**MANATEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**
**REGULAR MEETING**
**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, HONORABLE PATRICIA M. GLASS CHAMBERS**
**1112 Manatee Avenue West**
**Bradenton, Florida**
**July 30, 2026**

Meeting video link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUlgjuGhS-qV966RU2Z7AtA

Present were:
Tal Siddique, Chairman District 3
Amanda Ballard, First Vice-Chairman District 2
George Kruse, Second Vice-Chairman, District 7
Dr. Bob McCann, District 5
Jason Bearden, District 6
Mike Rahn, District 4

District 1 seat is vacant.

Present were:
Charlie Bishop, County Administrator
Pamela D'Agostino, County Attorney
Vicki Tessmer, Board Records Supervisor, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of the Circuit Court

Chairman Siddique called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**INVOCATION**

Commissioner Bearden delivered the invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Carlos Moreira, Navy Veteran, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**AGENDA** BC2026MMDDDOC001

1. **FY27 CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS – PART II**

Claudia Campos, Interim Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the order of the day.

**Manatee County Sheriff**

Ms. Campos used slides to review the Sheriff's FY27 Budget request of $280,189,348, requests by outside agencies for Sheriff services, increase of $11,894,040.33, requested positions total $7,011,443, and noted the requested changes related to public safety.

Discussion ensued regarding the Crossing Guards and traffic assistance are directly related to growth in the County, new medical wing Corrections Officers are new positions that were not funded when the medical wing was approved, and critical needs.

Sheriff Rick Wells responded that the Florida Highway Patrol has four active patrols at any given time in Manatee County, and the Sheriff's Office fills in the gaps, they are required to cover traffic crashes, there are eight deputies working during the day and seven or eight in the evening doing traffic control, and there may be some flock camera yearly surcharges. His office understands that flock cameras are controversial, and the primary goal of having the cameras is to catch criminals. The film is audited every two weeks, and case numbers are required to review any information from the flock cameras, used as a crime fighting tool. It is a felon to use any of the sensitive information for other purposes.

Discussion ensued regarding unfunded mandates by the State, lowest budget increase for the Sherriff in years, Fresh Start is a future budget need, reduced overtime by 30 percent, public needs to see the information to understand the budget, what are the unfunded mandates, safeguards regarding flock cameras, how is privacy being protected, chronic underfunding for Florida Highway Patrol effects the Sheriff's budget, and concerned with safeguards by the vendor for the flock cameras.

Sheriff Wells invited the Commissioners to speak with him at any time they have questions. He responded that Artificial Intelligence (AI) is too cost prohibitive right now for body cameras.

**Manatee County Property Appraiser**

Ms. Campos continued the slides to review the Property Appraiser's Office and noted the budget is mandated by the State. The increase of approximately $4 million is based on property valuations.

**TENTATIVE MILLAGE/BUDGET ADOPTION**

Ms. Campos used a slide presentation to review the FY27 Proposed Budget, the Capital Improvement Plan, total new budget, July first certifications and changes, overall ad valorem changes, total increase is $5,136,299, gross increase of 0.87 percent, net decrease is 0.05 percent, proposed changes, operating expenses, Constitutional Officer budgets and cash balance all decreased, proposed gross budget is $2,6978,805,004, with a proposed net budget of $1,447,020,538.

Ms. Campos responded regarding funding for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and fully funding the projects, efficiencies were identified and budget amendments were made to move projects forward.

Discussion ensued regarding discretionary budget if decreased, and discretionary non-profit funding outside of Children's Services.

Ms. Campos continued the slides with a summary of department budgets and decreases, overall increase in reserves is attributed to efficiencies found for FY26 and FY27, pulled items, identified 48 vacancies that have been frozen, CIP pulled items, Countywide sources and uses, largest uses are reserves, transfers and the Sheriff, General Fund sources and uses included revenue/expenditures, overall reserves, reserve for contingencies, salaries, cash balance and capital, 20 percent cash balance of reserves at 8.0 percent, and summary of changes in Cash Balance Reserves.

Ms. Campos defined reserves for contingencies and set aside reserves.

Candice Cruz, Financial Management, noted reserves are in the cash flow, but under 65 different funding sources, and a project must be fully funded prior to an award being approved.

Ms. Campos explained reserves for contingencies are set aside reserves that must be brought to the Board to be used via a budget amendment, every dollar that comes in and out has a direct effect on the reserves.

Discussion continued regarding why reserves are 20 percent and not 15 percent, can some of the reserves be used to complete projects in 2027, changes to the operating budget create a direct effect on cash balance, drop the reserves to 15 percent, dropping reserves could create a risk for the credit rating going down, 20 percent reserves is a best practice, not a statutory requirement, credit rating risk is related to transportation, reserves are for emergencies, several loans have been taken out for emergency repairs, and reallocate reserves for road resurfacing.

Ms. Campos explained the budget book with each line item will be published in August, internal services reserves include IT and Fleet, revenue sources can be limited, departments need to reimbursed if some of their funds are being reallocated to another department, and decisions are driven by revenue sources. She continued to identify other special revenues.

Discussion ensued to trim projects that have been on the books for a long time, $25.6 million in reserves for transportation, reserves can be used for regular maintenance, 20 percent contingency for construction manager at risk, R&R accounts for separate divisions, most of the funds listed in reserves look like pre-allocation for projects, with the exception of utilities, wastewater and debt service, these reserves are not needed, hypothetical impacts, general fund number is the rainy day fund, improve quality of life by using some of the reserves, and public perception of reserves and contingencies.

Discussion ensued regarding providing an analysis of reserves.

Discussion ensued regarding recommendation by the State Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to drop the millage by 1.0, last year was 6.03, and the year previously was 6.05 all millage changes occur in the general fund, State Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) report, no backup received from the State CFO, DOGE report did back up real numbers, and there are no new asks or decision units to the general fund, other than what was already presented.

Ms. Campos announced the Rollback rate is 5.7739, taking into effect current numbers, and comparing last year's budget, and is the millage to keep everything the same as last year. Once the tentative millage is set, it can only be reduced. The special millages were set by prior Boards. Resolution R-10-098 set the 20 percent reserves.

Discussion ensued regarding how the State CFO came up with his numbers regarding Manatee County overspending, Manatee was deemed being in the top 10 percent for not overspending, the rollback rate has been used every year, Manatee is still short on the General Fund, efforts made to reduce staff across all departments, and the millage rate is thoughtful.

Ms. Campos provided the numbers for lost revenues if Amendment 3 (property tax) passes.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kruse and seconded by Commissioner Siddique, to authorize the County Administrator to take all action necessary to certify existing millage rates as approved herewith to the Property Appraiser.

Discussion ensued regarding dropping the millage by 0.20 for general fund decrease of $16 million, State creating a situation where municipalities and counties would need to raise their millage to the maximum to make up for lost revenue, there are places to analyze, this is the first major spending cut post pandemic, still hold the same loss of $55 million, projections for general fund, goal is to keep the County steady in the next two years, rebuild the general fund accurately, goal is to have everything done prior to year end, Administration cut $35 million in 2026 and $16 million for 2027, transit routes were reduced, libraires and parks at minimum funding, need to look at how the County runs and find more places to cut, and services will be cut and residents will be unhappy.

Andra Griffin supports any reduction in taxes.

The motion carried 6-0.

Ms. Campos reviewed the Truth-In-Millage (TRIM) timeline, and noted the TRIMs will be sent on August 17, 2026.

Charlie Bishop, County Administrator, explained there are 48 positions in the general fund that are not being filled. Staff is working on filling positions for Animal Welfare.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Chairman Siddique adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Minutes Approved: June 30, 2026