



City of Sanibel

800 Dunlop Road
Sanibel, FL 33957

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

5:30 PM

BIG ARTS - 900 Dunlop Road

Budget Workshop

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting convened at 5:34 p.m.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (Vice Mayor Smith)

Vice Mayor Smith gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Due to this being a workshop and Councilmember Henshaw being out of state, he participated via zoom.

Present: 5 - Mayor Mike Miller, Vice Mayor Holly Smith, Councilmember Laura DeBruce, Councilmember John Henshaw, and Councilmember Richard Johnson

4. SET THE AGENDA

The agenda was set as published.

5. DISCUSSION OF FISCAL YEAR 2026 DRAFT BUDGET

a. Budget Presentation (Supplement 1)

Deputy City Manager Steve Chaipel spoke to the background of the budget process, demonstrated accessing the budgets on the city's website, and provided a PowerPoint presentation budget update.

Discussion ensued regarding personnel counts in the budget. City Manager Dana Souza spoke to the only change being from the Police Dispatchers being contracted to Lee County. Further discussion ensued regarding the storm water capital improvement projects; which items would be included in the 2026 budget and which would be delayed further.

Discussion turned to personnel options, contracted employees, and the balance of the loan for the Library Way property. Mr. Souza spoke to the specifics of the loan and noted it was not advised to cut any Police positions this year.

Continued discussion ensued regarding property values and increased recovery efforts, addressing storm water island wide, valuation calculations, and the differences between the ad valorem rates. Discussions returned to taxable values.

Council proposed including the flap-gate weir modifications in the FY2026 capital budget, implementing a feasibility study for the remainder of the weirs, and discussed the increase in professional services costs for the Planning Department. Mr. Chaipel spoke to the professional services being covered by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Mr. Souza spoke to the services being for updating the Land Development Code after the comprehensive plan work is completed.

Discussion ensued regarding Recreation revenues having recovered to pre-storm levels, investment earning levels, miscellaneous revenue amounts, general fund improvements, federal or state funds, and the CDBG-DR planning grants.

Discussions turned to determining which surface water management plan recommendations would be incorporated in the current year budget or capital improvement plan (CIP). Oisin Dolley, City Engineer, provided clarification of the recommendations from the surface water management plan report. Further discussion ensued regarding components to include in the FY26 budget and the FY27 budget for proper phasing.

By consensus, Council proposed amending the budget to include the design work for the flap-gate modifications and the feasibility study for the other projects in the FY26 budget.

Discussions turned to consideration of raising road elevations in the next few years, looking for infrastructure improvements to include in the legislative requests, and the Tradewinds drainage project. City Manager Souza spoke to the application process and noted if the grant was successful it would not be available until July 2026.

Discussions then turned to AI capabilities. Bert Smith, IT Director, spoke to preparing to launch the first step of AI on the City's website, noting the real implementation would be estimated for two years out.

Council inquired as to the process for setting up a storm water assessment. Mr. Chaipel spoke to the process for the assessment, fund accounts, and revenue sources. Mr. Souza noted discussions could come back in September.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comments:

- Lyman Welch - Sanibel Resident, spoke to discussions regarding having an ombudsman included in the budget and noted some items he submitted in

writing regarding storm water projects.

Discussion ensued regarding the funding for an ombudsman being included in consultant services on the City Manager's budget.

Mr. Souza expressed his appreciation for the Staff and their efforts to prepare the budget. Council concurred with the appreciation for the staff.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.