

# MINUTES CITIZEN BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD

**Monday, February 23, 2026**

The regular meeting of the CITIZEN BUDGET ADVISORY BOARD was called to order by Chair Barnett at 6:32 PM on **Monday, February 23, 2026**, in The Frank Art Gallery, second floor.

**Present:** Chair Scott Barnett, Vice Chair Frank Girardi and Members, Hugo Alvarez William Huff, Kennedy Rosario, Carolina Veira, Maguana Jean, Brandon Carrero, and Jorge Rodriguez.

**Absent:** Member Raul Ruiz.

**Also Present:** City Manager Charles Dodge, Liaison and Assistant City Manager Lisa Chong, Lesley Whyte, Thomas Petrero-Fire Department, Assistant City Attorney Quentin Morgan, and Board Secretary Marlene Graham.

**Mayor Angelo Castillo** and Assistant City Manager Jonathan Bonilla were also present.

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## MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Barnett called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM

**ROLL CALL:** The Board Secretary called the roll and declared a quorum. Member Carrero arrived at 6:50 pm.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The board approved the meeting minutes of January 22, 2026.

- **Motion** was made by **Member Rodriguez**, seconded by **Vice Chair Girardi**, to approve the board meeting minutes of January 22, 2026. **The motion passed unanimously.**

**CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:** Liaison Lisa Chong presented the City Manager's report on the Interim Financial Statements for the three months ending December 31, 2025, reviewing City Wide Revenues, Expenditures, General Fund Revenues and Expenditures, Road and Bridge Fund Revenues and Expenditures, Utility Fund Statement of Revenues and Expenses, and Interim Financials.

Chair Barnett spoke on how the Citizen Budget Advisory Board can effectively engage the City Commission regarding priority recommendations. He commended Property Tax Appraiser Marty Kiar's presentation at the Commission Meeting on February 18, 2026, the efforts of City staff, and the considerations of the Commission

regarding exploring strategies to offset the financial impact of state legislation on property tax reform on the City.

Chair Barnett introduced Mayor Castillo who addressed the board and expressed concern about State legislation that could eliminate property taxes without a plan to replace revenue for cities and towns to operate. He spoke on the possible impacts on the City's budget, affordability in the economy and the big picture issues that could result from the elimination of the Property Tax, in particular, reduction in revenues that provide public safety services, police and fire, safe parks, upkeep of roads and public rights of way among other streams of revenue that support quality of life and affordability in Pembroke Pines and other cities. He spoke on the City's implementation of its strategic plan and review of the City's internal controls.

Board members asked questions and discussed the implications of a comprehensive plan for revenue replacement that poses significant financial risks to cities. Board members agreed that public awareness and understanding of tax proposals are crucial for informed community decisions. Mayor Castillo pointed out that legal rules exist on how elected officials communicate information on issues to be placed on the ballot, requiring officials to educate rather than advocate. Assistant City Attorney Quentin advised that, like the elected officials, board members who address the legislation publicly would be constrained on how to communicate with the public to prevent advocating rather than educating citizens about ballot initiatives.

Member Petrero of the City's Fire Department referred to the Florida House of Representatives' bill CS/CS/HJR 203 on the Elimination of Non-school Property for Homesteads.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Member Carrero discussed the idea of producing a policy directive using best- and worst-case scenarios as a basis for the board to communicate its recommendations for action to the Commission.

- **Motion** was made by **Member Carrero**, seconded by **Member Huff**, to recommend that as a part of the budget process, City Commission direct city staff to create two budget scenarios: one best case and one worst case for better planning in anticipation of property tax reform. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Member Jean expressed concerns about the challenges of communicating information about action and implementation to residents to ensure a clear simple message about the impacts of revenue reduction on the City's budget and information on actions of the board and the Commission.

- **Motion** was made by **Member Jean**, seconded by **Member Veira**, to approve the preparation of an educational video for social media by City staff to inform the community about new State laws that could eliminate property taxes without replacement revenue, and the serious economic consequences and financial impacts on the community if the law were adopted. **The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA:**

Chair Barnett spoke about department presentations on upcoming meeting agendas. Charter Schools will be on the March agenda. Procurement Department will be on the April agenda.

**ABSENCES:** The board excused the absence of Member Alvarez.

- **Motion** was made by **Member Carrero**, seconded by **Member Jean**, to excuse the absence of Member Alvarez from the February 23, 2026 board meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

- **Motion** was made by **Member Veira**, seconded by **Member Huff**, to adjourn the meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

**NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026.**

Respectfully submitted by:

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Marlene Graham, Board Secretary  
City of Pembroke Pines, FL

**APPROVED: 3/16/2026**