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COMMISSIONER

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CITY ATTORNEY

KAREN HAYES, MMC, FCPC
CITY CLERK

JASON L. SHAW, SR
CHIEF, POLICE DEPT

CHRIS TAYLOR
CHIEF, FIRE DEPT

JENNIFER THOMPSON
INTERIM FINANCE DIRECTOR



AGENDA
CITY COMMISSION BUDGET WORKSHOP
August 26, 2026 at 6:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

- a. Invocation
- b. Pledge of Allegiance
- c. Roll Call

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- a. **Public Comments** - (Speakers limited to three minutes - no action taken on items)
- b. **Commission and Staff Response**

3. REGULAR BUSINESS

- a. 2026-2027 Development update

4. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

5. ADJOURN

Upcoming Events Tuesday: September 1, 2026, Planning Board Meeting 4:00 p.m. Wednesday: September 2, 2026, CRA Budget Meeting 5:00 p.m. Thursday: September 3, 2026, Historic Preservation meeting, 4:00 p.m. Thursday: September 10, 2026, First Budget Hearing Monday: September 21, 2026, CRA Meeting 5:00 p.m. Tuesday: September 22, 2026, Special Magistrate 1:30 p.m. Thursday: September 24, 2026, Second budget hearing. 6:00 p.m.	Board Vacancies Board of Zoning Appeals - 3 vacancies Public Arts Committee - 1 student vacancy
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STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 26, 2026
TO: City of Palatka City Commission
FROM: City Staff

APPLICATION REQUEST

The City Commission receive an update on the FY 2027 budget development process, review the City Manager's preliminary recommendation for the General Fund, and provide direction, so that a balanced recommended budget can be presented at the first public hearing on September 10, 2026.

BACKGROUND

Departments submitted their FY 2027 budget requests on July 14, 2026. The City Commission reviewed those requests at its meeting on July 23, 2026 ([Agenda Item 9.a](#)) and directed staff to return with reduction scenarios at five percent and ten percent showing the effect of each reduction on service delivery and on staffing. At the same meeting the Commission set the maximum millage rate for FY 2027 at 6.2397 mills.

The budget was presented that evening as informational, with estimated General Fund revenue of \$25,963,238 and expenditure of \$25,932,051, a preliminary surplus of \$31,187. That report stated that personnel expenditures were still being reconciled with Human Resources and that transfers, loan payments, insurance and non-departmental costs had not yet been reviewed.

The City Manager further committed to returning in August with the reserves, the interfund transfers and the debt service fully developed, and with finalized personnel projections. That work is complete and is reflected in this report, in the accompanying presentation and in the department detail provided as back-up

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Where the budget stands: Estimated General Fund revenue for FY 2027 is \$16,528,959 and estimated expenditure is \$20,546,040, resulting in a projected gap of \$4,017,081. This preliminary projection incorporates the department ten percent decrement submissions and the Police Department's five percent decrement submission. Additional recommended reductions total \$2,262,088, which brings the remaining gap to \$1,754,994. That figure includes \$1,575,030 of administrative cost reimbursement from the other funds, which is tentative because the CRA, Utilities and Sanitation budgets are not final. All figures in this report are estimates and will be finalized before the first public hearing.

The following table provides an overview of the General Fund gap specifically.

General Fund, FY 2027	Amount
Estimated revenue	\$16,528,959
Estimated expenditure	\$20,546,040
Projected gap	(\$4,017,081)
Additional recommended reductions	+\$2,262,088
Remaining gap	(\$1,754,994)

The change in how the budget is presented: The City Manager requested a line-by-line review of the FY 2026 adopted and amended budgets to determine the basis and accuracy of the budget data. That review yielded the following issues:

- General Fund reserves were recognized on the revenue side but were appropriated at lower levels on the expenditure side, which indicates that reserves were being used to fund recurring expenditures. For FY 2026 specifically, the budget brought in \$4,480,772 of prior year cash forward, the fund balance for the General Fund, as a revenue line, and set aside \$2,359,422 on the expenditure side. The difference, \$2,121,350, was use for recurring General Fund operating expenditures.
- The balance carried forward was never tied to the audited fund balance classifications. Three lines draw on the unassigned pool: Operating Cash \$4,480,772, Insurance Contingency \$624,444 and Red Light Camera \$49,988, totaling \$5,155,204 against an audited unassigned balance of \$4,339,458 at September 30, 2025. All three are unrestricted, so the budget brought forward \$815,746 more than the unassigned balance held. The Operating Cash line alone has been carried at the same \$4,480,772 since the FY 2025 adopted budget. The restricted and committed lines run the other way, brought forward at \$329,902 and \$91,375 against audited balances of \$616,592 and \$213,055. While this information may not have been available when the budget was adopted, the estimates should have been updated via a budget amendment once the audit was completed.
- Loan proceeds were appropriated on the revenue budget without supporting documentation. For FY 2026, this specifically represents \$1 million in loan proceeds for which staff is unable to find records for. The FY 2027 budget removes revenue estimates that are not substantiated or expected to be received in FY 2027.
- Interfund transfers for which no documented basis could be established were not included in the FY 2027 budget estimates.
- Forfeiture proceeds were appropriated as part of the initial budget adoption. Section 932.7055(9), Florida Statutes provides that neither the law enforcement agency nor the entity having budgetary control over it shall anticipate future forfeitures or proceeds in the adoption and approval of the budget. Section 932.7055(5)(b) provides that the funds may be expended only upon request by the chief of police to the governing body, accompanied by a written certification that the request complies with the statute, and only upon appropriation by the

governing body. The funds may not be a source of revenue to meet the normal operating needs of the law enforcement agency, and an agency acquiring at least \$15,000 in a fiscal year must expend or donate no less than twenty-five percent of those proceeds on drug treatment, drug abuse education, drug prevention, crime prevention, safe neighborhood or school resource officer programs. Funds already on hand may be shown in the fund's reserve or fund balance, but not as anticipated revenue or as amounts appropriated to spending lines. The FY 2027 budget carries no forfeiture appropriation, and forfeiture expenditures will be brought forward by budget amendment on the certification the statute requires.

- Debt service was not fully or correctly appropriated. The golf equipment leases were budgeted as an operating rental at \$78,048 rather than as debt service, against lease payments of \$102,548 in FY 2025. The Streets share of the Public Works building loan carried no appropriation at all in FY 2026, on either principal or interest, although interest of \$11,533 was paid in FY 2025; the other four shares of that same loan were budgeted. Additionally, interest for a state revolving fund loan was being paid from the principal account. All three are corrected for FY 2027, and every loan now appears on the debt service schedule at its own principal and interest accounts.

The budget by fund: The following table shows estimated revenue, estimated expenditure and the resulting surplus or deficit for each fund. The Better Place Plan and the ARPA Fund are shown as pending. Their FY 2027 budgets are still being developed with staff. The CRA, Utilities and Sanitation funds are shown as tentative because their budgets are not final.

Fund	Estimated Revenue	Estimated Expenditure	Estimated Surplus / (Deficit)
Airport	\$4,102,406	\$4,191,294	(\$88,888)
ARPA	Pending	Pending	Pending
Better Place Plan	Pending	Pending	Pending
CRA / Tax Increment (tentative – budget not finalized)	\$1,183,985	\$128,150	+\$1,055,836
General Fund	\$16,528,959	\$20,546,040	(\$4,017,081)
Golf Course	\$148,209	\$267,447	(\$119,238)
Sanitation (tentative – budget not finalized)	\$3,775,240	\$3,167,178	+\$608,062
Utilities (tentative – budget not finalized)	\$19,563,336	\$21,903,165	(\$2,339,829)
All funds (tentative – budget not finalized)	\$45,302,135	\$50,203,273	(\$4,901,138)

General Fund revenue by category: The following table shows the General Fund by major revenue category and where the variances exist for each. The first six categories are the City's

operating revenue. The last two represent the use of fund balance and the interfund transfers and reimbursements.

Revenue category	FY 2026 Adopted	FY 2027 CM Rec	Change
Taxes	\$7,143,845	\$7,238,283	+\$94,438
Licenses, Permits & Fees	\$4,446,151	\$4,428,271	(\$17,880)
Intergovernmental	\$1,799,384	\$1,834,830	+\$35,446
Charges for Services	\$221,456	\$221,456	\$0
Fines & Forfeitures	\$211,503	\$165,343	(\$46,160)
Miscellaneous	\$1,641,661	\$1,706,661	+\$65,000
Other Sources / Transfers	\$4,828,035	\$934,115	(\$3,893,920)
Fund Balance / Other	\$5,576,765	\$0	(\$5,576,765)
Total General Fund	\$25,868,800	\$16,528,959	(\$9,339,841)

Reduction scenarios at five and ten percent: Every General Fund department submitted both scenarios, with one exception. Section 166.241, Florida Statutes limits the reduction of a municipal law enforcement budget to five percent of the prior year operating budget, so the Police Department carries no ten percent scenario. Each target is a percentage of the department's FY 2026 adopted budget, taken on operating and capital and on current authorized positions. The current FY 2027 recommendation applies the ten percent scenario to all departments and the five percent scenario to the Police Department. Where a department had already reduced an expenditure line in its July 14 submission, the appropriation for that line was reviewed and adjusted. The full line-by-line detail for every department is provided in the back-up to this staff report (Back-up Item #3 - FY 2027 Department Detail).

Department	5% submitted	10% submitted	Target met
City Attorney	\$12,990	\$19,700	Not Met
City Clerk	\$8,352	\$16,703	Met
City Manager	\$91,761	\$127,864	Met
Code Enforcement	\$25,000	\$33,900	Met
Commission	\$26,133	\$52,266	Met
Community Affairs	\$66,000	\$114,850	Met
Finance	\$42,294	\$86,564	Met

Fire	\$221,304	\$442,608	Met
Human Resources	\$21,278	\$42,556	Met
Non-Departmental	\$9,545	\$19,090	Met
Planning	\$173,000	\$177,100	Met
Police	\$289,727	Not permitted	Met
Public Works	\$219,913	\$484,827	Met
Total, all departments	\$1,207,297	\$1,618,029	

Authorized position levels and personnel: Personnel is projected position by position rather than by applying a percentage to the prior year, with each position reflecting current salary, step, fringe and fund allocation. The projection totals \$18,052,863 across 191.0 positions and 188.8 full-time equivalents, of which 18.5 are vacant across all funds. The estimated FY 2027 personnel budget is \$17,808,118, and it includes the elimination of 3.0 full-time equivalents (from the ten percent decrements), a reduction of \$244,746 already applied.

Department	Funded FTE	Filled	Vacant
Airport	6.5	5.0	1.5
City Attorney	1.0	0.0	1.0
City Clerk	1.0	1.0	0.0
City Manager	4.3	1.3	3.0
Code Enforcement	3.0	3.0	0.0
Commission	6.0	5.0	1.0
Community Affairs	5.5	5.5	0.0
CRA	1.0	1.0	0.0
Finance	6.0	5.0	1.0
Fire	29.0	27.0	2.0
Human Resources	3.0	3.0	0.0
Planning	5.0	4.0	1.0
Police	46.5	45.5	1.0
Public Works	71.0	64.0	7.0

Total	188.8	170.3	18.5
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After the ten percent decrement scenarios were built in, the gap decreased to \$4,017,081, still a significant amount to close. The City Manager then selected additional vacant positions to eliminate and requested additional position eliminations from the departments. The following table provides an overview of all the positions being recommended for elimination as a result of those additional decisions. Five positions are filled. The Reduction in Force Plan has been communicated to the positions affected and is necessary to address the revenue shortfalls projected for FY 2027.

Department	Position	Status	Amount
City Attorney	City Attorney	Vacant	\$230,268
City Manager	Public Information Officer	Vacant	\$88,110
Commission	Commissioners Admin Assistant	Vacant	\$76,077
Community Affairs	Culture Arts Coordinator	Filled	\$52,770
Finance	Financial Services Supervisor	Filled	\$124,764
Finance	Procurement Specialist	Filled	\$87,274
Fire	Administrative Assistant I	Filled	\$74,652
Human Resources	Human Resources Coordinator	Filled	\$86,894
Planning	Senior Planner	Vacant	\$107,035
Police	Animal Control Operator	Vacant	\$61,531
Public Works	Parks Laborer	Vacant	\$51,829
Public Works	Streets Equipment Operator	Vacant	\$52,889
Total, 12.0 full-time equivalents			\$1,094,093

Reserves, Interfund Transfers, Debt Service and Administrative Expenses

- Reserves: The audited General Fund position at September 30, 2025 was \$616,592 restricted, \$213,055 committed and \$4,339,458 unassigned. Only the unassigned balance is available for appropriation, and it is projected to be substantially lower at the close of FY 2026. Staff recommends that a written fund balance and reserve policy setting a minimum balance, limiting the use of reserves to explicit Commission action, and requiring the balance carried forward to be re-derived from the audit each year.
- Interfund transfers: Each interfund transfer is now stated as a matched pair identifying the paying fund, the receiving fund and the documented basis for the amount, and total transfers out equal total transfers in citywide. The administrative cost allocation, which charges each fund its share of central administration, totals \$2,990,701 citywide and returns \$1,766,736 to the General Fund. That reimbursement falls to \$1,575,030 once the additional position eliminations are added, as this reduces the pooled amount to distribute.
- Administrative fees: Central administration serves every department across all funds. The Central administration pool is comprised of the Commission, the City Manager's Office including information technology and public information, the City Clerk, Finance, Human Resources and the City Attorney. The current pool budget totals \$2,990,701 for FY 2027. That pool is divided by the combined operating expenditure of the funds it serves, \$50,203,273, producing an effective overhead rate of 5.96 percent. Each fund is then charged that rate against its operating budget. The Better Place Plan and the ARPA Fund are excluded from the base because they are grant and project funds. On that basis, the General Fund is estimated to be reimbursed \$1,766,736 by the other funds:
 - Utilities - \$1,304,812 (tentative – budget not finalized)
 - Airport - \$249,683
 - Sanitation - \$188,675 (tentative – budget not finalized)
 - Golf Course - \$15,932
 - CRA - \$7,634 (tentative – budget not finalized)

The General Fund's share, \$1,223,965, is calculated but not charged back. Three of the funds that pay the allocation, the CRA, Utilities and Sanitation, do not have final budgets. They are just over half of the base the rate is applied to, so the reimbursement stated here will change when those budgets are complete.

- Debt service: Debt service is built against the schedule the Finance Department provided on August 17, 2026 and totals \$2,028,520 citywide, of which \$424,765 is to be paid from the General Fund.

Items that remain open: Three items are not yet resolved and will be brought forward before the first public hearing: the Better Place Fund, grants, and capital projects. The FY 2027 grant schedule is being validated with staff. Carryforward amounts, being FY 2026 appropriations carried into FY 2027, and anticipated completion dates for capital projects are being confirmed with staff. The FY 2027 budget for the Better Place Plan is being developed with staff.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Commission receive this update and provide direction on the City Manager's preliminary recommendation, which applies the ten percent reduction scenarios across General Fund departments, takes additional operating reductions above those scenarios, eliminates twelve positions totaling 12.0 full-time equivalents, and eliminates the City Attorney position and provides \$150,000 for contracted legal services in its place.

ATTACHMENTS

1.	FY27 Budget Presentation - August 26, 2026 Budget Workshop
2.	FY27 General Fund Decrement Analysis - 5 and 10 Percent
3.	FY27 Department Detail



FY 2027 Budget

Budget Workshop · City Commission · August 26, 2026

City Manager's Office · Cynthia W. Curry
Interim City Manager · August 2026

Purpose of Tonight's Discussion

- Update the Commission on where the **budget development process** stands.
- Present a **preliminary City Manager recommendation** for the General Fund.
- Take direction on the items that remain open.

Date	What happens
Tonight, August 26	Workshop. Preliminary recommendation and direction. No adoption.
September 10	First public hearing. The millage rate is set.
September 24	Second and final public hearing. The budget is adopted.

Where We Left Off on July 23

- Departments submitted their Fiscal Year 2027 budget requests on **July 14**, a mix of increases and reductions, and the Commission reviewed that list.
- The Commission directed staff to return with **five percent and ten percent decrement scenarios**, showing what each reduction means for service and for staffing.
- The Commission set the maximum millage rate for FY 2027 at **6.2397** mills.
- The budget was presented as **informational**, with estimated General Fund revenue of **\$25,963,238**, expenditure of **\$25,932,051** and a preliminary surplus of **\$31,187**. Personnel was still being reconciled, and transfers, loan payments, insurance and non-departmental costs had not yet been reviewed.
- The City Manager committed to returning in August with the reserves, the interfund transfers and the debt service fully developed.

What Has Happened Since

- **Revenue and expenditure detail were developed line by line** across every fund.
- **The reserves, the interfund transfers, the administrative cost allocation and the debt service were fully developed**, as committed on July 23.
- **Personnel projections were finalized** against the position roster.
- **The five percent and ten percent decrement scenarios were built**, department by department.

Where the Budget Stands

\$16,528,959

General Fund revenue

\$20,546,040

General Fund expenditure

\$4,017,081

Gap

General Fund	Amount
Revenue	\$16,528,959
Expenditure	\$20,546,040
Gap	(\$4,017,081)
Reductions decided, not yet in the model	+\$2,262,088
Remaining gap	(\$1,754,994)

• **Tentative.** The **CRA, Utilities** and **Sanitation** budgets are not final. They are just over half of the base the rate is applied to, so this reimbursement will change.

How We Are Addressing It

The City Manager’s preliminary recommendation has four parts.

Recommendation	What it does
Apply the ten percent reductions	Across every General Fund department, on operating and capital only
Additional operating reductions	Above the ten percent scenarios, where the department submissions allowed
Reduction in force	Filled and vacant positions removed from the Fiscal Year 2027 budget
Contract legal services	The City Attorney position is eliminated and legal services are contracted

01

FY 2027 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT • AUGUST 26, 2026

The Numbers

All funds, then the General Fund. Revenue, expenditure and authorized position levels.

02

FY 2027 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT • AUGUST 26, 2026

Reserves, Transfers and Debt

The items the City Manager committed on July 23 to develop before returning.

03

FY 2027 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT • AUGUST 26, 2026

The Recommendation

What the City Manager recommends, what remains open, and the direction needed tonight.

