

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FRIENDSWOOD
JULY 12, 2025**

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FRIENDSWOOD MET IN A SPECIAL MEETING ON SATURDAY, JULY 12, 2025, IN THE PUBLIC WORKS CONFERENCE ROOM, LOCATED IN THE BLACKHAWK FACILITY, 15355 BLACKHAWK BOULEVARD, FRIENDSWOOD, TEXAS, WITH THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS PRESENT CONSTITUTING A QUORUM:

John Ellisor	Councilmember
Sally Branson	Councilmember
Robert J. Griffon	Councilmember
Joe Matranga	Mayor Pro Tem
Michael P. Ross	Councilmember
Mike Foreman	Mayor
Morad Kabiri	City Manager
Karen Horner	City Attorney
Raquel Martinez	City Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Foreman called the meeting to order with a quorum present at 8:02 A.M. All members were present with the exception of Councilmember Trish Hanks who was absent.

2. INVOCATION

Councilmember John Ellisor led the invocation.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Foreman led the Pledge of Allegiance of the United States and to the State of Texas.

4. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND REPORTS

Mayor Foreman opened the comments by thanking staff for their work preparing the budget. Councilmember Ellisor reflected on his experience serving his second year on the City Council and expressed his appreciation in working alongside city staff and the members of Council, calling the experience positive and collaborative. Mayor Pro Tem Matranga thanked everyone present and acknowledged the hard work put in by staff behind the scenes to create the budget document, which is a huge endeavor that involves many hours of work throughout the organization. Councilmembers Branson and Griffon echoed the sentiment and expressed their appreciation to staff. Councilmember Ross reiterated thanks to the staff and acknowledged his own position as the "new guy," apologizing in advance for asking many questions throughout the retreat.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one who signed up to speak for a public comment.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS RELATED TO CITY COUNCIL

- A. Discuss an overview of the past Council retreats and possible updates related to the Council's mission statement, vision, goals, and strategic plans; community initiatives; communications strategies; HOA outreach; senior living facilities; EMS lift assist; and incentives to encourage staff members to reside within the city limits.**

City Manager Morad Kabiri provided an overview of past Council retreats and possible updates related to the Council's mission statement, vision, goals, strategic plans, etc. with the following highlights:

COUNCIL VISION & MISSION REVIEW

- Vision Statement (Adopted July 1, 2024): *"The Friendswood City Council is dedicated to providing quality public services, fostering a vibrant economic climate, and ensuring robust emergency operations and fiscal responsibility."*
- Goals: Maintain high service levels, diversify tax base, and complete prior-year initiatives.

Mayor Foreman and Councilmember Branson supported the existing vision statement. Councilmember Ross noted that it was missing a reference to Friendswood's identity as a family-centric community.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

- Key Engagement Channels (2024–2025): Facebook, email blasts, text alerts, website updates, and in-person engagement at community events
- How Councilmembers Can Help:
 - Engage on social media (like, comment, share)
 - Register for emergency notifications
 - Promote City boards
 - Attend HOA meetings
 - Refer questions to Staff for accuracy
- Major Weather Events Communication Stats:
 - Hurricane Beryl (July 2024) – 58 Facebook posts, 6 email blasts, 6 text messages, 3 phone calls, and 3 website updates
 - Winter Weather (Jan 2025) – 16 Facebook posts, 3 email blasts, 1 text message, 1 phone call, and 1 website update

The councilmembers asked about methods of emergency communication beyond digital platforms, particularly if power or cellular service is lost. Staff acknowledged this concern and listed fallback strategies, such as radio station outreach, promoting public facilities like the Library for Wi-Fi/power, reader boards, physical flyers at open businesses, and even door-to-door outreach when necessary. With regard to social media and per policy, Mr. Kabiri and Police Chief Josh Rodgers took a moment to address that the City refrains from posting on pages that are not officially run by the City.

HOA OUTREACH INITIATIVE

- Problem: Previously outdated HOA contact list, making communication difficult.
- Solution: Created a live HOA contact database that is updated by submitting an online form.

SENIOR LIVING & EMS LIFT ASSIST

- Key Statistic: 67% of EMS calls involve residents aged 55+.
- Concern: High frequency of fall calls requesting Fire Department or EMS.

- Implication: Need for senior-focused EMS planning and potential long-term solutions.

Anecdotes were shared by councilmembers whose family members received help from EMS and praised the service. As these calls (particularly from senior facilities) use a considerable amount of the City's capacity and resources, the councilmembers floated ideas, such as charging frequent users, applying a facility-level fee, or creating protocols for senior centers. Staff emphasized that any charge would need to be uniformly applied citywide, which would affect single-family residents. Councilmember Branson relayed that it would seem senior facilities would get charged a penalty. As this was a small percentage of calls overall, she was not sure if this is where they should be focusing their attention.

EMPLOYEE RESIDENCY INCENTIVES

- Current Residency Rate: Only 26% (66 of 249 full-time employees) live in Friendswood
- Benefits of Local Residency:
 - Employees invested in the community
 - Reduced commute time
 - Potential for faster response times in emergencies
 - Increased local spending
 - Increased employee visibility to residents*
- Challenges:
 - Housing Costs in Friendswood – median sold-home price \$426,000
 - Limited rental options
 - Many employees priced out of market
 - Not an equitable way to initiate program city-wide
 - Difficulty in recapturing incentives upon employee's departure
 - Increased employee visibility to residents* (employees never feel “off the clock”)
- Possible Incentive Programs:
 - Partner with homebuilders & developers to offer housing and service discounts to employees
 - Provide relocation assistance for new employees
 - Increase City participation in employee benefits (expand insurance to 100% coverage)
 - Any employee residency incentive must be budgeted for and agreed upon prior to service (longevity pay)

Council acknowledged the appeal of having more city employees live locally, as there would be benefits such as stronger community ties and faster emergency response. However, concerns about employees' interest and feasibility were weighed in their discussion.

At 9:15 A.M., Mayor Foreman recessed the meeting for a short break and later reconvened at 9:21 A.M.

Additional discussion ensued, prompted by Mayor Pro Tem Matranga, regarding whether the City should help provide homeowners associations (HOA) with flock cameras. Mr. Kabiri suggested the best way to handle this matter is if the Police Department identifies areas where they feel they are lacking. On a case-by-case basis, they can bring a license agreement to Council to determine if it would be advantages for the City to partner with the HOA.

B. Discuss the Council liaison appointments and duties, the Appointment Policy, and selection of a Mayor Pro Tem.

The Mayor opened the item by announcing his nomination of Councilmember John Ellisor as Mayor Pro Tem for FY 25-26, recognizing the excellent job done by Mayor Pro Tem Matranga for FY 23-24. Councilmember Branson voiced her support for the nomination. Mayor Forman then proceeded to discuss the Council liaison roles, as follows:

COUNCIL LIAISON ROLES

COMMITTEE	COUNCIL MEMBER	STAFF LIAISON	SCHEDULE
Clear Creek Watershed Steering Committee	Robert Griffon (Alt. Trish Hanks)	N/A	2nd Tuesday of every other month at 11:00 a.m., virtually
Community & Economic Development Committee (CEDC)	Sally Branson (Alt. Michael Ross)	Aubrey Harbin, Becky Bennett, Steven Rhea	1st Wednesday of every month at 4:00 p.m., City Council Chamber, City Hall
4th of July Steering Committee	Trish Hanks (Alt. Joe Matranga)	Megan Childers, James Toney	3rd Wednesday of every month at 6:00 p.m., CMO Conference Room, City Hall
Galveston County Consolidated Drainage District	Robert Griffon (Alt. Trish Hanks)	Jil Arias	2nd Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m., District Office, 1605 Whitaker Dr
Gulf Coast Authority	Mike Foreman (Alt. John Ellisor)	N/A	2nd Thursday of every month at 5:30 p.m., 910 Bay Area Blvd, Houston
H-GAC	Sally Branson (Alt. Mike Foreman)	Morad Kabiri, Jil Arias	3rd Tuesday of every month at 10:00 a.m., 3555 Timmons Ln., Houston
Keep Friendswood Beautiful (KFB)	Trish Hanks (Alt. Michael Ross)	Megan Childers, James Toney	4th Tuesday of every month at 8:00 p.m., CMO Conference Room, City Hall
Library Board	Michael Ross (Alt. Joe Matranga)	Matt Riley, Lisa Wilkins	3rd Tuesday of every month at 6:00 p.m., Library Public Library, 416 S Friendswood Dr
Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z)	Joe Matranga (Alt. Trish Hanks)	Aubrey Harbin, Becky Bennett	2nd and 4th Thursday of every month at 8:00 p.m., City Council Chamber
Senior Citizens Advisory Committee	Robert Griffon (Alt. Mike Foreman)	Shadey Caraveo-Saldaña	2nd Monday of every month at 10:00 a.m., Activities Building, 416 Morningside Dr
Zoning Board of Adjustment & Appeals (ZBOA)	Joe Matranga (Alt. John Ellisor)	Aubrey Harbin, Becky Bennett	As needed, City Council Chamber, City Hall

Mayor Foreman clarified the purpose of liaisons is to serve as a conduit of information between the Council and the board, commission, or committee. Being a liaison does not mean they are a member of that body. They are not there to participate in debate, drive the meeting, or advocate for their personal agenda. Their role is to observe, report, and, if asked, provide updates on relevant actions or decisions taken by Council. There was broad consensus that the role of a liaison is observational, not authoritative.

APPOINTMENT POLICY REVIEW

- Definition: Advisory boards are volunteer-based entities.
- Proposed Changes: Eliminate the residency requirement for Keep Friendswood Beautiful (KFB) and 4th of July Steering Committee.

Staff addressed a possible adjustment for Council to consider to their appointment policy is the residency requirement for two specific boards: the 4th of July Steering Committee and Keep Friendswood Beautiful (KFB). These two were noted to have consistently been a struggle to fill. Unlike other boards that attract a lot of interest, these two boards do not generate the same level of enthusiasm. The policy was last updated about three or four years ago when Former Councilmember John Scott felt strongly that only Friendswood residents should serve on those two boards. While the intent was clear, the practical impact has been

ongoing difficulty in sustaining volunteer engagement. Mayor Foreman requested to put this on the next agenda to consider this change at their next City Council Meeting.

C. Discuss the composition and appointment of a Bond Election Ad Hoc Committee and the proposed Bond Election to be held on November 3, 2026.

City Manager Morad Kabiri prompted Council's discussion on the composition and appointment of a Bond Election Ad Hoc Committee and the proposed Bond Election to be held on November 3, 2026, with the following highlights:

BOND ELECTION OVERVIEW

- Proposed Election Date: November 3, 2026
- Purpose of Discussion: Begin planning timeline for community input, project prioritization, and education. Also, formally initiate committee creation and timeline coordination.

Staff began by noting that the City is considering a potential bond election in November 2026. One reason no bond was proposed for 2025 is due to overlapping elections: Galveston County held one in May, and FISD is planning one for November. Given that, it is uncertain what the community's appetite will be for another bond election so soon. However, staff emphasized that a number of capital projects have been building up in the queue for years that, at some point, need to be brought before voters for consideration.

Should a 2026 Bond Election be pursued, the staff recommended the formation of a Bond Election Ad Hoc Committee tasked with: (1) evaluating the city's infrastructure and capital project needs, (2) gauging public interest and feasibility, and (3) formulating a recommendation for Council's consideration.

BOND ELECTION AD HOC COMMITTEE

- Composition: 15 members, appointed by the City Council on August 4, 2025
- Eligibility Criteria: Must be Friendswood residents
 - Preference given to those with: Volunteer experience, service on City boards, and or completion of the Friendswood Academy
- Timeline for Committee Work:
 - August 2025 – March 2026: Monthly meetings and evaluations
 - April 2026: Final report to be presented to City Council
 - Goal: Establish clear project priorities and inform the public ahead of the election

Staff and Council discussed potential candidates before moving onto the next item.

D. Discuss the City Council's Rules of Procedure, including procedures concerning a Vice Mayor Pro Tem; the posting of agendas, notices, and meeting dates/times; and executive sessions.

City Attorney Karen Horner introduced the item relaying that each year staff reviews the City Council Rules and Procedures to determine if any adjustments or updates are needed. This year, staff identified the following items worth addressing:

Vice Mayor Pro Tem

- Consider adding the Vice Mayor Pro Tem to serve in situations where neither the Mayor nor Mayor Pro Tem are available.
- Consider authorizing the Mayor to appoint the Vice Mayor Pro Tem.

The Council voiced their support for the suggestion as presented by staff.

Meeting Notice Requirement and Meeting Date

- Consider changing the City Council's regular meeting date to accommodate new Open Meetings Act rules, specifically HB 1522, by which the meeting notice requirements changed from calendar days to business days.

Council favored keeping their meeting date the first Monday of the month. Staff communicated expectations as keeping the current setup would limit Council's ability to make changes to agendas.

Executive Sessions

- Consider including best practices concerning executive session by aligning the rules with Section 551.146 of the Texas Government Code, pertaining to the confidentiality of executive sessions.

The Council agreed to the principle that what happens in executive sessions stays in executive sessions.

Community Interest and Liaison Reports

- Reports not received within the designated time period in which to submit a request for an agenda item regarding liaison reports will be added to the next Council agenda.

At 10:15 A.M., Mayor Foreman recessed the meeting for a short break and later reconvened at 10:24 A.M.

7. DISCUSS ITEMS RELATED TO CITY OPERATIONS

A. Discuss the City of Friendswood budget process, plans and overview of past, current and proposed budgets.

Finance Director Rhonda Boskas provided Council with a preliminary overview of the City of Friendswood upcoming budget with the following highlights:

VISION & BUDGET GOALS

- Vision Statement (Adopted July 1, 2024): *"The Friendswood City Council is dedicated to providing quality public services, fostering a vibrant economic climate, and ensuring robust emergency operations and fiscal responsibility."*
- Goals: maintain high-level service (base-funded), investing in the diversification our tax base, and fulfill prior year initiatives.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

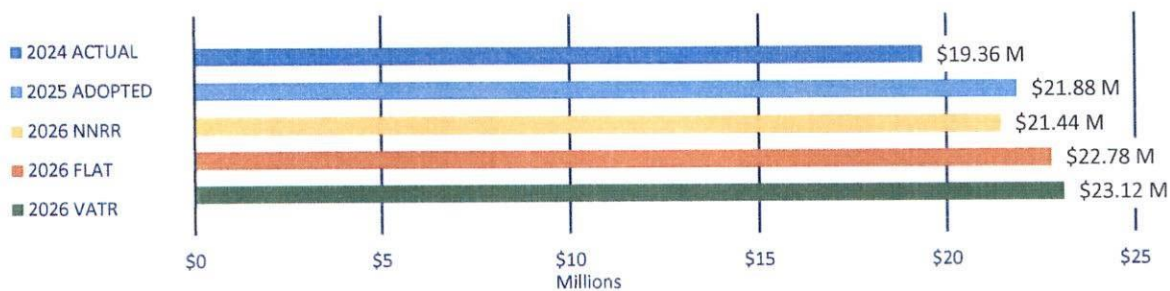
- Departments submit Decision Packages and base budgets
- Budget Team meets to review proposals and "Forces at Work"
- Packages are ranked by department directors
- City Council provides direction after seeing key budget drivers
- Property values are certified → tax rate is adjusted accordingly

GENERAL FUND

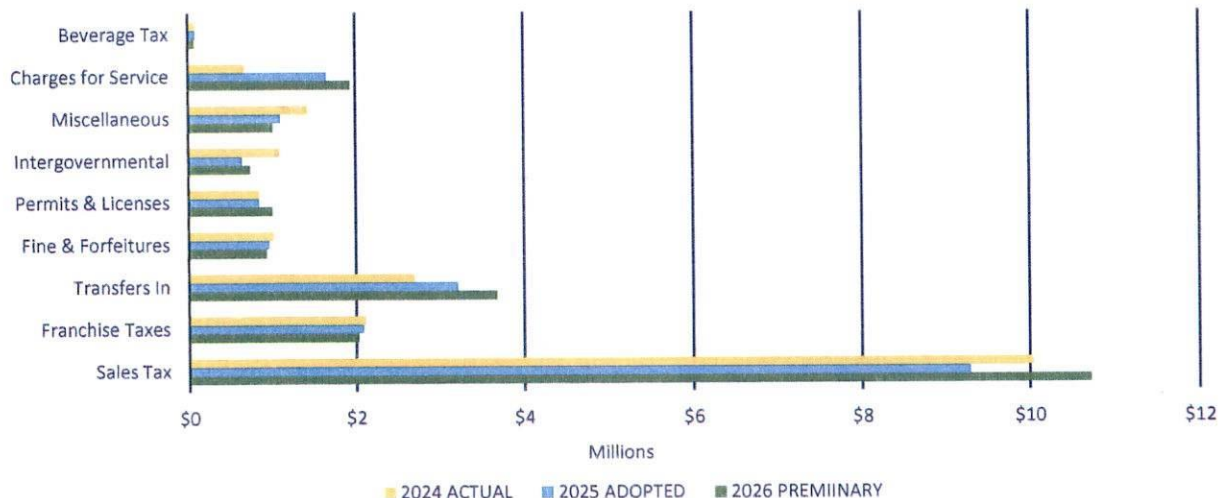
- Total Expenditures: ~\$43.9M
- Key Budget Drivers:

- Personnel: \$1.4M for merit increases
- Insurance: \$60K in increases
- FVFD: \$80K contract + \$2.47M capital equipment
- Capital Equipment Leases: \$1.5M
- Deferred Maintenance: \$500K
- Forces at Work: ~\$432K in additional external pressures
- Unfunded Requests & Equipment: Some capital items remain pending if funds become available
- Tax Rate Scenarios:
 - No New Revenue Rate (NNRR): \$0.4914 (insufficient to meet base budget)
 - Flat Rate: \$0.5147
 - Voter-Approved Tax Rate (VATR): \$0.5207 → Likely proposed rate
 - Debt Obligation: \$6.6M, up \$700K from FY25
- General Fund Balance: ~\$13.3M
- Capital Improvement Fund Net Balance: -\$1.48M (Deficit)

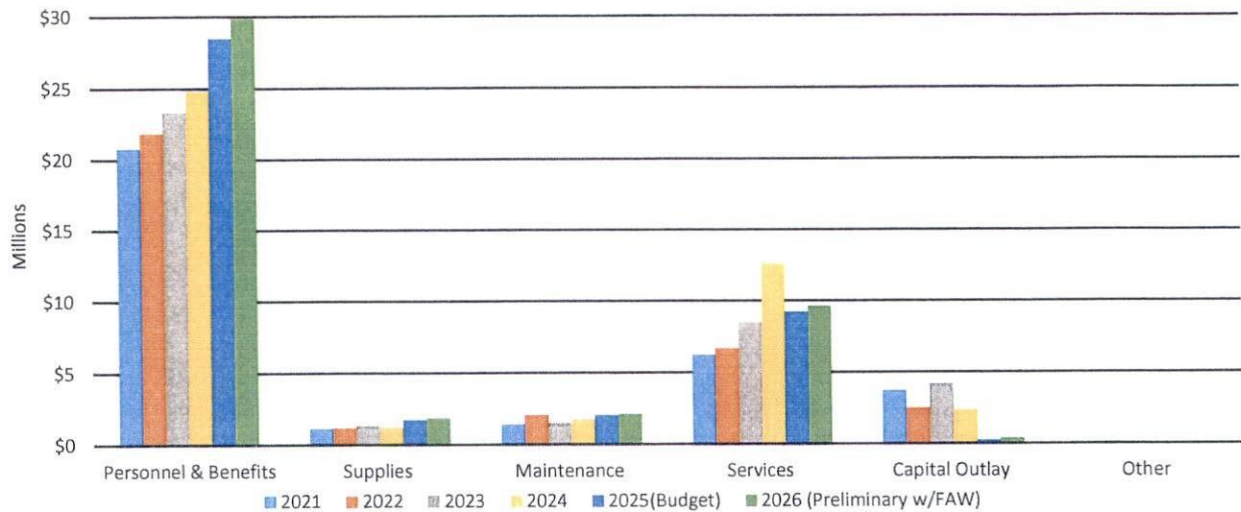
PROPERTY TAX REVENUE COMPARISON



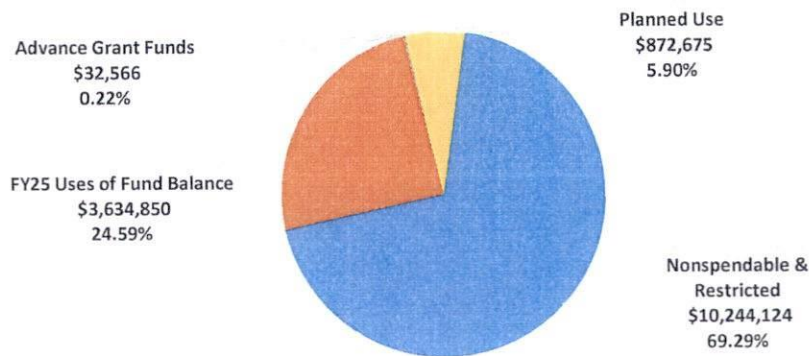
OTHER GENERAL FUND REVENUES ~ \$18.5M



GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY



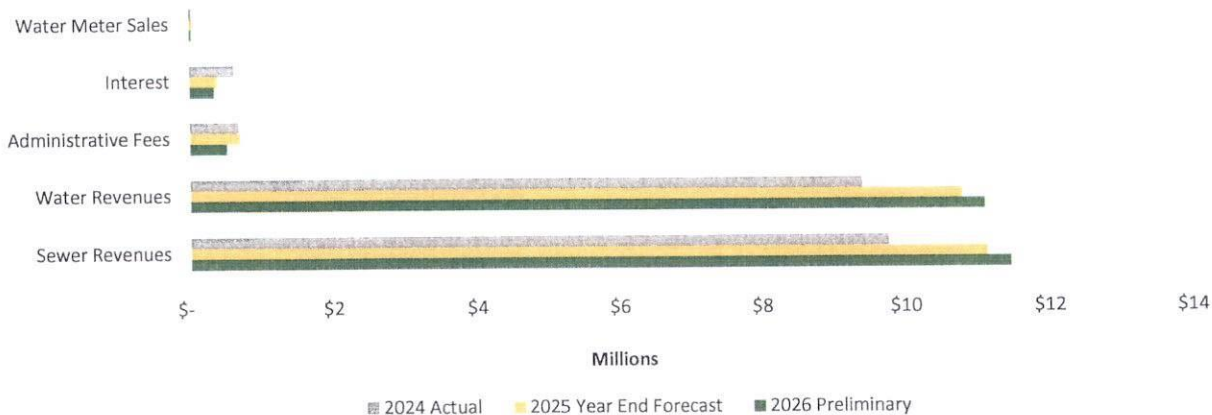
GENERAL FUND BALANCE ~ \$13.3M



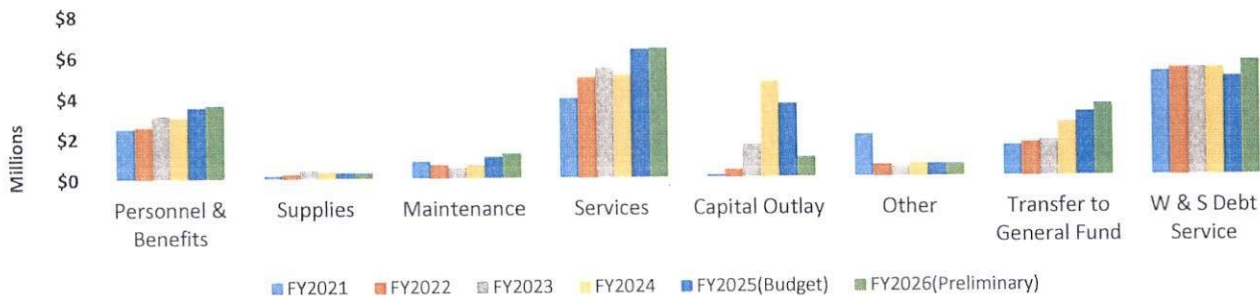
WATER & SEWER FUND

- Revenue: ~\$23.1M
- Expenditure: ~\$22.5M
- Key Budget Drivers:
 - Personnel: \$100K for 2.75% merit increases
 - Insurance: \$19K
 - Capital Debt Service Increase for 2025 bond issuance
 - Notable Capital Projects: 42" Southeast Transmission Line (\$990K) and VRP Vehicle Upgrade (\$32K)
- Working Capital:
 - Estimated: ~\$15.6M
 - Available (as of July 7, 2025): \$2.84M
 - Note: City of Houston water buy-in settlement: \$2.1M paid (60% of original \$3.5M)

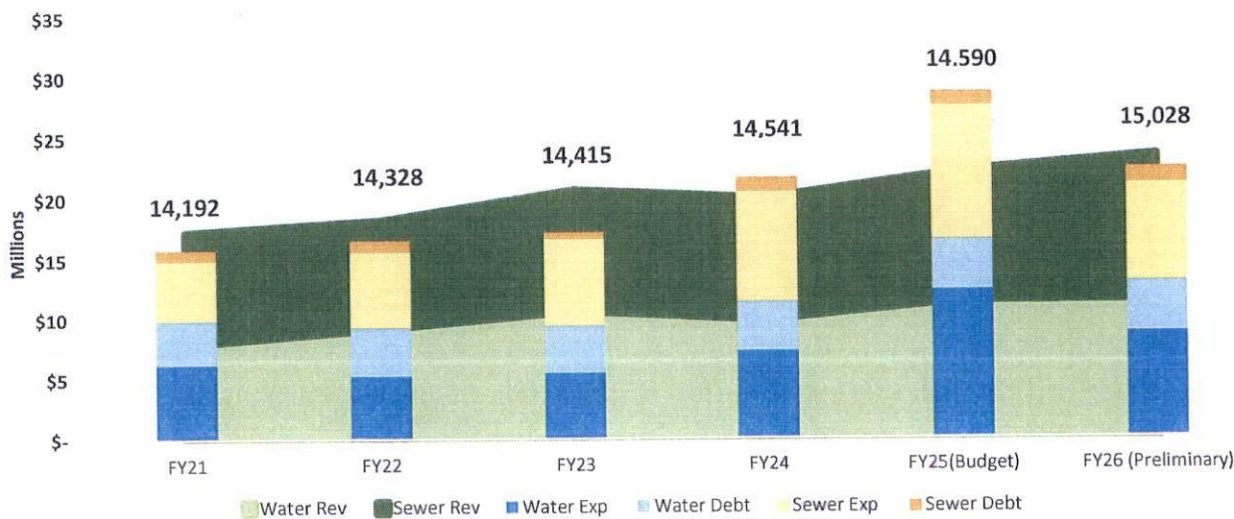
WATER & SEWER FUND REVENUE ~ \$23.1M



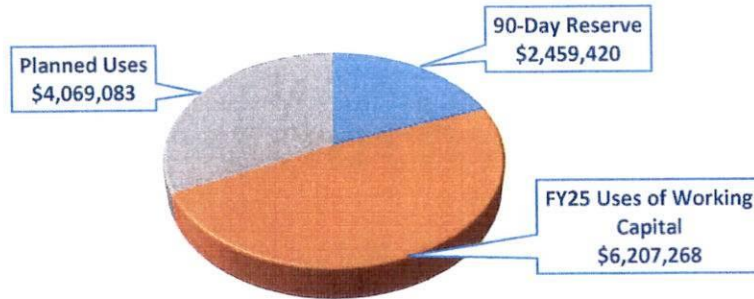
WATER & SEWER FUND EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY



UTILITY REVENUE & EXPENDITURE COMPARISON



WATER & SEWER WORKING CAPITAL ~ \$15.6M



NEXT STEPS

- Aug 1, 2025: Proposed Budget Delivered
- Aug 4: Budget Work Session
- Aug 13: Budget Workshop
- Aug 25: Public Hearing (Special Meeting)
- Sept 8: Tax Rate Hearing + Budget Adoption

At 11:47 A.M., Mayor Foreman recessed the meeting for a short break and later convened at 11:55 A.M.

B. Discuss the City's waste and recycling contract options and the related citizen survey.

City Manager Morad Kabiri relayed that about eight months prior, Waste Connections proposed to extend their contract by 10 years contingent on transitioning to automated service and holding rates at \$18/month. Council was initially receptive, but a change in management led the company to propose a shorter 3-year extension at a higher rate of \$21/month without automation. Compounding the issue, significant service failures emerged. Despite repeated staff requests, Waste Connections failed to resolve the problems.

As a result, the City will now pursue a request for proposal (RFP). A citywide survey will launch the following week via postcard and QR code about service satisfaction, frequency preferences, and pricing. The survey is accessible online (GIS-integrated for geographic response mapping) and via paper form at the City Secretary's Office. It will remain open through August 5, 2025. Discussion ensued amongst Council and staff over the issues that have failed to be resolved by Waste Connections.

C. Discuss a request to name a City Facility and/or build a monument in honor of former Police Chief Bob Wieners and former Mayor Kevin Holland

City Manager Morad Kabiri presented the two following requests to name a city facility and/or monument for Council's consideration:

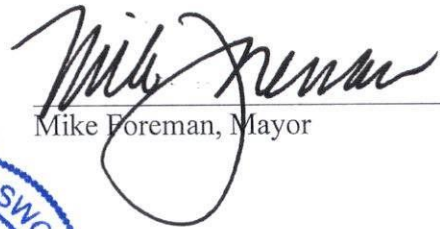
- **Police Chief Robert "Bob" Wieners** – Recognition for his 22 years of service as Chief of Police in Friendswood. He was credited with overseeing the department's significant growth and helping maintain Friendswood's reputation as one of the safest cities in the state and nation.
- **Former Mayor Kevin Holland** – Recognition for his many public service roles, including serving as Mayor (2012–2018), President of the Galveston County Consolidated Drainage District, and

other civic leadership roles. The proposal involved naming the bridge connecting City Park to Stevenson Park in his honor.

Councilmember Griffon voiced his concern of naming any facility after a politician or political figure. Upon further discussion, the general consensus amongst Council was that the individuals deserved recognition, but no final decisions were made during this session. Instead, Council leaned toward revisiting the requests with additional thought, such as possibly developing criteria or a matrix to guide future naming decisions with consistency and community buy-in.

8. ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to discuss, Mayor Foreman adjourned the July 12, 2025, City Council Special Meeting at 12:27 P.M.


Mike Foreman, Mayor

Attest:


Raquel Martinez, TRMC, City Secretary

