedule of Expenditures, both departmental and non-departmental. In reference to the list of economic incentives, CM Diamond said he'd like to cut all such funding. CM Freeman asked why there is no proposed funding for a FAMU game in Jacksonville, and he asked about the locations and usage of cooling centers. CM Diamond questioned the $120,000 identified for Lobbyist fees.

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Howland) to cut the $120,000 identified for Lobbyist fees. There was discussion about pausing this cut to assess lobbying fees in total, since some of those fees are incorporated in the Finance Department's budget that on the schedule for budget hearing #2.
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Howland) to withdraw the motion. Approved unanimously.

CM Diamond expressed his opposition to the annual Municipal Dues and Affiliation dues line items, which he referred to as a boondoggle.
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Freeman) to Municipal Dues and Affiliation dues.
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Howland) to amend the motion to only remove $237,427 proposed for Municipal Dues and Affiliations related to Florida and National League of Cities.

Approved 6-2 (Johnson and White in opposition)
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Howland) to approve the motion as amended. Approved 6-2 (Johnson and White in opposition)

CM Diamond expressed his opposition to the funding for membership in the Northeast Florida Regional Council. There was discussion about the purpose and usefulness of NEFRC.
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Freeman) to remove the $390,673 line item for the Northeast Florida Regional Council.
Failed 1-7 (Diamond in support)

There was discussion about the costs and benefits of Telehealth. CM Diamond expressed his opposition.
CM White noted the benefit for JFRD. CM Salem said the program only benefits hospitals. CP Howland advocated for a cut to the proposed funding instead of removal.
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Freeman) to remove the $1.5 million for Telehealth.
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Freeman) to amend the motion to place half of the funds ($750,000) related to Telehealth below the line in a designated contingency. Approved 6-2 (Johnson and White in opposition)
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Howland) to approved the motion as amended. Approved 6-2 (Johnson and White in opposition)

CM Diamond expressed his opposition to the funding for the lease payment to WJCT, offering his criticism about the programming. CM Boylan explained the history of this payment, related to a real estate transaction. There was discussion about the terms of the lease. This item was tabled.

CM Diamond expressed his inclination to cut the proposed $10,019,591 for Council Strategic Initiatives by half. CP Howland said it would serve as a good example of financial restraint.
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Freeman) to cut the funding for City Council Strategic Plan funding to $5 million.
Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Diamond) to amend the motion to reduce the funding for City Council Strategic Plan funding down to $2,200,000 from $10,019,591 with the difference designated for reserves. Approved 7-1 (Johnson in opposition)
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Freeman) to approved the motion as amended. Approved 7-1 (Johnson in opposition)

Lunch break 12:02 pm - 12:30 pm

The committee discussed the proposed Affordable Housing Trust funding. CM Diamond said he favored cutting all of the funding marked for that purpose ($4.9 million).

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Howland) to remove the $1.5 million for the Down Payment Assistance Home-Ownership Program. Joshua Hicks, Affordable Housing Administrator, explained that this program provides funds to workforce residents, like teachers and nurses, who are not eligible for state and federally funded programs. Approved 7-1 (Johnson in opposition)

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Howland) to remove the $2.4 million for the Local Capital Stack for Attainable Housing Program. Approved 7-1 (Johnson in opposition)

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Gay) to remove the $1 million related to the Attainable Housing Tap Fee Fund.
Approved 7-1 (Johnson in opposition)

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Miller) to approve the three Auditor recommendations related to expenditures:
1. Placing the $464,409 in Gator Bowl funding below the line until the new contract is approved by City Council. This will have no impact on the Special Council Contingency.
2. Reducing Juvenile Justice funding by $1,261,778 to $5,702,893 based on the state providing the required contribution amount for July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. This will have a positive impact to Special Council Contingency of $1,261,778.
3. Moving $4,900,000 in funding for the Affordable Housing Trust to a Designated Contingency pending the legislation being filed related to the changes on how this fund will be set up. These funds can be moved out of the designated contingency with the upcoming separate legislation. This will have no impact on the Special Council Contingency. These recommendations have a positive impact on special council

contingency of $1,261,778.
Approved unanimously.

Multiyear Programs and Initiatives Fund
No recommendations.

Debt Service
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Miller) to approve the three Auditor recommendations:
1. Switching $2,288,856 in principal and $1,298,927 interest from Fund 21131 to Fund 21130 to properly account for where the debt is paid from.
2. Switching the transfer of debt service payments of $1,348,438 in principal and $1,028,694 in interest to Fund 57111 to budget the debt service transfer going to the correct fund.
3. Correcting the subobjects used for the transfers out of Fund 46101 and in to Fund 47105.
Approved unanimously.

Schedule B3
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Freeman) to approve the Auditor recommendation:
Revise B3 to be consistent with the schedule on the prior two pages that correct some economic incentive amounts to the current best estimates. Approved unanimously.

Public Service Grants (PSGs and Cultural Council)
There was discussion about whether these funds go towards core services.

Motion/2nd (Lahnen/Diamond) to place 50% of the Public Service Grants Council designated contingency and the Cultural Council Grants funding in the "Referendum Contingency," which is contingent the results of Amendment #3. Approved 6-1 (Johnson in opposition)

Motion/2nd move to reconsider. Approved 6-1 (Johnson in opposition)
Motion/2nd (Freeman/Diamond) to place 50% of the Public Service Grants Council designated contingency and the Cultural Council Grants funding in the "Referendum Contingency," which is contingent the results of Amendment #3. Approved 7-1 (Johnson in opposition)

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve the Auditor recommendation: Schedule of Public Service Grants (Schedule A2) shall be updated to remove Public ServiceGrant Council funding from the schedule since the funding is appropriated in Ordinance 2026-509. Approved unanimously.

Direct Contracts
Agape Community Health:
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve technical amendments.
1. Authorize funds not distributed to the State as part of City's Federally Qualified Health Center Low-Income Pool requirement be disbursed directly to Agape for uncompensated

care for uninsured and indigent patients and authorize execution of related agreement(s); Reflect total funding not to exceed $121,724 between both activities.
2. Attach revised Exhibit 17 (Term Sheet) to reflect intended use of funds not disbursed to the State and correct budget schedule
Approved unanimously.

I.M. Sulzbacher Center for the Homeless - Homelessness Continuum of Care/Urban Rest Stop
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve technical amendment.
1. Attach Revised Exhibit 2 (Term Sheet) to correct budget schedule
Approved unanimously.

In the Word International – OutEast Community Center
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Miller) to remove this item. Approved 7-1 (Johnson in opposition)

Jacksonville Historical Society – History Center Campus Renovations
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve technical amendment.
1. Attach Revised Exhibit 13 (Term Sheet) to correct Scrivener's
Approved unanimously.
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve recommended amendment.
1. More definitive terms be added to the term sheet to be consistent with prior grant agreements establishing payment terms, project commencement requirements, specific defaults and clawbacks, etc.
Approved unanimously.

Jacksonville Urban League – Community and Veterans Empowerment Center
There was a lengthy discussion on this item. Dr. Danford, Urban League, spoke on behalf of the project.
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Lahnen) to remove the funding for this Center.
Failed 4-4 with a lack of majority (Howland, Diamond, Gay, Lahnen in support)

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve the technical amendment.
1. Remove requirement in Section 12.16 that agreement be executed in accordance with Chapter 118, Parts 1-5.
2. Attach Revised Exhibit 16 (Term Sheet) to remove authorization for 10% administrative budget changes, reduce authorized extensions to one additional year because additional funding is anticipated in FY 2027/28 and allow for administrative extensions under both the initial and renewal periods.
Approved unanimously.

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve the recommended amendment.
1. More definitive terms be added to the term sheet establishing minimum time periods of deed restrictions for public use, minimum private capital investment, specific defaults and clawbacks, etc.
Approved unanimously.

JAXCARECONNECT - We Care Jacksonville
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Freeman) to remove funding for items #6-12.
Failed 3-5 (Freeman, Diamond, Gay in support)

Motion/2nd (Johnson/Miller) to approve any technical amendments for items #6-12.
Approved unanimously.

United Way of Northeast Florida – 2-1-1 Program
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve technical amendment.
1. Attach Revised Exhibit 1 (Term Sheet) to correct Program Costs. Approved unanimously.

United Way of Northeast Florida – 9-8-8 Program
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve technical amendment.
1. Attach Revised Exhibit 1 (Term Sheet) to correct Program Costs. Approved unanimously.

United Way of Northeast Florida Eviction Diversion
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to move funding $1 million to the "Referendum Contingency," which is contingent the results of Amendment #3.
Motion/2nd to amend the motion to move funding ($500,000) to the "Referendum Contingency," which is contingent the results of Amendment #3.
Motion/2nd to approved the motion as amended. Approved 7-1 (Johnson in opposition)
Motion/2nd to approve the technical amendment.
1. Attach Revised Exhibit 15 to reduce maximum allowed assistance (rent and utilities) from 4 months to 3 months, to be consistent with the existing program approved in Ordinance 2023-803-E.
Approved unanimously.

Volunteers in Medicine – West Jacksonville Clinic
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve the technical amendment. Approved unanimously.

Wolfson's Children's Hospital - Pediatric and OB-GYN Graduate Medical Education
This item was tabled for further discussion at a later meeting.

Orleck Designated Contingency
No recommendations

MHOP
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve the technical amendment. Approved unanimously.
1. Attach a revised Exhibit 5 (I.M. Sulzbacher Center for Homeless term sheet) to correct the budget Schedule.

*** This is the only time these grants are presented**

3. Property Appraiser - 15 Minutes

Joyce Morgan, Property Appraiser, was in attendance to field questions about the budget.

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Freeman) to approved the Auditor recommendation:
1. Removing the funding for the commercial appraisal division chief position. This would decrease the budget for salaries by $89,489, pension costs by $10,738 and benefits by $12,353. This would be offset by decreasing the transfer from the general fund by $112,580.
Approved unanimously.

4. Fire & Rescue (includes Fire Inspections and Opioid Settlement Fund) - 60 Minutes

Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department: No recommendations.

Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Fund: No recommendations.

Building Inspection fund: No recommendations.

Homelessness Initiatives Special Revenue Fund
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve the Auditor recommendation:
1. Adding authorization to enter into contracts with Trinity Rescue Mission, Inc., City Rescue Mission, Inc., and The Salvation Army. This will require waivers of Municipal Code Section 118.107 due to these contracts not being competitively bid, attaching applicable term sheets consistent with prior years, and attaching Municipal Code Section 118.107 affidavits in order to provide for the continued provision of homeless shelter beds in fiscal year 2026/27.
Approved unanimously.

5. Office of the Sheriff - 60 Minutes
No recommendations.

911 Emergency User Fee fund
No recommendations.

6. City Council - 30 Minutes

Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve the Auditor recommended amendments.
Approved unanimously.
1. We recommend that the Value Adjustment Board protest fee be increased by $209,970. This will be offset with a decrease in the reimbursement from the Duval County School Board by $83,988. This will have a net positive impact of $125,982 on the Special Council Contingency.
2. We recommend that the communications allowance be increased for City Council Staff Services by $600 to add an employee that was inadvertently omitted from the

Communications Allowance schedule that was noted in our review. This will have a negative impact of $600 on the Special Council Contingency.
3. The salaries within the Council Auditor's Office was inadvertently understated by $112,725. The Budget Office has identified an enhancement within the Courts Administration of $59,399 that can be covered in the current year and part-time salaries within the Budget Office that can cover $33,528. This will have a negative impact on Special Council Contingency of $19,798.
The net impact of these recommendations is a positive variance of $105,584.

7. Tourist Development Council - 15 Minutes

TDC Fund 10301
Motion/2nd (Diamond/Johnson) to approve Auditor recommended amendment. Approved unanimously.
1. We recommend that Budget Ordinance Schedule W be revised to correct the Transfer from Fund Balance amount from $1,937,944 to $1,943,481 and expenditures for the Administration plan component from $355,515 to $361,052. This will align the schedule with the amounts in the budget and has no impact on Special Council Contingency.

TDC Fund 10304
No recommendations.

8. General Counsel - 30 Minutes

There was discussion about the salaries for attorneys in the General Counsel's Office and how that affects recruitment and retention. CM Gay requested a breakdown of OGC professional services for the use of outside counsel.
No recommendations.

9. Emergency Contingency - 15 Minutes

No recommendations.

Totals at end of hearing # 1:
$7.6 million in Amendment 3 contingency; $12.7 million designated to transfer to Reserves; $889,542 in special council contingency.

NOTE: The next budget hearing will be held Friday, August 14, 2026.

*******Note: Items may be added at the discretion of the Chair.*******

Pursuant to the American with Disabilities Act, accommodations for persons with disabilities are available upon request. Please allow 1-2 business days notification to process; last minute requests will be accepted; but may not be possible to fulfill. Please contact Disabled Services Division at: V 904-255-5466, TTY-904-255-5476, or email your request to KaraT@coj.net.

Minutes: Colleen Hampsey, Council Research
CHampsey@coj.net 904.255.5151
Posted: 8.18.26 5:00 pm