

**MANATEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY LIAISON COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 5TH FLOOR, MANATEE ROOM
1112 Manatee Avenue West
Bradenton, Florida
November 10, 2025**

Meeting video link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUlgjuGhS-qV966RU2Z7AtA>

Present were:

Mark Stanoch, Chairman
David Otterness, Vice-Chairman
Don Berg
John Settineri
Jeff Covert

Present were:

Stephanie Garrison, Government Relation Director
Brent Anderson, Government Relations
Crosley Jones, Legislative Aide
Jackie Edouard, Board Records Clerk I, Clerk of the Circuit Court

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

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

INVOCATION



Chairman Stanoch delivered the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE



Chairman Stanoch led the Pledge of Allegiance.



New member Jeff Covert was welcomed, Member Covert briefly introduced himself and gave details of his credentials.

**AGENDA
MINUTES**

BC20251110DOC001



Member Settineri requested the minutes to reflect the changes that the \$19.64 million in grants are funded by a special mileage, that come from the Children Service Advisory Board (CSAB) (not all of this funding is for Children's Services, and a note was made in the October 28 minutes reflecting this.



A motion was made by Member Settineri, seconded by Member Otterness, and carried 5-0 to approve the minutes as amended with the clarification of the \$19.64 million in grants comes from a special millage from CSAB for October 28, 2025 meeting.

2. **LETTER TO FLORIDA CFO WAS SENT ON 11/5/2025**



Discussion ensued, regarding the letter sent to Chief Financial Officer of Florida (CFO) Blaise Ingoglia in response to his press conference, it was signed by all members except Member Covert. The letter requested more details on how the Board derives the reported numbers. The letter was both emailed and mailed to Mr. Ingoglia's regional staff. The response time is unknown, but estimated at about 30 days. Staff confirmed that the letters were received.

BC20251110DOC002

3. **COUNTY DISCUSSION WITH COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR CHARLIE BISHOP**

 Discussion regarding a comparative look at Manatee County's efficiency relative to other counties, it was established that due to variations in operation including the jail, Sheriff's budget, and structural differences a direct, comprehensive comparison is challenging, despite the difficulty in comparison, an analysis against 10 counties indicated that Manatee County ranked in the bottom third across all efficiency categories, with a substantial budget of \$2.1 billion, realistic avenues for cuts were discussed, which would inevitably impact services, libraries were used as an example of potential service reduction, particularly questioning the need to maintain facilities near the local college where library cards are already accepted for use, a collaboration with State College of Florida was attempted but never finalized, beaches are a valuable asset, a second cleaning shift was added, as ending maintenance at 3:00 p.m., was deemed impractical, a need for greater collaboration with the School Board was identified, particularly for field usage, grant opportunities and potential recouping of funds, and a current collaboration for a park at King Middle School is in process.

 Charlie Bishop, County Administrator, discussed being a strong advocate of implementing paid parking at the beaches, efforts to implement centralization of operations and consolidate fuel sites across the county are still in progress, the County plans to utilize Artificial Intelligence (AI) more extensively, with the State inviting Manatee County to be part of a pilot program for AI usage. The County is also looking at other personal services for county employees. The grant team is actively working on securing approximately \$7 million in grants, updates were provided on significant County projects, the Lorraine Road project is currently a priority, but has been delayed due to the focus on other projects the Board deemed as a higher priority, the Mixon project is not yet finalized, and the DeSoto Bridge replacement has been pushed back to 2027. Tourism development tax and funding opportunities will undergo a further review.

 Discussion concluded that the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) report and internal staff discussions on the subsequent plan were reviewed, the report will be shared with the Government Efficiency Liaison Committee (GELC), Sheila McLean Chief Financial Officer (CFO) will provide more detailed information on the official budget process, committee will have the same access as Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), to the relevant budget report, cost-saving efforts were outlined, which includes a process to identify every full-time employee (FTE) position, implementing a check-and-balance system to determine position necessity, and considering a hiring freeze without eliminating existing roles, an outside consultant was hired to evaluate the structure and usage of IT, findings will be presented to the GELC, space usage at 9000 Town Center Pkwy, constant growth at the Judicial Center necessitates moves, the Chief Judge has directed the relocation of the Public Defender's office from the Judicial Center, the State Attorney has requested another floor in the County Administration Building, and Probation will also be moved, The County will save between \$60 and \$100 million by not funding the parking garage, which has an unfunded mandate, the garage project will instead be placed on the street as a public-private partnership, and because there are currently no bidders due to excessive constraints, the project's requirements will be loosened and revised.

Mr. Bishop offered to attend the GE Committee meetings quarterly to discuss relevant topics as needed.

4. **CFO/DOGE PRESENTATION**

 Chairman Stanoch, utilized a slideshow presentation to discuss the response to CFO Ingoglia and reporting findings. Recently, Mr. Ingoglia announced over \$112 million in excessive and wasteful spending in the Manatee County Budget. The increase in the general fund, driven by personnel increases, is considered the reason for the reported overspending. Manatee County's latest headcount, as of October, was discussed, alongside an update on how the Hernando County Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) Team is reviewing their County's staffing levels.

 Discussion ensued regarding questions raised about whether the County is overstaffed, the mail courier position was used as an example, there was concern about the necessity of this position and whether the Clerk's Office could pick up its own mail, it was also asked if volunteer positions could be considered, looking at Hernando County's head count, but also at their areas of interest, deliverables, and process, possibility of using AI, other areas of interest include the number of purchase orders processed, records requests and permits, and the committee is considering how efficiently staff handles work and aims to identify the main processes for better flow or consolidation.

 Mr. Stanoch continued the presentation, and when determining areas of interest, the committee should focus on areas where there is a high probability of duplication or a significant opportunity for consolidation. The initial areas of interest were purchasing, grants, and the tourism tax. The next step is to determine the type of deliverable and how and to whom it will be released. A potential conflict was discovered while reviewing grants awarded by the CSAB during FY2024-25, two grants that were awarded to Palmetto Youth Center warranted further review, one for \$271,011 and one for \$181,899. The grants were for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) which is an aggressive behavior modification technique associated with DEI indoctrination. A memorandum on SEL and examination under Florida Law was entered into the record. It has been banned in the State of Florida and reportedly against the law and should not have been approved.

 Discussion continued regarding a previous statement by Commissioner Ballard, that CSAB funds should have stipulations restricting disbursement to illegal alien children, but it is unknown if a legal option was considered when the statement was made, federal law restricts denying services for a person's health and welfare, such as medical needs, which cannot be denied to save the life of an illegal alien, this may or may not apply to CSAB funds, the goal is to ensure the funds are used in accordance with Florida law. The Palmetto Youth Center grants has expired, and it is unknown if the funds have been spent.

 Mr. Stanoch continued the presentation, reviewing the necessary steps to report findings and establish procedures to prevent similar approvals in the future.

 Discussion concluded that the committee will report any recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners, before sharing any findings, it was suggested to talk with the Human Services Director, Sara Brown before formally reporting any findings, the committee will receive a list of all citizen groups, sorted by those that request spending and those that do not, the County Attorney will be asked to review the finding and advise on the next steps, and the committee wants to understand if the finding shows mismanagement or wasteful spending.

 A motion was made by Member Otterness, seconded by Member Covert, and carried 5-0 to provide the information to staff to present to the County Attorney to review and give a legal opinion based on the two grant findings related to the SEL portion.

 Mr. Stanoch concluded his presentation noting other areas of interest should include IT spending where it was admitted in FY25 that managing these expenses are challenging. BC20251110DOC003

5. **INFORMATION REQUEST - FLORIDA CFO PRESENTATION**

 Discussion ensued regarding an article, "Did Manatee County make 'wasteful' hires as population spiked? See the numbers", FY25 employee hires were highlighted, noting that public safety had the largest number of new hires, Sheila McLean, CFO, is working on getting the final budget details and digital access will be given to the committee, she is also working on getting answers to questions that were asked in the previous meeting, Ms. McLean will present findings at an upcoming meeting, possibly in January, and a standardized line of questioning for each department will be created related to staffing, or more broadly, to department structure. BC20251110DOC004

6. **DISCUSSION - FUTURE AREAS OF INTEREST**

 Brent Anderson noted Information Technology discussion will take place in December 2025. Sheila McLean, CFO, will tentatively present finding at the January 2026 meeting. Staff is planning for Sara Brown from Community and Veterans Services will present at an upcoming meeting. The committee agreed to limit presentations to one speaker per meeting to ensure time for discussion. Cory Stuttee, Deputy County Administrator, who has expertise in IT and financial management, will be asked to attend a future meeting. More details on the AI pilot program are expected to be presented. The proposed meeting dates for the entire 2026 calendar year will be presented to the committee to review.

7. **DISCUSSION - HOW TO HANDLE PUBLIC COMMENT RESPONSES**

 Discussion deferred to December meeting.

8. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

 There being no citizen comments, Chairman Stanoch closed public comments.

9. **MEMBER COMMENTS.**

 Chairman Stanoch, welcomed Member Covert.

There being no further member comments, Chairman Stanoch closed public comments.

10. **ADJOURN**

 There being no further business, Chairman Stanoch adjourned the meeting at 12:02 p.m.

Minutes Approved: December 9, 2025