MANATEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY LIAISON COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 5TH FLOOR, MANATEE ROOM
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida
June 23, 2026

Present were:
David Otterness, Chairman
Jeff Covert, Vice-Chairman
Don Berg
John Settineri

Present were:
Charlie Bishop, County Administrator
Brent Anderson, Government Relations
Crosley Jones, Legislative Aide
Vicki Tessmer, Board Records Supervisor, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of the Circuit Court

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Otterness called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

INVOCATION

Chairman Otterness delivered the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Otterness led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES

A motion was made by Member Berg, seconded by Member Covert, and carried 4-0, to approve the minutes of May 25, 2026.

Chairman Otterness announced the GELC will present their report to the Board of County Commissioners on July 28, 2026.

AGENDA GE20260623DOC001

2. **LETTER TO FLORIDA CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

Brent Anderson, Government Relations, noted staff is still waiting for a response from the State.

PROPERTY TAX

Brent Anderson, Government Relations, provided a review of the proposed property tax referendum and explained the Commissioners are considering the possibility of the referendum passing and how it will affect the County.

Discussion ensued regarding the additional homestead exemption amount will increase to $150,000 in 2027, increasing by an additional $100,000 in 2028, and the Governor could call a special session for the roll out if it passes.

3. **QUESTION AND ANSWER WITH CHARLIE BISHOP, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

Member Settineri relayed the approach the Committee took to review Capital Improvement Plan Projects (Contracts), the Board needs timely updates on the CIP, review the terms, non-refundable deposits, have more centralized overview, assign a team to each project, status reports on larger projects, office space, and the Countywide trail master plan with funding coming from the State and federal governments.

Charlie Bishop, County Administrator, explained Commissioners receive monthly updates on the CIP projects, 9000 Town Center Parkway building, City of Bradenton may be leasing two floors of the County Administrative Building, Employee Health Benefits plans to move to the 9000 Building, and to implement the no camping ordinance Public Works moved out of their building to use it as a homeless shelter. The Gateway Trail is funded by the federal government.

Discussion continued regarding addressing costs for projects, grants, and pass-through items that are not funded with ad valorem taxes.

Mr. Settineri addressed Tourist Development Council (TDC) Taxes, converting the old jail downtown to a convention center, be more creative on using TDC funds, tourist taxes are limited in use, using TDC funds for Mixon Farms, part of TDC funds can be used for infrastructure, but there are certain restrictions that apply, but research using these funds for infrastructure, the Ferries, and encouraged looking into the how to further use TDC funds.

Mr. Bishop explained TDC funds have never been used for infrastructure, the TDC presents their recommendations to the Board for approval, planning for a new Ice Palace at Lakewood Ranch, some TDC funds are used for Premier Sports Campus, the County Attorney's office reviews the spending of TDC funds, and using a portion of TDC funds for repairs to the Maritime Museum. Gas Taxes are used for roads.

Mr. Settineri continued to address the reserves and recommended the Board be further educated on line-items in the reserves, questioned the 20 percent reserves, and CIP projects.

Mr. Bishop further explained the CIP is constantly vetted by the Board, and noted the referendum is making the County look at all projects. Utilities are an enterprise fund. There must be money in the bank to pay for certain upkeep of County facilities as specified in the CIP.

Discussion ensued regarding certain contingencies, government accounting standards, incorrect information regarding the budget and reserves being provided by citizens, funds are allowed to be reallocated from one project to another in the CIP as budget amendment resolutions, as long as a project is in the CIP, there needs to be funds available, andthe funds are balanced.

Mr. Berg addressed the possibility of doing a feasibility study on consolidating purchasing with all the local governments, and interlocal agreements.

Mr. Bishop acknowledged there may be somethings such as fleet and Human Resources that could be consolidated but noted there may be issues where each agency has their funding allocated.

Chairman Otterness continued to address interlocal agreements with local governments, educating the public, this is the best way to find efficiencies, collaborate with the School District of Manatee County by consolidating resources and assets, standardize reports, how funds are allocated, what are the terms for certain interlocal agreements, have the information available regarding each partner, database of all interlocal agreements, some governments may be providing more funding then others, provide follow-up reports, University Parkway agreement with Sarasota County, standardized interlocal agreements, information technology interlocal agreement, and Lake Manatee is a resource.

Mr. Bishop responded that all interlocal agreements are reviewed by the County Attorney's office.

Discussion ensued regarding a SharePoint site for interlocal agreement, sharing conduit with the School District and City of Palmetto, high schools may utilize County Parks, the County does not use Memorandums of Understanding for agreements with municipalities, good efficiency to share facilities with other entities, future agreement with the City of Bradenton related to the County Administrative building, limited opportunities with the School Board, and search for interlocal agreements using the Clerk's Office.

Mr. Covert addressed growth, expenditures related to storms, expenses grew by 7.12 percent, the Manatee Sheriff's Office growth, and requests for services have increased with growth.

Mr. Bishop noted school crossing guards are paid by the School District.

Discussion ensued regarding responsible growth, and expenses have reasoning behind them.

Mr. Bishop referenced the dollar bill visual representation of the allocation of ad valorem taxes, and the DOGE report regarding wasteful spending may have been a precursor for the property tax referendum.

Discussion ensued regarding if there is any research being done on the School District budget, there is a yearly meeting with School District and ideas are shared, but the County does not have a say on the School District budget, 700 Full Time Employees could be at stake for cuts, cutting property taxes cuts services, what the general fund goes to.

Mr. Bishop thanked the GELC for their time and insights. He noted saving funds by creating the Government Relations department, and staff works with the municipalities.

Discussion ensued regarding changing the name of the Government Relations department as lobbying is just a small part of their duties, and consolidating the 311 call center under one team.

4. **GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY LIASON COMMITTEE (GELC) REPORT**

Mr. Anderson reviewed the report and the order of presentation. Staff will finalize final report, and a summary of requests can be added to the last slide. The agenda package must be submitted by July 9, and they will forward the report to the Members for their final review prior to July 9.

5. **SUBMITTED CITIZEN COMMENTS**
There were no submitted comments.

6. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**
There being no citizen comment, Chairman Otterness closed citizen comments.

7. **MEMBER COMMENTS**
Members feel satisfied with the outcome of the GELC findings and final report and thanked everyone for their time.

8. **ADJOURN**
There being no further business, Chairman Otterness adjourned the meeting at 11:16 a.m.

Minutes Approved: ____________________