

CITY OF OAKLAND

BUDGET ADVISORY COMMISSION

Meeting of the City of Oakland Budget Advisory Commission (BAC) held
Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at 6:00 PM.

The Budget Advisory Commission meeting was held in Hearing Room 2 in City Hall.

Commission Members:

Mandela Bliss, Larisa Casillas, Mike Forbes, Ben Gould, Margaret Grimsley, Mike Petouhoff,
Jane Yang, Stephisha Ycoy-Walton

City's Representative(s):

Nathan Bassett – Finance Department
Walter Silva – Finance Department

Meeting Minutes:

1. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- **Present:** Commissioners Bliss, Casillas, Gould, Grimsley, Petouhoff, Ycoy-Walton and City of Oakland staff member Bassett
- **Absent:** Commissioners Forbes, Yang
- Roll call was conducted with six out of eight current commissioners present, establishing a quorum
- Meeting called to order by Acting Chair Casillas at approximately 6:03 PM

2. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Meeting minutes for March 12, 2025 were reviewed. Commissioner Petouhoff requested several amendments to ensure complete and accurate recording of recommendations.

Commissioner Gould made a motion to accept the minutes with the changes proposed by Commissioner Petouhoff. Commissioner Ycoy-Walton seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. COMMISSIONERS' PROTOCOL

Staff reported that the member of the Mayor's Office responsible for appointments was released as of Monday. No new appointments are expected until after the mayoral election is resolved.

4. AD HOC COMMITTEE UPDATES / PRESENTATIONS

Public Safety & Economic Development (30 minutes)

Commissioner Petouhoff presented updates on:

Revenue Enhancement Meeting: City Council will hold a dedicated meeting on April 14th focused on revenue enhancement.

Illegal Dumping and Blight: Only 11% of dumping citations are collected, and over 50% of appeals are granted. Recommended enhanced enforcement as both revenue enhancement and crime prevention.

Trench Repair Standards: Recommended city adopt standards similar to Fremont and other cities requiring financial deposits for public right-of-way work.

Pension Obligations: Potential refinancing opportunities identified, though credit rating concerns noted. Possible \$20-40 million in savings conceivable if feasible.

Measure W Homelessness Funding: Recommended allocation by homeless population rather than general population to secure Oakland's fair share of over \$500 million available.

Return on Investment Calculations: Presented ROI analysis for various homeless intervention programs:

- Family reunion programs: Over 1,000% ROI
- Guaranteed minimum income: 178% ROI
- Tiny home villages: 116% ROI

MACRO Program Funding: Suggested potential county funding through Measure W given MACRO's role in assisting unhoused populations.

Safety Ambassadors Presentation

Daniel Swafford, Executive Director of three Oakland Business Improvement Districts (Laurel, Montclair, Temescal), presented on Public Safety Ambassador programs:

Program Results: Six-week pilot program showed 40% reduction in all incidents across the board compared to prior six weeks, post-program period, and neighboring commercial district.

Cost Structure:

- Comprehensive coverage (18-20 hours daily): \$25,000/month
- Current scaled program (12 hours daily, 5 days/week): \$15,000/month

Services Provided: Overnight vehicle patrol, daytime walking patrol, merchant engagement, 24/7 response service with 15-minute response time.

Coordination: Established relationships with OPD captains and community resource officers, with clear escalation protocols.

Community Engagement (10 minutes)

Commissioner Grimsley reported the ad hoc will meet with Andrew from Tribe regarding the 12th Street homelessness encampment proposal. Full presentation planned for the next meeting.

Ad Hocs to Stand Up (5 minutes)

Budget Ad Hoc Committee: Commissioners Petouhoff, Forbes, Gould, and Bliss volunteered for the Mayor's Proposed Budget response committee.

Budget Process Report Ad Hoc: Commissioner Casillas lead, with commissioners assigned to attend district town halls for process evaluation.

Community Meeting Location: Acting Chair Casillas proposed moving one commission meeting to 81st Avenue Library community room to increase community engagement.

5. FINANCE DEPARTMENT UPDATES (30 minutes)

Nathan Bassett presented the FY 2024-25 Q2 Revenue & Expenses Report:

General Purpose Fund Status: Estimated available fund balance at year-end projected at negative \$89.17 million, improved from negative \$120.71 million in Q1 through various balancing actions.

Revenue Performance:

- Real estate transfer tax: Still underperforming despite some improvement in high-value transactions
- Transient occupancy tax: Down almost 20% due to hotel industry distress
- Sales tax: Down 6% average, with autos/transportation down 14% and fuel/service stations down 16%
- Business license tax: 3.2% of businesses that filed in 2024 have closed, including impact from Kaiser Permanente headquarters relocation

Expenditure Challenges: Multiple departments showing over-budget projections, including Fire Department at \$197.2 million against \$166 million adjusted budget, and Police Department projected 12% over budget primarily due to overtime.

Balancing Actions Taken:

- Position elimination reduced from 91.96 to 42 FTEs
- Equipment Services Fund balance transfer of \$8.3 million
- Various restricted fund transfers totaling approximately \$35 million in deficit reduction

6. CITY COUNCIL UPDATES (10 minutes)

Commissioner Meetings: Commissioner Ycoy-Walton reported outreach to District 7 with meeting scheduled for following week. Commissioner Petouhoff noted discussions with Council Member Ramachandran (Finance Committee Chair) on pension liability review and potential citywide safety ambassador program.

Budget Survey Results: Distributed to all council members as follow-up to commission's community engagement work.

Business Survey Proposal: Discussion of potential business district survey to inform April 14th economic development council meeting.

7. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Business survey development and implementation
- Sales tax measure spending oversight (pending election results)
- Joint meeting with Parks Recreation Advisory Commission on parks maintenance budget recommendations
- Community meeting at 81st Avenue Library (June meeting proposed)

8. OPEN FORUM

Survey materials from unhoused residents provided by Commissioner Ycoy-Walton.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:02 PM.

These minutes were drafted using a large language model based on a transcript of the meeting recording. They were reviewed and edited by a human for accuracy.