CITY OF MOUNT DORA, FLORIDA
CITY COUNCIL BUDGET
WORKSHOP MINUTES
June 8, 2026
City Hall 510 North Baker Street
Mount Dora, Florida 32757

CALL TO ORDER

Having been duly advertised as required by law, at 6:00 p.m., Mayor Homich called to order the City Council Budget Workshop in the City Hall Council Chamber.

MOMENT OF SILENCE & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance were led by Mayor Homich.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

James Homich, Mayor

John Cataldo, Vice-mayor

Cal Rolfson, District 2

Dennis Dawson, District 3

Marc Crail, District 4

Nate Walker, District 5

Doug Bryant, At-large

Also Present

Vince Sandersfeld, City Manager

Matt Dodson, Budget Officer

Jeanann Hand, City Clerk

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Budget Parameters and Fire Assessment

Mr. Sandersfeld introduced Budget Officer Matt Dodson, who presented the information for this meeting.

Mr. Dodson informed the Council that the budget was developed using guiding principles that included: protecting core services, maintaining fiscal discipline, preserving reserves where possible, and strategically prioritizing operating and capital expenditures. The discussion was centered on maintaining core City services while preparing for the potential financial impacts of the proposed statewide property tax amendment. Mr. Dodson presented the proposed budget theme of investing in community priorities while preparing for uncertainty surrounding future property tax revenues.

Council discussed the potential impact of the proposed constitutional amendment that would increase the homestead exemption to $150,000 beginning in 2027 and $250,000 beginning in 2028. Staff advised that, if approved by voters, the amendment could reduce the City's ad valorem revenue by approximately 33 percent in Fiscal Year 2027–2028 and approximately 53 percent the following year. Staff also noted that the proposal would reduce the commercial property assessment cap from 10 percent to 5 percent, further affecting both the City and the Community Redevelopment Agency.

Council discussed the importance of educating residents regarding the role property taxes play in funding municipal services, including police, fire, emergency medical services, infrastructure, parks, debt obligations, retirement costs, and other governmental operations.

Mr. Dodson reviewed the assumptions used in preparing the proposed budget. This included position budgeting and allocation of indirect administrative costs. Healthcare insurance projections were expected to remain generally stable, with a projected 7% increase in clinic costs. Property, casualty, and workers' compensation insurance increases were estimated between 1.8 and 2 percent.

Mr. Dodson presented information explaining the difference between taxes and charges for service.

The preliminary property tax roll showed the total taxable value increased approximately 9.98%. The increase generated approximately $1.274 million in additional ad valorem revenue under current assumptions.

Council also reviewed the City's historical millage rates, noting that the City had operated at the rollback rate for several years before restoring the millage rate to pre-pandemic levels to address capital needs, staffing, and infrastructure investments.

Council and staff discussed the need to be proactive in identifying potential reductions should the property tax amendment be approved. Potential areas discussed included: garbage collection, facility maintenance, library services and community events.

Staff suggested that the appropriate response at this time is to build the FY 2026-27 Budget with discipline.

Council discussed the importance of educating residents regarding the role property taxes play in funding municipal services including police, fire, emergency medical services, infrastructure and parks.

Mr. Dodson stated that a future workshop dedicated solely to the budget reductions and alternative revenue sources might be necessary.

Mr. Dodson presented a slide show showing the impact of FY 25-26 and proposed FY 26-27 taxes on the average resident. Proposed numbers indicate an increase of $41.

Council reviewed the assessment methodology for residential and commercial properties and requested additional information regarding assessments for larger commercial developments.

Mr. Dodson presented slides showing a sample of the Lake County Notice of Proposed Property Taxes and Property Change in Values which showed increases in Countywide and City Taxable Values.

Mr. Dodson then presented the proposed Fire Assessment budget. The Fire Budget consisted of four distinct funds: General Fund Fire Protection, Fire Impact, Fire Assessment and the 2018 Fire Assessment Bond. The General Fund Fire Protection budget will be discussed in detail during the July 20th Governmental Funds workshop.

The proposal is for the residential fire assessment fee to remain unchanged at $239 per dwelling unit. The assessment is projected to generate approximately $2.37 million in revenue and fire impact fees are expected to generate approximately $140,000. Mr. Dodson stated remaining revenues will support fire department operations through transfers to the General Fund.

Mr. Dodson will provide Council with a comparison of the fire assessment for Bristol Lakes under both residential and commercial classifications. Additionally, information regarding fire assessment charges for major commercial properties and other potential revenue sources available to the City will also be provided.

Mr. Dodson will prepare a detailed allocation of Fire Assessment revenues, including debt service, General Fund transfers, administrative costs, professional services, and capital expenditures, for the July budget workshop.

The June 16th City Council agenda will have the Preliminary Fire Assessment Fee Resolution.

Staff will prepare an alternate Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget scenario assuming approval of the November property tax amendment, to be presented at the July budget workshop. This will include recommended service reductions as well as potential fee increases.

Council requested staff acquire guidance from the Florida League of Cities regarding permissible communications concerning the proposed November property tax amendment.

Council and staff discussed developing a prioritized list of municipal services and programs that would be reduced or eliminated under lower revenue scenarios.

Council reiterated the importance of maintaining service levels whenever possible while preparing contingency plans should significant property tax reductions occur.

Mr. Dodson reviewed dates for upcoming meetings, workshops and public hearings. Final budget dates in September were also reviewed.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at approximately 7:08 p.m.

JAMES HOMICH, MAYOR
CITY OF MOUNT DORA

JEANANN HAND, CITY CLERK