

CITY OF OAKLAND

BUDGET ADVISORY COMMISSION

**Meeting of the City of Oakland Budget Advisory Commission (BAC) held
Wednesday, June 11, 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, Forbes, Gould, Grimsley, Petouhoff, Yang, Ycoy-Walton
- Absent: Commissioner Casillas
- Late Arrival: Commissioner Petouhoff arrived late due to Sacramento travel
- Roll call was conducted with six out of eight current commissioners present, establishing a quorum
- Meeting called to order by Chair Yang at approximately 6:02 PM

2. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Meeting minutes for April 9, 2025 and May 14, 2025 meetings were deferred to the July 9, 2025 meeting.

3. COMMISSIONERS' PROTOCOL

Staff reported three applications currently with the mayor's office for appointment:

- Two related to the Finance and Management Committee

- One from District Two for Commissioner Grimsley's seat (currently serving on holdover status)
- Five vacant seats total: District 3, District 6, District 7, and two mayoral seats
- Mayor's office has indicated they will prioritize appointments to this commission

4. FY25-27 BUDGET RECOMMENDATION AD HOC DEBRIEF

Commissioner Petouhoff provided a comprehensive debrief on the Budget Advisory Commission's presentation to City Council:

- Praised the mayor's cover letter for its forthright articulation of budget challenges, including discussion of deficit sources, one-time funds, Coliseum sale, and COVID spending increases
- All council members provided feedback during Q&A session
- Council members described BAC recommendations as "insightful and helpful"
- Several BAC recommendations were incorporated into council amendments
- City staff extended invitation for BAC to participate in the roadmap to fiscal health initiative
- Commissioner Forbes noted the need to verify if voter-approved measures were fully funded
- Commissioner Gould emphasized the significant improvement in budget process compared to previous years

5. BUDGET PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS AD HOC

Chair Yang announced formation of new ad hoc to provide mandated report to City Council on budget development process:

- **Members:** Commissioners Ycoy-Walton, Petouhoff, Gould, and Casillas
- **Deadline:** September 30th
- Ad hoc authorized to self-organize and request agenda time as needed

6. HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS AD HOC DISCUSSION

Commissioner Grimsley presented a draft proposal for transitional, co-governed unhoused community:

- Partnership with Wood Street Commons and Homeless Advocacy Working Group
- Proposal for self-governed community on publicly owned land funded by Measure W
- Would include tent platforms, RV parking, shared facilities, and supportive services
- Cost-effective alternative to encampment sweeps and traditional shelters

Public Comments:

- Armando (Wood Street Commons): Supported redirecting sweep funding toward proposed solution
- Monique French (formerly unhoused, Wood Street Commons member): Emphasized lived experience perspective and scalability potential

Commissioner responses:

- Commissioner Bliss expressed interest in joining the ad hoc to focus on cost-benefit analysis
- Commissioner Forbes noted preference for this type of transitional housing and flagged potential startup cost considerations
- Chair Yang emphasized need for clear articulation of why this proposal is in scope for the BAC and coordination with existing Housing Commission on Homelessness
- Commissioner Gould noted existence of Commission on Homelessness and importance of coordination
- Commissioner Ycoy-Walton confirmed commitment to continue the work with additional ad hoc support

7. BUDGET ADVISORY COMMISSION 2025 STRATEGY MID-YEAR CHECK-IN

Chair Yang led reflection on commission's 2025 strategy progress:

Areas of Success:

- Becoming trusted, respected voice
- Building strong team relationships and filling vacancies
- Enhanced working relationships with city council and staff
- Providing concrete, evidence-based recommendations

Areas for Growth:

- Commissioner Petouhoff suggested pension liability and non-city contracts as potential ad hoc topics
- Commissioner Forbes emphasized learning from other cities' practices
- Commissioner Bliss highlighted continued need for diverse perspectives
- Commissioner Grimsley expressed regret about limited progress on police spending accountability

Pulse Check: Commissioners rated strategy alignment at 4-5 on 5-point scale

8. GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA REQUESTS

Commissioner Forbes outlined guidelines for handling media inquiries:

- Individuals cannot speak for the entire BAC
- Commissioners should contact leadership team when receiving media requests

- Responses should reference previously approved BAC positions rather than personal opinions
- Staff offered to coordinate communications training if desired

9. OPEN FORUM

- Commissioner Grimsley noted police audit completion (300 pages) and availability for review
- Staff announced interim finance director appointment: Jan Mazyck (former Oakland employee, Santa Rosa CFO, Treasury Department experience)
- Staff reported letter from Friends of Oakland Public Library regarding Measure C and D maintenance of effort requirements
- Dr. Jennifer Tran, potential District Two appointee, was acknowledged in attendance

10. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:06 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.