

LAKELAND CITY COMMISSION**Public Budget Hearing
September 10, 2026**

The Lakeland City Commission met for the First Public Budget Hearing in the City Commission Chambers. Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley and Commissioners Chad McLeod, Terry Coney, Stephanie Madden, Mike Musick, Ashley Troutman, and Guy LaLonde were present. City Manager Shawn Sherrouse, City Attorney Palmer Davis, Finance Director Mike Brossart, and City Clerk Kelly Koos were present.

CALL TO ORDER - 6 p.m.**PRESENTATIONS****Proposed FY2027 Annual City Budget, City Manager Shawn Sherrouse and Finance Director Mike Brossart**

Shawn Sherrouse began the presentation, a copy of which is on file in the Agenda Packet.

FY2027 Budget Process Timeline.**FY2027 Budget Proposal**

- Property value growth
- The 1.5% increase in expenses is below the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- Proposed Across the Board (ATB) 2% and Merit 2.5% to 3%
- Collective Bargaining Units salaries
- Personnel Changes

Strategic Plan Framework**Strategic Focus Area: Infrastructure**

- Infrastructure – Lakeland Electric (LE)
- Electric Utility Fund
- Water Utility Fund
- Wastewater Utility Fund
- Stormwater Utility Fund
- Transportation Fund - The Commission discussed how projects are prioritized. Homeowner Associations (HOAs) do not contribute to any repairs. The City does not work on private roads. Grant funds do bring projects to the top.
- Community Redevelopment Agency Fund – The Commission discussed the Memorial Boulevard street scape. The Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was contributing for elements that are not eligible for Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) money. The Commission discussed South Florida Ave. The City is going to manage that construction project. The City has managed the design phase. The City will manage construction and get reimbursed from FDOT. Dixieland and Downtown Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs) will fund additional landscaping and improvements that would not be included with the FDOT construction funds.
- Information Technology Fund

Strategic Focus Area: Public Safety

Funding Sources: CRA and Information Technology

CRA - Midtown Neighborhood Alley Improvements

The Commission discussed alleys. The unimproved and unmaintained alleys pose problems for neighborhoods and the City. Vacating the alleys has proven to be expensive and time consuming. It has proven to be better to clean them up and then use them for connectivity and as an amenity for the neighborhood. It will take time. The alleys have been prioritized by the Lakeland Police Department (LPD), Neighborhood Associations, and Code Enforcement. The alley work is not a one and done initiative.

The Commission discussed street lighting. The City pays for street lighting out of the transportation funds. FDOT pays for lighting on state roads. There is no requirement to light parks. Chief Taylor supported lighting of streets and parks. It has helped police.

Strategic Focus Area: Economic Development

Community Redevelopment Agency Fund

Affordable Housing Development Program funded by various revenue sources including CRA

Housing Rehabilitation and Home Purchase Assistance Program

Lakeland Linder International Airport (LLIA) Fund Terminal Building Environmental Assessment

Strategic Focus Area: Quality of Life**Strategic Focus Area: Organizational Excellence**

The Commission discussed Fire Station #8. The budget already included staffing for the new station.

The Commission discussed a rescue truck for Station #5. It is on their radar for a year or two out.

There were \$47,423,261 in FY2027 Strategic Focus Area Expenditures.

Historical Ad Valorem Millage Rates

Millage Comparison – The reason Tallahassee and Kissimmee have lower millage rates than Lakeland is their fire service. They have fire assessment fees to pay for the Fire Services. Altamonte Springs (also lower) does not provide fire service.

The Commission discussed commercial property taxpayers. Lakeland was fortunate to have a combination of commercial, industrial and residential taxpayers. Cities that are smaller than Lakeland are being hit harder by Amendment 3 because they have no commercial tax base. We are blessed by the various types of property tax. It has allowed us to keep our millage rate low but artificially low.

General Fund Forecast and FY2027 Days Cash Estimate

The intention is to have 45-60 Day Cash on Hand (DCoH) in the third year. The potential Fire Assessment Fee makes the DCoH of 19 in FY2029 a little less concerning. The DCoH are dropping but there is plenty of time to address that next year.

The Commission asked to see the Surplus Generated/Used this time last year. Mike Brossart will provide that to everyone. They would like it to be shown at the next public budget hearing.

The Commission discussed the growth in 2008 and 2009. It took government a good while to recover from 2008. The City had negative growth for a few years. Back then, the City was not tracking the DCoH. It was shown as a dollar amount and was not projected 3 years out.

The Commission discussed how much of the \$47 Million was general fund. Staff did not have those figures. They will have to check the numbers and provide them at the next meeting. The Peregrine Platform, and the Organizational Excellence items were out of the General Fund.

The Commission discussed DCoH. That surplus is a way to recover from a hurricane without borrowing. Cities must have the cash to recover. The funds are reimbursable, not granted in advance.

FY2027 Millage Discussion Authorization

Mike Brossart covered the requirements to pass a millage rate. The City will need 5 of 7 affirmative votes to adopt the current millage rate.

Public Hearings

Ordinances

Proposed 26-030; Ad Valorem Millage Rate for 2026-2027 Fiscal Year

AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO AD VALOREM TAXATION; ESTABLISHING THE MILLAGE RATE FOR THE CITY OF LAKELAND, FLORIDA, FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 2026 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2027; PROVIDING FOR THE LEVY OF AD VALOREM TAXES; FINDING THE MILLAGE RATE IS 3.33% GREATER THAN THE ROLLED BACK RATE; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Palmer Davis read the title.

Motion: Commissioner Mike Musick moved to approve the ordinance on first reading. Commissioner Terry Coney seconded.

Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley asked for comments from the Commission and the audience. There were no comments.

Action: Upon roll call vote Commissioners Chad McLeod, Terry Coney, Stephanie Madden, Mike Musick, Ashley Troutman, Guy LaLonde and Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley voted aye. Ayes-seven. Nays-zero. The motion carried unanimously.

Proposed 26-031; Appropriations; Budget for 2026-2027 Fiscal Year

AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO APPROPRIATIONS; PROVIDING FOR THE APPROPRIATION OF MONIES FOR THE CITY OF LAKELAND, FLORIDA, FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 2026 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2027; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Palmer Davis read the title.

Motion: Commissioner Mike Musick moved to approve the ordinance on first reading. Commissioner Ashley Troutman seconded.

Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley asked for comments from the Commission and the audience. There were no comments.

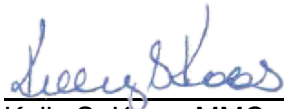
Action: Upon roll call vote Commissioners Guy LaLonde, Mike Musick, Ashley Troutman, Stephanie Madden, Terry Coney, Chad McLeod, and Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley voted aye. Ayes-seven. Nays-zero. The motion carried unanimously.

Shawn Sherrouse reviewed the budget adoption schedule for the budget public hearing on September 24, 2026. He has now covered everything in the budget. For the next hearing, he planned to just hit the totals and answer questions that were raised tonight.

MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COMMISSION - None

AUDIENCE - None

CALL FOR ADJOURNMENT - 7:16 p.m.



Kelly S. Koos, MMC
City Clerk

