



Board of County Commissioners

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TO: THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FROM: JAMES LIESENFELT, INTERIM COUNTY MANAGER 
SUBJ: THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 PROPOSED BUDGET
DATE: JULY 15, 2025

I am pleased to submit for the Board's review and consideration the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Proposed Budget and Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan. This budget demonstrates the Board's commitment to prioritizing funding for public safety, while continuing to decrease property tax rates. Brevard County continues to face significant fiscal challenges, as increased costs due to inflation and rising salary pressures are outpacing the County's revenue growth.

The proposed budget builds on the following strategic core initiatives:

- Enhancing Public Safety Services
- Investing in Employees
- Prioritizing Countywide Infrastructure Strategies
- Providing Responsive Services to the Community

While the process for developing the annual budget remains largely consistent, each year presents its own distinct challenges that must be considered. All budgetary requests are subject to thorough review and are carefully prioritized under the guidance of the County Manager's Office, the Budget Office, and senior leadership.

Enhancing Public Safety Services

Fire Rescue

Fire Rescue's proposed \$171.6 million budget supports an updated seven-year strategic plan, which focuses on employee recruitment and retention, infrastructure, and capital needs. Included is funding for a three-year wage package for Fire Rescue personnel, made possible in part by the Board's commitment to public safety through a 37% increase in the fire assessment fee, generating an additional \$14.32 million for Fire Operations.

The allocation of shared expenses between Fire Operations and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) ensures that personnel, operational, and capital costs are appropriately funded. Currently, 55.5% of costs are fire-related, funded by the Fire Assessment and Fire Control MSTU, while 44.5% are EMS-related, supported by the General Fund and ambulance billings. Fire Operations primarily serves unincorporated and contracted areas, with funding from the Fire Assessment and MSTU, which applies only to those residents. EMS provides ambulance transport countywide, financed through service charges and General Fund contributions.

To complement the increase in Fire Operations in this annual budget, General Fund support for EMS has been increased by approximately \$10.6 million. This increase was funded by the General Fund reallocation of \$3.3 million from the dissolution of the North Brevard Economic Development Zone and the remaining \$7.3 million allocated to the Fire Rescue budget by General Fund reductions primarily to the Public Works and Parks and Recreation department budgets, as described in the Budget Reductions section of this message.

At the time of this budget submittal, the County and the International Association of Firefighters Local 2969 (IAFF) have agreed on a three-year contract and are awaiting ratification by IAFF and final approval by the Board of County Commissioners. The contract provides increases to wages for firefighters as shown below.

Average Increases (Includes Step)			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Paramedic	18.47%	8.62%	10.44%
Firefighter EMT	21.10%	16.00%	6.82%
Fire Medic 2	16.48%	17.00%	5.96%
Lieutenant Fire Medic	12.03%	14.12%	10.97%
Lieutenant EMT	16.62%	15.41%	11.96%
Fire Prevention Inspectors	26.17%	20.95%	11.93%
Assistant Fire Marshal	29.83%	18.33%	7.88%
District Chiefs	12.49%	9.73%	9.97%

Sheriff's Office

The Fiscal Year 2025-26 Sheriff's Office (BCSO) budget is impacted by legislative mandates, contractual obligations and operational costs, such as employee compensation, retirement contributions, healthcare, payroll taxes, professional liability and workers' compensation insurance. BCSO is also impacted by cost increases to the County Jail operations for inmate healthcare, pharmaceuticals, and food services.

Recruitment and retention for BCSO is a priority as the county's population continues to grow. As stated in the BCSO budget submittal, "the ever-increasing cost of services and operations, coupled with the revenue constraints due to the charter cap provision, will continue to force the elimination of essential services and resources in FY 25/26 and beyond."

While this proposed budget supports BCSO's funding request of an additional \$11.68 million in General Funds, according to its budget submittal BCSO will face fiscal challenges in the coming years:

"As shown on the chart below, the forecasted increase in annual expenditures continues to outpace revenues based upon the charter cap provisions of 3% or CPI, whichever is lesser. The Sheriff's Office is forecasting an increase of approximately 7.5% each year, equating to a \$5.6 million deficit in FY 26/27, a \$11.8 million deficit in FY 27/28, and a deficit of \$18.8 million in FY 28/29 based on compensation and benefits, historical costs, growth projections, and current trends versus the General Fund revenue and MSTU charter cap restrictions. The urgency for capital needs and operational expenditures will only magnify this deficit."

Revenues	Actual FY 23/24	Budget FY 24/25	Proposed FY 25/26	Forecasted FY 26/27	Forecasted FY 27/28	Forecasted FY 28/29
County General Fund	\$124,142,302	\$132,041,461	\$148,085,913	\$ 155,490,209	\$ 163,264,719	\$ 171,427,955
Public Safety (CARES)	2,506,246	5,721,750	5,721,750	-	-	-
M S T U	28,633,712	24,634,671	33,877,665	34,893,995	35,940,815	37,019,039
Other Revenues	31,145,924	27,750,333	18,780,445	19,907,272	21,101,708	22,367,810
Total Revenues	\$186,428,184	\$190,148,215	\$206,465,773	\$ 210,291,476	\$ 220,307,242	\$ 230,814,804
Expenses	Actual FY 23/24	Budget FY 24/25	Proposed FY 25/26	Forecasted FY 26/27	Forecasted FY 27/28	Forecasted FY 28/29
Wages and Benefits	\$126,374,187	\$142,483,564	\$157,668,776	\$ 169,493,934	\$ 182,205,979	195,871,427
Operating Expenses	33,276,661	35,376,826	37,057,589	39,836,908	42,824,676	46,036,527
Public Safety (CARES)	2,506,246	5,721,750	5,721,750	-	-	-
Capital Expenses	19,643,153	4,702,146	4,396,953	4,836,648	5,320,313	5,852,344
Transfers	1,866,278	1,863,929	1,620,705	1,701,740	1,786,827	1,876,168
Total Expenses	\$183,666,525	\$190,148,215	\$206,465,773	\$ 215,869,230	\$ 232,137,795	\$ 249,636,466
Deficit				\$ (5,577,754)	\$ (11,830,553)	\$ (18,821,662)

Budget Summary

Brevard County's Proposed Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget is \$2,481,586,460. When compared to the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Current Budget of \$2,317,052,992, this represents an increase of 7.10%, or \$164,533,468.

Property Valuations & Property Tax Revenue

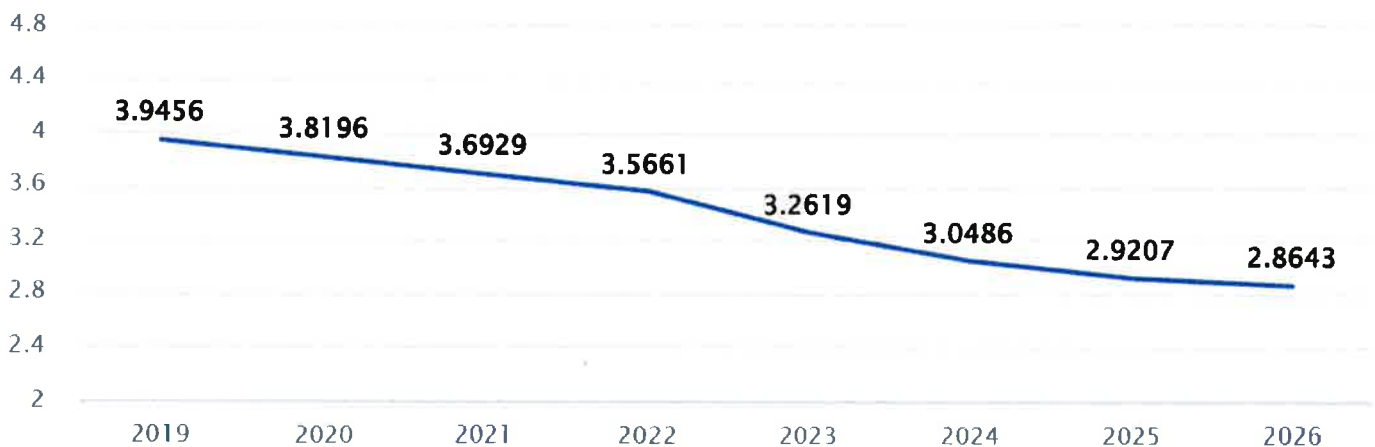
In the Brevard County Charter, property tax revenues are limited to an increase that is the lesser of 3% or the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index, which is 2.95% for Fiscal Year 2025-26. This limitation excludes ad valorem revenues associated with new construction and is not applicable to voter-approved millage rates. The proposed Fiscal Year 2025-26 millage rates were established in accordance with the County's Charter, and tax rates associated with voter-approved referendums are set within the mandated rate structures. All operating millages have been set in accordance with charter cap limitations.

Brevard County is the Taxing Authority of 24 individual Taxing Districts, which include 20 operating districts and four voter-approved debt districts. The Merritt Island Recreation Voted Debt and South Brevard Recreation Special District Voted Debt tax districts will no longer levy a millage in Fiscal Year 2025-26 as the existing fund balance is sufficient to pay off the debt. The aggregate proposed millage rate which represents all operational millages is 4.3515, which represents a 1.32% decrease from the Fiscal Year 2024-25 aggregate rate of 4.4099.

The aggregate proposed millage rate of 4.3515 is greater than the aggregate rolled-back rate therefore, according to Truth in Millage (TRIM) requirements established by the State of Florida, the final Budget Hearing will be advertised as a tax increase.

While property values increase, a reduction in millage rates is required to comply with the limitation in ad valorem revenue growth set forth in the Brevard County Charter. For the 12th consecutive year, the proposed General Countywide property tax rate has been reduced from the prior year rate as depicted in the graph below. The Proposed Fiscal Year 2025-26 General Fund millage rate of 2.8643 is a 1.93% decrease from the Fiscal Year 2024-25 millage rate of 2.9207. The combined effect of increased property values, new construction, and the reduction in the general countywide property tax rate has resulted in increased general ad valorem revenue of \$11.46M for Fiscal Year 2025-26.

General Fund Millage Rates



The following chart depicts the change in all 24 taxing district millage rates, along with the property tax revenue variances from Fiscal Year 2024-25 to Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Tax District or Unit	FY 2024-2025 Adopted	FY 2025-2026 Proposed	FY 2025-2026 Revenue Change
Brevard County BCC - Operating	2.9207	2.8643	\$11,457,884
Brevard County Free Public Library District	0.3306	0.3242	\$1,294,148
Brevard County Mosquito Control District	0.1367	0.1340	\$531,191
Fire Control	0.4929	0.4833	\$902,755
Recreation (District 1)	0.4281	0.4173	\$183,890
Recreation Special District Operations and Maintenance (District 4)	0.5036	0.4948	\$209,426
Titusville-Cocoa Airport Authority	-	-	\$-
Law Enforcement	0.8699	0.8531	\$1,434,313
Road and Bridge Maintenance (District 1)	0.4980	0.4863	\$117,166
Road and Bridge Maintenance (District 2)	0.1687	0.1648	\$59,757
Road and Bridge Maintenance (District 3)	0.1901	0.1855	\$28,023
Road and Bridge Maintenance (District 4)	0.2212	0.2176	\$146,141
Road and Bridge Maintenance (District 5)	0.2938	0.2887	\$31,925
Road and Bridge Maintenance (District 4; North Beaches)	0.1866	0.1842	\$5,547
Road and Bridge Maintenance (District 4; MI South)	0.0984	0.0964	\$984
Environmentally Endangered Lands (2024)	0.0467	0.0458	\$183,106
Port St. John/Canaveral Groves Recreation	0.2682	0.2612	\$27,113
North Brevard Recreation Special District	0.1657	0.1615	\$48,895
Merritt Island Recreation	0.2326	0.2265	\$68,571
South Brevard Special Recreation District	0.2178	0.2136	\$556,116
Sub – Total Operating			\$17,286,951
Environmentally Endangered Lands - Voted, Debt (2024)	0.0078	0.0073	\$4,515
North Brevard Recreation Special District - Voted, Debt	0.2034	0.0808	\$(633,189)
Merritt Island Recreation - Voted, Debt	0.0888	-	\$(494,743)
South Brevard Recreation Special District - Voted, Debt	0.0328	-	\$(1,323,067)
Sub – Total Debt Service			\$(2,446,484)
Total Operating and Debt Service			\$14,840,467

General Fund Highlights

The overall increase in General Government revenue is primarily due to an increase in Ad Valorem Taxes as well as FPL Franchise Fees, which is partially offset by a decrease in State Shared Revenues. Florida's elimination of the sales tax on commercial real estate leases will significantly impact the County's Local Half-Cent Sales Tax and State Shared Revenue. Preliminary estimates result in an annual reduction of approximately \$1.4 million in General Fund revenue, and \$2 million for the Save Our Indian River Lagoon sales tax. While this change offers financial relief to businesses, it presents substantial fiscal challenges for counties relying on this revenue.

The General Fund is also affected by higher funding requirements for Constitutional Officer budgets, along with an increase in the mandatory Medicaid contribution to the State of \$1.2 million (13%). Balance Forward declines slightly, primarily due to multi-year project progression.

The following chart provides an overview of General Government revenues and expenditures.

General Government Summary of Revenues and Expenditures

	FY 2024-2025 Budget	FY 2025-2026 Budget	Variance	% Variance
Revenue:				
General Fund Current Year AV Taxes	197,160,515	208,618,399	11,457,884	5.81%
Half Cent Sales Tax	37,394,551	37,459,026	64,475	0.17%
State Shared Revenue	19,275,039	17,873,385	(1,401,654)	(7.27%)
FPL Franchise Fee	13,591,174	14,983,198	1,392,024	10.24%
Communications Svc Tax	7,149,992	7,294,715	144,723	2.02%
Other Operating Revenue	15,930,938	17,143,788	1,212,850	7.61%
5% Statutory Reduction	(14,525,110)	(15,168,626)	(643,516)	4.43%
Balance Forward	76,035,415	74,021,438	(2,013,977)	(2.65%)
Non-Operating Revenue	10,080,055	8,145,884	(1,934,171)	(19.19%)
Total General Gov Revenues:	362,092,569	370,371,207	8,278,638	2.29%
Expenditures:				
Charter Offices	164,279,407	177,002,738	12,723,331	7.74%
Mandates	12,458,562	13,696,232	1,237,670	9.93%
Court Operations	4,121,995	4,550,431	428,436	10.39%
General Government Operating Reserves	30,113,704	30,113,704	-	-%
TIF Payments	10,723,260	8,145,086	(2,578,174)	(24.04%)
General Government Debt	3,155,973	3,181,371	25,398	0.80%
Roads & Infrastructure	66,522,518	59,022,792	(7,499,726)	(11.27%)
Public Safety	22,510,710	33,514,878	11,004,168	48.88%
County Agency Transfers	48,206,440	41,143,975	(7,062,465)	(14.65%)
Total General Gov Expenditures	362,092,569	370,371,207	8,278,638	2.29%

Operating Reserves are set aside to provide options for responding to emergencies, as well as working capital to provide necessary cash flow before ad valorem taxes are collected. The Budget and Financial Policy establishes a goal to maintain an operating reserve of no less than 10% of projected operating revenues. The proposed budget establishes General Government Operating Reserves at 9.94% of projected operating revenue or \$30,113,704, which is equal to the prior year reserve level.

Budget Reductions

Strategic decisions were made to balance the General Fund budget, including the dissolution of the North Brevard Economic Development Zone. Given rising costs that outpaced revenue growth, further reductions across County departments were necessary to achieve Board priorities while maintaining a balanced budget. The following chart outlines the specific reductions made to County department budgets.

Reductions to General Fund Requested Budget	
Public Works Transportation Construction	
West Central Ave Bridge Construction -D2	\$1,300,000
Aurora Road SW (Croton to Wickham) Sidewalk and Drainage Construction -D4	\$818,450
Hollywood Blvd. Widening Advance ROW Acquisition -D3	\$570,762
Scottsmoor Drainage Imp. Phase II Surveying and Design (Aurantia Area) -D1	\$300,000
South Patrick Drainage Asset Mapping -D4	\$100,000
Public Works Facilities Management	
Parks and Recreation Restroom Renovations Countywide	\$1,500,000
BCGC North VAV (HVAC/Heat) Replacement and Asbestos Mitigation -D1	\$1,500,000
BCGC Viera Flooring (Bldgs A,B,C Office Carpet) -D4	\$800,000
BCGC Viera Restrooms Bldgs A2 Annex, B2, C3 -D4	\$800,000
Space Planning Bldg A -D4	\$300,000
CSC Merritt Island Flooring (Common area LVP) -D2	\$150,000
CSC Melbourne Flooring (Common area LVP) -D5	\$150,000
BCDC Main Entrance Ramp resurface -D1	\$150,000
CSC Titusville Walkway Spawling and Sidewalk Repairs -D1	\$150,000
Chevy 2500 Van Countywide Replacement	\$45,000
Public Works Survey and Mapping	
Contracted Services and Capital Equipment	\$22,500
Parks and Recreation - North Area	
Space Coast Communities Sports Complex Soccer Field Lighting - D1	\$500,000
Scottsmoor Landing Dredging - D1	\$400,000
Parks and Recreation - Central Area	
Mitchell Ellington Park Replacement of Sod on Two Soccer Fields - D2	\$300,000
MILA Elementary Ballfield Sod Replacement - D2	\$150,000
Parks and Recreation - South Area	
Viera Regional Park Expansion - D4	\$900,000
Max K Rodes Park Playground Replacement - D5	\$519,490
Howard E Futch and Police Foundation Park Parking Lot Paving - D5	\$380,510
Capital Equipment: Carry All Cart, 2-Toro Mowers & Silverado	\$218,000
South Mainland and Nancy Higgs Community Center Renovations	\$190,000
Flutie Athletic Complex Pickleball Court - D3	\$160,000
Nancy Higgs Park Dog Park Shade Structure & Playground Climbing Feature - D3	\$130,000
Flutie Athletic Complex Concession Rollup Door Replacement	\$100,000
Flutie Athletic Complex Baseball Field Renovations - D3	\$90,000
Additional Reductions	
Budget Office Lean Six Sigma Coordinator Position	\$102,600
Assistant to the County Manager - Pro-Rate Vacant Position	\$40,854
Human Resources Vacant Position Unfunded	\$90,858
Information Technology Network Switches	\$70,000
Total Reductions to Requested General Fund Budgets	\$12,999,024

Detention Center

As part of the ongoing 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan, a key objective has been to allocate \$3.5 million each year for multi-year plumbing replacements at the Detention Center. Although the proposed budget does not include additional funding, there is a carryforward balance of \$3.7 million from prior years, which is sufficient to cover anticipated expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year. While carryforward funds will allow this project to continue in Fiscal Year 2025-26, it is expected that without additional revenue, there will not be sufficient funding in Fiscal Year 2026-27.

Road Resurfacing and Repair Reduction

In addition to these reductions, escalating construction costs have significantly impacted the County's ability to maintain previous levels of roadwork in the upcoming year. As a result, planned resurfacing will decrease from 50 miles in Fiscal Year 2024-25 to 40 miles in Fiscal Year 2025-26, while reconstruction efforts will decline from 7.5 miles to 5 miles. To restore paving and reconstruction to current levels, an additional \$3.8 million would be required.

Potential Revenue Generating Options

To further the continuation of essential public safety, infrastructure, and capital projects, including the reduction of the total number of miles in the road program that were eliminated in this budget submittal, the following suggestions for revenue generation are provided for discussion by the Board. The following potential revenue sources can be implemented and affect the Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget.

Public Service Tax

The Public Service Tax (PST) is imposed locally and administered by the County under Chapter 166, Florida Statutes. The PST may be levied on electric, fuel oil/kerosene, LLP gas, manufactured gas, natural gas, and water. The Board could consider the levy of PST in unincorporated Brevard by County Ordinance adopted 120 days before the effective date.

It is estimated that the PST could generate approximately \$32.1 million annually if charged at the full 10% on electricity purchases. However, that estimate could be reduced if the Board exempts the first 500 kilowatt hours of monthly residential usage, which is allowable under Florida Statutes. If approved, the Board has the authority to allocate the additional funds at its discretion.

Finding of Critical Need to Exceed Charter Cap Limitations

In accordance with Section 2.9.3.1(c) of the Brevard County Charter, the Board may determine that exceeding the charter cap limitation is necessary due to an emergency or critical need. This would enable the imposition of a millage rate sufficient to generate ad valorem revenue beyond the 3% cap set by the Charter. To proceed, the Board must adopt a resolution by a supermajority vote declaring the critical need.

Parks and Recreation Debt Millage Reallocation

The voter-approved referendum debts for Parks and Recreation are scheduled to be fully paid off in Fiscal Year 2025-26. In light of existing fund balances, the voter-approved millage rates associated with these debts will either be eliminated or substantially reduced. As all three debt millages are voter-approved, their millage rates may be redirected to their respective operating millages, resulting in the following revenue generation:

- North Brevard Recreation Special District: \$644K
- Merritt Island Recreation MSTU: \$479K
- South Brevard Recreation Special District: \$1.1M

Transferring these voter-approved debt millages to their corresponding operating millages would generate an additional \$2.2 million, which would be applied to offset recommended budget reductions in the Parks and Recreation Department.

Increase in Voter Approved Millage Rates

The following millage rates have been approved by referendum, therefore are not subject to charter cap limitations as outlined in Brevard County Charter, Section 2.9.3.1 (e). As a matter of practice, the Board has reduced these millage rates in previous fiscal years to avoid advertising a tax increase. If the Board chooses to restore the millage rates to the voter-approved rate, the following additional revenue could be generated:

Tax District or Unit	Year Approved By Referendum	Voter Approved Millage	FY 25-26 Proposed Rate	FY 25-26 Proposed Revenue	Increase in Revenue at Voter Approved Rate
Fire Control MSTU	1998	0.6431	0.4833	\$16,807,381	\$5,557,251
Recreation Special District Operations and Maint (District 4)	1971	0.9000	0.4948	\$3,685,794	\$3,018,358
Port St. John/Canaveral Groves Recreation	1994	0.9000	0.2612	\$626,463	\$1,532,100
North Brevard Recreation Special District (Operations and Debt)	2000	0.8000	0.2423	\$1,430,161	\$3,291,790
Merritt Island Recreation MSTU (Operations and Debt)	2000	0.8000	0.2265	\$1,364,489	\$3,454,898
South Brevard Special Recreation District (Operations and Debt)	2000	0.6000	0.2136	\$9,309,425	\$16,840,645

If the Fire Control MSTU millage is increased, additional funds would be restricted to Fire Operations only. Funds allocated to field operational expenses must be complemented by additional General Funds in accordance with the 55/45% cost distribution.

The Board may wish to increase some or all of the Parks and Recreation millages, which would provide additional funds to restore the proposed cuts in this budget. Increasing the millages up to the voter-approved rates would allow General Funds currently dedicated to Parks and Recreation to be reallocated to Public Works to offset the proposed cuts in this budget.

Fuel Taxes

- **9th Cent Fuel Tax on Unleaded Motor Fuel** – If levied by October 1st, this additional fuel tax is expected to generate approximately \$2.7 million in County revenue, which could be allocated to transportation-related expenditures. This revenue would help mitigate potential reductions in the Public Works program. Enacting this tax would require either a supermajority vote by the Board or approval via a ballot referendum.
- **Local Option Gas Tax (1-5 Cents)** – The imposition of this additional fuel tax is projected to generate approximately \$6.4 million in County revenue, and would also be directed toward transportation expenditures, assisting in offsetting proposed reductions to the Public Works program. Like the 9th Cent Fuel Tax, implementation would require either a supermajority vote by the Board or approval through a ballot referendum.

Local Government Infrastructure Surtax – A surtax of 0.5% or 1% could be levied to support infrastructure initiatives. Brevard County currently imposes a 0.5% surtax for the Save Our Indian River Lagoon Program. A new infrastructure surtax would require approval through a referendum held during a general election (November 2026). A half-cent surtax is estimated to generate approximately \$68.8 million, of which \$38.1 million would be allocated to the County, with the remainder to be shared with municipalities, unless an interlocal agreement is established.

Additional Budget Considerations

Property/Casualty Insurance

The County's property/casualty program primarily includes workers' compensation, property, auto and general liability coverage. Expenses for the program include not only the cost of insurance premiums but also the cost of claims and fees associated with the third-party administration of claims. The primary source of revenue to support the program comes from rates charged to participating agencies and departments. Over the past several years, the revenue generated has not been sufficient to cover program expenses, thus relying on reserves to cover the shortfalls. In Fiscal Year 2025-26, the anticipated fund balance is \$4.6 million, which is a significant decrease from the Fiscal Year 2023-24 ending fund balance of \$10.1 million. Reducing the depletion of reserves is critical to remain actuarially sound. Rates for participating agencies were increased last year, however, the expenses continue to outpace revenue. Therefore, this proposed budget includes rate increases for workers' compensation (15%), property (9%), auto (9%) and general liability (12%). We will continue actively exploring ways to responsibly reduce the program's overall cost and will continue to evaluate all viable options and cost-saving solutions to secure necessary coverage at the best possible rates.

Impact Fees

In Fiscal Year 2024-25, Board action was taken to undergo an impact fee study to evaluate current capital needs based on the impact of new development and to propose an updated rate structure for Board consideration in this upcoming fiscal year.

Information Technology

Information Technology's guiding principles are to modernize infrastructure, streamline operations, and enable data-driven decision-making that enhances service delivery for our residents. One of the most significant advancements this year has been the successful upgrade of SAP, the County's enterprise-grade platform for financial, human resources, and procurement operations. This milestone marks a critical step in ongoing transformation from aging legacy systems to a modern, scalable, and integrated digital cloud environment.

As aging network infrastructure approaches the end of its useful life, the County will need to invest in the replacement of critical equipment to maintain reliable and secure connectivity.

Investing in Employees

Brevard County's dedicated employees are its greatest asset. The proposed budget supports the Board's commitment to address staffing needs, turnover, and broader workforce challenges by offering a cost-of-living adjustment of either 4% or \$1 per hour, whichever is greater.

This budget proposal includes an 6% increase in employer paid health insurance premiums. This adjustment continues the County's multi-year approach to address the volatility of the healthcare marketplace as overall expenses continue to outpace revenues in the program. In this upcoming fiscal year, the County expects to seek proposals for the future administration of both medical and pharmacy programs with a focus on finding innovative and cost-effective strategies. We remain committed to monitoring trends and evaluating additional ways to ensure the sustainability of the self-insured health plan while also providing reliable and cost-effective healthcare to employees.

Environmental Infrastructure

Save Our Indian River Lagoon

The Save Our Indian River Lagoon (SOIRL) Program has assisted over 2,000 homeowners to upgrade septic systems, connect to sewer, or repair leaking sewer pipes while also completing 106 of the most cost-effective projects to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus pollution in the Indian River Lagoon. Currently, 35 additional projects are under construction, and 60 more are contracted for design or permitting. These 201 completed and ongoing projects represent a total investment of over \$411 million, which will remove over 1,000,000 pounds of nitrogen and over 75,000 pounds of phosphorus from the lagoon.

During this legislative session, the SOIRL Program received additional funding of \$2.9 million for assisting homeowners who convert from septic to sewer. Furthermore, over \$19 million in state water quality and innovative technology grant funding has been awarded for SOIRL projects this year.

The SOIRL Program continues to collaborate with other agencies to maximize funds and deliver results. A notable example is our partnership with St Johns River Water Management District on the \$24 million dollar Crane Creek/M-1 Canal Flow Rediversion and Restoration Project. The M-1 Canal is a 100-year-old, man-made flood control structure that drains 5,300 acres in Melbourne, West Melbourne, Melbourne Village and unincorporated Brevard County. This restoration project redirects baseflow west through a constructed stormwater treatment area prior to discharging to the St. Johns River. The project is engineered to maintain the full flood control benefits of the M-1 Canal while improving water quality.

Coastal Management

Work to restore all of Brevard's beaches eroded by recent hurricanes continues to protect coastal infrastructure, beach and dune habitats, and support Brevard's tourism-based economy. Federal and state funding have been obligated to fund 100% of the combined \$119 million construction costs for the Hurricanes Ian and Nicole beach restoration projects. Restoration of the 9.8-mile North Reach was completed between January and May 2025. In the Mid Reach and South

Reach, restoration of 11 miles of shoreline continues. In the Mid Reach, sand placement was completed in March 2025 and native dune vegetation was installed on the nearly 8 miles of newly constructed dunes. Renourishment of the South Reach will be completed by April 2026. Native dune vegetation was installed along the 13-mile South Beaches project on previously constructed dunes. Additional sand will be placed in the South Beaches by April 2026 to further protect the dunes.

Utility Services

Utility Services Department is committed to enhancing the County's long-term utility infrastructure and water and sewer demands related to development growth, as well as State of Florida environmental compliance mandates.

South Brevard Water and Wastewater Treatment Plant: This project replace the Barefoot Bay water and wastewater treatment plants (total project cost \$219 million), and will serve the Barefoot Bay District and other unincorporated portions of south Brevard. The most current technology will be utilized to assure that state and federal requirements are met, and conversion to Advanced Water Treatment (AWT) will assure that the highest nutrient removal is attained.

Mims Water Treatment Plant Expansion: This project will expand the treatment capacity for the North Brevard area and utilize reverse osmosis to provide quality drinking water (total project cost \$113.6 million).

Among numerous utility improvements planned in the South Beaches area:

- South Beaches Wastewater Treatment Plant / Advanced Wastewater Treatment (AWT) Conversion
- Two deep well injection projects will provide additional treated wastewater disposal to mitigate potential discharges.
- South Beaches Force Main and Ground Storage Tank will increase the resiliency of the beaches wastewater collection system.

South Central Reuse projects will improve the reuse service in the Viera, Suntree and Palm Shores service area.

The Phase 2 Study for Regional Wastewater Options associated with Space Florida is underway to evaluate the need and logistics of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal capacity as it relates to the increase in space launch activity, which includes NASA, Space Florida and Space Force. The evaluation of the study will look at wastewater demands from on site, on federal property, and to impacts from housing developments for the future jobs the space sector will create in Brevard County.

Solid Waste

The Solid Waste Department will move forward with the third round of securing financing to ensure long-term disposal capacity. This initiative will fund ongoing projects such as the construction of a replacement transfer station at the Mockingbird Way Mulching Facility (total project cost \$22 million) and construction of a Class III solid waste facility at the US192 property (total project cost \$83 million), and initiate construction of Cell 3 of the Class I South Landfill at the Central Disposal Facility (total project cost \$47 million).

In Fiscal Year 2025-26, progress continues with Phase I of the U.S. 192 earthwork, with construction underway; continued construction of the transfer station at the Mockingbird Way Mulching facility; and construction is scheduled to begin on a Class I cell at the Central Disposal Facility. These initiatives ensure future solid waste disposal capacity for Brevard County.

Mosquito Control

Mosquito Control continues to innovate and advance in new technological areas to maintain Brevard County's high public health, safety and environmental standards. Proactive mosquito impoundment pumping, water level management, and native fish hatchery and stocking techniques have been enhanced to reduce mosquito occurrences and pesticide demands. Reduced helicopter availability has led to a more surgical approach to pesticide applications, utilizing higher-level precision drones, as well as upgraded ground vehicle and watercraft configurations to target isolated mosquito breeding areas. Mosquito trap collections have dropped by approximately 50% over the last few years due to this more targeted and proactive approach. The Department anticipates implementation of permanent program changes to modernize its historical aerial approach, and is also developing new employee career paths which will maximize utilization of new equipment and streamline operations.

The Department plans to move forward with construction of a new biology laboratory by Fiscal Year 2026-27. This lab will safely house new equipment and expand biological staff capabilities to assess local mosquito resistance to pesticides, detect mosquito-borne diseases, and conduct efficacy testing and environmental monitoring. Mosquito Control is actively expanding partnerships with academic, local, state and federal entities, which are critical in generating new projects and increasing associated grant funding opportunities. The Department is also expanding the educational outreach program and customer service levels while supporting the public health and environmental mission through increased community engagement at waste tire amnesty events, Indian River Lagoon cleanups, and native mosquitofish giveaways.

Delivering Responsive Services to the Community

Libraries

Circulation continues to grow with the greatest increases in online formats: e-books, e-audiobooks, streaming content, and financial information. Programs at libraries, such as Read Your Way to K and Summer Reading are popular and continue to attract the public. The Library App BCLGo is frequently being updated to make patron's access to all of the library resources even easier.

Eighteen Library Facilities, including the recently renovated River House programming space, built between 1924-2018 contain over 377,000 square feet of public space. This requires a commitment to maintain facilities that are welcoming, functional, and secure for the public. Emphasis is being placed on maintaining HVAC systems, plumbing and building envelopes. In addition, internet bandwidth continues to be evaluated, ensuring the ever-growing need for online access by the public at library locations is readily available. Capital improvements are planned in the amount of \$4.8 million for Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Housing and Human Services

Brevard County's Housing and Human Services Department continues its vital work in supporting Veterans, homeowners, and economically challenged residents through a range of programs funded by federal, state, and local sources. These programs provide essential services such as home repairs, first-time homebuyer assistance, community infrastructure improvements, and other initiatives designed to strengthen and uplift our communities.

This proposed budget also addresses the ongoing opioid crisis by allocating funding grants to community agencies for lifesaving medications and addiction recovery services, along with opioid awareness and education campaigns.

Included in this year's budget is funding from the HOME-American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) program. These funds will support the Affordable Rental Housing Project on Houston Lane, which will consist of eleven (11) single-family rental homes and three (3) affordable homeownership units, all offering supportive services to promote long-term stability.

Tourism

Tourist tax collections continue to grow -- from \$16.9 million in Fiscal Year 2020-21 to a projected \$26 million in Fiscal Year 2024-25. The County's Tourist Development Tax (TDT) is expected to reach new heights in Fiscal Year 2025-26 with the addition of several new hotel properties. This proposed budget continues to fund capital facilities projects previously approved by the Board, including \$15 million dedicated to a new Aquarium located at Port Canaveral. A portion of this budget is allocated to complete major repairs of the South Beaches that were damaged during hurricanes Ian and Nicole and to finish a large renourishment project running from Patrick Space Force Base down to Melbourne Beach. Major advertising campaigns will cover the Fall/Winter, Spring, and Summer seasons.

Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department remains committed to enhancing quality of life in Brevard County by upgrading existing facilities, replacing outdated infrastructure, and providing popular programs and activities for residents of all ages.

- **North Area Parks**, the replacement of the laundry and restroom facilities at Manatee Hammock Campground is scheduled for completion in Fiscal Year 2025-26. Additionally, improvements at Blanton Park – funded through a donation from Parrish Medical Center – include a new playground, installation of exercise stations, renovations to the basketball court, and next fiscal year, renovation of the pavilion and restroom facilities.
- **Central Area Parks**, renovations at the McKnight Family Sports Complex are scheduled for completion in Fiscal year 2025-26. Planned improvements include the replacement of field and dugout fencing, resurfacing the tennis

courts, installation of a new roof on the tennis building, paving of the existing dirt parking lot, and laser grading and laying of new sod on the athletic fields. Additionally, McLarty Park will undergo significant upgrades, including the installation of new lighted pickleball courts, paving of the dirt section of the parking lot, and replacement of the 34-year-old fencing on four of the baseball fields.

- **South Area Parks**, planned improvements for Wickham Park include the replacement of the main playground structure with a new ADA-accessible design. The playground footprint will be expanded to incorporate a new sidewalk, shade structure, and a modern restroom facility. Enhancements to the archery range will include the addition of a shade structure in the practice area. The dog park will also be expanded to accommodate increased user demand, featuring ADA accessibility, separate entrances for small and large dogs and shaded areas for patrons. At Long Point, the 25-year-old pedestrian bridge to Scout Island – currently closed due to severe damage from Hurricane Milton – will be replaced. The new bridge will be constructed using composite materials to ensure greater durability and an extended lifespan, restoring safe pedestrian access to Scout Island.

The Parks and Recreation Department has completed approximately 75% of reported Hurricane Milton damage projects related to repairs to damaged shorelines, fencing, roofs, and various docks and boardwalks. The repairs have been completed by staff, solicited contractors, and coordinated with FEMA to maximize future federal reimbursement.

Environmentally Endangered Lands

The Board authorized the issuance of bonds to fund capital improvements to existing facilities and equipment, including upgrades to the trailhead and parking areas at Scottsmoor Flatwoods, enhancements to the equestrian dirt parking at Malabar West, and the construction of observation towers at Pine Island Conservation Area, Ulumay Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Barrier Island Sanctuary. These projects provide residents with enhanced opportunities to enjoy these protected areas. Additionally, the Board approved a rubric for evaluating land acquisitions that directly benefit the Indian River Lagoon and St. Johns River, and appointed an agent to facilitate these purchases. Land Acquisition efforts will continue through Fiscal Year 2025-26.

Planning and Development

The South Beaches have been designated as an Area of Critical Concern and the Department is working to adopt updated land development regulations.

The Department is currently implementing an upgrade to its database program (ACCELA) to meet legislative mandates, streamline processes, and to provide increased customer service to Brevard County residents.

Conclusion

This proposed budget reflects a strong commitment to public safety and continues our investment in the County's workforce, infrastructure, and services to support a thriving community. This would not be possible without the dedication and collaboration of County staff and the continued support of the Board of County Commissioners. I am grateful to Department Directors, Assistant County Managers, County Attorney, Budget Office, and all of the management and finance teams for their valuable contributions in developing this budget.

CC:
Charter Officers
County Attorney
Assistant County Managers
Budget Director
All Department and Office Directors