City of Pembroke Pines, FL

City of Pembroke Pines
Charles F. Dodge City Center
601 City Center Way
Pembroke Pines, FL 33025

Meeting Minutes - Draft

Tuesday, May 26, 2026

7:00 PM

Discussion & Presentation Regarding the Proposed Police-Fire Public Safety Complex; Exhibit # 1 to PRE-1 was added on 5/22/2026; Exhibit # 3 and Exhibit # 4 to Item 2 were added on 5/26/2026; Exhibit # 1 to PRE-1 was updated on 5/26/2026.

Commission Chambers

City Commission

Mayor Angelo Castillo
Vice Mayor Michael A. Hernandez
Commissioner Thomas Good Jr.
Commissioner Maria Rodriguez
Commissioner Jay D. Schwartz

7:00 PM SPECIAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Present 5 - Mayor Angelo Castillo, Vice Mayor Michael A. Hernandez, Commissioner Thomas Good Jr., Commissioner Maria Rodriguez, and Commissioner Jay D. Schwartz

Also present: City Manager Charles F. Dodge, City Attorney Samuel Goren, and City Clerk Gabriel Fernandez.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Castillo thanked the attendees and invited everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the national anthem.

Mayor Castillo requested that the City Attorney lead the gathering in the Pledge of Allegiance.

City Attorney Goren led the meeting attendees in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Castillo thanked the attendees.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITEMS TO BE PULLED FROM AGENDA

MAYOR'S REMARKS

Mayor Castillo clarified that the intent of the current session was not to place any item on the upcoming November ballot. Mayor Castillo explained that the goal of the meeting was to decide and discuss whether the city should present the option of building a new public safety complex, including a police headquarters, a public safety station, and a replacement for Fire Station 69, to residents during nine town hall meetings scheduled for June.

Mayor Castillo confirmed that the commission unanimously decided to have the town halls focused on the two charter questions that will be on the ballot, noting that they would not be discussed during the current meeting. Mayor Castillo noted that the sole topic of the night was whether to proceed with presenting the public safety facility options to the public or abandon the project entirely. Mayor Castillo summarized the history of the proposed public safety complex, emphasizing that it had remained part of the city's work plan for over a decade. Mayor Castillo noted that personal discussions regarding this project's history had occurred with the current police chief, the current fire chief, City Manager Dodge, two previous police chiefs, and a former fire chief.

Mayor Castillo explained that an architect had spent the past year collaborating closely with the city administration, the police department, and the fire department to develop detailed depictions and specifications for the new complex. Mayor Castillo extended gratitude to the police department, the fire department, and the administration for their hard work alongside the architect. Mayor Castillo recalled that during a previous attempt to bring a similar project forward, residents shared that there were not enough details and requested a menu option.

Mayor Castillo informed the commissioners that the wording of the proposals was fully under their ownership and could be modified or adjusted if necessary. Mayor Castillo expressed the opinion that if the commission intended to conduct nine town hall meetings on this topic, it was critical to demonstrate support. Mayor Castillo affirmed a personal conviction that constructing the public safety complex was required to defend the long-term health, safety, and welfare of the community. Mayor Castillo characterized the existing facility as small, technologically obsolete, structurally inadequate to endure hurricanes, and a direct hindrance to the emergency departments. Mayor Castillo mentioned that the city manager, police chief, and fire chief all recommended this project and shared that he was in agreement with their assessment.

Mayor Castillo announced that if the upcoming vote on the first resolution was not entirely unanimous, he would vote no on the matter. Mayor Castillo argued that if any commissioner did not support progressing with the project, it should be abandoned to avoid repeating past failures where a split commission failed to convince residents to make personal financial sacrifices. Mayor Castillo clarified that last time there were policy questions and noted that this one involves money and therefore should be a unanimous decision. Mayor Castillo reiterated that if anyone voted no, he would also vote no, sharing that he would allow commissioners to change their votes before finalization.

Mayor Castillo explained that he checked with the parliamentarian and verified that the mayor has the authority to allow such voting adjustments, although he does not plan on using that authority frequently. Mayor Castillo reiterated that a unanimous front is necessary, or the project should be abandoned, at which point a motion would be required to remove the complex from the city's strategic plan. Mayor Castillo gave City Manager Dodge the floor to introduce the architectural presentation before moving to the drafted resolutions.

PRESENTATIONS:

PRE-1 PRESENTATION NO. 1: ARCHITECTS DESIGN GROUP WILL BE MAKING A PRESENTATION ON THE PROPOSED PEMBROKE PINES POLICE-FIRE PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX.

City Manager Dodge thanked the mayor and called the architect forward to present the project options developed alongside staff. City Manager Dodge indicated an intention to deliver a recommendation regarding the project scope and funding parameters after the commission reviewed the architectural layouts and received guidance from the bond counsel and finance director. City Manager Dodge shared that the project cost includes approximately 20 million extra dollars to account for changes in the cost of the project.

Mayor Castillo directed the presenter to activate the microphone, state their name, and declare their professional affiliation.

Rodney McManus introduced himself as the senior vice president and director of operations for Architects Design Group, based in Winter Park, Florida.

Mayor Castillo welcomed the presenter to the meeting.

Mr. McManus thanked the mayor, the city manager, and the commissioners and affirmed that his firm had assisted the city on this project for over a decade. Mr. McManus shared that he and his firm have toured the buildings and recognized that replacing the existing buildings with a state-of-the-art complex was an important objective.

Mayor Castillo requested that the presenter position themselves closer to the microphone.

Mr. McManus explained that his firm has met with multiple generations of police and fire leadership, reviewed individual departmental needs, and mapped out location adjacencies to allow for maximum efficiency.

Mr. McManus described the property as being on the same site, which is a relatively smaller five-acre site, proposing a vertical layout consisting of a two-story fire station, a five-story police department, and a five-level parking garage to satisfy parking needs. Mr. McManus reported that the firm researched the needs of the departments, utilizing questionnaires and meetings with individual departments to log every square foot of required functional space. Mr. McManus outlined the exact dimensions of the master plan, stating that the public safety facility would require 108,000 square feet upon initial completion and would grow to 123,000 square feet in 30 years. Mr. McManus noted that Fire Station Number 69 would need 21,391 square feet and would not grow over the next 30 years.

Mr. McManus added that the second floor of the fire station would eventually feature a 9,189-square-foot fire administration area, while the multi-level parking garage would be 145,671 square feet to store rolling assets for both departments. Mr. McManus explained that the plan includes two decentralized utility plants per building, a choice intended to lower costs and eliminate construction overlaps by letting the facilities operate simultaneously. Mr. McManus added that they would find a new location for the communications tower and replace the municipal fueling depot. Mr. McManus noted that the development options ranged from solely meeting immediate needs to options for meeting 15-year and 30-year needs. Mr. McManus detailed the logic of including shell space in the buildings, allowing the city to expand as the departments grow rather than facing higher construction costs in the future.

Mr. McManus identified the proposal under evaluation as option C-2.2, which prioritized constructing the primary public safety building and the parking garage as phase one and the construction of the fire station as phase two. Mr. McManus began detailing the hard construction costs, noting that building the 108,853 square-foot police headquarters and training facility.

Commissioner Schwartz requested that the presentation be placed on the screen so that those watching remotely could see it.

Mayor Castillo directed IT to place the presentation on the screen.

Mr. McManus shared that the construction carried an estimated cost of $555 per square foot, yielding a subtotal of $59,869,150. Mr. McManus added that the future expansion of shell space was estimated at $450 per square foot for an additional 14,088 square feet, costing a projected amount of 6,339,600 dollars.

Commissioner Rodriguez requested a brief clarification regarding option C-2.2, inquiring whether the proposed space was being built specifically for 2056 or for 2041.

Mr. McManus clarified that the entire physical structure needed for 30 years in the future, in 2056, would be present when it is built. Mr. McManus noted that the area required for 2041 would be built out, and the area for 2056 would be left as unfinished shell space once the building is completed.

Commissioner Rodriguez clarified that the entirety of the building would be completed in 2056.

Mr. McManus confirmed that the description was accurate, explaining that not every closet or internal component would be completely built out initially. Mr. McManus explained that this is because circumstances could change as time progresses. Mr. McManus noted that building for 30 years in the future can be difficult.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if finishing the shell space later would introduce additional expenditures.

Mr. McManus acknowledged that future build-outs would carry costs but emphasized that they would represent pennies on the dollar compared to constructing brand-new external walls, foundations, and primary HVAC mainlines later. Mr. McManus shared that the parking garage was engineered for 288 vehicles at a rate of 34,000 dollars per parking space, creating a structural subtotal of 9,792,000 dollars. Mr. McManus explained that the ground level of the garage would feature a dedicated 24,687-square-foot rolling asset storage zone at 220 dollars per square foot, totaling 5,431,140 dollars.

Mr. McManus reported that the police headquarters' central utility plant carried an estimated allowance of 5,200,000 dollars. At 65% of the gross square footage, the utility allowance covered a primary generator, fuel tanks, fuel pumps, and localized HVAC equipment enclosed inside protective cages engineered to withstand hurricane-force winds. Mr. McManus, the costs of the demolition and disposal of the current police headquarters, calculated at $7.50 per square foot across 39,800 square feet, equaling 298,500 dollars. Mr. McManus detailed the phase two hard costs for the new fire station, projecting a 30,254 square-foot structure built at 625 dollars per square foot for a total building expenditure of 18,908,750 dollars.

Mr. McManus added that the fire administration utility plant, accounting for 35% of gross square footage, cost 2,800,000 dollars to install a dedicated generator, fuel infrastructure, and protective caging.

Mr. McManus explained that tearing down and disposing of the existing fire station number 69 was budgeted at $7.50 per square foot for 24,706 square feet, totaling 185,295 dollars and bringing the complete structural building subtotal to 108,824,435 dollars.

Mayor Castillo posed a question regarding the listed square footage estimates and asked whether the architect had integrated future costs against future inflation or if the figures reflected strict current values.

Mr. McManus explained that the numbers merged baseline current square footage market values derived from personal experience with estimated values meant to offset inflation that may occur between the current design period and actual construction.

Mayor Castillo asked Mr. McManus to identify the baseline for square footage construction values.

Mr. McManus responded that the square footage comes from what is required in each of the rooms.

Mayor Castillo clarified that he would like to know where the market values were derived.

Mr. McManus explained that the market values were derived from databases and experience his firm has been tracking and executing similar public institutional projects throughout the state of Florida over the past 52 years.

Mayor Castillo reiterated that the basis was the 52-year background and experience.

Commissioner Rodriguez observed that construction inflation had risen dramatically over the last few years, far outstripping normal historical data models. Commissioner Rodriguez asked for the exact values that Mr. McManus included to offset or account for inflation.

Mr. McManus stated that the firm's current tracking observed real-world construction escalation hovering between 5 percent and 6 percent annually. Mr. McManus explained that when mapping out the project schedule, the fire station phase was intentionally assigned a higher per-square-foot cost than the police station because its construction was set to begin at a later date. Mr. McManus communicated that construction inflation has become difficult to predict, noting that due to the pandemic, inflation jumped 20 percent per year over a three-year period.

Mr. McManus emphasized that because public safety buildings operate as essential facilities, they require more robust hurricane-resistant structural engineering than residential or standard commercial properties.

Mr. McManus transitioned to site development costs, explaining that the police headquarters and parking garage footprint occupied 2.85 acres, with civil prep work calculated at 425,000 dollars per acre to total

1,211,250 dollars. Mr. McManus explained that the fire station, administration wing, and fueling facility occupied 2.15 acres at the same 425,000 dollars per acre rate, totaling 913,750 dollars. Mr. McManus detailed a comprehensive site security and technology system allowance, sharing that the police department has a 950,000 dollar allowance, developed alongside an engineering partner that his firm has used for 15 years. Mr. McManus broke down the technology allowance by department, allocating 57 percent of the system share to the police department for a value of 541,500 dollars. Mr. McManus shared that the remaining 43 percent share of the technology allowance was allocated to the fire department, totaling 408,500 dollars.

Mr. McManus reported that the installation of a shared fueling island was split equally at 557,500 dollars for the police department and 557,500 dollars for the fire department. Mr. McManus clarified that the cost for the communications tower and for completing the median modifications and signalization along Pines Boulevard would be borne by the city outside of the current cost estimate. Mr. McManus explained that the subtotal for the project site development equaled 4,190,000 dollars, which, combined with the building construction values, generates a cost estimation of 113,414,435 dollars.

Mr. McManus explained that on the graphic, blue represents police allocations and red identifies fire. Mr. McManus presented the project soft costs, which include professional fees, fixtures, furniture, equipment, and technology for a furniture and fixtures allowance totaling 5,312,040 dollars. Mr. McManus communicated that the technical security and computing networks carried a matching systems allowance of 5,312,040 dollars. Mr. McManus reiterated that permitting, testing, inspection fees, and moving fees were omitted from this presentation and would be covered directly by the city.

Mr. McManus explained that compounding a four percent annual escalation over a two-year planning runway added 9,221,978 dollars to the budget. Mr. McManus added that a ten percent project contingency allowance was integrated and added 11,341,444 dollars to the soft cost column. Mr. McManus explained that the total soft cost projection reached 42,448,945 dollars, producing a total development cost estimate of 155,463,380 dollars for complete project development.

Mr. McManus transitioned to the overhead site plans, displaying the current layout of the municipal property, highlighting the location of fire station number 69 and the existing four-story police headquarters.

Commissioner Good requested to return to the prior slide.

Commissioner Good noted that he had questions focused on the previously presented numbers and how they plan to distinguish current market values from future projections. Commissioner Good asked for confirmation that all itemized figures listed before item 10.7 reflected current costs, while 10.7 represented the escalation costs.

Mr. McManus confirmed that Commissioner Good is correct and clarified that the $11 million is a contingency.

Commissioner Good referenced item 2.3 regarding a 950,000 dollar cost for the fueling island. Commissioner Good noted that he was preparing for a separate meeting in two days, which prompted his detailed questions. Commissioner Good stated that the document he was reviewing contained slightly different numbers that did not match the presentation slides. Commissioner Good noted item 1.7 for the fire administration utility plant and item 1.4 for the police utility plant allowance, which included fuel tanks, and he asked if those fuel tanks were designated for the generators.

Mr. McManus confirmed that those tanks were strictly for the generators and special building equipment, which differed from the vehicle fueling depot.

Commissioner Good asked if the fueling depot was separate from the generator fuel systems.

Mr. McManus clarified that the fueling island functioned as a gas pump for vehicles and apparatus, which included its own underground storage tanks, while the generators possessed separate storage systems near the central utility plants.

Commissioner Good expressed confusion regarding why the fueling island site development costs were separated from the building construction hard costs, noting that the separation lacked detail and represented a substantial sum.

Mr. McManus explained that building construction costs and site development costs were combined to form the total hard costs.

Commissioner Good stated that he was trying to determine if double counting had occurred within the calculations.

Mayor Castillo intervened to clarify the question, explaining that Commissioner Good wanted an explanation of the difference between the fuel reference in item 1.7 and the fuel reference in item 2.3.

Mr. McManus apologized for the misunderstanding and explained that items 1.4 and 1.7 covered the fuel tanks and pumps necessary to deliver diesel fuel to the generators to maintain building power during an outage or hurricane event, with no relation to automotive fueling.

Commissioner Good explained that he was starting to become agitated, as he is not ignorant of this. Commissioner Good asked what a fuel pump is and whether that is tied to an underground storage tank.

Mr. McManus explained that a fuel pump delivers fuel and that it is tied to an underground storage tank that is separate from and near the central utility plant.

Commissioner Good asked for clarification on what the fuel pump in 1.4 and 1.7 is.

Mr. McManus explained that the fuel pump is the piece of equipment that takes the fuel from the tank to the generator to power the building when the power goes out. Mr. McManus affirmed that the fuel pump is not related to any automotive uses, noting that the generators would run on diesel fuel.

Commissioner Good stated that he would move past the item but expressed a desire to see more details later, noting it was unusual to highlight a standard fuel pump as a distinct major component separate from the generator system.

Commissioner Good raised a second question regarding the rolling assets and parking garage design, asking if the proposal was predicated on current fleet numbers or projected assets, and whether the city currently possessed all the rolling assets identified in the plan.

Mr. McManus replied that the design was an estimate and that he does not believe the city has all the assets.

Commissioner Good questioned what assets the city does not yet possess and how the future expansion was determined for inclusion in the garage. Commissioner Good explained that it was important to know if the city was planning for 75 percent or 90 percent of current assets, or if a high-cost future asset was being factored into the garage design. Commissioner Good acknowledged that the presenter might be unable to answer and directed the question to the city manager, noting that the distinction between current rolling assets and a 30-year projected increase had not been discussed by the commission.

City Manager Dodge stated that the police chief could address the rolling asset details. City Manager Dodge stated that all rolling assets had been identified and asked Police Chief Vargas to clarify if the space accounted for replacement assets, new growth, or if it was built out to full capacity immediately to avoid future construction. City Manager Dodge shared that he believes that the assets closely match the current inventory.

Police Chief Vargas detailed that the design mainly anticipated additional police vehicles to accommodate department expansion up to the year 2056. Police Chief Vargas shared that the plan also factored in growth for the fire department, including fire engines, apparatus, and a potential full-time armored rescue vehicle.

Commissioner Good requested a detailed written breakdown comparing current assets against future planned assets, noting that police vehicles were typically take-home units assigned by shift and were not generally parked at the main station unless a roll call was occurring.

Police Chief Vargas agreed to provide a detailed breakdown and explained that the department maintained pool vehicles that required storage to prevent degradation. Police Chief Vargas noted that the rolling assets also included armored rescue vehicles, motorcycles, and portable traffic enforcement equipment.

Commissioner Good interrupted to note that Chief Vargas had mentioned a potential additional armored vehicle.

Police Chief Vargas responded that he would likely not be the chief in the year 2050, meaning that the decision would fall to future leadership, but the option was preserved in the structural design. Police Chief Vargas reiterated that a detailed breakdown would be provided, noting that portable red light cameras and license plate readers were also part of the asset list slated for future expansion.

Commissioner Good asked where the portable enforcement equipment is currently located.

Police Chief Vargas replied that because the main station had run out of room, the equipment was scattered throughout different areas of the city, with some traffic lights out west, license plate readers distributed across locations, and the second armored vehicle stored in an alternative location.

Commissioner Good acknowledged that the city possessed other large, empty facilities that could accommodate such equipment, and he noted that choosing between centralized and decentralized storage was an important policy consideration.

Commissioner Good raised another question, asking the presenter if the estimated construction numbers would differ if the project were located on a pristine, undeveloped plot of land.

Mr. McManus responded that such a site would eliminate demolition costs but introduce utility and site unknowns. Mr. McManus explained that because the current site was functioning, the firm possessed data regarding power, utilities, and fiber infrastructure. Mr. McManus stated that a greenfield site would require separate assessments for stormwater management, fiber loops, and electrical grid connectivity, which could demand greater generator capacity. Mr. McManus noted that the small size of the current site forced a vertical design, resulting in a five-story police facility rather than a two-story structure. Mr. McManus added that housing the rolling assets on the ground floor of the parking structure provided direct exterior access and protected the fleet from weather and high winds, creating cost savings by utilizing space that would otherwise only hold standard cars.

Commissioner Good asked for the expected cost differential if a virgin piece of land were used instead. Commissioner Good noted that building on an already developed site carried risks, such as hitting unknown infrastructure during demolition and disrupting county systems due to outdated utility records.

Mr. McManus responded that the square-foot construction costs provided were derived from projects of a similar nature, meaning the risks of demolition and rebuilding within an active campus were built into the estimate. Mr. McManus added that calculating an exact cost differential for a virgin site would require input from civil, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and structural engineers to assess soil conditions and determine if pilings or specialized stormwater management systems were required.

Commissioner Good countered that those engineering assessments were already required for the currently developed site; otherwise, the presented site costs would not be so high.

Mr. McManus agreed but noted that a developed site allowed the firm to make reliable structural assumptions that were impossible on an unstudied virgin site.

Commissioner Good remarked that a virgin site eliminated the risk of disrupting existing operations, allowing excavation without structural interference, which represented a distinct cost advantage.

Commissioner Good raised a question regarding service displacement and operational management, noting that the fire department would be displaced during construction and forced to operate from another location. Commissioner Good explained that he lived near the police station, viewed it daily from his house, and was deeply familiar with the location. Commissioner Good expressed concern regarding the construction's impact on the surrounding neighborhood and the nearby park, which was heavily utilized by residents.

Commissioner Good noted that a nearby apartment complex relied on the access road between the park and the police station to reach Pines Boulevard, and he questioned how construction would impact local mobility and the limited park space in his district, noting the park featured a popular pavilion used for community events. Commissioner Good explained that he would not agree to using the park for construction staging if it took the space away from the residents, directing the concern to the city manager. Commissioner Good stated he would reserve further questions for the upcoming evening session or the scheduled Thursday meeting.

Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that the mayor had stepped away briefly and asked Commissioner Rodriguez or Commissioner Schwartz if they had any additional thoughts.

Mr. McManus noted that the master plan slide had not yet been presented.

Commissioner Schwartz requested to be recognized by the vice mayor to ask a quick question regarding construction types.

Vice Mayor Hernandez requested Commissioner Schwartz to repeat the question, noting the audio did not transmit clearly through the microphone.

Commissioner Schwartz shared that he had a couple of questions regarding construction. Commissioner Schwartz questioned whether the wall construction cost estimates were based on tilt-wall, block construction, or a 3D concrete system.

Mr. McManus replied that the exact construction type had not been finalized.

Commissioner Schwartz countered that not being able to establish the construction type was a significant issue that undermined the reliability of the square footage costs. Commissioner Schwartz emphasized that public funds demanded strict fiduciary responsibility rather than a blended estimate.

Mr. McManus shared that the estimated costs between standard masonry, tilt-up, and precast concrete systems generally fell within the same financial range, and there are efficiencies and inefficiencies in each of them.

Commissioner Schwartz emphasized that the statement that all the construction types are in the same ballpark is not sufficient. Commissioner Schwartz explained that the use of public funds demanded strict fiduciary responsibility rather than a blended estimate.

Commissioner Schwartz raised a second question regarding the operational shell space, asking if the future energy costs for air conditioning and electricity had been factored into the overall operational estimates for the building.

Mr. McManus confirmed that operational costs were considered and pointed to the square footage numbers, noting that unfinished shell space was estimated at 100 dollars less per square foot than finished space. Mr. McManus explained that the shell space could be left unconditioned, provided safeguards were implemented to manage unconditioned zones adjacent to conditioned environments, or it could be integrated into the central HVAC distribution system from day one. Mr. McManus stated the space was strategically placed to align with the long-term growth information provided by the police and fire chiefs.

Commissioner Schwartz asked what specific LEED green building standards were targeted for the design and whether solar arrays were proposed to reduce utility costs.

Mr. McManus detailed that no specific LEED certifications were currently mandated for the project, though all designs adhered to sustainable standards required by essential facility building codes. Mr. McManus noted that the buildings could achieve certification if desired by the city, but chasing formal silver, gold, or platinum LEED designations often introduced substantial cost premiums.

Commissioner Schwartz responded that LEED certification would open up opportunities for federal and state grant money to reduce overall costs, asking if the administration had analyzed that option.

City Manager Dodge requested that Commissioner Schwartz repeat the question.

Mayor Castillo clarified that Commissioner Schwartz was asking if the administration had considered utilizing LEED standards to capture governmental grant funding.

City Manager Dodge responded that he would need to rely on the architect's guidance, but shared that he believed that LEED certification provided minimal value in the current grant environment.

Mr. McManus explained that federal and state grants carry restrictive regulations and compliance requirements.

Mayor Castillo noted that it could be Davis-Bacon, which could increase overall construction costs beyond the value of the grant itself, noting that sometimes it is more cost-effective to pass on a grant to deliver a more cost-efficient project.

Mr. McManus noted that it would be Davis-Bacon and acknowledged that the Mayor’s assessment is correct.

Commissioner Schwartz agreed, noting that the net benefit to the public should take precedence over chasing grant metrics that inflated baseline costs. Commissioner Schwartz stated he agreed with the fiscal logic and shifted to the topic of fleet electrification. Commissioner Schwartz asked if electric vehicle charging stations or Tesla charging infrastructure had been incorporated into the garage design, noting that electric vehicles represented a major current decision-making factor.

Mr. McManus responded that specific electric vehicle charging stations had not been identified in the initial plan but could be added later. Mr. McManus explained that the current design provided the underlying infrastructure so the city could incorporate what they need as they need it.

Commissioner Schwartz asked City Manager Dodge who was in charge of deciding whether the city’s vehicles should be shifted toward electric vehicles. Commissioner Schwartz questioned whether the city had consulted with Florida Power and Light to install an electrical vault to feed power back into the grid to lower utility costs.

Mayor Castillo intervened, stating that while he respected the questions, fleet electrification and grid vaults were operational questions rather than the construction cost estimate under review. Mayor Castillo noted that the presented numbers did not represent final construction bids but rather a pre-design estimate meant to establish a budget or bid document. Mayor Castillo reiterated that the commission is reviewing the architect's initial renderings, asking if the drawings were 40%.

Mr. McManus confirmed that the work is a pre-design, sharing that a criteria package would be created at 40% of the project's completion.

Mayor Castillo stated that the objective was to establish a factually rich ballpark estimate based on the needs of 2026 as determined by the chiefs.

Commissioner Schwartz yielded for other questions.

Commissioner Good requested to speak further before the presentation moved forward, noting that his points aligned with Commissioner Schwartz's comments on future city vehicle needs. Commissioner Good remarked that designing for 30 years into the future was a relevant consideration, noting that the current outdated police building failed to anticipate modern communication advances, resulting in thick concrete bunker walls.

Commissioner Good explained that he had not received an answer to his previous question regarding service displacement costs, specifically whether the abnormal expenses of moving fire personnel and managing parking during construction were built into the presented costs.

Mr. McManus clarified that the costs for relocating the police or fire departments during the construction of the phase one facility and garage were not included in the presentation.

Commissioner Good noted that moving an entire fire rescue operation off-site represented a substantial, separate cost that would impact emergency response times.

City Manager Dodge explained that the administration had evaluated the relocation logistics with the fire chief and identified temporary on-site staging options. City Manager Dodge explained that to preserve response times, the fire operations may temporarily shift to the rear of the current property near the park during phase one. City Manager Dodge stated that once the new police station was complete, the old police station would be demolished to clear land for the permanent new fire station.

Commissioner Good asked if moving operations to the back meant moving them toward the park.

City Manager Dodge responded that it would be placed near or at the entrance of the park, acknowledging that while it would cause temporary inconveniences, it was the most logical method to maintain public safety response times.

Commissioner Rodriguez returned to the sustainability topic, asking what specific sustainability measures were considered if formal LEED metrics were omitted.

Mr. McManus explained that to satisfy current essential facility codes, the design required energy analyses. Mr. McManus explained that standard firm practices ensured high sustainability targets that could be expanded to gold or platinum levels if funded. Mr. McManus noted that LEED certification required an independent building commissioning process that added a 5 percent to 10 percent cost to get certification.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked how the building would accommodate changing automotive technologies over 30 years, noting that while patrol vehicles might not use electric power today, garage infrastructure should adapt easily without requiring a complete structural overhaul.

Mr. McManus mirrored that installing underlying conduit during initial construction solved the issue, allowing future wiring to be threaded through without tearing down walls. Mr. McManus observed that technological trajectories can change, noting that vehicles in 30 years could shift toward hydrogen fuel cells, flying cars, or drones. Mr. McManus explained that his firm works with TLC regarding emerging technologies, highlighting a recent station design conference that emphasized the growing integration of Real-Time Intelligence Centers to enhance situational awareness for both police and fire departments, which was factored into the layout.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if the city would have a Real-Time Crime Center.

Mr. McManus confirmed that the Real-Time Crime Center, Information Center, and Intelligence Center are all the same concept.

Mayor Castillo requested that Mr. McManus continue his presentation.

Mr. McManus displayed the existing site plan, pointing out the current police headquarters, the communications tower, a CBS storage building, a four-story structure, and the rear fueling station. Mr. McManus transitioned to the proposed master plan, explaining that phase one required demolishing the existing fire station to construct the new five-level parking garage and a new communications tower on the back corner of the garage. Mr. McManus explained the tower would be built first to maintain continuous operations during garage construction, followed by the construction of the new police headquarters.

Mr. McManus detailed that construction barriers would isolate the active job site to ensure fire rescue operations could safely enter and exit the property during phase one. Mr. McManus stated that phase two would begin once the police force relocated to the new facility, allowing the old police station to be demolished to clear land for the new fire station. Mr. McManus noted the new fire station design shifted the apparatus bays further toward the center of the site, requiring cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation to alter the medians and signaling on Pines Boulevard to secure safe right-in, left-in, and left-out driving paths for emergency vehicles. Mr. McManus noted the vehicle fueling station would also be built during phase two, explaining the final design detailing would be managed by a subsequent builder-architect team once the criteria package reached a 40 percent completion threshold, and that the other 60% would be done with another builder-architect team.

Commissioner Rodriguez noted that the fire station appeared to move east rather than west from its current location.

Mr. McManus corrected himself and confirmed the station moved east.

Mayor Castillo and Mr. McManus asked if the commission had further questions regarding the preliminary layout.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked for the total vehicle capacity designed for the parking garage, recalling the earlier discussion that patrol officers drove their units home.

Mr. McManus responded that data from the police department designated a capacity of 288 spaces within the garage, as well as secured surface parking behind the fire station and public parking spaces along Pines Boulevard.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked for the specific net increase in parking spaces compared to the current site layout, noting that staff members frequently resorted to parking on the grass swales and around tight corners.

Police Chief Vargas stepped forward to provide the exact metrics, stating the current site contained 172 parking spaces, with 124 assigned to police and 48 assigned to fire. Police Chief Vargas explained that at peak times, there can be up to 270 total employees at both facilities simultaneously.

Commissioner Rodriguez was informed that in the new design, there are 288 spaces plus separate public parking. Commissioner Rodriguez asked if a community meeting room was included in the new building and how much parking would be available for the public for community events. Commissioner Rodriguez noted that the current station's community room hosted student of the month events that overwhelmed the public parking, sometimes forcing commissioners to use designated veteran parking spots.

Mr. McManus confirmed that there would be public parking for the community center. Mr. McManus explained that all parking behind or in the secured access area and within the upper garage levels was restricted to department personnel, while public parking was situated along Pines Boulevard, providing a total of 55 public spaces.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked how many public parking spaces existed on the current site.

Police Chief Vargas estimated the current public spaces stood between 30 and 40 spots. Police Chief Vargas explained that while patrol officers take their work vehicles home, the department employs approximately 115 civilian staff members who work daytime hours, creating parking difficulties during shift overlaps. Police Chief Vargas explained the 288-space metric was calculated using peak staffing data provided to the architects to resolve the current deficit and accommodate visitors.

Mr. McManus pointed to the upper right corner of the slide diagram, showing how levels one, two, and three of the parking garage aligned directly with the floor plates of the police building. Mr. McManus explained that this structural connectivity allowed officers to transport property and evidence directly from their vehicles into evidence processing areas without utilizing elevators.

Mr. McManus reviewed the individual floor plate layouts, noting that level one housed public-facing services and the community room. Mr. McManus explained that level two was focused on patrol, as well as training officers, traffic units, and school resource officers. Mr. McManus noted that level three focused on evidence storage, IT systems, and facility support. Mr. McManus shared that level four focused on crime analysis, investigations, detective units, digital forensics, victim advocates, and the SWAT department. Mr. McManus explained that the fifth floor focused on police administration, command staff, professional standards, finance, payroll, communications, the 311 call center, and the Real Time Crime Center.

Mayor Castillo requested to return to the level three layout slide to discuss property and evidence storage. Mayor Castillo asked for the total estimated square footage assigned to the property and evidence.

Mr. McManus stated he did not have the exact amount available from memory, but noted it was detailed later in the presentation and in the files that were sent to the city.

Mayor Castillo asked if the new design delivered a significant expansion of evidence space compared to the current building, or if the footprint remained comparable.

Mayor Castillo requested the police and fire chiefs to sit closer to the front to reduce their walking distance, noting that they were in great shape. Mayor Castillo asked if there is more property and evidence space in the new building.

Police Chief Vargas confirmed that the new design provided significantly more property and evidence storage to secure the department's needs for the coming decades.

Mayor Castillo emphasized the importance of evidence storage, noting that improper storage could jeopardize criminal convictions and allow criminals to escape justice. Mayor Castillo explained that current evidence was distributed across different locations due to space shortages, making an expansion necessary. Mayor Castillo asked if the new building included dedicated in-house laboratory spaces to process narcotics and individual forensic tests.

Police Chief Vargas confirmed that the level one crime scene layout featured a dedicated crime lab to allow the department to process evidence in-house.

Mayor Castillo asked if the department possessed that lab processing capacity in the current facility.

Police Chief Vargas responded that the department lacked that capacity, noting that while investigators can perform basic tasks, the current space prevented the unit from achieving the advanced capabilities desired by the crime scene investigations supervisor. Police Chief Vargas shared the mayor's concerns regarding storage limits, stating that the high-priority evidence vault for weapons, narcotics, jewelry, and currency was reaching maximum capacity, which presented a serious concern despite the excellent work of the staff.

Mayor Castillo expressed relief at the design expansion, noting that during his six-year tenure on the command staff at the Broward Sheriff's Office, the evidence unit fell under his control. Mayor Castillo explained that some evidence requires impenetrable concrete reinforcement and specialized doors to prevent unauthorized entry, distinguishing the facility from a standard office building. Mayor Castillo reiterated that the existing police station was vulnerable and not even hurricane-protected, creating a safety risk for personnel ordered to remain on duty during hurricanes.

Mayor Castillo recalled a discussion with the city manager, noting that he was informed that the original police facility was constructed in 1978 using a federal grant program that no longer existed. Mayor Castillo noted that around 1991, the city built the current police headquarters and converted the 1978 building into the fire station. Mayor Castillo noted that the fire station was one of the oldest in the city and currently operated with only two apparatus bays, while the new design provided four bays. Mayor Castillo praised the four-bay expansion as a major improvement for the eastern side of the city, noting it served as the primary station for District 1 alongside the full-time units at Century Village and North Perry Airport.

Mayor Castillo observed that because District 2 lacked an independent fire station, the eastern facilities bore the brunt of the call volume, making a four-bay configuration twice as effective for rapid asset deployment. Mayor Castillo shared his enthusiasm for the layout and design that have been proposed.

Commissioner Good pointed out that while the city operated three stations on the east side, the park near the airport was subject to a five-year lease with Broward County. Commissioner Good asked City Manager Dodge to confirm the lease status and whether the city possessed any long-term guarantee that the county would renew the agreement.

City Manager Dodge noted the county had not indicated non-renewal since the city paid rent. City Manager Dodge explained the lease arrangement had been renewed consistently every five or ten years for the past 45 years.

Commissioner Good countered that the site's future was insecure, recalling a major past dispute where the county threatened to reclaim the property.

City Manager Dodge clarified that the dispute occurred while the city provided regional fire services, noting that the city currently pays combined rent for the fire station, Maxwell Park, and the local recreation center. City Manager Dodge expressed doubt that the county would take steps to shut down an active public safety station.

Commissioner Good recalled a presentation that he delivered years prior, demonstrating that county aviation officials showed little concern for preserving the city fire station. Commissioner Good emphasized that because the city did not own the property, the infrastructure was at risk, meaning the expansion of the station to four bays was a safeguard in case the city was forced to consolidate all east-side rescue services into a single owned location. Commissioner Good urged the city to scout alternative land plots for small future stations to mitigate this vulnerability, and thanked the mayor.

City Manager Dodge explained that it was never intended to be a fire station for the airport; it was intended to serve parts of Hollywood, Pembroke Pines, and Miramar. The city manager noted that because they were situated, they provided the fire service to the airport when asked, noting that the county has to provide fire services. The city manager noted that, alternatively, the county would have to build a fire station for the airport.

Commissioner Good explained that it is not what the city thinks that makes the difference, and therefore, the city is at risk.

The city manager shared that they could research other available locations in the city, noting that a lot of land is not needed for a fire station.

Commissioner Good reiterated that he is simply trying to elevate future possibilities.

Mayor Castillo asked the architect to continue.

Mr. McManus displayed the fire station layouts, showing levels one and two on a single slide plan. Mr. McManus explained that level one featured the four-bay apparatus floor alongside specialized support spaces, including SCBA fill stations, turnout gear lockers, and a decontamination room. Mr. McManus noted the design utilized pressurized airlock vestibules to divide the apparatus bay from the crew quarters to prevent carcinogens and exhaust fumes from contaminating the crew zones.

Mayor Castillo asked if the layout represented two separate buildings.

Mr. McManus clarified that the diagram displayed a two-story building, with the level two fire administration offices stacked directly on top of the ground-floor crew quarters and apparatus bays.

Mayor Castillo acknowledged the clarification, noting he initially missed the level labels and now understood that the design was stacked. Mayor Castillo requested City Manager Dodge's permission to direct the architect and the chiefs to present the layouts to the police and fire labor unions. Mayor Castillo explained that because the union members would work within the structures, they should have an opportunity to review the designs and share their comments. Mayor Castillo remarked, with respect to the current chiefs, that it had been a long time since either of them actively pulled a fire hose or sat in a police car, making feedback from active road personnel important.

City Manager Dodge and the chiefs agreed.

Mr. McManus noted that the spatial needs assessment was compiled by interviewing individual supervisors and unit leaders from every division, including patrol and canine units, and their needs were already integrated into the numbers. Mr. McManus displayed an axonometric elevation slide showing the physical relationship between the parking garage, the blue police facility, and the red fire station, showing the communications tower set back toward the northern park boundary.

Mayor Castillo noted that both facilities were designed as north-facing buildings, noting that this was ideal for integrating energy-efficient and sustainable elements. Mayor Castillo reiterated the commission's strong interest in sustainable, visually attractive architecture, asking the architect to keep that in mind.

Mr. McManus shared that, especially for projects like these that utilize taxpayer dollars, they ensure they are extra responsible and do the right thing with the funds.

Mayor Castillo joked that fiscal frugality should not result in an ugly building.

Mr. McManus agreed, stating the firm took serious responsibility for public tax dollars. Mr. McManus noted that all proposed structures featured flat roofs, noting that they placed the central utility plants on the ground level to avoid placing anything on the roof. Mr. McManus shared that they wanted to avoid items on the roof turning into flying projectiles during a storm. Mr. McManus added that the uncovered top level of the parking garage was engineered to support a future canopy solar array, providing vehicle shade while generating renewable energy.

Mayor Castillo asked about the Pooches in Pines animal assistance. The mayor was informed that they were on the same campus and subsequently asked whether the program would be relocated as well.

Police Chief Vargas responded that they work with pooches in pines, but their program is the animal assistance program, which would not be displaced for too long. The police chief noted that they were integrated into the plan, noting that the current trailer is located on the side of the garage. Police Chief Vargas explained that temporary accommodations would manage the dogs during construction.

Mayor Castillo suggested that the final plan should improve the animal program's accommodations, clarifying that he is not suggesting what they have is insufficient, but noting it could be improved by the year 2056.

Police Chief Vargas joked that there might be robot dogs by that time.

Police Chief Vargas noted that the project was a ground-up collaborative effort initiated under former Chief Justino and was refined by current and past leadership, with every supervisor contributing to the current and anticipated needs of their units.

Mayor Castillo explained that the commission had reviewed the remaining square footage data sheets and thanked the architect for a clear presentation. Mayor Castillo asked if the commissioners had further inquiries.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked when more details about the transition process would be available.

City Manager Dodge replied that the transition would be negotiated with the selected contractor and the plan would be presented to the commission as a formal transition document once a firm was hired.

Commissioner Rodriguez referenced notes in the spatial assessment and asked for confirmation that a wellness and lactation room was included in the layouts.

Mr. McManus confirmed a lactation room was included.

Commissioner Rodriguez noted the inclusion of a soft interview room for children, emphasizing that because individuals often arrive at the police station following traumatic experiences, the design should feel safe for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Mr. McManus shared that he had recently delivered a presentation on trauma-informed design for public safety facilities at a national conference in Nevada. Mr. McManus noted that most people do not go to police stations for fun and noted that different circumstances bring different people to public safety buildings. Mr. McManus explained that the design incorporated decompression zones for emergency dispatchers, emergency operations center staff, and road personnel who faced daily high-stress environments. Mr. McManus noted the importance of training areas.

Commissioner Rodriguez recalled a visit to the county-operated Nancy J. Cotterman Center, noting that their interview rooms were very careful about wall decorations and configurations to put victims at ease, urging the design team to make the locations as comfortable as possible. Commissioner Rodriguez asked if lactation rooms were provided in both the police and fire structures.

Mr. McManus confirmed that both facilities featured wellness quiet rooms equipped with a sink and a small refrigerator.

Commissioner Rodriguez raised a question regarding the future of the existing West District police station, asking what functions it would serve.

Police Chief Vargas clarified that the new facility was engineered to meet all the needs of the police department until 2050. The police chief noted that what to do with the West District station would be up to the city administration. The police chief noted that currently, the west station houses the traffic division and the background selection unit due to a lack of space at the main headquarters. Police Chief Vargas explained that future utilization of the west building was an administrative decision.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if everything would fit in the new building, meaning that the west station would not be necessary.

Chief Vargas agreed and communicated that the station in the west district would not be needed.

Commissioner Rodriguez reiterated the question of what they will do with the West Station.

Mayor Castillo noted that it would be a question that would need to be addressed at another time. Mayor Castillo noted the substation sat within Commissioner Rodriguez's district and stated that options included selling the asset or repurposing it for alternative municipal use, communicating that her input would guide the decision.

Commissioner Rodriguez shared concerns about the space being left unused, especially as it sits between her district and Vice Mayor Hernandez's district. Commissioner Rodriguez emphasized that the location is impactful.

Police Chief Vargas shared that the department is passionate about victims and already provides a lactation room. The police chief praised the victim advocate unit for maximizing their limited current space, agreeing that a modern facility would deliver a better environment for vulnerable children and victims.

Commissioner Rodriguez praised the Nancy J. Cotterman Center and recommended that staff tour the site to study its comfort layouts.

Mayor Castillo asked Commissioner Good for his remaining questions.

Commissioner Good referenced the 1978 and 1991 construction dates and asked if a formal asbestos investigation had been conducted, noting that asbestos abatement could introduce unexpected costs.

City Manager Dodge explained that when the 1978 grant-funded police station was converted into the fire station, asbestos was discovered, and they learned that it was not built to code, forcing a rebuild. City Manager Dodge explained that there are issues with the police building, noting that the issues made demolition cheaper than renovation.

Commissioner Good reiterated that he was asking specifically about asbestos and the costs associated with it.

City Manager Dodge explained that he believes no asbestos remains on the site, as the site is not that old, but shared that they would look at it.

Commissioner Good insisted on knowing for sure, explaining that for an investment of this magnitude, there should be certainty.

City Manager Dodge shared on the record that there is no asbestos.

Commissioner Good joked and asked if the city manager would still be here if they found any in 2056. Commissioner Good reiterated that asbestos can significantly increase costs.

The city manager noted that asbestos remediation at Howard C. Forman

Park in the past has been very expensive.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if asbestos required complete removal before standard demolition or if specialized containment protocols sufficed.

Commissioner Good explained that crews must manually strip, wrap, and remove the materials first.

Mr. McManus explained that there are different types of materials containing asbestos, noting that even if linoleum tiles were clear, the underlying adhesive glues from the 1970s frequently contained high concentrations of non-friable or friable asbestos.

Commissioner Good asked the architect how many design iterations were evaluated before selecting option C-2.2.

Mr. McManus responded that the firm evaluated more than 12 master plan layouts before concluding that option C-2.2 represented the best option.

Commissioner Good asked if option C 2.2 is the most expensive option.

Mr. McManus explained that they did not do a cost estimate because the numbers represented an opinion of probable cost rather than a contractor bid; the square footage baseline remained identical across all structural iterations, meaning variations in building height or orientation did not cause significant cost differences.

Commissioner Good thanked the presenter, and Mayor Castillo noted that no members of the public sought to speak on the workshop presentation.

Mayor Castillo asked City Manager Dodge to outline his administrative recommendations regarding project financing, cost management, value engineering, and public presentation strategies for the upcoming town hall meetings and eventual ballot placement.

City Manager Dodge reported that after reviewing the financial data with staff, the city has some great opportunities. City Manager Dodge explained that while the architect's total estimate stood at 155 million dollars, that figure included 20 million dollars in escalation and contingency costs, leaving baseline construction at an estimated 135 million dollars. City Manager Dodge recommended that the city limit any public bond referendum proposal to a maximum threshold of 80 million dollars in bonds.

Mayor Castillo asked what the 80 million dollars would cover.

City Manager Dodge clarified that the 80 million dollars represented the portion funded through bonds, instructing the assistant city manager to prepare the microphone. City Manager Dodge explained that by the time final designs are completed, contractors are selected, and value engineering is implemented, baseline costs could drop. City Manager Dodge revealed that the city had identified separate revenue opportunities that would generate sufficient cash reserves to bring the value up to $130 million over the multi-year construction timeline, protecting residents from unnecessary borrowing. City Manager Dodge explained that the project cost would remain whole, but the voter-approved debt portion would be capped at 80 million, noting these resources were unavailable during the previous public bond vote.

City Manager Dodge explained that the cost of construction is only increasing and that the city needs to take action now. City Manager Dodge noted that the city needs a police station, specifically the technology and the infrastructure that come along with it. The city manager reiterated that his recommendation is to propose an amount of no more than $80 million.

Mayor Castillo asked if City Manager Dodge supported amending the pending resolution to replace the $155 million ballot figure with the $80 million cap.

City Manager Dodge clarified that the total project should reflect the true cost, but the specific legal ballot question authorizing public borrowing should be set at a maximum of 80 million dollars.

Mayor Castillo asked City Attorney Goren what amendment is necessary for the ballot language to ensure that voters are not confused. Mayor Castillo asked what would need to be done to change the draft bond resolution to change the number to 80 million.

City Attorney Goren explained that the $155 million is already in the ballot language, and it would be the amount by which voters authorize the city to borrow. The city attorney explained that if the commission wished to change the maximum limit to $80 million, then the bond language would change to replace the $155 million value with $80 million.

Mayor Castillo reiterated that this was also his understanding and asked the city manager if he was recommending that the ballot language be changed to no more than $80 million in bonds.

City Manager Dodge noted that this was correct, but wants it to be noted that the scope of the project is not being minimized. The city manager noted that the $155 million would still be the total cost, but the remaining funds outside of the $80 million would be sourced using other city resources. The city manager asserted that under this proposal, the residents would only need to be concerned with the $80 million figure. City Manager Dodge noted that Assistant City Manager Chung would present slides illustrating the tax impact differences between borrowing targets of 155 million, 100 million, and 80 million dollars.

Vice Mayor Hernandez stated that he had remained silent to absorb the data, but held strong opinions. Vice Mayor Hernandez noted that resolution item number one simply expressed support for the administration's recommendation that the public safety complex was necessary for the city, which was separate from the formal bond authorization in item number two. The vice mayor asked for legal confirmation that this was the case.

City Attorney Goren confirmed that the description was legally accurate, stating that item number one represented a collaborative endorsement of the project need, independent of the financing mechanism in item number two.

Vice Mayor Hernandez thanked the staff and explained that while the complex was desperately needed, he was completely opposed to discussing or authorizing a public bond referendum at the current time. Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that he could choose to register his vote as legally present rather than cast a negative vote to prevent the mayor from voting no as well. Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that due to personal scheduling conflicts, he had been unable to meet with the architects before the meeting and was scheduled to review the layouts with them on Thursday. Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that the state legislature has still not passed property tax reforms, leaving the future of the city's municipal finances highly uncertain.

Vice Mayor Hernandez stressed that the country was experiencing an affordability crisis, with gas prices up 40 percent and basic goods inflating rapidly, making it irresponsible to approve a bond resolution on this night without more information. Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that he has faith in the architects and administration and did not want to remove the project from the strategic plan because the city needs it, noting that he also wanted it to be a public safety complex and not a police station because the older Station 69 is next door. The vice mayor noted that fixed-income seniors, particularly the 13,000 residents in Century Village and communities like Hollybrook, were struggling under doubled condo maintenance fees.

Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that these elderly residents were relying on their adult children to afford monthly fees and could not bear additional tax pressures. Vice Mayor Hernandez reiterated that the complex is necessary, but to him, it is irresponsible to forward it to a bond before meeting with the architects and having the town halls. Vice Mayor Hernandez noted that the commission was the first in the state to formally oppose Florida Power and Light's recent rate hike, which inflated local electric bills by 240 to 300 dollars annually. Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that newer home buyers with property valuations near 900,000 dollars would feel it. Vice Mayor Hernandez announced that he would vote in favor of item number one to affirm the structural need but would abstain from voting on item number two to avoid killing the process entirely while refusing to endorse the bonds, as there is an affordability crisis.

The vice mayor shared that his stance is not a reflection on the work that City Manager Dodge does, sharing his admiration for the city manager and his team. Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that he is a yes on one and either a no or an abstention on two.

City Manager Dodge requested that Assistant City Manager Chung present the tax impact data, noting that an 80-million-dollar target would demonstrate a minimal financial impact on residents while preserving vital life-safety services.

Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong introduced herself and presented the tax impact models based on a 30-year fixed-rate bond at 4.63 percent issued in two separate series staggered two years apart, assuming a 3 percent taxable value annual increase.

Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong explained that for a single-family home reflecting the median city taxable value of 217,400 dollars, a $155 million bond would cost the owner a total of 2,914 dollars over 30 years, averaging 97 dollars annually, 8 dollars monthly, or 27 cents daily. Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong explained that a 100-million-dollar debt tier would cost that same median homeowner 1,873 dollars over 30 years, averaging 62 dollars annually, 5 dollars monthly, or 17 cents daily. Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong shared that the recommended 80-million-dollar debt would cost the median homeowner 1,499 dollars over 30 years, averaging 50 dollars annually, 4.14 dollars monthly, or 14 cents daily.

Vice Mayor Hernandez sought clarification, communicating that these are average numbers that these figures represented median metrics, meaning an equal number of properties above and below the 217,400-dollar mark, with some homesteaded owners paying nothing.

Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong confirmed that statement and reviewed the median condo taxable value model, which stood at 122,000 dollars. Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong detailed that under a 155-million-dollar bond, the median condo owner would pay 1,629 dollars over 30 years, averaging 54 dollars annually, 5 dollars monthly, or 15 cents daily. Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong communicated that a 100-million-dollar bond would cost the condo owner 1,051 dollars over 30 years, averaging 35 dollars annually, 3 dollars monthly, or 10 cents daily. Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong explained that the $80 million bond would cost the median condo owner 841 dollars over 30 years, averaging 28 dollars annually, 2 dollars monthly, or 8 cents daily. Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong announced that the city had developed an online tax calculator that would allow residents to import their exact taxable value from the Broward County Property Appraiser website to calculate their individual exposure, noting the tool would go live once the commission reached a consensus on a specific bond dollar target, providing an example.

Commissioner Good requested clarification regarding the two-series issuance structure, asking if that means it would be some now, some later.

Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong explained that for a 100-million-dollar target, the city would issue an initial 50 million dollars in year one and the remaining 50 million in year three because the project could not physically expend the entire sum within the first 24 months.

Commissioner Good asked if the figures in the presented table show whether the funding was all done at one time.

Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong said that the presentation shows that if it were done in two parts, for instance, year one issuing $50 million and then again in year three.

Commissioner Good shared that he understands but is trying to grasp how the numbers in the presented table show two series.

Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong explained that under an 80-million-dollar target, the city would issue 40 million dollars in year one, costing the median homeowner 26 dollars, which would adjust to 25 dollars. Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong explained that in year three, the city would issue the remaining 40 million dollars, causing the homeowner's annual tax line to jump to 52 dollars.

Mayor Castillo asked if there was a typo in the year-two column for the 80-million-dollar projection.

Commissioner Good noted the difference likely resulted from a rounding error.

Commissioner Good asked City Manager Dodge a policy question, noting that if the project required up to 155 million dollars and the bond was capped at 80 million, the city was forcing itself to supply 75 million dollars. Commissioner Good questioned what specific capital projects within the broader strategic plan were being sacrificed or canceled to harvest that 75 million dollars, noting that past strategic plan initiatives had already been stalled due to a lack of funding. Commissioner Good asked what specific new revenue streams were being generated to create that cash match.

City Manager Dodge offered to conduct individual one-on-one meetings with each commissioner to detail the revenue elements, guaranteeing that no funds would be diverted from the strategic plan for city roads and parks. The city manager noted that the funds are additional dollars that he expects the city to have, emphasizing that he would like to share that information with the commissioners.

Commissioner Rodriguez countered that the active strategic plan was reduced to a 60-million-dollar tier of prioritized items, leaving a massive secondary list of unprioritized neighborhood projects completely unfunded. Commissioner Rodriguez explained that the 75 million dollars intended for the public safety match could theoretically be used to complete the unprioritized projects. Commissioner Rodriguez shared that she wants to know what the new sources of revenue are, even if it needs to be in a one-on-one meeting. Commissioner Rodriguez recalled that past revenue assumptions, such as the sale of the affordable housing unit, had completely fallen through, emphasizing that there is no guarantee that the $75 million will be secured.

Commissioner Rodriguez warned against capping a bond at 80 million dollars based on speculative funds, noting that sudden price increases or high gas prices could exhaust city reserves and force the commission to return to the public for a secondary bond. Commissioner Rodriguez shared that she wants to know exactly where the $75 million is coming from, what unprioritized projects could be funded instead, and whether a buffer could be implemented, such as using the $100 million bond option instead. Commissioner Rodriguez noted that a $100 million bond target might provide a safer cushion for the city, explaining that although she is protective of taxpayer funds, public safety is priceless, and a hurricane-hardened command center is important.

Vice Mayor Hernandez agreed with Commissioner Rodriguez’s analysis but reiterated that he lacked sufficient information to place the item on the ballot tonight. The vice mayor noted that the state legislature ignored regulating property insurance despite it being a big expense that leads to more foreclosures than the inability to pay. Vice Mayor Hernandez warned that a rumored 500,000-dollar homestead exemption proposal being discussed in Tallahassee could devastate local government finances and eliminate the funding required to maintain police and fire payrolls. Vice Mayor Hernandez urged the commission to delay the bond vote and focus strictly on the town hall schedule, noting that bond counsel Jerry Ford could present alternative interest rate models to the public during those sessions.

The vice mayor reiterated that the public safety complex is necessary, but that he needs more time to decide given the affordability crisis. Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that the state legislature is not a good partner to cities and ignores the state's 430 cities and 67 counties, arguing for a deferral.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked Vice Mayor Hernandez to clarify whether his opposition targeted the specific dollar value of the bond or the concept of utilizing a bond as the primary funding method, noting that she has been unable to identify any other alternative methods to build the structure. Commissioner Rodriguez explained that other methods, including a public-private agreement, were unviable because they required pledging future tax revenues, ultimately increasing local tax burdens. Commissioner Rodriguez explained that she is trying to understand how he could acknowledge that it is necessary and yet not want to fund it.

Vice Mayor Hernandez responded that he wants to complete his meetings with the architects and administration to evaluate the likely state tax reforms before locking the city into a specific general obligation bond format.

PRESENTATION BY ADVISOR JERRY FORD

Mayor Castillo thanked the commissioners and the presenters and called Advisor Jerry Ford to the podium to clarify municipal financing structures. Mayor Castillo asked Mr. Ford to confirm whether a revenue bond typically carries a higher interest rate than a general obligation bond.

Mr. Ford confirmed the Mayor’s statements.

Mayor Castillo shared that he believes that is because the bonds are processed, those behind it see an obligation on the public as having a greater reliability than an obligation that a city or a county commission chooses to take upon itself. The mayor asked Mr. Ford if that was correct.

Jerry Ford introduced himself as a representative of Ford Associates, serving as the city's municipal advisor. Mr. Ford confirmed that general obligation bonds have less elastic revenue, noting that there is more stability in the ad valorem revenue stream compared to volatile utility or communication service taxes.

Mayor Castillo recalled the 2005 municipal bond election, noting he was the sole current commissioner on the dais who voted to place that issue before the public. Mayor Castillo noted the 2005 commission approved the measure unanimously, and the public passed it by a narrow 52 percent to 48 percent margin during a prosperous economic era free from current conditions. Mayor Castillo noted that Pembroke Pines had also just won the All-America designation and had changed mayors.

Mayor Castillo recalled that his initial doubts were resolved by former City Attorney Sam Goren, who explained that a bond vote was not the commission voting to tax residents but rather authorization allowing residents to decide whether to tax themselves. Mayor Castillo explained that as mayor, his mandate was to represent the collective interest of the entire population, which is different from the district-specific perspectives of his colleagues. Mayor Castillo reiterated that he would not proceed with the project without a unanimous commission endorsement, warning that entering public town halls with a divided dais would doom the initiative. Mayor Castillo suggested that if members required additional time to review the financing details, the second resolution could be deferred.

Vice Mayor Hernandez stated he did not want to act as an impediment to progress, but confirmed he would not cast a positive vote on the bond resolution tonight.

Mayor Castillo stated that voting one's conscience did not constitute an impediment. Mayor Castillo argued that it was illogical to invite the public to town hall meetings to discuss a project without presenting a unified, clear funding proposal. The mayor explained that he wants to separate the issues so everyone understands, describing it as a legal reality that cannot be ignored. Mayor Castillo noted that the two charter questions have to be done by ordinance, meaning they must be read twice. Mayor Castillo noted that, given the city's recent past, if they are seeking to talk to the public about money, there must be unanimity.

Mayor Castillo explained that if the commission is comfortable with number one, they can begin speaking to the public about the need for a bond and defer number two until everyone is comfortable. The mayor noted that if the commission is not comfortable with the first item, then they should vote no, and it should be removed from the strategic plan. Mayor Castillo noted that some degree of borrowing is required to complete the project; therefore, not wanting to consider bonds means the project cannot be completed. The mayor shared that he believes that the commission made the right decision in 2025 when it asked the residents for their opinion.

Mayor Castillo noted that the city was going to contribute 60 or 66 million dollars in city funds to leverage what they borrow. Mayor Castillo shared that the goal in 2025 was to bolster the city after a decade of inaction, explaining that not having a capital plan continuously over time generates an accumulated mess. The mayor affirmed that he believes that this was the right policy decision and that the commission should proceed with the project, or else they would have done nothing for the city.

Mayor Castillo thanked the city manager for proposing the $80 million change and shared his respect for his last-minute suggestion. The mayor reaffirmed that if the commission needs additional time to consider the last-minute proposal, they should have it, but the town halls still begin on Thursday. Mayor Castillo explained that he needs to know if there is an openness to consider placing something on the ballot. The mayor explained that with the second item, they are only trying to pass a draft of what it could look like in August, noting that it's necessary as the commission is unable to discuss a subject when it has been placed on the ballot. Mayor Castillo noted that the city only gets one opportunity with the bond resolution as opposed to two, so they need to give residents a chance to give feedback and input on the matter.

Mayor Castillo once more asked the commission, before even considering one or two, if they wanted the topic to be discussed at the town hall meetings or not. The mayor reiterated that the consensus needs to be unanimous, as they are discussing an expensive topic, and asked the commissioners to share their opinions on whether they want the public safety complex discussed and whether they want to inform the residents that one of the ways to fund it is through a bond of $80 million.

Vice Mayor Hernandez agreed and shared that he prefers that during the town halls, they provide residents with a thorough explanation of why the public safety complex is necessary and why bonds are the only realistic way of financing it.

Mayor Castillo asked if the vice mayor would like to authorize staff to give their presentations.

Vice Mayor Hernandez asked if that meant voting yes on number one.

Mayor Castillo responded that he did not mean number one; he meant simply allowing the administration to present to residents how the project would look.

Vice Mayor Hernandez agreed and commented that he wants the administration to present the information to every audience.

Commissioner Rodriguez agreed as well and commented that she does not want the bond amount to be discussed until the commission can agree on what that amount should be. Commissioner Rodriguez shared that they should inform residents that they are looking at bonds as an option because it is the most viable option, but does not want residents to fixate on a price that the commission may change.

Commissioner Good agreed and noted that the public needs to be informed and the commission needs to hear their comments.

Commissioner Schwartz explained that he is comfortable removing the provision in item one, section two, on page two that addresses funding of the safety complex to allow the public to see the presentation on bonds and CB&A.

Mayor Castillo asked what CB&A is.

Mr. Ford explained that CB&A means Covenant to Budget and Appropriate, and it secures the bonds with all legally available non-ad valorem revenues.

The mayor asked if it was still a bond.

Mr. Ford responded affirmatively.

Commissioner Schwartz shared that the CB&A can be done at the dais with public input, while the GO bond is done at the ballot box. Commissioner Schwartz explained that he agrees with Commissioner Rodriguez that the city is not in a position to pay for the entire amount; therefore, there needs to be public input to see how comfortable residents are with the city sourcing financing.

Mayor Castillo restated the question, asking Commissioner Schwartz if he is all right with the town hall meetings, including discussion on the public safety complex and the possibility of bonds to pay for the project.

Commissioner Schwartz explained that he is very comfortable with informing the public about the need for a public safety complex, but noted that it does not have to be paid for with bonds.

Mayor Castillo asked what other ways the project could be funded.

Commissioner Schwartz explained that Mr. Ford will cover that in his presentation, but expressed that it would be a mistake to limit funding opportunities solely to bonds, sharing that the public should be informed of those other opportunities as well.

Mayor Castillo asked the city manager if there was another funding source other than bonds.

The city manager responded that the only other option is a revenue issue, where the city is required to raise taxes to pay the debt. The city manager noted that while it can be done through a revenue issue, it will cost the taxpayers more money.

Mayor Castillo noted that either way, taxes are increasing and shared that the city would also pay more interest that way. The mayor asked Mr. Ford for confirmation.

Commissioner Schwartz commented that it is unfair to say that borrowing is the only option, noting that the city can also sell its assets and property.

Mayor Castillo asked Commissioner Schwartz what assets he would like to sell. Mayor Castillo commented that he does not believe the commission is ready to proceed.

Commissioner Rodriguez countered that the commission is ready to have the discussion and can simply address all potential funding sources and options. Commissioner Rodriguez noted that while she does not believe that there are other funding options, in theory, there could be. Commissioner Rodriguez noted that there is consensus and that the commission could present that they are open to looking at all funding options, which is theoretically true.

Mayor Castillo shared that he does not believe a town hall can be structured without a clear proposal, noting that it would become gibberish. Mayor Castillo explained that if consensus is impossible, the public safety topic should be removed from the town halls, and the focus should be on the two charter questions.

Commissioner Rodriguez countered that abandoning the public safety discussion was unacceptable.

Mayor Castillo shared that he still believes that the commission should proceed with resolution one while deferring the second.

Commissioner Rodriguez explained that Resolution One only mentions vague funding, so they can discuss it without addressing the bond issue.

Mayor Castillo agreed and reminded the commission that if anyone voted no on resolution one, he would as well. The mayor asked Mr. Ford to proceed with his presentation.

Mr. Ford, representing Ford Associates as the city's municipal advisors, stated that all of the financing alternatives under consideration are forms of bonds and represent debt that must be borrowed from investors and repaid periodically. Mr. Ford noted that regardless of whether an instrument is called a general obligation issue, a covenant to budget and appropriate bond, a revenue bond, or a lease revenue bond, it functions as debt. Mr. Ford explained that any debt making use of property taxes as a repayment source for a period exceeding twelve months must receive voter approval through a referendum. Mr. Ford noted that a general obligation bond referendum represents an obligation on the property tax base where the city levies the necessary amounts to pay off the debt.

Mr. Ford shared that general obligation bonds and stated that their security source that is the property tax base paid directly by property owners. Mr. Ford noted that investors consistently view general obligation bonds as the highest quality credit available within a given community, which results in lower interest rates. Mr. Ford explained that general obligation bonds require a referendum and provide a new, completely independent revenue stream that does not disrupt existing municipal revenues or operations. Mr. Ford noted that general obligation bonds carry no non-appropriation risk because a city lacks the legal ability to stop levying the property tax or halt payments, which would constitute a default leading to legal remedies against the city.

Mr. Ford noted that while he is not a lawyer, he believes general obligation bonds do not carry exposure to property tax reform due to the state's non-impairment laws, which would keep the voter decision intact and ensure the bonds continue to be paid.

City Attorney Goren confirmed that, from a legal standpoint, a general obligation bond constitutes a covenant with the bondholders, and the state would not be able to legally impair that obligation to pay.

Mayor Castillo commented that he had not heard of any discussion by the state legislature that would disrupt or hinder cities from issuing debt on bonds, and asked if anyone else had.

City Attorney Goren noted that while he had not seen any legislation or proposal that would impair the city, the description Mr. Ford is offering is that if bonds are issued, a protected relationship would be created regarding the bonds. The city attorney reiterated that he does not see anything that would impair those rights going forward.

Mayor Castillo acknowledged the city attorney’s point and directed Mr. Ford to continue.

Mr. Ford noted that general obligation bonds provide the lowest cost of financing among the options presented. Mr. Ford recalled that the city utilized this method during the 2005 referendum and subsequent bond issuances in 2005 and 2007. Mr. Ford explained that under federal tax law, a city must possess a reasonable expectation that all bond proceeds will be expended within thirty-six months. Mr. Ford added that spending the proceeds within twenty-four months yields federal tax advantages by exempting the city from paying arbitrage rebates to the federal government on interest earned. Mr. Ford noted that this federal requirement was the reason for the two-year staggering proposed in the current financial model.

Mr. Ford discussed the second option, which is a bond secured by legally available non-ad valorem revenues of the city. Mr. Ford explained that the definition of legally available revenues excludes funding for public safety and other essential operations, which currently rely on ad valorem taxes to cover expenses alongside non-ad valorem taxes, which support the remainder. Mr. Ford defined a covenant to budget and appropriate (CB&A) pledge as a commitment to place the non-ad valorem revenues in the budget each year and appropriate those funds at the appropriate times. Mr. Ford explained that these documents include an anti-dilution test requiring the city to maintain non-ad valorem revenues at a certain level. Mr. Ford noted that missing a payment under a CB&A bond does not relieve the city of its obligation for the remaining years of the bond issue.

Mr. Ford explained that the estimated financing cost for a CB&A bond is slightly higher than that of a general obligation bond. Mr. Ford noted that the city maintains a high double-A2 rating from Moody's on the general obligation side and would likely receive an equal or slightly lower rating for a non-ad valorem issue, unless tax reform changes the conditions. Mr. Ford explained that a non-ad valorem bond would likely price roughly five one-hundredths of a percent higher than general obligation bonds. Mr. Ford referenced a memo sent by his associate indicating that the difference is approximately $30,000 a year. Mr. Ford calculated that based on the original $155 million project figure, the present value of every one-hundredth of a percent is about $113,000, meaning the total interest rate difference over thirty years amounts to between $500,000 and $600,000.

Mr. Ford noted that if property tax reform passes, the city would receive fewer ad valorem revenues, which would force the administration to shift expenses currently paid by property taxes over to non-ad valorem revenues. Mr. Ford observed that this shift would create additional stress on non-ad valorem revenues since they do not represent a new source of funds.

Mayor Castillo asked if that means that this is the perfect opportunity for a general obligation bond.

Mr. Ford responded that what the mayor describes is a policy decision, but if property tax reform occurs before the city issues the bonds, the pricing differential between non-ad valorem bonds and general obligation bonds would likely increase. Mr. Ford noted that a city can also choose to issue a revenue bond secured by a pledge of specific non-ad valorem revenue streams rather than all available non-ad valorem funds.

Vice Mayor Hernandez asked for clarification regarding the timeline and impact of potential property tax reform being discussed in Tallahassee, noting that a constitutional amendment placed on the November ballot would require a 60% vote to pass and would likely phase in piece by piece over a decade. The vice mayor asked how it would affect costs if the city moved forward with a bond issuance before the property tax exemptions began phasing in.

Mr. Ford stated that he could not provide a definitive legal answer, deferring to the City Attorney, but noted that if a referendum was already in place, the hope is that the non-impairment clauses would protect the transaction.

City Attorney Goren noted that he is a lawyer, not a magician, and cannot predict the future or know exactly what will happen with the proposed homestead tax exemption in the Florida Constitution. City Attorney Goren shared that he cannot predict how a constitutional change would affect future drawdowns of a bond transaction.

Vice Mayor Hernandez noted that the city could find itself in a scenario where voters are voting on both the city referendum and the state property tax amendment on the very same ballot in November, and asked how that overlap could potentially impact the borrowing interest rates.

Mayor Castillo noted that a general obligation bond does not draw from regular tax revenues but instead appears as a separate line item on a property owner's bill, moving directly from the taxpayer to the tax collector and then to the bond company without the city touching the funds. Mayor Castillo explained that the city only becomes involved if it passes a revenue issue that comes out of municipal funds or requires a tax increase. The mayor explained that the city manager may have to raise the millage to pay the bill if property tax reform passes.

Commissioner Rodriguez explained that the part that matters is that it is on a separate line from property taxes, noting that the state legislature is only considering property tax reform. Commissioner Rodriguez shared that a GO bond is a separate line on the bill that is not affected by homestead tax reform.

Mr. Ford confirmed that it is on a different line as its own item, explaining that it goes from the tax collector to the city, which then makes payments on the bond.

Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that, according to his understanding, it affects the borrowing interest rates even if the bond sits on a separate line item, meaning home-owning taxpayers could still end up paying more for the project. Vice Mayor Hernandez emphasized the need for clarity that property tax reform, if passed, could impact the interest rates the city pays.

Mr. Ford explained that he is not certain if what the vice mayor explained is true. Mr. Ford explained that if homestead exemptions increased and caused the city's overall tax base to decline, the millage rate required to fund the general obligation bond would automatically rise to the amount necessary to make the payment.

The mayor noted that this covers pledge revenues and asked for details on lease purchase.

Mr. Ford explained that a lease purchase can be done through a lease revenue bond or a certificate of participation (COPs). Mr. Ford explained that this represents the most expensive financing option available to the Commission. Mr. Ford explained that this structure contains no pledge on any specific revenue stream but is secured by the lease payments made by the city to investors and by the building itself. Mr. Ford noted that it is subject to annual appropriation, meaning the Commission must actively vote to budget and appropriate the funds each year. Mr. Ford explained that the city would have the legal right to walk away from the payments at the start of any budget year without defaulting, but doing so would force the city to give up the public safety facilities. Mr. Ford explained that due to this annual appropriation risk, it carries the highest financing cost.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if options such as special assessments and public-private partnerships were omitted from the presentation because they are less favorable to the city.

Mr. Ford agreed that public-private partnerships are generally ill-suited for this type of project because they typically require a revenue-generating stream to succeed.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked for examples of what that revenue-generating stream would be.

Mr. Ford explained that good examples are toll highways and parking districts. Mr. Ford explained that because the proposed public safety complex does not produce revenue, a general obligation bond remains the lowest-cost option for the city.

Commissioner Schwartz noted that there was a memo provided by Mr. Ford's firm late last week, which referenced $30,000 per year based on an uptick in the interest associated with CB&A. Commissioner Schwartz noted that since City Manager Dodge recommended cutting the bond amount roughly in half to $80 million, the additional annual interest cost would likely be half, totaling around $450,000 over thirty years. Commissioner Schwartz estimated that it would require a total payment of $9.5 million a year, costing $285 million, which, when halved, would cost an additional $35 to $40 million of total debt, equating to roughly $120 million over thirty years, and asked if his math was correct.

Mr. Ford explained that he could not follow Commissioner Schwartz's logic, noting that it is more than 50%.

Commissioner Schwartz explained that the $30,000 a year referenced in the memo is $900,000 for the 30 years. Now that the value is being halved, the additional cost and total interest would also generally be cut in half.

Mr. Ford clarified that the present value of a single basis point on a smaller $80 million issue is approximately $58,500. Mr. Ford calculated that multiplying that figure by the five-basis-point differential results in between $250,000 and $300,000. Mr. Ford emphasized that changing the numbers does not alter the fact that a general obligation bond creates an independent revenue stream that does not displace existing revenue streams. Mr. Ford explained that choosing whether to displace current revenues is a policy decision for the Commission to make.

Commissioner Schwartz clarified that the policy decision is choosing between what's at risk with the capital impacts of CB&A and the other options. Commissioner Schwartz argued that the minor interest increase is minuscule compared to the risk of halting other city projects if non-ad valorem revenues are used.

Mr. Ford explained that what is not factored in is whether the stress placed on non-ad valorem revenues as a result of property tax reform will increase the differential and interest rates.

Commissioner Schwartz noted that a town hall presentation cannot simply give a one-line answer that non-ad valorem financing costs more, because the calculation must factor in property tax reform, local capital project impacts, and broader financial risks.

Mayor Castillo requested that Mr. Ford put the slide ranking the financing options back on the screen.

Mayor Castillo asked if, without a doubt, a general obligation bond is the lowest cost option for the taxpayer, followed by a covenant to budget and appropriate bond as the second least expensive, a pledged revenue bond as the third, and a lease purchase as the most expensive.

Mr. Ford shared that this is correct in today’s market but does not make projections for the future.

Mayor Castillo asked if it is true that under any scenario, proceeding with a CB&A would cost the taxpayers more money as well as expose the city to more risk than the other options, given the current atmosphere.

Mr. Ford responded that in Pembroke Pines, it would cost the taxpayers more money and expose the city to more risk in the current economic atmosphere.

Mayor Castillo asked City Manager Dodge if the minimized cost to the taxpayers and reduced risk to the city were the reasons he recommended a general obligation bond over the other financing models.

City Manager Dodge confirmed that this was the reason and shared that he had no doubt regarding the recommendation, based on his extensive experience working with Mr. Ford on general obligation debt.

Mayor Castillo thanked Mr. Ford for his presentation.

Commissioner Good asked Mr. Ford to explain how a limit on available non-ad valorem revenues impacts a city's capacity to secure a sizable revenue bond in the market.

Mr. Ford replied that if the city attempted to fund a project with unlimited non-ad valorem resources, they would perform an anti-dilution test against the budget. Mr. Ford explained that the test calculates the exact ad valorem resources used for operations and subtracts the non-ad valorem revenues legally required to fund public safety payroll. Mr. Ford noted that the remaining net number must cover the projected debt service by a specific factor to determine how much the city can legally borrow, which is always a much larger number than what a city should borrow.

Commissioner Good commented that the bond amount is predicated on the city's available funds and noted that the city does not currently have clear data on that capacity.

Mr. Ford confirmed that his firm has not run the analysis on the city's non-ad valorem funds recently, although they could.

Commissioner Good asked City Manager Dodge if there is the capacity to use non-ad valorem revenue to fund a bond this size. Commissioner Good clarified that he wants to know the city's capacity to use non-ad valorem revenue to pay for a bond, asking how big a bond the city could get with its available revenue.

City Manager Dodge explained that funding a project of this scale through non-ad valorem revenues would create a significant problem. City Manager Dodge explained that he does not know how the city would fund that, and the administration would be forced to raise the tax to generate the necessary cash.

Commissioner Good explained that CB&A and pledge revenue are non-ad valorem and asked for those two options: what non-ad valorem money the city has available and how big a bond it can result in.

City Manager Dodge explained that he understands the question, but shared that he does not know what millage rate the city would have to raise in order to generate that, sharing that the city does not have that surplus money.

Mayor Castillo clarified that Commissioner Good is asking what source of non-ad valorem revenue can be pledged against the bond issue.

Commissioner Good noted that the options are being provided but reiterated that the city must run a mathematical analysis to determine if there is enough non-ad valorem revenue to leverage a $50 million or $60 million bond.

The city manager explained that there is no available non-ad valorem money, explaining that going back to $80 million means available resources are being used to make up the difference.

Commissioner Good explained that there is a capacity issue and noted that as the availability is consumed, the bond rating changes.

Mr. Ford agreed that leverage is a factor.

Commissioner Good commented that this is a bigger issue than simply listing the options.

City Manager Dodge expressed serious concern regarding the upcoming town hall meetings, noting that the city is currently at a loss for what to tell the public regarding a viable funding plan.

Mayor Castillo reiterated that the city cannot have a conversation with taxpayers about a project without a plan for how taxpayers can help. Mayor Castillo noted that the Commission could pass resolution number one to explain that a new public safety complex is urgently required to uphold the health, safety, and welfare of the residents. Mayor Castillo suggested that the presentation could then introduce a general obligation bond option that would cost an average homeowner $50 per year and a condo owner $25 per year. Mayor Castillo noted that the presentation can explain how the City Manager discovered a creative way to use internal city resources to cover the difference, combining city cash with an $80 million bond to deliver a $155 million complex.

Mayor Castillo added that the town hall should remind residents that delaying necessary capital projects drives up construction costs and interest rates, as seen over the past year, when interest rates jumped by thirty to fifty basis points. Mayor Castillo warned that if rates continue to climb to seven or eight percent, the city will no longer be able to hold this conversation because the project will become completely unaffordable for the residents. Mayor Castillo explained that the city missed its previous window of opportunity, but the public safety need remains unchanged.

Mayor Castillo argued that the final choice belongs to the residents, and they should be allowed to decide. Mayor Castillo asserted that entering a town hall without consensus on a financing proposal is completely untenable. Mayor Castillo commended the city administration for organizing the agenda to feature the architect's presentation, followed by a legislative finding in Resolution No. 1. Mayor Castillo noted that Resolution No. 1 allows the Commission to formally agree with the City Manager, Police Chief, and Fire Chief on the necessity of the project, a step that was not done previously. The mayor explained that the second one was about a draft of how the city would do it to give residents a chance to provide feedback before the final version in August. Mayor Castillo noted that since there is no consensus on the draft ballot language in item number two, the Commission should proceed with a vote on resolution number one. Mayor Castillo called on City Attorney Goren to read resolution number one into the record.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

RESOLUTIONS:

1. MOTION TO ADOPT PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO. 2026-R-09.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION NO. 2026-R-09 IS A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF PEMBROKE PINES, FLORIDA SUPPORTING THE CITY MANAGER AND THE POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS' RECOMMENDATION TO DEVELOP, CONSTRUCT, AND FUND A POLICE-FIRE PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX; PROVIDING FOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

A motion was made by Commissioner Good Jr., seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to adopt as amended Proposed Resolution No. 2026-R-09. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 5 - Mayor Castillo, Vice Mayor Hernandez, Commissioner Good Jr., Commissioner Rodriguez, and Commissioner Schwartz

Nay 0

Enactment No: 3948

A motion was made by Commissioner Schwartz, seconded by Mayor Castillo, to amend Proposed Resolution No. 2026-R-09 by inserting the word "future" before the word "funding" in the fifth Whereas clause and Section 2. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 5 - Mayor Castillo, Vice Mayor Hernandez, Commissioner Good Jr., Commissioner Rodriguez, and Commissioner Schwartz

Nay 0

Enactment No: 3948

PRIOR TO THE 1ST VOTE BEING TAKEN:

City Attorney Goren read the title of Proposed Resolution number 2026-R-09 into the record.

Mayor Castillo requested City Attorney Goren to perform a full reading of the body of the resolution.

City Attorney Goren read the full text of Resolution Number 2026-R-09. City Attorney Goren noted that the resolution would become effective immediately upon passage and opened the floor for public comment.

In section 2, Commissioner Schwartz proposed an edit to insert the word future before the word funding in both the fifth clause and section two of the text.

Mayor Castillo seconded the amendment and called for public comment.

Ryan Reiter, a resident of Fort Lauderdale, spoke in support of public safety and asked the Commission to consider that, although it failed, House Joint Resolution 203 aimed to protect public safety budgets from ad valorem cuts.

Mayor Castillo replied that HJR 203 was legislative fluff, explaining that the legislature is looking to cut public safety funds relied on by police and fire. The mayor explained that HJR 203 becomes a hollow resolution when ad valorem dollars are eliminated. Mayor Castillo shared that he is not surprised that it failed because it lacked substance, as it is not feasible.

Mr. Reiter responded that he brought it up in the event that the special session impacts public safety.

The mayor responded that he is glad Mr. Reiter brought it up, as it is something that the public has to realize. Mayor Castillo warned that residents should be aware of empty promises, noting that there are no cities or sheriff's departments in the state of Florida that believe they can easily operate without ad valorem dollars.

Mr. Reiter explained that if the city increased the budget and a similar resolution were passed, it would be safeguarded.

Mayor Castillo, expressing his skepticism, explained that the rhetoric compiled into a statute that, if ever passed, could not realistically be actualized. Mayor Castillo explained that he does not know how that would even work and that a judge would likely agree. Mayor Castillo thanked Mr. Reiter for bringing the matter forward.

Scott Barnett, a resident of Pembroke Pines, voiced disappointment that the public safety complex has been kicked down the road by previous administrations for over a decade. Mr. Barnett reminded the commission that they have a fiscal responsibility to the community to get the best deal possible. Mr. Barnett noted that he has a 1.75% 15-year mortgage because he acted when the opportunity presented itself. Mr. Barnett noted that last year, when the rates were down, that was the best opportunity, thanking the mayor for bringing up the issue in the first place.

Mr. Barnett reiterated that no one has been discussing what needs to be discussed and asked what solutions the city would implement to manage overcrowding, issues with evidence storage, and to meet the department's needs. Mr. Barnett explained that should the measure not pass, public safety departments will still need relief, asking what the contingency plan is.

Mayor Castillo noted that the Commission would have to figure out a solution, noting that should the city pursue a public safety complex again, it would cost more. The mayor explained that maybe in the future the city will have a more favorable interest rate, but stressed that he does not know. The mayor affirmed that, should resolution one pass, the commission will continue to work on it until they reach an answer that serves the city.

PRIOR TO THE 2ND VOTE BEING TAKEN:

Mayor Castillo asked for a discussion on the amended item.

2. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE DRAFT OF A RESOLUTION WHICH WOULD SUBMIT TO REFERENDUM A QUESTION TO THE REGISTERED ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF PEMBROKE PINES AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF NOT EXCEEDING $155 MILLION DOLLARS OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Hernandez, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to defer the item. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 5 - Mayor Castillo, Vice Mayor Hernandez, Commissioner Good Jr., Commissioner Rodriguez, and Commissioner Schwartz

Nay 0

PRIOR TO THE VOTE BEING TAKEN:

Mayor Castillo called for a motion to defer item number two.

Vice Mayor Hernandez asked the commission if there was a particular date they would like the resolution to return.

Commissioner Good responded that, on top of the meetings with the architects, the commission should wait to complete some of the town halls before discussing the item again.

City Attorney Goren reminded the vice mayor that the outside date is August 5th, which is the meeting at which the commission will consider on second reading both charter amendments. The city attorney noted that this resolution also needs to be considered that day as well. City Attorney Goren noted for the record that the absolute legal deadline to approve ballot language for the November election is August 5th, coinciding with the second reading of the city's charter amendments.

Commissioner Schwartz countered that the city technically has until August 18th to submit final text to the supervisor of elections. Commissioner Schwartz noted that the commission could move the second meeting to August 17th, for instance.

Vice Mayor Hernandez moved to defer item number two until the manager is ready to bring it back, without a specific return date.

Commissioner Rodriguez seconded the motion to defer.

Commissioner Rodriguez commented that the most favorable option was shown in the presentation.

The mayor asked Commissioner Rodriguez to hold her comments for a moment, sharing that he is interested in her viewpoint.

REPORTS OF LEAGUE AND MPO REPRESENTATIVES

REPORTS OF THE CITY MANAGER AND CITY ATTORNEY

COMMISSION ITEMS:

Commission Agenda Q&A to be forthcoming, as / if / and when available via the following link: https://tinyurl.com/mtkmvsud

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Castillo asked Commissioner Rodriguez if she was suggesting that the town halls present information on the needs of the police department and include information on funding options and what their costs would be.

Commissioner Rodriguez agreed that this is what she was suggesting.

Commissioner Good explained that cost was one thing, but another consideration is whether the city has the capacity to pass a bond at that level, asking the city manager to provide that information.

Mayor Castillo questioned what Commissioner Good meant by capacity.

Commissioner Good responded that if the city does not have enough available funds to leverage the bond, there is no point in speaking about costs.

Mayor Castillo responded that between tonight and the first town hall meeting, staff will have enough time to craft a proposal that provides numbers and viability to each option.

Commissioner Rodriguez explained that they would be able to show the public that there is or is not enough revenue to leverage whatever the option may be. Commissioner Rodriguez communicated that clarity is important and all possible options need to be presented, as well as their costs, in order to present all viable options to the public.

Mayor Castillo explained that the town hall meeting will present the public safety complex and present the four funding options before the commission, including general obligation bonds, covenant to budget and appropriate bonds, pledged revenue bonds, and lease purchase options to the public.

Commissioner Schwartz explained that he supports that and noted that the manager should include currently unneeded city property. Commissioner Schwartz specified that he did not want to name specific properties tonight.

Mayor Castillo supported the addition and requested that the City Manager add a fifth column for city properties that are potentially available for surplus.

The Commission established a unanimous consensus directing the city administration to feature the detailed facility designs, all four borrowing structures, and an assessment of surplus city properties at the upcoming town hall meetings and on the city website.

OLD BUSINESS:

ADJOURN - 11:01 P.M.

CITY OF PEMBROKE PINES

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Gabriel Fernandez
City Clerk