

## Shayna Jencks

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**From:** Shayna Jencks  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 10, 2025 8:42 AM  
**To:** 'Lively, Cathy'  
**Cc:** District 1 Commissioner Kathryn Delaney; District 2 Commissioner Tom Goodson; District 3 Commissioner Kim Adkinson; District 4 Commissioner Rob Feltner; District 5 Commissioner Thad Altman; 'morris.richardson@brevardfl.gov'  
**Subject:** Minutes for approval  
**Attachments:** 03-27-2025 Draft Shay Budget Workshop #3.rtf

Good morning Cathy,

Can you please add the attached minutes for Board approval on July 17, 2025, Agenda.

Thank you ☺

*Shayna Jencks*

**Deputy Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners**

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# **Brevard County Board of County Commissioners**

*2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way  
Viera, FL 32940*



## **Minutes**

**Thursday, March 27, 2025**

**1:00 PM**

**Budget Workshop #3**

**Florida Room**

**A. CALL TO ORDER 1:00 PM**

**Present:** Commissioner District 1 Katie Delaney, Commissioner District 2 Tom Goodson, Commissioner District 3 Kim Adkinson, Commissioner District 4 Rob Feltner, and Commissioner District 5 Thad Altman

**B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Adkinson led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. COUNTY DEPARTMENT PRESENTATIONS**

Chairman Feltner stated he had a request that the workshop be a four hour meeting; he believes that is reasonable; and asked for the pleasure of the Board.

Commissioner Delaney replied with a motion.

Chairman Feltner stated he does not think the Board needs to vote, it just needs to agree that it is going to be a time certain for 5:00 p.m., which means realistically it will probably have another budget workshop.

Frank Abbate, County Manager, stated before they get into the budget presentations, he knows it is a significant concern to everyone on the Board what is happening with the Rockledge Hospital situation; and he has asked the Chief to speak and give an update in terms of what some of the efforts are that are being worked on to try to help address the situation as it moves forward.

Patrick Voltaire, Fire Chief, stated as everyone knows it is no secret Orlando Health Rockledge came to them and said that they would be closing the hospital down; since then there have been several meetings during the week with hospital leadership and local partners working on a plan forward to support the community; starting this week they have partnered with Coastal Ambulance Service in Brevard County to start working on the Basic Life Support (BLS), those low acuity calls like toothaches, rashes, and someone having trouble sleeping; those calls would get transferred down to Coastal Ambulance Service; in 96 hours of service so far this week they have done six transports which might not seem like a lot but that is in a system that is still fully functional with all hospitals in place, with the trial happening in Merritt Island; so an area that does not have a significant call volume in Cocoa and Rockledge area, but every one of those calls that are transitioned down, there is a five team medical direction staff, so the doctor is called every time to consult on that and ensure that that is the right decision for the patient; once that transitions, they will be on 24-hour shifts instead of the 12-hour shifts they are on now; so next week those two ambulances in Merritt Island will then go to four; the third week of the trial, it will transition to Cocoa and Rockledge; and the fifth ambulance will be in the Port St. John/Canaveral Groves area, it will be a system status which means it will go wherever it is needed, like filling in gaps even if that is north County or south County, it is not bound to one area for the coverage. He added that the men and women in Merritt Island are excited to have Coastal Ambulance Service as part of their fire response family; even though system status is what Coastal Ambulance Service does they have invited them into the fire house to enjoy some meals and just get out of their rigs; and so it has already worked out to be a great partnership between Brevard County Fire Rescue (BCFR) and Coastal Ambulance Service to serve the community and respond to the things that are happening with Orlando Health.

## C.1. Planning and Development

Billy Prasad, Planning and Development Interim Director, stated Planning and Development (P and D) is a large department with services provided, everything from zoning, code enforcement, subdivision planning, building code and collection of impact fees; there are 2,500 code enforcement and contractor licensing cases annually, 3,900 development records that includes site plan subdivisions; they process about 100 building permits every single day; 53,000 payment transactions annually; 1,200 to 1,300 County licensed contractors; and conduct about 216 building inspections every single day. He stated Planning and Development has about 77 employees, a few lean six sigma initiatives, and seven projects have been completed with two being active; Emergency Support Functions (ESF5) is a communications function where they assist teams at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) during and after an event in organizing information for later distribution; the bulk of the employees do damage assessment, so after a storm, as soon as it is safe, they have teams of employees go out to canvas areas whether it is Countywide or specific areas depending on what the situation requires, and document damages through images and texts which allows the EOC to ensure the residents have access to the assistance and funding they deserve; and due to the large amount of breadth and functions of the department, this allows the employees to create synergies that increase their level of service at no additional cost; and for example, there may be a code enforcement case that involves zoning and because code enforcement and zoning are under one roof those two teams work together to find a resolution to that problem for the residents and get voluntary compliance. He mentioned five other County department fees are collected through P and D that includes Public Works, Natural Resources, Utilities, Solid Waste and Fire Rescue. He stated for the 2025 budget about \$80 million of the \$108 million of the P and D budget are impact fees, that is primarily a pass through, that is not money that P and D is using itself that is passing it on, either through other County agencies or outside agencies such as the School Board or the various cities; if the \$80 million is taken out, what is left is about \$28 million and that is split up between the functions that P and D actually spends on day to day operations like Building Code, Code Enforcement, Planning and Zoning, Licensing, Regulation, and Enforcement; and the budget overview takes out impact fees and balance forward for the reasons he just mentioned so the revenue is about \$10.6 million in Fiscal Year 2024 versus expenses of \$9.5 million. He stated the first program he will focus on is impact fees trends; impact fee assessments dropped from 2023 to Fiscal Year 2024 from 5,400 to about 4,300 but that is after a three-year consistent increase meanwhile, the total impact fees collected remained flat; a lot is dependent on value and type of project, not just raw numbers and applications; that it is pretty consistent over time; and when getting into individual funds that is when one sees variability. He mentioned impact fee revenue restrictions, the County must specifically earmark funds collected under the impact fees for use in acquiring, constructing, or improving capital facilities to benefit new users; unincorporated versus incorporated, including education, more impact fees were collected in incorporated areas \$25 million versus \$13 million and removing education that number flips; correctional impact fees have maintained consistent over the last five years; educational impact fees north and south cannot be intermixed, so what is collected in the north must stay in the north fund, what is collected in the south must stay in the south fund; the south fund stays consistently much lower; in 2024, it was about \$5.7 million, whereas, in the north at \$17 million; and transportation impact fees, again separate funds cannot be intermixed, so the spike in 2023 in South Mainland it might have made sense that Central Mainland went down but they cannot be flipped to make up for the difference, it has to stay where it is collected. He continued by saying EMS/Fire impact fees were combined onto one slide just to give an idea of overall collections; fire is pretty consistent, although, there was a drop between 2023 and 2024, meanwhile, the Viera Station 48 expense is money that is going out the door essentially that P and D are obligated, based on the agreement with Viera that built the fire station, money collected in that specific area goes back to Viera, so that was \$206,000 in 2024; residential projects in

unincorporated Brevard County, the rates in light green on the slide he is showing are actual rates for single-family detached homes; the brownish orange box on the slide is the smaller one or two-story multifamily, the blue box is the three or more stories and then in the yellow is the mobile home and RV rental; and commercial impact fees are based on different factors depending on square footage, etc., and there were 23 commercial business impact fee assessments in 2024 for a total of about \$3 million. He stated that impact fee was last raised in 2001 on January 28th; the Board had directed staff to draft a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a consultant to perform an impact fee study on the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and fire, then in February the Board gave an option to broaden that, the RFP was advertised on March 14th and proposals are due April 8th; the procedure for impact fees, there has been an update on the extraordinary route because there are two primary routes to increase the impact fees, the normal which is 25 percent or less has to be done in two, then between 25 and 50 percent is done in four increments, and then for an extraordinary increase that allows it to go over 50 percent, or if the extraordinary shows it down to one year, but the key is there is a bill filed in the legislature which better defines extraordinary need in a much more narrow way than has been used in the past, so if that winds up getting to the Governor's desk and he signs it, that will limit the Board's options if it were to go down that route to begin with; but even if it did, it would have to expressly demonstrate an extraordinary need, have two public workshops, and an approval by a two-thirds vote. He talked about the Florida Building Code department, the Statewide Uniform Building Code is mandated by Florida law and administered by the Florida Building Commission; it is based on the International Building Codes with Florida specific issues; all municipalities and counties must follow the Florida building code which establishes minimum construction standards; Building Code trends, the raw numbers do not necessarily translate to revenue in the development world, the permit-issued number has gone down quite a bit since 2019 when it was at \$26,394 and now it is down to \$23,429 but because the job values have gone up, the revenue in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 actually increased, despite the lower amount of raw permits because the permit job value drives the revenue, they get in just as much as the raw number of permits issued; major construction permit trends, are kind of new builds, new homes, new businesses, this gives an idea from P and D perspective and gives the Board an idea of what development is like and the development trends overall in unincorporated Brevard County; it remained pretty consistent between 2023 and 2024 from 1,100 to 1,000; the average job value went up significantly on the commercial side in 2024, which is more than likely due to one project that is skewing it, specifically the Merritt Island Health First Hospital; and the average construction fees did not increase in revenue because the statutory mandated reduction in permit fees for specific projects. He mentioned building code revenue restrictions are extremely restricted under Florida Statute, it can only be used for carrying out the County's responsibilities and enforcing the Florida Building Code; fees generally may not exceed actual cost; aside from direct enforcement activities, and that is paying the employees that are actually doing the inspection and doing the plan reviews; funds can be used for the construction of Building Code enforcement activities or upgrade technology, hardware, software systems to enhance service delivery; and that technology language was added in 2024 and became very important. He went on to say building permitting review agencies, which are the agencies that are reviewing building permits, the top three which are building, land development, and zoning are housed in P and D, other agencies touching various permits are Fire Rescue, Natural Resources, Public Works, Utilities and their impact fees; and these agencies look for structural issues, foundation issues, mechanical issues, life safety issues, accessibility, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues, and the most recent version of the Florida Building Code updated a few things having to do with energy efficiency, whether that is lighting and things with heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC). He commented about the statutory mandate and how the Florida Statute 553.791 mandates a 25 percent reduction for inspection and/or a 25 percent reduction in review fees when using private providers; the red line on the slide shows 1,600 permits where private providers have been utilized for one or the other, that included the hospital, so again, it

is one of those things where the number of raw permits that are being used may not be as important as the job value associated with those permits from a revenue standpoint; the inspection trend side, for County inspectors there were 47,024 versus 8,000 in contracted inspectors, they are required to have contracted inspectors which they use as a backup for staffing issues; and they try to keep that number as low as possible because it is significantly more expensive to use that versus County inspectors. He mentioned that there is an issue in the Building Code area with a combination of an aging workforce and troubles in recruitment, which will be a huge focus in the coming year; it is an immediate need to keep that number down and hopefully get that purple line on the slide back down; another key focus is leveraging technology, the State has continually and openly demanded more out of the permitting process while shortening statutorily mandated time frames; the State has suggested dealing with that by expanding staff, but in this environment he does not believe that is the best approach, rather becoming more efficient would be his preference; in 2009 and 2024 there was a 90 percent increase in efficiency regarding records that P and D process through Accela, it is just an easy way to pull data to get a measure metric of their efficiency and they have gone up by 90 percent on that metric; virtual inspections allow them to improve efficiency which actually results in superior inspections in most cases, for example, the inspectors do not get on roofs to inspect roofs, so with virtual inspections there are contractors that can and do that for them, sending them high quality, high resolution images to look at; they can also ask for more images when there is a need for them; the utilization of that has gone up significantly since 2021, an increase of 235 percent, similar to that on the permit side for the applications submitted online; that is not just something P and D prefers for efficiency, they have done a number of projects, polls, outreach and that is what customers want, they want to be able to just do their business online; and between 2020 and 2024 it went up to 91 percent for applications submitted online. He explained things that Building Code revenue can be used on is to upgrade technology and software systems to enhance service delivery, and because of the Board approval last year P and D is doing just that where the Board approved Solid Waste to use \$5.3 million in building funds for an upgrade in Accela, which is very much needed to provide not only efficiency, but to provide public service; one of the biggest complaints P and D gets is about their Bass portal, which is a public portal for the public for records and a variety of other reasons, it is old and clunky, and this will allow them to go to the newest version called Bass 2.0 that allows them to do OpenCounter; it is a decision based software where somebody could go online and get an idea of what they can and cannot do with their property and once they decide what they want to do with their property, say if they want to build a pool, the program will walk them through start to finish whether they can do it, how to do it, provide the permitting process, provide the information that is needed from start to finish; and the backbone, the Accela system, is going to transition to a cloud-based model, which allows for quarterly updates, so like most new software, it is not like buying one version anymore it is constantly going to update to the latest version, which allows for reduced maintenance costs because P and D is not housing all the servers. He noted what P and D is most excited about internally is applying Accela best practices, it is designed to allow them to see where things are stalling out and things of that nature, so it would really be helpful from an efficiency standpoint; the Geographic Information System (GIS) integration, those are the maps that both the public and P and D use; and that allows them to increase the information they are providing through that.

Chairman Feltner asked about the GIS and whether the County one interacts with the Property Appraiser's.

Mr. Prasad replied the two GIS systems themselves do not interact but they use each other's data to build their GIS, P and D collects data from the Property Appraiser that they integrate to their GIS system and he believes the same goes for the Property Appraiser.

Chairman Feltner asked if the Property Appraiser's pictometry helps P and D also.

Mr. Prasad replied, yes.

Chairman Feltner asked if he had access to that, like a license type situation.

Tad Calkins, Interim County Manager, responded yes sir, there is a weekly exchange of data back and forth between the County and the Property Appraiser for new addresses and parcels, so the databases are pretty up to date.

Commissioner Delaney asked if the lines would get a little bit clearer on parcels on the new program.

Mr. Prasad replied it might but he cannot say for sure; the issues with those lines, he also sees them on the Property Appraiser's, so he is not sure where that issue lies that is causing it; he understands what she is talking about, it tends to be just slightly off; and he noted he would have to dig into the source of the issue to see if that would be addressed through this or not.

Chairman Feltner stated when he worked in the Property Appraisers Office more than 10 years ago, that was the constant talk of the Map Department, as there are about 300,000 parcels in Brevard County, it is a pretty big task.

Mr. Prasad stated he has gone through some of the big programs in his department, now he will start to go a little quicker; they are certainly not less important for a budgetary standpoint to have a less impact on the planning, zoning, and land development that includes comprehensive planning, zoning, subdivision, and site plans; some planning and zoning trends show the site plan subdivision zoning applications between 2020 and 2024 have gone up significantly; fees and charges for services, however, remain pretty flat; and once again it is not so much the numbers it is the type. He mentioned meeting with each of the Commissioner's to talk about the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) that was transmitted in November of 2024; they received a response January 21, 2025, that was an effort just to get to that point; the Brevard Barrier Island Area Protection Act, which created one of five areas of critical state concern in the State, the first in many years that was created in the State; Florida Commerce is continuing to conduct an audit style review of their Comprehensive Plan and Land Disposal Restrictions (LDR) as they relate to the South Beaches area; they have transmitted their amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to try and be consistent with that, in November, by continuing to develop that based on the State's commerce which will be coming to the Board in the coming months; and major 2025 zoning projects, again dealing with the area of critical state concern, Comprehensive Plan aspect is just the first step, then they will be delving into the Code which is actually, in some ways, an even more significant effort amending the County ordinances to be consistent with the area of critical state concern, and of course the adoption of EAR. He mentioned 25 percent of the Board's agenda business is initiated by P and D with zoning as a focus; staff deals with contractor and code compliance on a daily basis, so he just wants to highlight the sea turtle protection which they will be ramping up consistent with the area of critical state concern legislation; they prioritize short-term rentals based on Board direction and, of course, they are focused on life safety issues like unsafe buildings; Code Enforcement trends is interesting because the relationship between the cases and revenue are not really what someone would expect; there is not a direct correlation; it is especially seen when it is expanded out over a number of years; the revenue on the Code Enforcement side is associated with the housing market; most Code Enforcement cases in their system are not actually associated with a single cent in revenue; and that is because they have a voluntary compliance rate of over 90 percent of cases complying prior to hearing which means they are not collecting any revenue from that. He stated the revenue is derived from those cases that sit

for a very long period of time collecting daily fines, liens are attached to the property so eventually when the property is sold, those liens are paid when the sale happens, so when property is tending to change hands more often, that is when the revenue increases; the outlier payments, every once in a while, this happened in 2024, somebody will sell a property that happens to have a very large lien on it over \$100,000 which of course causes the revenue to spike a little bit; the licensing, regulation, and enforcement fund, P and D registers two types of licenses, there is the County contractors which P and D creates their license, those people for a variety of reasons have chosen to be licensed in and through Brevard County, P and D does their exam approvals, certifications, license issuance and renewal processes; then there are the State certified contractors, those are the people that are already licensed to contract through the State, so P and D looks to register them in their system, and check their insurance and certificates; licensing renewals, although, they have remained stable over the past few years, they trended downward initially due to deregulation initiated by the State, so effectively, P and D does not regulate anything differently than the State does under State law; anybody who is licensed in the County could theoretically be licensed through the State to do the same permitting work; and nevertheless, there is a good reason to continue to be licensed through Brevard County, and frankly, it is customer service where they will walk people through their issues with their license and things like that, so at least 1,366 have chosen to continue to be licensed through the County, the revenue initially dropped off from that but has remained stable since then. He reiterated the trends of increasing State mandates on their activities, meaning more is expected in less time throughout the development process; he highlighted a couple of bills that became law in the last legislative session; the bills could impact local governments to the extent that they may have to hire more employees to meet the prescribed time frames, and that is just two of them; there has actually been a trend over a period of years and based on the bills that he has seen filed this year, he does not believe there is any sign of letup, so that makes it all the more important to carry on the efficiency initiatives that Tad Calkins, Interim County Manager, started; they must do more with the available resources that they have; and P and D fully intends to confront that challenge and succeed.

Commissioner Delaney stated that she has talked in depth with Mr. Prasad about the Bass system and she appreciates that that is getting updated and that the step-by-step process for the customers online will just be customizable to what their needs are.

## **C.2. Merritt Island Redevelopment Agency**

Larry Lallo, MIRA Executive Director, stated he is pleased to present the work of MIRA, the challenges, successes and budget. He mentioned one thing that has come up a lot lately at the Federal level and locally is the aspect of Department of Government Efficiency (Doge) and accountability; Community Redevelopment Agency's (CRA) are under a number of accountability standards created by the State; agency oversight is delegated by the Board of County Commissioners as the Board of Governance of MIRA, it delegates the operational activity and budget authority on the approved budget to a seven member board of advisors; MIRA is managed by 2.75 Brevard County staff; as Executive Director he reports directly to the Assistant County Manager and County Manager who develop his budget along with the Budget Department; the Advisory Board is accountable to the governing Board; the agency must follow two Statutes, Chapter 163, Part III in the Florida Code, MIRA is a CRA but it is also a Dependent District to the County, which is under the Code, Chapter 189 as a Special Dependent District; the standards MIRA has to follow include submitting an annual report to the Commissioners, which is due March 31, as well as all CRAs in the County; the Statute that was added in 2020 requires that each CRA prepare an independent audit which will be included in the annual report; and then they are required by State Statute to post that information on their website. He stated that anytime it comes to building or finance, MIRA, like all County departments, have to go through the County Finance Department, which he believes makes



them highly accountable in terms of their finances; all CRAs are required to follow the procurement policies of their governing boards, so in his case they follow County procurement policies; one unique thing for CRAs to be mindful of is when a CRA is created they have to have a community redevelopment plan; CRAs are limited to their expenditures that are qualified under the statute, and the projects and programs have to be in that redevelopment plan, that is what they have to go back to when they do a check, is it in the plan, at least in a program or project level and of course in the CIP; a couple things about MIRA, each CRA is very unique because each community is unique; and in MIRA's case it is a crossroads to Port Canaveral, the second largest commercial passenger port in the world, the Atlantic beaches, and the Kennedy Space Center, those are key areas in the County in terms of tourism, traffic volume, and economic activity. He mentioned that one thing about MIRA, which is kind of something people do not think about too much, is MIRA covers less than 10 percent of Merritt Island property that goes into the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) portion of the TIF fund, 90 percent or more of the CRA properties that are in their targeted area are not residential properties, all residential properties are not part of the TIF, basically, they focus on the corridors and the barge canal, Courtenay Parkway, State Road 520 and State Road 528; the average year built for commercial structures in the redevelopment area is 1978, which presents a lot of redevelopment challenges; another thing to note is that being mostly redeveloped in 1978, he believes the storm water regulation came in around that time, which means that sets them in place for having a lot of property in the redevelopment area that was originally built without any stormwater regulation; one of the challenges that Merritt Island faces is when it was created it went from 3,000 population in 1960 to 30,000 in 1970, that is a 900 percent increase due to the space race and a lot people running to Merritt Island to be close to where they work; and it was a largely unregulated environment, septic tanks, small lot sizes, all types of things that occurred including the digging and creating waterfront property with all the canals. He stated MIRA's mission focus is alleviating blight, fostering beautification, and improving public infrastructure; 86 percent of MIRA's major expenditures is public infrastructure, MIRA focuses on modal networks and mobility to help the Space Coast area transit system and bus shelters; MIRA works closely with redevelopment activity from the commercial sector, and the State Statute requires that MIRA work with the private sector; and MIRA does not have a lot of incentives to offer unlike a lot of other CRAs so they try to leverage solid good quality redevelopment activity through the use of infrastructure improvements and beautification. He went on to say MIRA's total operating revenues, \$1.5 million is generated through capturing two millages that are in the County, the General Fund millage and the Fire Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU); another thing about CRAs is that about 80 percent of the millages are spread Countywide, the base is not frozen on those millages; the operating budget is \$916,000, capital outlay this year is very large because of the amphitheater project that is under contract, grants and aid is a combination of mostly environmental Brownfield projects and former façade grants that were paid out, and compensation and benefits is \$285,000; MIRA tried to create a basic TIF model because understanding tax and government financing especially for the lay person is a little difficult; so when MIRA was created in 1988, after the Space industry started to fall down, buildings were starting to age, the County Commissioners at the time approved the creation of MIRA, primarily focusing on the commercial core, which is the existing tax base and any increase in taxes, only on those two millages, is what goes into what is called a trust fund; and MIRA is limited to what goes into the trust fund unless they are going out after grants. He continues by saying increment revenue from 2002 to 2024, the graph on the slide in many ways might represent the County during that period; in 2008 MIRA's increment revenues peaked meaning the property values peaked; 2020/2021 MIRA collaborated with Public Works in the rebuilding of the Sea Ray Drive Bridge, they took a 20 percent reduction from MIRA's TIF income to support the construction of the Sea Ray Drive Bridge; which at that time was going to be about \$5.5 million; the bridge has substantially increased in cost since then; and it is nearing completion. He noted one thing he wanted to emphasize, on an annual recurring basis, for every million dollars of increased taxable value from redevelopment project in the

redevelopment area approximately \$2,594 goes into the MIRA redevelopment trust fund, and \$9,272 would go to all the other Brevard County Ad Valorem Taxing Districts; this is some of the grants MIRA has received in recent years, they try to leverage the MIRA revenue stream with other grant funds, St. John's, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Tourism Development Council (TDC), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Brownfield program, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), private donations, and MIRA has also helped leverage other grants like for the acquisition of Griffis Landing, MIRA contributed \$400,000 to leverage a \$2 million grant from the Florida Forever Grant program; this year \$8.2 million amphitheater project is currently under construction to be completed in November, \$4.7 million came from MIRA, \$2.5 million came from the TDC, and \$1 million came from the Florida Department of Commerce; the other project which is pending final engineering and going out to bid is a quarter infrastructure project with a total potential cost of at least \$4 million of which MIRA will be contributing \$2 million; Veteran's Memorial Park, another project which is the Medal of Honor Tribute area and is awaiting matching funds; at Griffis Landing, which is one of Florida's last forever working waterfronts, MIRA is looking at leveraging \$300,000 with an \$890,000 grant from the Florida Department of Commerce; and right now there is a building over there that was flattened known as Miss Apples, in the last hurricane. He added that is property owned by Brevard County under management by Natural Resources and is considered vital property by the MIRA Board. He mentioned the small semblance of projects that MIRA has involved themselves in is largely infrastructure projects; the corridor looks good and making it attractive is considered by the MIRA board to be an economic incentive, not a direct grant, but remember it is infrastructure and beautification to incentivize investment dollars; some of MIRA's challenges and redevelopment trends on Merritt Island, consist of blighted conditions on Courtenay Parkway and State Route 520, redevelopment of key sites with national tenants, MIRA has a lot of national tenant interest from redevelopers, which is a good sign from a market point of view; increased traffic volumes on State Route 520 and Courtenay Parkway, most of these MIRA is going to do an origination and destination survey to find out where that traffic is originating from and going to because the retail industry is pretty much going downhill, for every one percent of online sales they lose 10,000 stores in the United States, so the mall parking lot is usually vacant for those 4,000 parking spaces; there has not been a major multifamily development on Merritt Island for the most part other than River Fly-In, for over 20 years, so the traffic being a concern, but he cannot say that it is caused by overdevelopment; redevelopment is good because they are taking land that has already been developed, surface water is already going off in the wrong direction impacting the lagoon, redeveloping can alleviate some of those considerations; Merritt Island right now is in a very threshold moment, and the blight that is there has been aging since some of those buildings are approaching 60 years old, and that is accelerating at the same time because of its market position on the way to the beaches, the traffic volume of SR 520 and SR 528 in Courtenay, they are seeing accelerated interest in redevelopment; and that is actually a good thing when considering where MIRA has been. He commented one of the worst cases of blight is an abandoned multifamily development on Courtenay Parkway; it was abandoned during the Great Recession, and MIRA is hoping to work with a redevelopment entity to redevelop this; it was under contract at one time but the contract fell through because the redevelopment they discovered with doing their due diligence they would have to tear the buildings down; it has been almost 20 years, they are full of graffiti, kids walking through them and the infrastructure is not suitable for redevelopment; and with Code changes, the base flood level, even the retention pond would have to be raised which is one of the challenges MIRA faces with redevelopment, a classic case of a dramatic redevelopment that occurred on Merritt Island what most Islanders know as Tingley Marina and RV Park and has been sitting in pretty bad shape since 1978; and working with some good developers MIRA created a project that about \$376,000 in annual revenue stream goes to the County and MIRA would receive about 20 percent of that, the other \$300,000 goes to all the County taxing districts. He mentioned these are some projects and programs; this is a major infrastructure project designed for three

purposes, to create a beautiful park to attract other redevelopment in the mall area, the prime purpose and a big deal for Natural Resources and MIRA, the storm water lakes were created to handle the 165 acres of runoff in the mall area so what this will do is stimulate redevelopment when that starts occurring, and it is starting to occur, and thirdly, it provided the veterans a place to call home; right now there are about 78,000 veterans in the County; the final vision and it is a collaboration with MIRA who put in the money for the acquisition of the project, it was a defaulted Pulte Home project, condominium project; MIRA bought it for about \$2.2 million with the permission of the County and they worked with Public Works, the Brevard Veteran's Council, and Natural Resources to bring that project about; soon they will get some numbers on how many people go to this park; and MIRA also put in the improvements around the lakes. He mentioned he has been doing economic development a very long time and he never thought he would see a park be a stimulus for economic development but that is what is happening; adjacent to the stormwater lake, there was a site plan approved for \$120 million redevelopment with 300 luxury apartments; MIRA asked the developer why they wanted to be there, it is the park, the mall, and in the proximity to the hospital; he shows the overview of the project; and he noted they are trying to have tours of the construction on a regular basis. He stated the Cone Road septic sewer project is another major infrastructure project, a \$3.6 million collaboration, again, with Natural Resources and Public Works; he was told the ditch that was there, cars often went down inside of there, cars would get stuck; they did sidewalks, fences, they took off 80 properties from septic and brought them into the sanitary system; and MIRA acquired the grants so that all those commercial property owners did not have to pay to do that. He commented this is redevelopment in action; one of MIRA's challenges was that all the automobile dealerships were following a national trend to go to the interstates; they have a brownfield program and worked with the redevelopers, Matthew Development, and what is going up there now is a brand new Chipotle, a pretty high quality EI car wash, same model that is in Viera, a Wawa, Christian Brothers Automotive that has completed 170 automobile franchises in the southeast, and not one of them has gone out of business, so they chose this site and will be under construction soon, and a Chinese restaurant is on its way; Health First Hospital is a 15-acre site, it was all pretty much impermeable, a former Kmart, this \$410 million hospital being adjacent to the mall is going to leverage a lot of other redevelopment activity whether it is offices, residential or commercial; MIRA is trying to provide some concepts to redevelopers, later in the afternoon they have a community workshop where the public will be invited; and they hope to have a large gathering of people coming to gather input on potential concepts. He stated MIRA plans on updating their redevelopment plan; it sunsets in 2034 in the current plan; he does not believe they will need to ask for an extension, MIRA just wants to utilize the current revenue stream to do some of their larger projects; there is going to be infrastructure projects and other types of projects needed to leverage the mall into a good solid redevelopment; one question he gets often is what are they going to do with the mall, and the first thing he has to say is, MIRA does not own the mall; they have to respect private property rights, but on the positive side, after about five years, from his experience in MIRA, the mall is being very cooperative now and trying to get as much information from MIRA as they can; MIRA tries to connect them; with redevelopers and potential mall purchases; MIRA shares concepts with them and they do share the potential for incentives, subject to the Board of County Commissioners.

Chairman Feltner mentioned indoor Pickle Ball courts.

Mr. Lallo replied MIRA did fund a market study for the State Route 520 corridor and some of the recommendations are, obviously retail would be very difficult given today's retail trends, so mixed use development seems to be very attractive, especially with the park to the south and the first one coming in this year under construction; they are seeing a lot of mixed use development with retail, so they are thinking about \$300 million to do the whole thing and that would bring in a little over \$2.5 million in taxes to the County per year; and right now, the taxes

collected on the mall are about \$296,000 a year, valuation is \$20 million.

Commissioner Delaney asked how come MIRA gets Fire MSTU money.

Mr. Lallo responded, back when MIRA was created, he would have to check on the Code but when CRAs are created they capture certain millages, fire was one and the other was a General Fund Millage; and in terms of the Code, he can get back to her on that and tell her how the Code is structured to allow that.

Commissioner Delaney mentioned that one of her biggest concerns about the mall redevelopment is the evacuation times, that is something that needs to be talked about and find a plan for people because she does not want people stuck on bridges when a huge storm is coming.

Mr. Lallo responded that should be part of the planning process, he is not sure if there is a Code for evacuation times, but he will look into that.

Commissioner Goodson asked if someone was stuck on a bridge would that not be a State issue rather than a County issue.

John Scott, Emergency Management Director, stated there are studies that do that, the Regional Planning Council heads that one for them; as far as Commissioner Goodson's direct question, that would be a County issue, but they take a lot of steps to make sure that does not happen; they have a whole backwards planning process, and they make sure everything is done well before they get themselves in that dangerous point at all.

Commissioner Goodson replied that was not the question, the question was if Mr. Scott does everything possible and somebody does not leave, they get hooked on that bridge being a two-lane bridge, is that a State issue not having four lanes to get them out.

Mr. Scott responded he is not sure, but that it is probably a joint issue.

Commissioner Goodson asked so the County would have to fund half the bridge to put four lanes in.

Mr. Scott replied that they are not responsible for the infrastructure to...

Commissioner Goodson stated correct.

Mr. Scott stated the actual response and movement is where the County would come in.

Commissioner Goodson replied correct, and he agrees with everything Mr. Scott said, but the funding of building a bigger bridge is State or Federal.

Commissioner Delaney stated her point was more so that the County would have to look into making sure that it is planning properly in the development and not overdoing that.

Mr. Scott replied that is something his staffs spend a lot of time looking at year-round, both with the Planning Council on the numbers with the State of Florida with their partners at Department of Transportation (DOT) and make sure that they are actually implementing those, they have good timing and data from the weather services, from the hurricane center, they use something where they use a light phased evacuation so they are always adding cushion and doing as much as they can to know, and there is the behavioral aspect as to know how people will respond, so when they do issue evacuation orders and what kind of response they are doing,

they are spending a lot of time, energy, and effort making sure they get it as right as possible.

Commissioner Goodson asked Mr. Scott if he could get the Board numbers that he says people react to evacuation notices from the Barrier Islands.

Mr. Scott replied yes, in general, the larger the storm the more people will be seen evacuating, for big storms they allow a minimum of 24 hours to get people clear, so categories three, four and five they are using those kinds of things.

Commissioner Goodson stated that is not the question, can Mr. Scott tell them the numbers of people that evacuate from the...

Mr. Scott responded oh, the population.

Commissioner Goodson replied yes.

Mr. Scott expressed his apologies, he misunderstood and thought he was talking about clear times.

Commissioner Goodson stated Mr. Scott has done all this planning he must have numbers on how many are listening.

Mr. Scott stated that listening is a little harder because that is a behavioral piece, there are about 250,000 people on the Barrier Islands, 275,000 give or take; when talking about a category storm that is going to be of such that they would actually evacuate people from the Barrier Islands, that is the number they use as the planning number that 250,000-275,000; and how many people actually listen, they call that their response rate, and that is around 50 to 60 percent.

Commissioner Delaney asked what is the time right now for evacuations for Merritt Island.

Mr. Scott replied it is hard to just give a Merritt Island timeframe he would have to go back...

Commissioner Delaney responded what about Barrier Islands.

Mr. Scott stated it is about 19 hours, worst case.

Commissioner Delaney asked if 2,000 apartments were added, does that do anything to the numbers.

Mr. Scott stated he would have to run the numbers because it is not just that that would increase it, does it increase it an hour or three hours he does not believe so, but he wants to look at the numbers because it is very much tied to roadway network; when talking about evacuations they use the phased concept, almost like a funnel where they are just dumping a bunch of people in all at once, they are going to get stuck; but if they gradually move them through, more people will get through in a more efficient manner.

Commissioner Altman stated vertical evacuation is the wave of the future where things are being built to category five storm, some of the new facilities might help reduce the evacuation time because it gives options.

Mr. Lallo stated the hospital is being built to a category four standard which is one reason they are building on Merritt Island, they want to be open and independent for at least a week, including all utility systems, without having to evacuate patients.

Tad Calkins, Assistant County Manager, stated through the development review process, they get traffic information, traffic studies, and traffic statements from developers that are all evaluated for the impacts on the roadways and roadway network.

\*The Board recessed at 2:08 p.m. and reconvened at 2:16 p.m.

### **C.3. Solid Waste Management**

Tom Mulligan, Solid Waste Management Director, stated his department's mission statement is to protect the public health and the environment; they are the final resting place for everything that nobody wants anymore; Brevard County is the only County in the State of Florida that has a Solid Waste Disposal Act with the Florida legislature; in 1967 that granted the Board of County Commissioners the power to establish a solid waste collection and disposal system; it requires all entities in the County to use that system also prohibiting disposal of waste that is generated from outside the County, which keeps capacity in the landfills for the taxpaying residents of Brevard; it also granted the Board authority to issue bonds to finance the system; and it granted the Board the right to create exclusive franchises to help operate the system. He stated there are five solid waste facilities; Central Disposal Facility which is a class one landfill, the only one in Brevard County; the two transfer stations, Sarno and Titusville take waste from the north or the south portion of the County, consolidate it, and get it to the Central Disposal Facility; Sarno Road Class III Landfill is for the waste that is generated in the south part of the County; US 192 site has started construction after 33 years; and the Mockingbird Way Mulching Facility is also under construction, replacing the Titusville Transfer Station and expanding the pad there. He stated the green north service area on the slide he is showing everything collected there goes to either the Mockingbird Way Mulching Facility or the Titusville Transfer Station; the red central area, everything collected there goes straight to the Central Disposal Facility; in the south yellow service area, everything now goes to the Sarno Transfer Station or the Class III Landfill; and eventually it will go the US 192 site to replace the Sarno Road Class III Landfill. He stated talking about the programs and services, it is split up into two different things, one is collection and recycling which Solid Waste Management does not have much to do with because it is contracted out, so the curbside collection is done by the contractors, Solid Waste Management monitors and administers the contract; on the disposal side is where more of the County employees are involved with the operation of the transfer stations, the landfill, household hazardous waste, waste, tires, metal, white goods, and vegetative waste; and they also do recycling education, which is where their administrative and finance are, also in engineering, permitting, and environmental compliance, so that is where the County employees are, they all work on the disposal side. He stated that the budget itself, which is an estimated Fiscal Year 25-26 budget, solid waste collection is through the collection assessments, everything below that on the slide is funded by solid waste disposal assessments; there is \$25.8 million for collections, \$30.6 million for operation of the actual facilities, \$55 million for capital improvement projects which is expansion of the system to keep capacity for the residents, equipment replacement is about \$8 million, transfers and debt services are about \$10 million, and then restricted reserves which is used only for closure of landfills, that is \$37 million; and it looks like a lot of money but they have to have that much money in case the County walked away from doing solid waste, the State wants them to have enough money that they could close the landfills without spending any additional money. He stated there are 165 positions right now, he says positions because they do not have 165 employees, there are some vacancies in both the professional side because the solid waste industry is kind of a niche industry and it gets hard to find civil engineers that want to be in that kind of industry, the boots on the ground; during Marc Bernath, Public Works Director, previous presentation he talked about the people that are out there all day in all kinds of weather and they are making the same money that someone could make at McDonald's; Solid Waste has that same issue for the boots on the ground people, but they are also standing in people's



rotting garbage and getting christened by seagulls, and so they do have some recruiting and retainage issues; and they try training for people to move up, but that becomes a double edge sword because as soon as someone moves up they have a slot that needs to be filled again. He mentioned collection/recycling consists of all residential properties receiving collection services in unincorporated Brevard County but it also regulates the rates charges charged for collection service at commercial properties, which is paid for by the non-ad valorem Solid Waste collection assessment that only goes out to residential properties, commercial properties have to contract with the franchise collector themselves; County employees are not paid out of that fund, it is strictly to pay for Waste Management's contract that started on October 1, 2020, and it runs through September 30, 2027, meaning that under the current term of the Commission, the Board is going to be negotiating and executing the new contract, which needs to be in place by October 1, 2026, so that if Waste Management does not win the new contract, whoever does will have a year to get the infrastructure in place so they can service the County on day one; there was a 39 percent increase in rates once the new contract started with a three percent cap every year for increases and rates; and there is a small reserve fund for disaster debris collection that he will talk about later. He went on to say a majority of the revenues for collections is basically from the residential collection assessments, that is the money that is being paid to Waste Management to collect people's yard waste, recycling and garbage; there is a little bit of a balance forward that Solid Waste has each year but majority of it goes straight from Solid Waste collection assessment straight into paying Waste Management to do the collection; the expenditures is 93 percent of the budget; there are some transfers to other departments like the Property Appraiser and the Tax Collector, those are the people that are tracking all the new properties, the sizes of the properties, the Tax Collector is putting the bills out and collecting the revenue; the Operating Reserve which is about \$1.5 million and is used for disaster debris collection; hurricane Nicole was \$2 million to recover, Milton was \$3.6 million, and Irma was not even a direct hit to Brevard County and it was about \$11 million to collect; and Solid Waste has to put that money up front to have the contractors out collecting and then they hope that they can get 85 to 100 percent of that back from Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) within two to four years. He stated that disposal is Countywide; a solid waste disposal assessment goes on every tax bill for residential and commercial in Brevard County because the Solid Waste Disposal Act requires that every entity in the County use the system, even if someone is living in a municipality, they may not be paying a collection assessment but they are paying for a disposal assessment to use the landfills; that is where the funds come from to pay the employees, the Solid Waste operations, capital equipment replacement and the funds for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) which is to expand and make sure they have the capacity for the system; the budget for revenues is \$141.5 million, about 34 percent of that is actually the revenue not just the disposal assessments, it is also from interest; the majority is balance forward; note that impact fees make up a small piece of that pie; and Solid Waste impact fees can only be used for expansion of the system, right now, it is being used as part of the debt service for the current 2023 series bonds that is used to fund the system. He explained 22 percent of expenditures is what it costs to run Solid Waste facilities and pay the employees; the debt service, that is taking into account a series 2025 bond; the capital outlay includes both the CIP's to expand the system and also includes equipment replacements; the restricted reserves or escrow is the \$34 million; and again, transfers to other departments includes the Tax Collector, the Property Appraiser, the Clerk of the Courts as well as Code Enforcement because they are going to be enforcing the Ordinance 94 which has to do with litter and whether or not they have been putting garbage out correctly. He commented he wants to talk about the prioritized projects; the US 192 Solid Waste Facility is currently under construction, it is in phase one which is basically the earthwork, the stormwater, wetlands, roads, and underground utilities; the construction and oversight is about \$33.4 million which has been funded with the series 2023 bond and the remainder needs to be funded with the series 2025 bond; phase two which will have the actual infrastructure, the scale house, the Class III landfill, leech collection and storage and all the

overhead utilities; construction and oversight right now is estimated to about \$45.8 million and Solid Waste anticipates that to be funded with a series 2027 and a 2029 bond; the Titusville Transfer Station is under construction; construction and oversight is about \$21.5 million which is being funded with the series 2023 bond, anticipating the remainder of the contract to be funded with the series 2025 bond; the current transfer station is 48 years old and was built in 1976, it uses obsolete technology, relies on compaction of the garbage into the back of these steel trailers which uses a lot of weight for the steel and a hydraulic ram that pushes the garbage back out of the trailer; the new design for the transfer station will be more like the Sarno Transfer Station with open top aluminum trailers which will leave more weight for the waste tonnage, be more efficient, have less trips, less fuel, less tires, and less wear and tear on the machines themselves; because it is so old, it is constantly needing to be repaired, there are no parts for a lot of that, so a lot of the mechanical things have to be created to rebuild it; one other thing because it is going to be built on the Mockingbird Way, right now there is no scale house, no flow control so commercial establishments cannot use Mockingbird Way or the Titusville Transfer Station because they do not have the scales so measuring how much people are dumping and charging it to their accounts is impossible to do, this will accommodate it with a manned scale house so commercial operations will no longer have to drive down to Cocoa, it is also going to expand the pad so there will be more space for vegetative waste; it will make it into a much more efficient facility and last north Brevard for many decades; and the third major project that is a critical need is the Central Disposal Facility (CDF) South Landfill, Cell-3 already has a permit to construct cells three through five, the construction oversight is estimated to be about \$45 million and it is anticipated to be funded by the series 2025 and 2027 bond. He repeated that the CDF is the only Class I landfill in Brevard County, so having that capacity, the additional capacity is very important; cells one and two reach capacity in mid to late 2028, in addition to that, the Sarno Road Class III landfill is reaching capacity, once that ends receiving waste, that is going to increase the amount of waste going into the CDF by 20 percent; and right now cell three is designed, it is a 53-acre cell, it is anticipated to take the County into at least 2037 or 2038 before cells four or five need to be done. He mentioned he was talking to one of the heads of permitting and compliance for the Department of Environmental Protection about other counties and she was talking about the fact that other counties are running up to the same problem where they are behind the eight ball, they do not have the space, they are running out of capacity, and they are looking for other ways to do things because there is no space or funds because it gets more expensive by the year to build these things; another thing that is critical is the expansion of the gas collection system, every Class I landfill needs an active gas collection system to collect the landfill gas; the good part about this is that this project is funded by the closure escrow, the restricted reserves, also in the last Landfill Gas Purchase Contract that was done in 2023 with Brevard Energy, there was a stipulation in there that as it expands they will contribute 50 percent to each project up to a cap of \$5 million which takes a little bit of the burden financially off of the County as well, since they are benefiting from the collection of this gas; the final closure of the Sarno Road landfill as he stated is reaching capacity and may last toward the end of the year, estimated at about \$21 million and that is going to be fully funded by the escrow, which is the same thing with the CDF slurry wall that is almost at capacity; he thinks they have about 65,000 cubic yards of capacity left and that is for emergencies, if there are issues in the south landfill, transfer trailers can be taken up to the slurry wall; and when the final closure on that happens it will be funded at \$21 million, from the engineers estimate, fully funded by the escrow. He stated that the expenditures report that is being done, it is the third party report that is necessary for the public bonding, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 bond was \$53.9 million but about \$20.2 million ended up paying for a commercial paper loan that was needed while cell two was being built; and with the cost and payout a 2025, 2027, and 2029 bond is going to be necessary to fund this. He stated this is the disposal unit billing history, the tops rows on the slide are what the actual billing unit history, including in FY 2023 when the Board actually approved the incremental increases to start keeping up with inflation; on the bottom of the slide is what the disposal assessments would have been had



they kept up with inflation; one thing to note is that for 30 years from FY 1992 through FY 2022, the disposal assessments themselves decreased by 6.6 percent and over that same 30 year period, the consumer price index for garbage and trash increased by 110 percent. He stated he is grateful to the Board for allowing them to raise them incrementally as to not put a heavy burden on the public right away; another thing to note is that even on the bottom two rows on the far right of the slide, right now, even if there were an increase those disposal assessments to those numbers, \$198.49 for residential and \$560.56 per commercial billing unit, borrowing money would still have to happen for major projects; even raising it that much would not pay cash out-of-pocket; another thing, how they got there and do not have a robust capital reserve fund, this is over the same 30-year period where a lot of money was spent on projects; one thing to note is that historically when the US 192 property was purchased, the original idea was that they were going to build a Class I and a Class III landfill there and they were going to shut down CDF, Sarno and everything was going to be centralized on this one facility, of course, opposition and the legal challenges led them to the point where it was delayed continuously; money had to be spent to make sure Sarno Road landfill and the Central Disposal Facility would last while trying to figure out the new direction; another thing that is important to look at is at the bottom of the slide in 2022 is when they ran out of capital reserves, which is when they had to get a paper currency loan of \$20 million; \$16 million of that went to fund the remainder of the construction of cell two; another thing that actually is important is between 2016, the construction of cell one, and 2022, the construction of cell two, they are identical, same design, same construction, so in 2016 it cost \$21.12 million to build and in 2022 it went up to \$32 million; and so over that six-year period they had a 53 percent increase in construction costs. He continued by saying with the trend data, the black line on the slide is the tonnage that goes into the Central Disposal Facility; the lower red line is the tonnage that goes in annually to the Sarno Road Class III landfill; in 2017, there was an increase that is going to be correlated to both economic conditions and development in Brevard County; there was a giant increase in the amount of waste that is coming into CDF; another thing to keep in mind, with the red line on the slide, is that as soon as the Sarno Road landfill runs out of capacity that red line then becomes part of the black line which is the 20 percent increase in waste that is coming into that facility; next trend is the landfill compactor cost which is one of the most important pieces of equipment; it is spreading out and compacting that waste to a uniform density, it is saving air space making things as efficient as possible; and 2015 to 2019 can be ignored because the alternating years do not represent the same piece of equipment, they represent manufacturers of equipment that were being bought on alternating years. He went on to say it is after 2016 when one of those manufacturers went out of business, and 2016 through 2024 is the same make and model of compactor; over the eight-year period the cost of the compactor has basically doubled which is representative of every piece of major equipment, heavy equipment, excavators, bulldozers, front end loaders, everything has gone up in that same manner; and what used to be eight years ago in annual equipment replacement fund of \$3 to \$4 million is now \$6 to \$8 million per year for them to replace the same amount of equipment. He mentioned what the Board has done in the past to help with the rising costs of equipment and operation, Solid Waste was authorized for a public hearing to consider the assessment increases and the engineering study to finance the five year CIP; there was a public hearing in 2022 where the Board approved incremental increases and now every year it is tied to the CIP for garbage and trash, so each year they calculate that in March and put that into their budget; December 2022, that is when the Board authorized a commercial paper loan of \$20 million which was to finance the ongoing capital improvement projects which was completing the construction of cell two, putting in a gas system in cell one of the south landfill that was required by regulation, and then the remainder of that was used for design for cells three, four, five and also some US 192 design; then in August that is when the Board approved them to sell \$53.8 million in bonds and that is what started paying for right now the beginning of the construction of US 192 and also the construction of the Titusville Transfer Station; and most recently in November, the Board authorized a revised engineering study which is what

they are doing right now and the numbers that he used for the CIP expenditure schedule in the previous slides. He stated in the last slide are items for future Board consideration, collection and recycling is running out September 30, 2027, they are wanting to have a contract in place by October 1, 2026, that Request for Proposal (RFP) is anticipated to be advertised, he is going to have that circulated so the Board and County management can look at it; he will get that out and everyone can start putting the final touches on it, that is not just the RFP but the contract itself so all the issues can be looked at from the past and figure out a way to address them in the future; while doing that everyone might want to consider the increases in Solid Waste collection assessments like from the current contract there was an immediate 39 percent increase in costs; he showed how much Solid Waste usually has in reserves when a natural disaster happens and what money is available to pay for contractors; the Board might want to take into consideration having a reserve fund for natural disasters because in the past with hurricane Irma they had the money that was in Solid Waste collection fund, but they had to borrow \$10 million out of the Solid Waste Disposal fund; and Solid Waste no longer has \$10 million in the fund to borrow anymore so all the projects are being funded through bonding at this point. He noted the actual CIP financing, according to the latest iteration of the engineering report, what they are looking at the Board considering is a \$32.8 million bond in this fiscal year, then the \$31 million bond in 2027 and a \$43.2 million bond in 2029; he added an asterisk on the slide because it is all subject to changes in construction costs, updates on the cash flow and analysis; and he would be happy to answer any questions to the best of his ability.

Commissioner Goodson asked if there has been any consideration given to privatizing the dump.

Mr. Mulligan responded in the past the consideration has been given but he has not heard anyone actually expressing that interest.

Commissioner Goodson asked Mr. Mulligan to name a County in the State of Florida that has privatized their dump.

Mr. Mulligan replied he does not know of one that has privatized, he does know ones that started with a private landfill, like Okeechobee, and there are private landfills around the State, the nearest Class I is the JED landfill in Osceola County, but he is not aware of a County that started with...

Commissioner Goodson stated it might not have started but had a County dump, then privatized it.

Mr. Mulligan responded no he is not aware of that.

Commissioner Goodson asked if he could research Duvall County and get back to him.

Mr. Mulligan replied yes he will do that.

Commissioner Goodson asked why would someone not want to privatize other than management, what would be the reason not to privatize.

Mr. Mulligan responded one reason not to privatize for them is the rates, the disposal assessment rates, the gate charges, they are not going to be controlled by the Board of County Commissioners; the JED landfill is a private landfill, and they will set their rates with whatever they feel like setting them at the time; so if Solid Waste did that it would be putting a profit percentage in play, so there would not only be just enough money to serve the public and expand the system, somewhere along the line because it is a capitalist operation, that the

capitalism kicks in and someone wants to make a profit off of this; and people would pay more than they normally would.

Commissioner Goodson stated Mr. Mulligan recently changed the pricing or the venue on how landscapers dump or private people dump and that was a problem for his office because everybody was up in arms. He asked if that had cleared up any.

Mr. Mulligan replied that it has been a lot quieter, he believes that people have gotten used to the fact that the disposal assessment does not cover an unlimited amount of waste coming from a residential property.

Commissioner Goodson stated that when he goes, he carries a birth certificate, marriage license, a tax bill, and two driver's license.

Chairman Feltner stated they had discussed at one time about an e-pass for the people that go through there a lot to try to speed them up.

Mr. Mulligan responded they were bringing that back up because of the fact that one thing about providing identification and proof of origin it puts a slightly longer amount of time that someone would spend at a scale house, so seeing which people they could pair up with the Wizard, which is lane two where they can just type in a code, it weighs them and then they already have their tare weight in the database; Solid Waste and Waste Management use it; and they are starting to look at what other operations they can make available so that it takes them out of the line that has to go through the scale house.

Commissioner Adkinson asked about staffing issues and what is the percentage of open positions for Solid Waste.

Mr. Mulligan replied it is not as high as other departments, they have been doing very well and he thinks it is because of their dedication to the training programs that they have, when they have their job fairs they highlight that people can come in with almost no skills, no training and at the lowest level and they can be trained to be a heavy operator one, train them on more equipment to be a heavy equipment operator two, operator three, become a lead so that these people can see that there is a path forward and it is not just a dead end job that there is only one position available to them which has helped them a lot; but it is also a position that does end up with a revolving door sometimes with their own issues of people who do a no-show, no call for interviews, work two days and decide that standing outside is not for them.

Frank Abbate, County Manager, stated the Commissioners will hear from Human Resources when they do their presentation for every department that has new employee orientation program.

Commissioner Delaney...stated people have been affected by the transition and she gets that it is needed but what it has resulted in is a lot of dumping, so that combined with charging for commercial dumping at the landfills is causing a lot of dumping in District 1; it is actually causing people to call into her office because people are digging holes on their property and allowing these businesses come to their property and dump on their properties which is causing a real problem; and she does not know if they could talk about any kind of resolution to that or any kind of ideas because yes, the County is gaining more revenue, but it is causing another problem.

Mr. Mulligan responded he understands, but it is tough because when they do the numbers, because of the disposal assessments basically being stagnant for 30 years, it is really tough

and it immediately puts a burden on the citizens if they go ahead and say okay they are going to triple these so they can make up for the rising costs, if they did that they might be able to go back and say yes now people can dump for free but when they do the numbers itself there is no way right now a \$69 residential disposal assessment is going to be able to pay for tons of vegetation as well as what is picked up by the collector as well as if they happen to decide to do their entire house, raise the house, and they dispose of the entire home; and \$69 a year does not pay for the amount of money it cost Solid Waste to process the vegetation, to run the equipment, to pay the employees, to dispose of it, and to make sure that they are doing all of that in compliance with the State and Federal regulations.

Commissioner Delaney stated her last block of questions is regarding the Waste Management Contract; one of the major complaints that she has gotten in her district is yard waste especially with the elderly, when they have to wait so long for yard waste to get picked up, it blows all over the street; oversized items being left out for so long causes more issues; she has been working really hard to get the word out that people have to call Waste Management; also the garbage coming out of the tops of the garbage trucks especially on the State Road 524 to Adamson, that area is really bad; and she has talked to Waste Management about it and she hopes that they can negotiate with them.

Mr. Mulligan replied that is why he wants to get the RFP out so that the Board can look at it, plus the draft contract so that way everyone can agree on what new provisions should be added in there. He mentioned that the last meeting he had, because he meets monthly with Waste Management, they go over their performance and liquidated damages, they were mentioning about at least with vegetation waste going away from calling in for a clam truck and starting clam truck routes, because it is not just the north area, there is south A1A, Tropical Trail, all areas end up having large amounts of vegetation debris in large piles that people fail to call in or they do call in and then there is one person who gets their pile picked up and then the other 10 are left behind because they did not call in, so they are working on things like that, and that might actually be able to happen, even before the contract expires.

Commissioner Delaney stated that one of the things that she has been having her staff do is every time her office gets an email or phone call about the trash not getting picked up, she has been having them document it and not only that but they have been sending it to Solid Waste and Waste Management, that way there is documentation.

Mr. Mulligan stated that he could provide her with as much information as she needs as to how many contacts came to Solid Waste, how many contacts came to Waste Management, and how many of those were legitimate complaints that resulted in liquidated damages against the contract; any information she would like to see on that, he has been tracking it at least since they have started the reimbursement program; but he knows they go a little farther back than that.

Mr. Abbate asked if that report was done on a monthly basis.

Mr. Mulligan replied yes.

Mr. Abbate stated it is consistent with what the Board set up, which was once a complaint is outside the contract period there is a liquidated damage that the member of the public can receive and so the County has that going back for over two years.

Mr. Mulligan stated he believes it was August of 2021.

Mr. Abbate stated they have all that information up to the current...

Mr. Mulligan stated so what that does is the residents that call them, part of the liquidated damages that the County takes off of the invoice that they are paying to Waste Management, that will go back to the residents depending on whether they use the phone or they did it over the internet, until such a time they have given them a 100 percent refund on their collection assessment; no one has ever gotten a 100 percent refund on their collection assessment; individually it does sometimes look bad but on the overall it actually is not as bad as it was during COVID, that was the worst period of time because there were no drivers, no workers, and a lot of people when they got sick had to be out for two weeks, so there is a whole workforce that is ill and no one can collect the waste; but the County did what it could for the residents.

Chairman Feltner stated he likes the amnesty days or periods when people can drop off a tire and some of those other things, he thinks that helps, there should be couch amnesty in Brevard County.

Mr. Mulligan responded that kudos goes to Joseph Faella, Mosquito Control Director, for that one, Solid Waste just helped.

Chairman Feltner mentioned about the large items being picked up, over the years, a grill or something he was throwing out, he put it on Craigslist, free scrap metal and capitalism is amazing because someone will show up in two hours and pick up the items and clean it up or take it to Trademark, so there are other ways to get rid of things.

#### **C.4. Utility Services**

Edward Fontanin, Utility Services Director, stated he is going to give the Board a brief overview of Utility Services, what it does, and then he will dive into the weeds on funding projects and all of that good stuff; with regard to the utilities, there are six service areas and none of the service areas are connected; from the operational side there is the North Service Area that is referred to as Merritt Island, Port St. John, and North Brevard; the North Service Area is where Utility Services does water and wastewater in Mims, and wastewater in Port St. John and Sykes Creek, along with reuse in the limited areas of Merritt Island and Port St. John; the Central Service Area is known as the area of Viera, Suntree, and Town of Palm Shores where Utility Services does sewer and reclaim water; the Utility Services does not do the water, Cocoa provides the water for this service area; Utility Services does have a 12 million gallons per day water plant, which is its largest; the South Service Area is referred to as beaches; and the wastewater system on the beaches is everything from Pineda Causeway south and it does water and sewer in Barefoot Bay and water in San Sebastian. He stated in terms of the assets to get an overview of what the six service areas are that he was referencing, if miles are added up in terms of reclaim, gravity, water, and force main it is about 1,100 miles; if he or she were to Google a map, he thinks it would take that person to Rhode Island or Connecticut; there are 321 lift stations under his jurisdiction; there are other lift stations that are private, but the 321, if he checked today it would probably be even a bigger number on the rate of growth within the service area; time flies, but the creation of Brevard County Utilities, he believes was in 1965, and a lot of that started with the incorporation of the South Brevard Area; when considering the age of the assets they are going back to the late to mid-1960's, but they also took over assets that are going into the early 1950's; and that kind of gives the Board an idea of the zero to 70 range of what staff is working with. He explained how they take care of all of these assets, how they stay on top of it, and how they provide reliability is the heavy assessment program in a variety of all their assets; over the last five years staff has done gravity sewer assessments of 530 miles; there is a technology called the Smart Ball, where staff basically shoves almost like a bocce ball in a force main with a cushion and it gives detection readings of leaks and gas pockets; staff could do that on the large mains, it is more cumbersome, but they are still

committed; seven miles has been done and all of the lift stations were assessed; eight of the nine treatment plants air relief valves, which are the component to the functionality of force main lines; one must remember, in Florida, it relies on force main over gravity because they could only go so deep with the pipes; air release valves is really the opportunity for the gases in a force main to burp itself of its gases, so it gives more capacity; and annually staff checks them all. He stated over 11,000 manholes had been assessed and all of the valves, whether it is on a water main, a reclaim, or a force main; there is about 3,500 and all of those are assessed every year to make sure of their functionality; those that do not end up programmed in operations and maintenance projects to get them on a schedule; and within a year or two of getting those back to functional. He stated a utility is really an Enterprise Fund and it does not get any ad valorem revenue; and the revenue for Utility Services derives from all of the rates and fees that are within the rate Resolution, as approved by the Board. He stated this slide is an overview of 2024 and it shows the revenue as the permits, fees and special assessments revenue as the bulk of it; charges for services revenue gives an overview of how Utility Services is receiving its money in and how it spends money; and debt service expenditure will be discussed upon later in his presentation, because when getting into the larger projects Utility Services does not generate enough money to pay-as-it-goes once getting into \$30 to \$50, \$80 million, and not having the generation of revenues within a year, in order to pay for those projects so then it relies on debt service. He stated if going back to the slide about the South Service Area, within the nook of the utility system is Barefoot Bay; the reason he is pointing that out is because the Barefoot Bay is a Dependent District and falls under the jurisdiction operationally, of Utility Services; administratively, the Board of County Commissioners is the Governing Board of the Barefoot Bay Water and Sewer District; there is no intermediate board other than the Board; but because it is a Dependent District, it is not eligible to the fees and revenue received from outside of the other service areas. He added Barefoot Bay has its own accounting system and that is why it is shown separately; the next slide shown gives the Board an indication of the expenditures; and these are smaller numbers to be seen, if the Board is familiar with the geography of the Barefoot Bay area, and it is not a large area.

Chairman Feltner inquired if Micco is serviced by that same area.

Mr. Fontanin responded yes; and he stated on the east side, until it turns into the Palm Bay. He went on to say this is a snapshot of the balance forward and this is the money that they have to rollover from year to year; to give the Board a little idea of what it is seeing on the slide is the \$54 million; when the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money was coming in, Utility Services received \$60 to \$65 million; if the Board is familiar, there was a Federal requirement in order to get those projects encumbered by December of last year which included engineering and everything in order to get those out to bid; and in order not to lose that opportunity of free money, that is outside of what the rates have generated, it was put as a precedence. He added Utility Services also received from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) grants, which is always hit or miss because every year, whether it be two or three times a year there will be website portals for application; he has put in for a lot of projects and sometime a lot is given, sometimes none is given, and sometime a just few are given; in the onset of this Utility Services was quite successful in 2022-2023 with that; and a precedence was set to make sure a draw was being shown on that money from Tallahassee to not give them an opportunity to take that away. He stated when talking about utilities for all of Florida the phrase 'thou should' is heard a lot; with utilities being water and wastewater, everything done is governed by FDEP or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and when they turned that into a law it is 'have to'; some of the major laws started kicking in, in 2020-2021 when the inkling started to be seen, and it has grown ever since; and currently, whenever he sees a House Bill in Tallahassee of what they are proposing, and not done yet, on how to improve the infrastructure, especially on the wastewater side when dealing with nutrients and nutrient reduction. He provided a brief overview of the laws, the first one is Federal through the

EPA and is about the Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substance (PFAS) reduction that is when getting into the surficial wells, recording the assessment of the wells, and assuring that they are not tripping the four parts per trillion for PFAS; if they are, then that is a project and the Board will hear from him about what is being done in South and North Brevard at the water plant; zero discharge by 2032, is basically what the State of Florida said, regardless of what the explanation is for having a discharge, whether the power went out, a truck backed into it, or a hurricane, if there is any discharge into a protected body of water a consent order would obviously be received; and that is where it escalates come 2032. He continued to say the other component of that is when getting into deep injection wells and those are the primary way of how Utility Services deals with treated wastewater; it is a well 2,000 to 3,000 feet in the ground for the discharge; every five years the FDEP requires a sophisticated test that takes about five days, but for five days the well typically has to be shut down; typically, the FDEP allows for shut down, puts a clause in the permit saying only for that period of time could it be discharged into an open body of water, for the benefit of the test; and come 2032, those come out, therefore, meaning every facility having a single well would now require a second well due to this law. He stated nutrient reduction in Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) is now a big-drive with what is going on in Florida...

Frank Abbate, County Manager, interrupted by saying tell them what the cost of one of those wells is.

Mr. Fontanin indicated he would get to that. He added he has been doing this for 30 years; he has been active in Florida for 20 years; if the Board asked him what the cost of a well was eight years ago, rule of thumb was \$6 to \$8 million; today, with engineering, it literally is getting into \$25 million, and plus; it is only going to go up because of the law mentioned and the deadline of 2032; if one could envision, every utility across Florida has to do this, not Brevard County; he will say three, but there is only one good one that does this; and they are at the ability, because if an opportunity is wanted to make money, go into deep injection wells because those do not have price competition, but it has to get done. He mentioned knowing that Melbourne just went through this and it went out to bid, and it was up significantly from what they had anticipated. He stated Florida Statute, Chapter 403, Section 086, is where the Board will hear him talk more about Advanced Water Treatment (AWT), and is the requirement of treatment that FDEP now expects from treatment plants that are in BMAP areas; as Utility Services deals with the treatment plants, which there are several and he will go into that, and whenever AWT is heard it is the requirement FDEP has specified; and there is Florida Administrative Code (FAC), in addition to Federal law and State law, there is FAC, and there are clauses in there that are justification where Utility Services has to provide uninterrupted wastewater which falls into the zero discharge. He stated to give the Board a glimmer of what the major projects are and this is only part of them listed; this is the effort of what the Utility Services Department is doing; on septic-to-sewer there are 17 projects being managed and the bulk of those projects are on Merritt Island and there are some in the beaches, south of Eau Gallie has a few; in terms of quantity and cost of what is being managed, it kind of gives the Board a perspective; combine that with the initiatives that are going on in South Brevard with a new Water and Wastewater Treatment (WWT) plant, it is driven because of the PFAS rule being tripped and the requirement is now going to Reverse Osmosis (RO) and the WWT, plant being in a BMAP, has to be AWT; the Mims Water Treatment Plant expansion has the same story about the PFAS and wells tripping the four parts per trillion; the technology to remove PFAS is RO; and the component when doing RO is the only means of disposal because there is a brine that is generated from the salt water, is a deep injection well, so not just one is built, due to the zero discharge it has to have a redundancy, one is getting tested, while the other one is online; and that gives the Board an idea of where the \$107 and \$150 million are coming from. He went on to say in South Beaches AWT for \$50 million is in Melbourne Beach; South Patrick force main improvement is \$38 million, but Utility Services was fortunate to get an FDEP grant of \$14

million that would help to offset that cost; and he does not mean to bore the Board with going through this, but what is listed is just a portion of the projects underway of what Utility Services staff is currently managing. He stated there is also project initiatives for Port St. John and the reason is, it is not in a BMAP yet, but it is going to be; that is the oldest plant, it is almost at

capacity, it is not AWT, and if it were in the BMAP it would definitely fail the BMAP nutrient requirement; in addition, what Florida is doing with these BMAPs in some of the rulings in the BMAP plans in central and west Florida, they are creating laws, and those laws are saying now that there is a BMAP, any new development cannot have septic systems; any existing old septic's cannot get a renewal for the septic; and it puts onus on the utilities, not only about the growth and being able to accommodate it, but to the existing customer, or a constituent, who has a longtime septic tank that needs replacement would not be able to because of that law. He mentioned talking about Sykes Creek/Space Florida in December or January, but he is still waiting on what is going on with Space Florida tying in, that is going to continue; and Utility Services is currently in the negotiating phase with the engineer on the phase two study, specifically associated with this effort. He stated for Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) going through 2034, some of the numbers might slide because of Utility Services execution of the projects; currently, over a ten-year span Utility Services is looking at close to \$700 million; as this due diligence keeps coming in, that the State requires and still being done, he is anticipating that number to grow; obviously, the cost of inflation and any delays cannot be a cause for increase; earlier he talked about being an Enterprise Fund with user fees and the good news is, that over the last four to five years the Utility Services Department, with the cooperation of the County Manager's Office, had looked at these and tried to get a plan in place to kind of get the rates current; the rates were stuck or not reflective; and the slide shown gives the Board a current snapshot of what was approved in 2022, giving an implementation of what it is, and emphasized not stopping after a four-year jump and to try to keep the cost index current so they do not come to the Board 10 to 15 years from now, and ask for 20 percent to kind of keep it up to speed. He talked about Barefoot Bay being a smaller area, but its rates are higher, that is because it is a Dependent District and not able to capture, or be a part of the Countywide financial model of Utility Services to do projects; and those rates are raised significantly more. He stated the next slide gives the Board an overview of the revenue versus the expenditure; in the first glance, it looks like Utility Services is doing well, but when looking at the subsequent years 2027, 2028, and 2029 that is where Utility Services is starting to pursue debt service to get bonds to do these major projects he spoke about earlier; the hatched area right now is a range of what is being anticipated for that debt service payment; and he will talk about how to get there. He stated one of the other changes is the updated Consumer Price Index (CPI); historically, the Utility Services Department was using the General CPI; if going into the CPI, it actually has a long menu of different CPIs; there is one specific to CPI Sewer and Water Maintenance that is more appropriate for the Utility Services Department; and through Board approval, a change had been made. He stated project funding developer fees was another one; that was looked at for what fees were being charged to the developers for the services Utility Services provides; it was not a lot, that was noticed in October of 2024, and sought Board approval to get it up to standard of what the rest of the departments in the County are using; and a greater increase in revenue is being anticipated from that. He stated in addition to the services of water and wastewater, Brevard County has the only publicly operated Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) septage facility and that is becoming an interesting story across Florida, because as growth is occurring in the County and regionally, more restaurants are coming in as the people are coming in, which is a generator of FOG, homes that are being built that are not on sewer but are on septage, and when those are pumped out it has to go somewhere; it used to be that if there is no capacity by FDEP, the hauler would seek permission to go to another county like Osceola or Orange, in order to do that; the issue is all of these counties are experiencing so much growth, that are now starting to restrict out-of-county transport because they are saving that capacity for its constituents within its



county; and Utility Services is currently looking for alternatives. He stated the rates were established in Resolution No. 2022-08, but they were not updated because staff knew it was going to do something bigger and better; right now, there is a capacity issue, and staff is currently looking at that to come to a long-term solution; the benefit of it is the FOG septage has its own separate rates; the question is, are the ratepayers paying for this; and the answer is, if the rates are established at the appropriate level, based on the infrastructure, the answer should be no. He stated there are connection fees and he heard a question of what is the difference between an impact fee and a connection fee, because sometimes they are the same, but they are not; a connection fee is similar to an impact fee, it only could be used on the expansion of capacity, and what that means is if a person is building a wastewater plant and it is at one million gallons but he or she wants it to go to two million gallons, the one million gallon replacement is a replacement of the existing and to go from one to two is an expansion, and that is where connection fees come in; even when doing a pipe replacement, if going from a 12 inch to a 20 inch, the replacement cost of the 12 inch is not through connection fees, but from 12 inches to 20 inches could be used on the connection fees; and it is important, because if Utility Services' money is spent correctly and it maximizes its application of connection fees on projects, it takes less of a burden on the user rates that are being generated. He continued to say connection fees are a one-time charge for connecting to the water and wastewater system; this is basically, making sure that new users who are placing a burden on the system are paying his or her fair share to gain a portion of the system's capacity; the connection fees help with growth which is needed; the funds collected go towards water, sewer, and facilities; the benefit of it and what he was tying it into, is what differentiates, and under the impact fee laws there are parameters on the frequency of the percentage that could be applied in an impact fee; but under Subsection 12 of that, it literally says it does not apply to water and wastewater connection fees; and it gives Utility Services some latitude on how to implement that. He stated that the current rates staff has done research and it found that this goes back to 1993, and there has not been an index; when considering what that means, he took the graph that the Budget Office had that ended at 2013, he expanded the Construction Cost Index back to 1993, and if taking the accumulation of that it is an increase of 167 percent from 1993 to present, to put that into perspective; in doing that, there currently is a connection fee study underway; and he is optimistic to get it to the Board for consideration for adjustments to those fees. He explained why a connection fee study is underway is because the costs are going up for a multitude of reasons; Florida is popular with a lot of people and he is talking about the fair share; if the connection fee is not set, anything needing to subsidize will subsequently come from the user rates; it is trying to be done with a fair approach and wanting new connections to pay the fee of the current moment; it gives Utility Services less burden on the user rates; and puts Utility Services in a position for long-term planning for not getting into situations of nearing capacity, to be ahead of the curve, and being given the ability to make those decisions. He provided a brief overview of the Utility Services Department, in terms of the quantity of projects; the current design projects in the workload is 25 and 17 for Save Our Indian River Lagoon (SOIRL), and that is in addition to the 25; there is 20 studies and evaluations currently being done, and from that he is referring to as a report or a study; eight projects that are near to, or are out to bid for construction; and there are currently 20 projects for construction. He stated he talked about connection fees, user fee rates, FOG, and septage fees; he is proud of the success the Utility Services Department has had in seeking alternative sources; six FDEP grants were received since 2022 and totaling \$33 million; when ARPA came around, staff had submitted 25 projects totaling \$67 million; and recently, regarding the Space Florida initiative with Department of Defense receiving \$750,000. He added how is this paid for is, by having bonds; Utility Services does have bonds and it has a County bond that was issued in 2014, in order to do some repairs and some funding of the South Central Wastewater Plant; in 2029, Barefoot Bay would be debt free, and it goes back to the acquisition of Barefoot Bay in 2002; he showed an overview of what Utility Services' total debt service is as of today; and what is being shown is actual and does not include what is projected as future debt service, but he is

anticipating this number in order to do funding of debt service being realistically within \$10, \$12, and possibly even more million per year, in order to do what Utility Services has to do. He mentioned currently there is the WWT connection fee study and he will be bringing that to the Board for its consideration, for making those adjustments; he will be talking about the investment of a new FOG facility and what would be the adoption of new rates, in order to make it without utilizing user rates; and in order to do the CIPs, would be the adoption of bonds that Utility Services is going to need, in order to do that.

Commissioner Delaney asked about when the Board would see the results of that study.

Mr. Fontanin replied which one; and he stated he has 20 of them.

Commissioner Delaney responded the connection fee study.

Mr. Fontanin responded he is currently working with the rate consultant and he would like to say before June, but it most likely will be right after the June break.

\*The Board recessed at 3:34 p.m. and reconvened at 3:42 p.m.

## **C.5. Human Resources**

Melissa Powers, Human Resources Director, stated today she is going to go through a quick introduction of what Human Resources does, provide details on the group health plan, the property casualty program, talent recruitment and retention, and technology and updates. She stated what is done in Human Resources is there are primarily six areas that serve all different functions, by all working together; there is personnel services, support services, benefits group, risk management group, organizational/employee development manager, career development program, and employee relations; Human Resources is primarily funded through internal funding sources and the slide shown gives a breakdown of those funding sources; and it can be seen that almost all of Human Resources funding comes from internal funding mechanisms, primarily for the benefits, which is the group health program, the risk property casualty program, and some General Fund as well. She stated she is going to provide a quick overview of the personnel services and support services sections before getting into more detail on the other areas; personnel services handles working with the departments to create job requisitions, the advertising for jobs, the hiring process, the onboarding process; and it manages the new employee organization program, employment compensation evaluations for the departments and try to maintain internal equity within the organization, work with payroll and County Finance to make sure that payroll and employment compensation is working hand-in-hand, and managing SAP in the Human Resources modules, with a lot of reporting through that. She stated over the past year they combined the finance group and the records group within the department to create support services; on the finance side, it manages the group health plan, as well as department operational budget; and on the records side, it helps manage personnel files, background check processes, system updates for employees, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requests, and Public Records Requests (PRRs). She stated the benefits team supports employees through his or her entire life cycle at the County from onboarding to retirement, including benefit election for core benefits which are group health, dental, vision, short-term and long-term disability insurance, and life insurance; this is done not only at the onboarding process once hired, but also annually through the open enrollment process that is typically done in the fall; the benefits team helps employees adjust his or her benefits after qualifying life events, such as marriages, divorces, child birth, help employees navigate through the deferred compensation program, employee assistance program, and various other voluntary insurance projects; the team supports the in-house wellness team and supports the robust wellness program, by running two health fairs each year; and as employees

get ready for retirement, the team assists employees with his or her Florida Retirement System (FRS) benefits, deferred compensation, and retirement health coverage. She provided an update on the County's group health program; she stated the group health plan is a fully self-insured program, which covers all of the medical and pharmacy claims, meaning that the County and the participating entities fund the program through the revenues collected, and pays for administrative fees, claims, and stop-loss coverage to protect the County from large medical claims over \$1 million; the group health plan covers more than just the Board's employees; the charter offices and other various County agencies participate in the program; while the number fluctuate with new hires and separations; and the screen shows how many lives the Plan currently covers, approximately a little over 4,000 employees, about 3,300 dependents, and for a total of about 7,500 lives. She stated the group health plan is primarily funded through employer contributions from the various departments and agencies; the rate applies to all full-time employees; since the program began, the County built up some significant reserves in the fund, but because of this the County reduced the contribution rate in 2017 and then kept it flat for several years; however, as reserves have declined, the employer contributions began increasing again in 2022; on the slide shown Fiscal Years 2023, 2024, and 2025 contribution rates increased by eight percent; for Fiscal Year 2026 a six percent increase will be proposed to that rate; and she reminded the Board to keep in mind that this is the employer contribution rate for what departments and agencies are paying into the fund, it is not what the employee is paying, and it is not being contemplated to increase employee contributions this year. She stated this slide provides a five-year look at the actual revenue and expenses that came into the group health plan; it shows expenses have exceeded the revenue each year since 2020; the increases in employer contribution rates and some plan design changes over the past couple of years have helped reduce the losses, but as shown the revenue is not keeping up with the expenses of the plan; shown on the last line is the required reserves and as a self-insured program, the County is required to report the financial status of the plan to the State annually; and through a calculation based on the incurred claim cost, the State provides an amount the County is required to keep, then the County adds the Incurred But Not Reported (IBNR) to that for the required reserves, and generally as claim costs increase that reserve amount is going to increase as well. She stated this graph shows that relationship between the balance forward and the required reserves; it is important because it is showing that those lines are starting to get closer and closer together; she needs to make sure the County is keeping on top of this and is trying to increase the revenues, and reduce expenses as best as possible to avoid these lines from intersecting because the County does not want to fall below the threshold reserve requirement; the next graph shows the claim trends that were incurred through December of 2024 and were paid through February of 2025; the red line shows the combination of medical and pharmacy expenses combined; the green line shows that the revenue generated into the plan currently showing about 4.5 percent claim trend; in 2024, there is a period of time that the lines got pretty close together, which was a good thing; but in the last quarter of 2024, in early 2025 a lot of high-cost claims came in that has bumped up that trend. She mentioned last year when going through the budget development process, she focused on two main things when it came to continuing the group health program, and those are sustainability and simplification; with regards to sustainability, she wants to make sure the group health plan is financially sustainable moving forward; to do that, she is looking at how to increase revenue into the program and to reduce costs; for revenue, she had already mentioned looking at the six percent increase in the employer premiums being proposed for this year's budget; various other plan design changes have been implemented over the past couple of years; and she is seeing some benefit to the overall program from those changes, but there still is work to do. She added for 2024, the plan spent approximately .92¢ of every \$1 of revenue coming in; the industry standard is about 85 percent and the Medicare program was about 88 percent, with the County being a little bit ahead of those trends and it being efficient with the dollars that are going into the program; the next significant change being looked at is the pharmacy program, by trying to figure out how to

better or improve it and to make it more cost-effective for the plan and the employees; the Employee Benefits Advisory Committee (EBAC) met on Monday and it had a good discussion about all of this; it does want to go out for Request for Proposals (RFP) on pharmacy and medical, as well as doing a pharmacy audit; a pharmacy audit was done for 2023 and it showed Cigna was doing what it was supposed to; there was a little bit of difference where Cigna ended up paying the County back about \$130,000; it is always good for transparency purposes to keep on top of that and to make sure it is fulfilling its obligations under the contract; the EBAC recommended doing that pharmacy audit in 2024 and that is going to be done; and looking at those plan design changes going out to RFP for pharmacy and the medical plan to be implemented for January 1, 2027. She stated about simplification, staff is always looking for ways to keep the health plan sustainable, but also find ways to keep it or simplifying it for the employees; the prior Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) program was sunsetted and launched a new program called the Wellness Wallet which seems to be going well this year; staff is continuing to focus on strong communication and education to give the employees information needed to ensure he or she understand what his or her benefits are, and how to navigate through the care system with the health plan; a new benefits enrollment system will be rolled out this year for open enrollment in the fall; the system is expected to be more user friendly than the current system; staff is excited about that; the County is currently in the kickoff stage of working through the planning with the new vendor; there has been a positive shift in the group health plan; but the County still needs to work on increasing revenue and reducing costs in the upcoming year. She advised the focus in 2026, is to be looking at how to restructure the pharmacy program and going out to RFP for that and medical, to see what can be found to develop a good win-win for the plan and the employees.

Commissioner Adkinson inquired if she heard Ms. Powers say the employer contribution for 2026 would be about six percent.

Ms. Powers responded that is what she is planning to budget around.

Commissioner Adkinson mentioned that is a little bit lower than it has been the last couple of years.

Ms. Powers replied correct.

Commissioner Adkinson asked if the employee is going to be paying the same or less.

Ms. Powers responded there is not going to be any change for employee contributions, only the employer for the departments or the agencies of what is paid into the program on a per employee per month basis, is what is going to increase, and not employees.

Frank Abbate, County Manager, explained that is because there has been significant changes in co-pays and other things that employees had been paying; and staff is trying to minimize additional increases beyond that because there were additional program changes last year that fell on the employees and the dependents that were covered.

Ms. Powers pointed out the focus is really trying to find cost savings, as opposed to cost shifting, and not wanting to help the program too much by shifting too much onto the employees.

Chairman Feltner inquired what the employee contribution is right now.

Ms. Powers responded for the employee only, he or she is paying \$37.80 a month; and if it is family, he or she is a range from \$193 to \$415, depending on the plan chosen.

Chairman Feltner asked if family is two people.

Ms. Powers replied no; and she stated family could be any number of people, both spouse and children.

Chairman Feltner stated greater than one is family.

Ms. Powers advised there is a rate for employee plus spouse, a rate for employee and just a child, and family that would be spouse and child, and whatever number of children there is.

Commissioner Delaney inquired what is being done for those lines not colliding for the fund balance versus required reserves.

Ms. Powers responded doing things like implementing several design changes over the past couple of years and by working with the co-pays and deductibles; sunseting the old HRA, that definitely was a cost-savings for the County, because those credits were rolling over and creating a significant liability for the program but still accessible through 2027; the new program is a use it or lose it, for those credits per year and not continuously increasing; and always trying to find cost-savings.

Commissioner Delaney stated those are the two big things.

Ms. Powers stated she is shifting to the property and casualty program for Risk Management; the Risk Management team works on identifying, assessing, and finding ways to control risk for the County; that is done through a combination of things with risk acceptance, avoidance, mitigation, and transfer; there is participation in the Preferred Governmental Insurance Trust (PGIT) and the Board approved the County joining PGIT in 2003; as part of PGIT, the County shares risk with a pool of similarly situated governmental entities; and the County utilizes Third-Party Administrator (TPA), to administer claims for the County, and by providing claim administration, damage and liability assessments, and claim resolution services. She added it is similar to the group health plan, the risk program, and the property casualty program relies upon revenues coming in and spending it on the expenses of the program, that includes not only insurance premiums but also claim costs are probably the most significant portion on the expense side; and the County does self-insure for quite a bit and it carries some excess coverage in some areas, after working with the brokers for where that is needed. She stated the next slide illustrates the insurance program, with the health program covering more than just the Board of County Commissioners departments; the constitutional officers also participate in the program and the only exception is the Brevard County Sheriff Office (BCSO) does not participate in the general liability, auto liability programs; and that is because it is more cost-effective for BCSO to do that through the Sheriff's trust, but workers compensation and property are participated in. She stated this slide provides an overview of the revenue and expenses for the property and casualty program for Fiscal Year 2024; the total revenue into the program was a little over \$13 million; the claim cost was \$8,761,802; the premium expense was \$6,293,657; other expenses were a little under \$2 million; it shows it was a rough year for the program and it had a deficit at the end of the year of about \$3.7 million; the current risk fund balance moving forward into Fiscal Year 2025 was \$6.2 million; and in order to generate some revenue to continue working on catching up to expenses, she is proposing some rate increases for workers compensation, property, auto, and general liability which are the rates that goes out to the departments, and the agencies that participate. She added workers compensation is based on position codes and salary; property is obviously based on the property assigned to a department; and auto and general liability as well. She went on to say with the assistance of the brokers, the County continuously looks on how best to protect the County; for some areas excess insurance coverage is purchased; this slide shows each line of insurance that the

County purchases and the premium cost for the current Fiscal Year; the brokers advised to expect increases in the non-property lines between eight and 15 percent, with an average of about 12.3 percent, and assuming there is no change in sovereign immunity which she will speak about on the next slide; for property, it is obvious of the large premium, but the County is required to carry it, in order to be eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement; for property, the broker advised to expect a flat rate, however, the total insured value has increased; and it is expected there would be a premium increase for that. She advised she would have the property renewal on the Agenda at the end of April or the first meeting in May; and the property coverage carries from June 1 to May 30, whereas, all the others are on the Fiscal Year of October 1 to September 30. She mentioned the rates the County is expecting, assuming there is no change in sovereign immunity, staff is carefully watching House Bill 301, there is Senate Bill 1570, but the House Bill seems to be the one that is making traction through the committees; the Bill was submitted and currently exists as of this morning; it is in the House Judiciary Committee; it is proposing an increase in sovereign immunity from \$200,000 per claim, \$300,000 per incident if there is multiple claimants; increasing that to \$1 million to \$3 million, which is substantially a huge increase and a little scary; there are some additional changes about shortening the statute of limitations, shortening the notice period, and the ability to settle claims above the insurance limit, that would have some positive effects certainly of the statute of limitations; but if the sovereign immunity level goes up that much, it would be pretty significant for the County.

Mr. Abbate advised he is going to jump in to help Ms. Powers conclude quickly. He stated what the Board needs to know is, health insurance is healthy, but it has to go to the six percent; the property and casualty line, the Board should be concerned about; \$3.7 million is a bad number; there is only \$6 million left, that \$6 million that is there has to pay all of the claims for the life of those claims, and that tells the Board that the County needs a significant increase when looking at those numbers for what the premiums are going to be; unfortunately, it puts extra pressure on budget development because all agencies are going to have to pay property, liability, and workers compensation; and the reason for the Sheriff being with the County is because it is the cheapest, and the most expensive is the Sheriff because high-risk groups have more claims. He went on to say while keeping health insurance at six percent, the rest are going to be nine to 12 percent, and it should probably be higher but staff is trying to figure out where it could not lose more ground; he asked the Board to jump to the next area, because he thinks it is self-explanatory for Human Resources, but he wants to mention slides 28 and 29; the number of new hires this year is 362, rehires is 34, and separations is 403 which tells a little bit of ground is being lost in 2024; the numbers he thinks the Board would be interested in and seeing, is all the department areas that had over 100 Primary Care Networks on page 29, and the Board heard from several of these departments already; Planning and Development has almost a 24 percent vacancy rate, Parks and Recreation is at 17 percent, Fire Rescue is at 17 percent and has a lot because even at 17 percent it has 600 employees, and when multiplying that out that number could be seen; it could be seen that all of the big departments, historically eight to 10 percent, maybe 11 percent is usually, historically for the last 25 to 30 years is where the vacancy rate has been; it is higher and this is not unique to Brevard County; but is a very significant challenge, because if it is a service like Utilities Services or Solid Waste where they need to have the people there. He continued to say if there are too many vacancies or one does not have a road crew out doing what it needs to do in Public Works, it is overtime; from Fire Rescue, the Board heard that repeatedly; it is a significant issue across the organization; there are a variety of initiatives ongoing for recruitment and hiring; Public Works and Fire Rescue have their own recruitment staff now, because they have to do something to do outreach beyond what they had been doing; those initiative are ongoing, as well as the developed people from within the organization, or given opportunities that the Board heard from Tom Mulligan, Solid Waste Management Director; those are all explained, but quite honestly, to put it simply, at the rate going with budget hearings, he will be long retired, and the Board



would still be having budget hearings which is not going to work for the Board; he needs to regroup with staff to kind of condense things; he is trying to do that here for Human Resources; he thinks it is all there for the Board and he wants to get through more of the presentation, but if it is good with setting up an additional workshop, staff would try to get everybody else to give the Board information which would help it to give direction to staff at the end of the next workshop; and staff will try to get everybody else done in that kind of time frame. He stated he thinks those are the essential points; and he does not mean to cut Ms. Powers' off.

Chairman Feltner stated he thought at the end of today maybe the Board would pick a date and maybe have a group discussion, because he thinks there is going to have to be another workshop just like this; and maybe squeeze in a couple of the smaller departments.

Mr. Abbate advised staff would try to get everybody in at the next workshop, as best as staff can just to provide the Board with the essential information needed. He stated if the Board is good, they would move on to Public Safety, and staff is going to make it very short.

## **C.6. Public Safety Office / Emergency Management**

Matthew Wallace, Public Safety Office Director, stated the slide shows the Public Safety Group with an overview of what it is; it truly is an honor to lead the 800-plus men and women of the Group; he considers them as some of Brevard County's greatest heroes; they run to fires, they go to work when a hurricane is coming in which is not natural, they show up on the scene of a fatality, and they are the first ones that do investigative work and usually contact the family to let them know that something bad has happened to his or her family; the crossing guards are the ones who jump out in the middle of a street and all they have is a plastic sign to try to get the traffic to stop; if that is not hero capabilities and characteristics, then he is not really sure what is; even though he is the direct supervisor of Fire Chief, Pat Voltaire, and the Emergency Management Director, John Scott, he is also dual-hatted as the Director of Record for the Public Safety Offices, consisting of the Medical Examiner's Office, Community Corrections, and School Crossing Guards; and each one of those is led by a program manager and those three individuals are some of Brevard County's most fantastic folks, they are absolutely awesome. He stated the Mission of the 'little three' is what staff calls them, the Medical Examiner is to determine the cause and manner of death when a fatality happens; they coordinate with families to ensure there is dignified transfer of the body; they work with law enforcement and the judicial operations, if those cases so deemed that staff is going to have to go to court; for Community Corrections, those folks work in the jails in some of Brevard County's toughest populations; they are there to do post, post-trial, and pretrial supervision; they are there for the probate folks and for the folks who are released pre-trial, and they also facilitate the Public Safety Coordinating Council (PSCC) which brings together laws enforcement, judicial, and the support services across the community to support those populations that are Sheriff Ivey's clients; and the School Crossing Guards are self-explanatory, they cross all of Brevard County's unincorporated children who cross in unincorporated areas at the designated locations throughout the County. He added that with everything in Public Safety, it is under some intense regulatory guidance; Florida Statutes govern the Medical Examiner's Office, establishes medical districts, and provides a list of cases that must have autopsies; Community Corrections is guided that counties must have a PSCC and provide supervision to those pre-trial and post-trial clients to ensure they are properly accounted for; and School Crossing Guards directs local communities that have those School Crossing Guard programs; and there is strict guidance from the Florida Department of Transportation for training and making sure that all of the crossings are done in a completely safe manner. He stated staffing in the public safety offices in the 'little three' is fully staffed and has about 99 folks; there is a lot of emphasis in recruiting for crossing guards; it is a senior population, they come and go a lot, there is a lot of emphasis into making sure they are onboarding School Crossing Guards; and right now,

they are pretty healthy across-the-County. He stated the Public Safety Office budget is primarily General Fund funded for an overwhelming majority of \$4.7 million total and \$4.6 million of it being from the General Fund; the Medical Examiner's budget is \$3.4 million total and \$3.3 million of it being from the General Fund; when looking at expenses, an overwhelming majority is compensation and benefits, people, lab services and operating expenses, toxicology, and pathology services on a case that may need doing; the operating services is usually the transportation of the bodies to and from the Medical Examiner's Office; the Community Corrections budget is just a little over \$500,000 and a majority of it being from the General Fund transfer; for expenses, an overwhelming majority is the people cost for them; they do have a small amount of operating services to travel to and from homes of those probates that has to do mandatory services and supervision; the School Crossing Guards budget is about \$779,000 total, with a majority of it being from the General Fund; and compensation and benefits is an overwhelming majority of what the expenses are for School Crossing Guards. He mentioned some fast facts of what the Medical Examiner's Office was doing last year in 2024 with over 1,000 autopsies that the three Medical Forensic Pathologists performed, which is in line with what Florida guidance is; it is about 335 autopsies per Doctor, per year, is what should be done, and is pretty much in line with staffing; Community Corrections made sure releasing properly 875 pre and post-trial release folks who are waiting for his or her trial; this is done in coordination with judges to ensure the right folks are released, they have to apply and be vetted; that is done to keep the jail population under a targeted amount which is quality of life and good living conditions for those folks who are in Sheriff Ivey's jail; School Crossing Guards crossed over 650,000 children going to and from school last year, it was done at 57 designated crossing across the County; and they supported about 25 schools. He advised in looking forward he wanted to give the Board what the workload factors are and what drives his or her work; for the Medical Examiner's Office it is the number of autopsies as the County's population continues to grow; for Community Corrections it is the number of inmates that can be serviced to try and get out on pre and post-trial release; and for the School Crossing Guards is the number of designated crossings across the County, and as the number of unincorporated schools grow and designate those crossings, that is what drives the need for crossing guards.

John Scott, Emergency Management Director, stated from a mission and vision value standpoint in Emergency Management there are three divisions who work for it, there is Emergency Operation Center (EOC), Public Safety Radio System, and 9-1-1 System Administration; Mr. Wallace and he work closely with those divisions and at the end of the day, the vision is to be at its collective best when things seem their worse; one of the things benefited from is their partnerships, it is a core principle for Emergency Management; very little of what is used during disaster response or day-to-day operations is actually theirs, they leverage their partners and existing relationships to meet the needs as they go through that; and they have a small force that used a lot to get through and they rely on those partnerships; and those partnerships are also a benefit to them, because they become, for the County and for the community, the guy who knows a guy, who knows a guy to help get the people connected. He continued to say a lot of that is done through coordinating information and resources, sharing what is going on, and changing outcomes because they have that luxury of the 50,000 square feet view, as opposed to the crews who are out in the field at a granular level; the next slide is the overall Emergency Management organizational chart with about 20 folks who work in Emergency Management, across the three divisions; in moving forward, budget-wise overwhelmingly Emergency Management is Special Revenue and User/Services Fees funded in and about the 83 percent range; the 800 Megahertz (MHz) Public Safety Radio System that is utilized by all public safety agencies, not just fire and law enforcement, but the Health Department, Public Works, and the Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT) crew that all connected through one system which allow leveraging resources as fast as they can; and especially during times of emergencies, that is 52 User Agreements with agencies, and



Emergency Management works year-round to support them. He added Emergency Management is also working when it comes to buildings and things like that to make sure it gets good signal penetration in all of the different areas, especially as new construction continues, that breakdown, from a support standpoint, is the 6,100 Radio Users, 646 Talkgroups, and supports 10 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) through nine towers, nine hubs, 210 Repeaters, it is a lot of equipment, and it is taken seriously, the responsibility of delivering clear and concise communication for the teams in the field; from a budget standpoint, overwhelmingly supported through the Radio User Fees, Emergency Management does receive a small amount of General Fund and a slightly larger amount of Special Revenue Funds; Administration of 9-1-1 systems are two primary components, the first piece is the support of the PSAP, those are the dispatch centers, it provides all the technology there, not the call takers, but everything they need to handle the call that is coming in; he will be showing the Board a chart with how they do that; they are making sure the right address is provided because one of the big keys is being able to dispatch help, is to know where that person who needs it is, and making sure the location data is the same; and they work with Planning and Zoning for the address assignment and doing some address assignments for some of the municipalities. He explained there are two core sites for equipment, which is the 10 PSAP where the actual equipment is provided, and two host sites, which is the backbone of that system where that technology comes from; the host sites are sort of the hub and the PSAP's are the spokes in this conversation; in addition, some services are being provided for the telecommunicators, training, and funding dollars for the actual dispatch centers, as well; and then a variety of other support options for the telecommunicators. He highlighted what that call system looks like, it could be seen on the chart; there are many different steps, a call that has to go from the call maker, the person experiencing the emergency before even getting to the dispatcher; inside of the green box it shows all of the steps that have to happen within three seconds; it is a lot of equipment that has to work and work well, in order for the dispatcher to get the call, and know where that person is; and once they are on the line, they are constantly refreshing that location for if it changes because they need to make sure the actual services go to the person who needs them. He added in the 9-1-1- Systems Administration budget is at 99 percent of Special Revenue funds, that comes through a variety of different fees received when talking about State money; the Emergency Management and the actual EOC side of the house from a hazard profile, because he thinks it is important to note having a very unique hazard profile in Brevard County; it has three rivers, 72 miles of oceans, several different kinds of habitat, since 1950, there has been 45 Federally declared disasters in Brevard County, and putting Brevard County three times in the national average with 10 in the State of Florida and keeping them very busy; there is also Port Canaveral which is the world's largest cruise Port; being in the 50-mile ingestion pathway for the St. Lucie Power Plant that equates to the chart and the numbers seen on the slide; total activations were 116 times, making Brevard County the most activated EOC in the State of Florida, and one of the most activated EOC's in the country; and additional numbers could be seen to support all of the day-to-day activities being done. He mentioned Hurricane Milton and the team that was behind that is shown on the slide; it is a lot of work that goes into any sort of disaster response; Brevard County was lucky with Hurricane Milton, that it experienced minimal impacts, minimal consequences from it, and the chart for Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Matthew looks significantly larger; he highlighted how proud the Directors are of the new EOC; last year it opened on June 1, that was the culmination of probably 25 years of community work; there was tremendous support from the County Manager and his team, from all Commissions, from the State Legislatures, from the Federal folks, and from the community to make sure it got there; prior to opening, they were in a civil era defense bunker that was the second oldest EOC, and they were putting 200 to 300 people in there; the County is in a much better situation and it shares that facility with the Brevard County Sheriff Office and its unified communication center; those kinds of things have been a tremendous improvement; he wanted to highlight on when the EOC opened, it was talked about having a commitment with partners and the community, and 104 meetings and

trainings were hosted; and it not just a gray skies kind of facility, but is a place being used all the time, for all of the partners so that everyone is benefiting from the additional space and increased technology. He talked about Emergency Operations primarily governed by Florida Statutes 252 and Brevard County has an Emergency Management Ordinance, all of the details is shown on the slides; he pointed out it is a requirement by law to have an emergency management program with a director, a special needs shelter registries, a comprehensive emergency management plan with a local mitigation strategy, the authorities who give implemented protective actions, and locally, the Ordinance defines roles and responsibilities, and helps to put guardrails, as it goes through it; the operations side of the budget, is the portion that gets the largest from General Fund; there is a small portion of User/Service Fees and some protected Fees received from the State and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the General Fund; the table accompanying the chart shows a breakdown of what those primary expenses are; about \$131,000 is the required match for the Federal grant received; and the rest of the money is pretty much between staff and operating the new facility, as it is significantly larger and more complicated than the previous facility.

Commissioner Altman stated when talking about the color money, he sees there is Special Revenue Funds covered for his hat and tie; and he asked if he has green pants on, too.

Mr. Scott responded just a green suit.

Commissioner Altman remarked he has the color of money covered and that is good, and helpful.

## **C.7. Save Our Indian River Lagoon**

Virginia Barker, Natural Resources Management Director, stated she is presenting on the Save Our Indian River Lagoon (SOIRL) Program only, which is one of her department's programs; she is going to skip her presentation outline; Amanda Elmore, Natural Resources Management Deputy Director, is going to talk about the other five programs within the Natural Resources office; the slide shown is about the colors of money pie and it is predominantly pink, pink, pink, pink, pink, with one tiny sliver of green that is what Ms. Elmore will be presenting; diving into just the SOIRL Program, it is entirely pink for special revenue funds; and the expense pie chart shows very little for compensation and benefits and operating expenses, the rest in purple, gray, and yellow is all going to projects. She stated the Lagoon is important to a healthy economy and she will not take up time for that; healthy seagrass meadows are the foundation of Lagoon productivity and fisheries abundance; 70 percent of sportfish use seagrass, like all plants seagrasses need sunlight to grow, and dirty polluted water is a problem; in 2016, there was a horrible fish kill, the Board asked the Governor for help, and it was told it needed a plan; staff was directed to develop a plan, and come up with referendum options to help fund the plan; and by August the Board had a plan, ballot language, an enabling Ordinance, established a Citizen Oversight Committee (COC), a trust fund, and directed staff to negotiate sales tax use and distribution agreements with cities, for all of the money to go into one pot and work together. She highlighted on the ballot language, the purpose of this funding was projects and programs designed to improve water quality, fish, wildlife and marine habitat, remove muck and reduce pollution, with the COC and annual independent audits; she is not going to go into the election results, but obviously it passed; the COC is made up of a whole bunch of different fields of expertise, which half of the members are nominated by the League of Cities since they allowed all of the money to go into one pot that is managed by the County; the other half of the members are nominated by the County; and the role of the COC is important for many reasons. She mentioned how the money is spent, it is called the four R's; reducing the sources of pollution, removing pollution that is already there, restoring the natural shock absorbers in system, and responding to new information and opportunities; they needed to hit the ground

running to lose no time for analysis, paralysis, more studies, use the best available data, get going with no regrets strategies, and as they learn adapt the plan; and that is part of why the COC is so important for that annual adaptation process to provide, to listen to the community and provide recommendations to the Commission. She added the sources of pollutions have changed dramatically and people have different perceptions based on when he or she were paying attention to what was going on; in the 1990's point sources was wastewater being the biggest source and that has changed dramatically by the time the plan was being developed; some sources had been contained and reduced, and other sources had grown with more and more people moving here; the plan has got to be relevant to the problems of today; she is not going to go through the 428 projects that are in the plan; but she provided the Board with a handout that shows what the projects are, where the money is going, and what the progress is. She stated to illustrate how much has changed since the original plan, the change could be seen from the gray on the left-hand pie chart that is mostly removing pollution that was already in the Lagoon, to the right-hand that is mostly yellow, orange, brown, and blue that are wastewater and stormwater projects, to stop pollution from getting into the Lagoon in the first place; next is the same information but in a tabular format; and in the far right column is an increase of almost all of the increased revenues collected, since initial projections have gone to wastewater projects and stormwater projects. She stated this graph has different scales of pollution sources, which is shown on the wide bars of muck flux, stormwater, air pollution, and septic that are the largest sources; she overlaid with pink for revenue and the revenue roughly follows the contours of the sources, with the exception of septic systems that receive emphasis due to a lot of public and policy issues; the Natural Resources Management program, like all of the other Directors have had to deal with inflation, and it has been a wild ride that was not anticipated in 2016; it has affected revenues year after year; in 2020 revenues actually went down, but then a major recovery in 2021-2022; it is pretty stable now and staff is hoping that continues through the end of the 10-year tax; and overall it shows, comparing projections to actuals, that has done pretty well, in fact, for the 2024 calendar year 99.8 percent of the projected revenue was collected. She added on the construction side there is inflation issues and the slide shows the difference between what was in the 2024 plan versus what is actually happening in the world; the 2025 plan was adjusted for inflation on all of the projects to help address that issue; this graph shows the significant growth in homeowner projects completed in the last couple of years and she was going to tell the Board why, but she is skipping that; it is a bunch of repairing broken sewer pipes, connecting them to adjacent sewer lines, and upgrading septic; and this graph shown is similar to the homeowner projects, this crescendo in the big capital projects, and this graph shown is without and with the cities, but both the County and the cities have struggled a little bit in the last year with inflation exceeding the budgets, and having to reject bids and delay getting projects under construction. She went on to say staff has tried to make up a lot of the delta by leveraging grants and the graph shows how success with grants has changed significantly over the years; she added some extra bits since the FY2025 budget was adopted and it has received \$5.8 million in Legislative appropriations last session and on Tuesday, the Governor announced \$19 million in State grants awarded from the Indian River Lagoon Protection Fund; the number of Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) has increased, managing grants to keep up the workload; it takes money to make money and because of the SOIRL tax being collected from the citizens, it takes about one-fifth of that from tourists, and uses that to leverage grant dollars and to get more funding from their partners; every dollar paid by a local at the checkout counter is getting about \$2.50 worth of project delivery; she showed a list of Legislative appropriations from last year versus this year's list; and the ones that are lined through were vetoed by the Governor, she will see how it does this year, but she appreciates whatever they could get. She stated 101 projects were completed, 46 of those were by cities, and collaboration with the cities is important to addressing hotspots in the community, that is where pollution tends to be most concentrated entering the Lagoon, and they need to work with the cities to address those problems; on the middle column of the slide where it says spent, plus in progress, is showing between what was spent to date, plus

the projects that are in progress, in design, in construction, in permitting, and totaling \$411 million; they have collected \$434 million and are trying to keep up collections and push projects forward at a pace with the collections; is staff picking the right projects, they put in 45 groundwater wells up and down the County to determine that, the green bar is pollution levels in natural areas and conservation lands, the red bar shows what the pollution levels are in the groundwater at homes that are on septic, and the blue bar shows what the pollution level is in homes that are on sewer service; there is still increased pollution with people who are on sewer, but it is nowhere near what septic systems are like; there is a huge benefit when converting people from septic-to-sewer; then the treated sewage is sent back to people to use for irrigation, but they are still getting the nutrients; and though the upgrade has to be done, the wastewater treatment plants, and the advanced wastewater treatment that Edward Fontanin, Utility Services Director, had described in his presentation. She stated muck removal is vacuuming out the accumulation of past pollution that collects in the low spots; she jumped to do these projects work; first, is the Titusville Osprey Waste Water Treatment Plant project, the brown bars are showing what was pre-pollution level, the blue bars are clean water afterwards, whether it is a wastewater treatment plant upgrade, a septic-to-sewer project, reducing turbidity or dredging and reducing bloom severity, these projects work; collectively 101 projects have removed over 800,000 pounds of pollution from the Lagoon; she showed the bloom levels map from 2016 to present; those peaks are when there was a major bloom; the first peak, on the left end is the 2016 fish kill; the next peak is 2018, which was in bloom the whole year; the center peak is the worst one from Thanksgiving to Christmas in 2020 when there were fish kills in both the Banana and Indian Rivers; but then after that it has been relatively calm and right after December 2020, it calmed down. She explained what that means is that the green bars are hectares of seagrass in the Lagoon; seagrass was expanding up until 2010; in 2011, there is the super bloom and it is showing the first decline; in 2016, is the next decline; in 2020, is the last decline; since 2020, staff has progressively been expanding seagrass; there is a long way to go, but recovery is clearly possible, if they keep doing what works; and she was going to tell all about the challenges of septic, but she would skip that and go to questions.

Commissioner Delaney inquired if there are test wells near any of the wastewater treatment plants, not just by the homes that have sewers.

Ms. Barker responded there are test wells at the homes that are close enough to the wastewater treatment plants, that are receiving reclaimed water for irrigation, but not at the wastewater treatment plants; staff does the sampling by downloading the reports that the wastewater treatment plants have to submit to the State; those are tracked and they also, pour water samples directly out of people's sprinkler systems; and sends that water to the lab so that staff knows what is reaching the homes, not what is coming out of the wastewater treatment plant.

Commissioner Delaney asked about the cities that have those near the wastewater treatment plants.

Ms. Barker replied staff does a representative subsample and does not monitor every, single project; and staff does not want to spend that much money on monitoring.

Commissioner Delaney inquired which ones those are by.

Ms. Barker responded Titusville and Palm Bay has one.

Chairman Feltner advised it seems unrealistic to get through the next presentation; before calling it quits, the Board needs to pick the date for the next Budget workshop; and he is open to suggestions. He mentioned having it on April 9, 10, 15, or 16; he understands on April 10,

there is Transportation Planning Organization (TPO); but that could probably be skipped to come here to do a Budget workshop, if it works for the staff.

Commissioner Goodson felt he was thinking about dying on that day.

Chairman Feltner asked him to hang in a little longer.

Commissioner Goodson stated he thinks he could make it.

Chairman Feltner stated he is sure his insurance annuity would be better by then.

Commissioner Delaney stated she has a Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX) board meeting on April 10 in the morning. She asked if April 14 or 15 would be possible.

Chairman Feltner advised on April 15, he thinks he has a meeting at 11:00 a.m., that he cannot move, and it would have to be in the afternoon; and he thinks they all have to move some things.

Commissioner Altman asked what day.

Chairman Feltner stated the Board is agreeing in the afternoon at 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on April 15. He asked Don Walker, Communications/SCGTV Director, if there are any Speaker Cards.

Mr. Walker responded no.

#### **F.5. Commissioner Kim Adkinson District 3, Re: Board Report**

Commissioner Adkinson stated first, she took the Board's direction and reached out to the Property Appraiser and the Tax Collector on March 11, to request information on what kind of taxes the partners in space are paying; she sent the request on March 12; she did not hear anything for a week and she re-checked with them, but she has yet to hear anything; eventually, she will, and when she does, she would bring that information back to the Board and the residents that she has that are questioning that; and secondly, she expressed her thanks to Billy Prasad, Interim Planning and Development Director, and to all of his staff, for all the work done on the Barrier Island Protection Act, she knows it has been a lot, and she appreciates it.

#### **F.7. Commissioner Rob Feltner District 4, Re: Board Report**

Commissioner Feltner stated his one thing was picking the date for the next workshop, because he did not think staff was going to get through all of it; he believes there will be some news, maybe over the weekend from the Legislature regarding Wuesthoff Hospital, but he does not have specific details; and that is something that is continued to be looked at in the Legislature.

Upon consensus of the Board, the meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

ATTEST

  
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RACHEL M. SADOFF, CLERK

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ROB FELTNER, CHAIRMAN  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

As approved by the Board on July 17, 2025.