

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE

City Commission Special Meeting Monday, July 14, 2025

The City Commission met in a formal session on Monday, July 14, 2025, at 3:00 P.M. in the Alcazar Room at City Hall. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline, and the following were present:

1. Roll Call: Nancy Sikes-Kline, Mayor/City Commissioner
Cynthia Garris, City Commissioner
Jim Springfield, City Commissioner
Jon DePreter, City Commissioner

Absent: Barbara Blonder, Vice Mayor/City Commissioner

Also Present: David Birchim, City Manager
Isabelle Lopez, City Attorney
Darlene Galambos, City Clerk
Meredith Breidenstein, Assistant City Manager
Reuben Franklin, Assistant City Manager
Melissa Burns, Director, Finance
Anthony Cuthbert, Assistant Police Chief
Elyse Wiemann, Recording Secretary

2. General Public Comments

The Commissioners heard from the following members of the public:

- BJ Kalaidi

3. FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS DISCUSSION

3.A. Revenue Manual Review. (M. Burns, Finance Director)

Melissa Burns, Finance Director, presented the Revenue Manual for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. She discussed the following items in the General Fund:

- Ad Valorem Taxes
- Franchise Fees
- Utility Taxes
- Intergovernmental Revenues which included Communication, Half-Cent Sales Tax

- Local Option Gas Tax, which had to be used for roadways
- Building Permits and Fees
- Fire Assessment Fee
- Rents and Royalites
- Meter Parking Fees
- Meter Parking Fines
- Short-Term Rental (STR) Permits

Ms. Burns outlined the proprietary funds which had to be spent directly in these categories as follows:

- Stormwater
- Utility
- Solid Waste
- Municipal Marina
- Visitors Information Center

Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline noted the funds that staff were recommending increase at 2.3%, which was the rate of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) were:

- Stormwater
- Solid Waste: residential and commercial

Mayor Sikes-Kline asked if the Fire Assessment would be increased this year or if a study would be done and an increase applied to the 2026 budget.

Ms. Burns confirmed that there would be a study conducted, and the increase would be applied to the 2026 budget.

Commissioner Jim Springfield asked how much was left in the reserves. He said depending on the amount of money left in the reserves would determine if he wanted to raise the cost.

Ms. Burns replied that she could provide that information. She noted that there was a surcharge that was applied to those outside the City, which was reduced yearly and by raising the cost by the CPI, this would help reduce financial burden.

Commissioner Jon DePreter asked where the other half of the fire assessment came from if we only received 50%.

Mr. Burns replied that the other half of the Fire Assessment came from the General Fund.

Commissioner DePreter said that the Fire Assessment was recommended by staff for an increase in 2026.

Ms. Burns replied that before the Fire Assessment was increased, a consultant would be hired to help evaluate the fees before implementation.

Commissioner DePreter asked if metered parking was recommended for an increase too.

David Birchim, City Manager, stated that was correct; however, that would be clarified further during the regular City Commission meeting with the Night of Lights presentation.

Commissioner DePreter asked if a cost increase for Short-Term Rental permits was recommended.

Mr. Birchim confirmed that the increase would be by the CPI.

Mayor Sikes-Kline clarified the funds that would be increased by the CPI was:

- Stormwater
- Solid Waste: residential and commercial
- Short-Term Rental
- Fire Assessment Fee in 2026
- Parking Fines

Ms. Burns said water and sewer were included; however, those could be increased by City Code. She said that Rents and Royalites was increasing as well by the CPI of 2.3%.

Commissioner DePreter asked that a list be provided separately for the items that would be increased in order to be clear.

Mayor Sikes-Kline agreed that it would help make things clear for the public.

Commissioner Cynthia Garris said she was concerned with the parking tickets. She said the price increase from \$35 to \$100 was a bit extreme.

Mr. Birchim said that the fee increase was limited to illegal parking, not including a meter parking space that had expired but a yellow curb, or a no parking zone.

Commissioner Garris asked if signage would be posted. She felt the changes were catered to the Nights of Lights; however, Nights of Lights was a season and if a resident had a visitor park where a

yellow curb was, she did not want them to receive a \$100 ticket.

Mayor Sikes-Kline said that it would be further discussed during the Nights of Lights presentation at the regular City Commission meeting.

Mr. Birchim replied that the increase was to prevent people from parking in places where people knew it was illegal but were fine with paying the \$35 fine.

Commissioner Garris suggested instead of increasing the fine to \$100 it could be \$50, or a sign could be posted that the vehicle would be towed to discourage people from parking illegally.

Mayor Sikes-Kline agreed that higher penalties should be given to those who tried to create or invent parking where it did not belong. She said parking on a yellow curb was not safe as it blocked sight lines and parking on the grass, sidewalks, or in areas where they did not belong was an issue.

Commissioner Springfield thanked Ms. Burns for her hard work, and he appreciated the work her and her staff had accomplished.

Public Comment was reopened and the Commission heard from the following member of the public:

- Vicki Pepper

Mr. Birchim clarified that the proposed rate increase was the CPI at 2.3%.

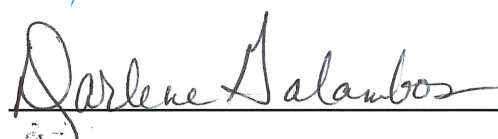
Mayor Sikes-Kline asked for the next budget meeting date.

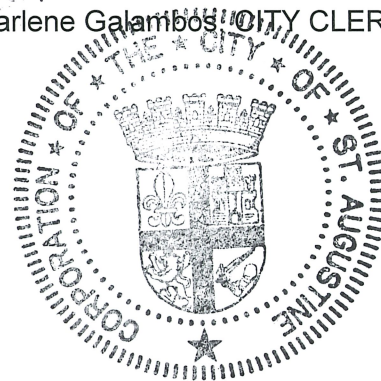
Darlene Galambos, City Clerk, advised the next budget meeting would take place on August 28, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. and if needed, it would continue August 29, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:31 P.M.¹


Nancy Sikes-Kline, MAYOR


Darlene Galambos, CITY CLERK



¹ Transcribed by Elyse Wiemann