

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 7

Lee R. Feldman

*Gainesville City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM

2011 Northeast 22nd Terrace
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33305
954-999-2115
lfeldman33305@gmail.com

July 27, 2019

Mr. Colin Baenziger, MPA
President
Colin Baenziger & Associates
by email Recruit45@cb-asso.com

RE: Application for the Position of City Manager of Gainesville, Florida

Dear Mr. Baenziger:

Thank you for taking the time to review my application and resume for the position of City Manager of Gainesville, Florida.

Based upon the organizational vision that Mayor and City Commission have formulated for the future of the City of Gainesville, I am very intrigued about the possibility of joining their team as City Manager. As you are aware from our past conversations, I have a strong passion for building communities and enhancing neighborhoods; establishing a sense of place; creating strong civic engagement; and promoting trust in government.

Over the past 33 years, I have served as an integral part of executive teams in four (4) municipalities, leading three (3) of those cities as city manager. Each iteration of career progression has resulted in leading more complex organizations; the last being the City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida [Population: 180,000 (Daytime Population 300,000+); Employees: 2,600+(FTE); Annual Budget: \$785 million].

Specifically relating to the position, I would like to highlight some specific accomplishments of our team in Fort Lauderdale:

- The creation a neighbor-centric service delivery model for city operations which included the establishment of a Neighbor Support Office to serve as a one-stop shop for resolution of issues; the establishment of a public participation ordinance providing for neighbor input on development projects before formal submittal to the city; a city visioning process with multiple venues of community engagement resulting in "Fast Forward" (Vision), "Press Play" (5-year Strategic Plan) and the Commission Annual Action Plan; the implementation of the Telephone Town Meeting program which promotes direct engagement between the Commission and neighbors; the creation of a Nighttime Economy Manager program designed to promote a balanced entertainment environment in the Downtown neighborhoods; and, the establishment of the first city-wide [Nextdoor](#) network.
- Through the City's Community Redevelopment Agency (comprised of three distinct areas designated as slum and blight) the funding of numerous streetscape enhancements to assist developers in siting projects in economically challenged neighborhoods; the undertaking of

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strategic capital projects designed to be a catalyst and lift neighborhoods, including a \$50 million park/parking garage project on Fort Lauderdale Beach and a \$27 million renovation of the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center; the partnering with the YMCA for a new multi-purpose facility in the center of the low-income Sistrunk neighborhood; and, the creation of local neighborhood jobs through the financial participation in redevelopment projects.

- The implementation of the Business Engagement Assistance & Mentorships (BEAMs) program, designed to support businesses at all levels, from start-up to successful growth and expansion resulting in the first 24 months 78 small neighborhood businesses graduating with the tools necessary to increase their business opportunities.

In addition, you will find that I have complemented my community building activities with a strong emphasis on public finance, governmental accountability, and organizational management. The enclosed resume provides some examples of my activities over the past seven-and-a-half (7-½) years during my tenure as City Manager for the City of Fort Lauderdale. Additionally, during that time I have continued to be on the forefront of national municipal issues in my role as ICMA President; as a Director of ICMA-RC; as a Director of the National Civic League (All America City); as a member of the National Advisory Council of FEMA; as a member of the National Homeland Security Consortium; and, as a Board Member of the Alliance for Innovation, as well as serving on numerous committees and task forces for the National League of Cities.

Please accept this letter as my application for the position of City Manager of the City of Gainesville, Florida. As requested, in addition to my resume, I have enclosed a list of professional references for your utilization.

I look forward to speaking with you as the selection process commences.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM

enclosures

Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM

2011 Northeast 22nd Terrace
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33305
954-999-2115
lfeldman33305@gmail.com

More than 33 years of experience in public sector administration, distinguished by providing progressive vision and decisive leadership to local government organizations in Florida. A topocrat dedicated to building vibrant communities and enhancing neighborhoods; to establishing a sense of place; to promoting strong civic engagement; and to restoring trust in local government. Proven expertise in developing strategies to solve highly complex problems and resolving organizational issues while navigating diverse agendas. Possesses a strong business acumen and core management competencies in all aspects of municipal governance and leadership.

Employment

President and Founder, Toposcra, LLC

January 2019 – present

Full service local government consulting services. Clients include the Florida League of Cities (Smart City Initiative); Colliers International (Strategic Real Estate Disposition Services); International City/County Management Association (International Programs); CNA (Cybersecurity Training) and Sustainability Partners (Infrastructure Financing). Additionally, provided expert witness services in conjunction with an intergovernmental water rate dispute.

City Manager, City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida

June 2011 – December 2018

Population: 180,000 (Daytime Population 300,000+); Employees: 2,600+(FTE); Annual Budget: \$785 million. Full Service City with Water and Wastewater Utility, Parking Enterprise, Cemetery System; General Aviation Airport; Community Redevelopment Agency; All-America City (2014); ISO 9001:2015

- Oversaw the planning and development of Downtown Fort Lauderdale resulting in the mixed-use development (constructed or approved) of 17,900 multi-family residential units, 2.8 million square feet of retail space, 4.3 million square feet of office space and 1,440 hotel rooms resulting in \$2.3 billion net new construction added to the taxable value of the City since 2012.
- Created a neighbor-centric service delivery model for city operations. Established the Neighbor Support Office to serve as a one-stop shop for resolution of issues; proposed a public participation ordinance providing for neighbor input on development projects before formal submittal to the city; spearheaded the city visioning process with multiple venues of community engagement resulting in "Fast Forward" (Vision), "Press Play" (5-year Strategic Plan) and the Commission Annual Action Plan. Instituted the Telephone Town Meeting program which promotes direct engagement between the Commission and neighbors. Established first city-wide Nextdoor network.
- Established the City's first Financial Integrity Principles designed to ensure the use of best practices in the development and the administration of the budget. Increased the General Fund Fund Balance from \$32 million (FY12) to \$76 million (FY18) while maintaining the millage rate at 4.1193. Implemented a P-Card Program resulting in an annual rebate in excess of \$900,000. Oversaw the issuance and refinancing of over \$581 million of debt for capital projects relating to utility

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improvements and municipal capital needs and \$337 million of debt related to the refinancing of the pension systems' unfunded liability resulting in over \$230 million in cumulative savings to the City to date. Successfully achieved multiple multi-year agreements with seven (7) collective bargaining units without impasse.

- Administered, as Executive Director, the City's Community Redevelopment Agency (comprised of three distinct areas) resulting in numerous streetscape enhancements to assist developers in siting projects in economically challenged neighborhoods, a \$50 million park/parking garage project on Fort Lauderdale Beach (under construction), a \$27 million renovation of the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center (contract let) and a partnership with the YMCA for a new facility in the center of the Sistrunk neighborhood.
- Established new divisions in the organization designed to keep the City on the leading edge of municipal best practices. Examples include the creation of the Structural Innovation Division which is dedicated to strategic planning, performance measurement and process improvement monitored through the interdepartmental FL²STAT process; and the creation of the Nighttime Economy Manager program designed to promote a balanced entertainment environment in the Downtown and Beach neighborhoods.
- Restructured the organization of the City to create an alignment with the City's Vision ("Fast Forward") and Strategic Plan ("Press Play"), including establishing the Police Chief and Fire-Rescue Chief as direct reports to the City Manager. Worked closely with the public safety team to develop joint capability for hot-zone response and promoted innovative partnerships with the private sector (for example, Ring Doorbell).

City Manager, City of Palm Bay, Florida

October 2002 - June 2011

Population: 107,000; Employees: 800+(FTE); Annual Budget: \$115 million Full Service City with Water and Wastewater Utility; Community Redevelopment Agency

City Manager, City of North Miami, Florida

May 1996 - October 2002

Deputy City Manager, City of North Miami, Florida

October 1989- May 1996

Population: 59,880; Employees: 571+(FTE); Annual Budget: \$98 million Full Service City with Water and Wastewater Utility (Fire/Rescue provided by County)

Assistant City Manager, City of North Miami Beach, Florida

April 1986 - October 1989

Assistant to the City Manager, City of North Miami Beach, Florida

May 1985 - April 1986

United States Naval Reserve, Lieutenant Commander, Supply Corps

1987 - 2002 (Honorable Discharge)

Education

Master of Governmental Administration, Fels Scholar,
Fels Center of Government, University of Pennsylvania, May 1986

Certificate, Senior Executives in State and Local Government,
Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, February 2001

Bachelor of Arts (Cum Laude), Public Policy,
Washington and Lee University, June 1984

Organizations

International City/County Management Association (ICMA), Full Member

Credentialed Manager (ICMA-CM) since May 2002
President (2016 - 2017)
President-Elect (2015 - 2016); Past President (2017 – 2018)
Vice President (Southeast Region) (2010 - 2013)
Member, (Chair 2013) Committee on Professional Conduct (2010 - 2013)
Member, (Chair 2007 - 2008) Governmental Affairs and Policy Committee (2002 - present)
Member, (Chair 2013 - 2014) Sustainable Communities Advisory Group (2007 - 2014)
Member, ICMA 100th Anniversary Task Force
Member, Conference Planning Committee (2014, 2006)
Member, Task Force Community Tools for Ending Racism (2001 - 2002)
Member, Conference Evaluation Committee (2001, 1998)
Member, Assistant's Steering Committee (1993 - 1996)

ICMA-RC, Director (2018 – present)

Alliance for Innovation, Director (2014 - present)

National Civic League, Director (2015 - present)

National Homeland Security Consortium, Member (2018 - present)

United States Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Advisory Council

Member (2008 - 2017)
Flood Insurance and Mitigation Subcommittee - Chair (2015 - 2017)
Preparedness and Protection Subcommittee - Chair (2012 - 2015)
Stafford Act Working Group - Chair (2010)
National Response Framework Working Group - Chair (2010)

Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA), Full Member

President (2006 - 2007)
President-Elect (2005 - 2006)
Secretary/Treasurer (2004 - 2005)
Board of Directors (2007 - 2008, 2003, 2001 - 2002, 1993 - 1995)

Miami-Dade County City Management Association, President (1992)

National League of Cities

Member, (Chair 2009 - 2010, Vice-Chair 2008), CityFutures Panel (Public Finance) (2004 - 2012)
Member, Public Sector Retirement Advisory Committee (2016 – present)
Member, National City-County Task Force on the Opioid Epidemic (2016)
Member, Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy and Advocacy Steering Committee (2009 - present)
Member, Municipalities in Transition Committee (1998 - 2002)

Florida League of Cities

Board of Directors (2007 - 2008)
Instructor, Institute of Elected Municipal Officials (2003 - present)
Member, Finance and Taxation Committee (2008 - 2009)
Member, Home Rule Council (2006 - 2007)
Member, Municipal Administration Policy Committee (1998 - 2006, 2009 - present)
Member, Environmental Quality Committee (2002)

University of Central Florida Public Administration Advisory Board, Member (2007- 2013)

Florida International University, Metropolitan Center Advisory Board, Member (2013 - present)

Nova Southeastern University Public Administration Advisory Board, Member (2014 -present)

Major Awards and Recognitions

- Fellow, National Academy of Public Administration (2018)
- Distinguished Alumni Fellow, Fels Institute of Government, University of Pennsylvania (2016)
- Florida League of Cities - City Manager of the Year (2006)
- Florida League of Cities – Home Rule Hero Award (2013, 2014, 2015, 2017)
- Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) - President's Award (2008); Michael J. Roberto Career Development Award (2009); Lifesaver Award (2014)
- University of Central Florida Public Administration Department - Exemplary Public Service Award (2007-1st Recipient)

Candidate Introduction

Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM

EDUCATION

- Master of Governmental Administration (MGA), Fels Center of Government, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Certificate, Senior Executives in State and Local Government, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts
- Bachelor of Arts (Cum Laude), Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia

EXPERIENCE

President, Toposcraacy, LLC	1/2019 – present
City Manager, City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida	6/2011 – 12/2018
City Manager, City of Palm Bay, Florida	10/2002 – 6/2011
City Manager, City of North Miami, Florida	5/1996 – 10/2002
Deputy City Manager, City of North Miami, Florida	10/1989 – 5/1996
Assistant City Manager, City of North Miami Beach, Florida	4/1986 – 10/1989
Assistant to the City Manager, City of North Miami Beach, Florida	5/1985 – 4/1986
Lieutenant Commander, Supply Corps, United States Naval Reserve	1987 – 2002
President, International City/County Management Association (ICMA)	2016 – 2017
President, Florida City/County Management Association (FCCMA)	2006 – 2007
Director, ICMA-RC (Retirement Corporation)	2018 – present
Director, National Civic League	2015 – present
Director, Alliance for Innovation	2014 – present
Member, National Homeland Security Consortium	2018 – present
Member, FEMA National Advisory Council	2008 – 2017

BACKGROUND

Incorporated on March 27, 1911, the City of Fort Lauderdale is framed on the east coast of Florida by seven miles of golden sand beaches and bordered on the west by the Everglades. Between the two are the Intracoastal Waterway, the New River, and a canal system reminiscent of Venice wind through the interior. Encompassing nearly 36 square miles with an estimated population of 182,827 Fort Lauderdale is the largest of Broward County’s 31 municipalities and one of the ten largest cities in Florida. An advantageous economic climate has helped Fort Lauderdale establish itself as an international business center and one of the most desirable locations for new, expanding, or relocating businesses. Once known strictly as a tourism-based economy, today Fort

Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM

Lauderdale supports a diverse range of industries, including marine, manufacturing, finance, real estate, high technology, avionics, aerospace, and film and television production.

The City of Fort Lauderdale’s organizational structure is comprised of the offices of the City Manager, City Attorney, City Auditor, and City Clerk, along with the following nine departments: Finance, Fire-Rescue, Human Resources, Information Technology Services, Parks and Recreation, Police, Sustainable Development, Public Works, and Transportation and Mobility. The City employs a workforce of approximately 2,600 full-time equivalent employees. Six bargaining units represent a substantial number of employees, including: Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), FOP Police Captains, International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), IAFF Battalion Chiefs, International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 769, and the Federation of Public Employees (Professional and Supervisory).

The FY 2019 total adopted operating budget of Fort Lauderdale for all funds was \$785,015,992, including balances and transfers. The FY 2019 Adopted General Fund Operating Budget, including balances and transfers, was \$358,814,320. The operating tax rate is \$4.1193 per \$1,000 of taxable value.

The three most significant issues that faced the City of Fort Lauderdale were:

- Impact of Growth. Ensuring that all neighborhoods received the benefits of commercial and residential revitalization (Leave No Neighborhood Behind) while mitigating the impacts of traffic and noise on the community.
- Sea Level Rise. Creating a strategy and funding source to harden and protect the City’s infrastructure against the effects of climate change.
- Homelessness. Treating the homeless community as neighbors and creating a system that promotes and provides permanent supportive housing as a solution.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

Mark Twain once said, “The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.” I cannot point to the exact day I found out why, but I know why – to build community.

I have spent the last 33 years working for local government, the last 22 of which has been in the capacity of city manager. First, the City of North Miami, a city of 60,000 residents; then the City of Palm Bay, a city of 100,000 residents; and, most recently, the City of Fort Lauderdale, a city of 180,000 residents. During those 33 years, I have brought to fruition a fair number of projects; built a fair amount of infrastructure; and, attended to the business of government by building progressive organizations that operate on the bleeding edge of innovation.

Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM

Over the last month, I have had an opportunity to learn more about the City of Gainesville. The City is rich in history and has a reputation of inclusiveness and diversity. Neighborhoods are clearly important to the City Commission. There is a strong desire to professionally address the needs of the City in a proactive, communicative, innovative, and pragmatic manner. These are attributes that are important to me and essential to building community.

I truly believe that I have a lot to offer the City of Gainesville and that the City offers me the philosophic framework and challenges to continue to grow as a professional local government manager.

My management style is to question why the organization does things in one way and not another? Why do we have signs that say “No Fishing” and not have signs in parks that say “Have Fun!”? Why do we call it “Code Enforcement” and not “Community Enhancement”? You will find that I challenge the status quo and push against an intrinsic bureaucracy that strangles creativity and innovation. I have been called an “out of the box” thinker, but, quite frankly, I would rather be in a room without a box.

If you discuss my traits and characteristics with staff, across all levels, you will find a consensus that I treat everyone equally; create an environment of mutual respect; provide an atmosphere of consistent support; and, encourage a strong commitment of service to the neighbors of the city. Likewise, the elected officials that I work with will highlight my accessibility to them, staff, and neighbors; they will discuss my “get the job done” philosophy, my communication skills, financial prowess, and inherent strength to move the organization forward, as a team, to achieve their established priorities. Most importantly, both the elected officials and staff will attest to my commitment to build community and leave no neighborhood behind.

Upon introspection, I would say that my greatest strength is the ability to bring the elected official’s priorities to fruition through innovation, effective communication and hard work. Leading from the edge of my seat, I have fostered a workplace centered on creativity and collaboration, while preserving empathy and compassion. It is, perhaps, my drive that is my greatest weakness and the expectation that everyone is as equally motivated as I am to deliver on expectations. Over time, I have adjusted by emphasizing the need to establish realistic deliverables that are not over-promised.

I follow the Drucker principle that “you can’t manage what you can’t measure.” As City Manager of Palm Bay, I instituted a “PerformanceStat” model (which I was identified as an early adopter of the model) branded as “PalmStat” which was designed to identify operational deficits, provide corrective action, and measure success. The program was successful due to the constant follow-up to fine tune responses.

In the City of Fort Lauderdale, I created FL²STAT to provide the framework for an enterprise-wide quality management system. FL²STAT is integrated with the City’s Strategic Plan and Commission Annual Action Plan to measure the desired outcomes. Deficiencies in outcomes are identified as

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“Areas for Improvement” (AFI) and corrective actions are strategized and implemented by the senior management staff. The City of Fort Lauderdale’s quality management program is ISO 9001:2015 certified (the second municipality in the nation to receive such certification).

My philosophy is that a high-performance organization will implement a quality management program. Performance metrics must be outcome-based, not outputs. Measures cannot become targets or they will cease to be a good measure (Goodhurt’s Law). However, no program is ever effective if there is no follow-up to the action plans created.

I am most proud of my ability to change the nomenclature of governance. We often refer to the population as “residents”, “taxpayers”, “constituents”, “voters” and “customers”. This creates a transactional relationship with the City. I much prefer the word “neighbor” as this term stresses the relationship we should have in how we work with those who have entrusted us with governance. In Fort Lauderdale, we provided Neighbor Services, hosted Neighbor Support Night, conducted Neighbor Surveys, and held Neighbor Leadership Academies.

Likewise, departmental missions tend to create silos which only serve frustrate neighbors and reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. In Fort Lauderdale, we adopted one mission, “We Build Community”, which became the focal point for all departments to base their operations around. Employees, from the clerk to the city manager, served neighbors as “Community Builders”.

The change is nomenclature, embraced by all, including the City’s Mayor and Commissioners, resulted in consistent high levels of neighbor satisfaction.

Perhaps, if I have one regret during my tenure with Fort Lauderdale, it was not being able to achieve consensus around a new methodology for calculating stormwater fees. The traditional method of establishing fees was to base the fee upon the property’s run-off contribution. However, this did not capture the large amount of vertical development occurring within the City and I had suggested using trip generation as a more equitable methodology. Despite support from the City’s rate consultant, this methodology was not implemented due to the innovative nature of the solution (nowhere else in Florida has employed the methodology).

I also recognize that one of the most difficult tasks of any city manager is to terminate employment for individuals. I have approached this in several ways depending on the circumstances of the matter; however, understanding that a person’s livelihood is at stake, I have recognized the need for compassion and empathy is critical.

The challenges facing the City of Gainesville are:

- Implementation of “The Gainesville Answer”. Taking the Big Idea and the 9 Changes identified by the Blue Ribbon Advisory Committee for Economic Competitiveness and putting them in action with regular transparent reporting on progress.

Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM

- Supporting a Strong Economy and promoting the strength of the City through cultural diversity.
- Fostering Greater Equity by working with underserved neighborhoods to bring fruition to the concept of upward mobility.
- Planning for a Better Future, including better programming for the next generation and initiatives designed to promote the City as a leader in environmental issues.
- Becoming a Model for Other Cities to Follow through bleeding edge innovation and implementation of cutting-edge technologies designed to enhance “The Gainesville Answer.”

During the my first thirty (30) days with the City of Gainesville, I will:

- Begin introduction to all critical stakeholders including the Mayor & City Commission, Senior Management Team, Employees (Community Builders), County Manager, School Superintendent, University and College Presidents, Regional Partners, the business community, civic associations, and key neighbors.
- Begin weekly windshield meetings with Mayor & City Commission.
- Hold face to face meetings and begin to develop relationships with community builders and stakeholders.
- Conduct a budget and financial review of the City.
- Gather feedback and identify critical issues:
 - How do we operate?
 - What value to we provide to neighbors?
 - Where can we be in 5 years?
 - What is the one thing would you do if you were City Manager?
 - What should we stop doing, start doing, keep doing?
- Review municipal and regional information.
- Begin to develop a view of the current state of the City.
- Begin to communicate my operating principles and expectations.

During the following sixty (60) days, I will:

- Understand, evaluate, and confirm our value propositions and establish culture of trust and innovation.
- Analyze effectiveness of current baseline strategies.
- Evaluate initiatives:
 - Are we a high performing organization?
 - How have we defined success?
 - What metrics are we monitoring?
- Review/assess current economic development program and opportunities.
- Review/assess infrastructure and Community Investment Plan (CIP).

Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM

- Build a long-term economic model and meet with the City's Financial Advisor and Bond Counsel.
- Understand and evaluate the City's sustainability, resiliency and risk management framework, contingency planning, and cybersecurity protection efforts.
- Evaluate technology strategy roadmap and priorities.
- Conduct assessment of neighborhoods using the National Civic League's Civic Index.
- Review/assess current performance management system.

At the conclusion of ninety (90) days with the City of Gainesville, I will:

- Ensure that all Community Builders and other stakeholders clearly understand, support and are aligned with a go-forward direction and strategy.

I believe it is important to be accessible to the media (print and television) and to provide them with sufficient background information to enable their accurate reporting of stories and events which affect the City's neighbors. As I have a verified Twitter account, I will use that social medium to promote the City and provide information as coordinated with the City's Communications Department.

I do not anticipate anyone contacting the City with negative contacts about me or my performance as City Manager in the cities of North Miami, Palm Bay or Fort Lauderdale.

In my leisure time, I enjoy playing fantasy sports (football and baseball); watching movies; and, reading books on current trends and biographies.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Innovative and Progressive
- Communicative
- Accessible
- Energetic Team Player
- Ethical and Honest
- Action-Oriented

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

Due to change in the composition of the Mayor and City Commission in March 2018, my contract was terminated by the City of Fort Lauderdale City Commission on October 9, 2018. The Mayor and City Commission requested that I remain fully functioning as the City Manager through December 31, 2018; 20 days beyond the contractual notice provision.

CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY

My final compensation at the City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida:

Base Salary -	\$260,770
401a Differential -	\$ 10,430
401a Contribution -	\$ 51,867
Executive Benefits	Car Allowance, Cellphone Allowance, Medical/Dental/Life Insurance

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
LEE RUSSELL FELDMAN**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Brevard County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Brevard County, FL	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Excellent

Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern.

**Background Check Summary for
LEE RUSSELL FELDMAN
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Lee R. Feldman

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been convicted of driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Do you have a personal My Space, Face Book or other type of Web Page?
Yes No
9. Do you have a personal Twitter Account?
Yes No
10. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
11. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: 
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to (888) 539-6531 no later than 5:00 PM PST 08/12/19.
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

**Background Check Summary for
LEE RUSSELL FELDMAN
Personal Disclosure Explanation**

Lee R Feldman

4. As City Manager of the City of North Miami, it was alleged that I passed over an African-American male, who was serving as an Assistant Police Chief, for the position of Police Chief on the basis of his race. The matter was concluded when it was pointed out to the investigating body (US EEOC) that I had selected an African-American female for the position of Police Chief.

8. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/lee.feldman.14>

9. <https://twitter.com/leefeldman>

11. Joan Powers v. Alex Penelas, et. al.	Dismissed
Craig Pattison v. Palm Bay, et. al.	Dismissed
Florida State FOP v. Palm Bay, et. al.	Dismissed

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes
Lee Feldman

John “Jack” Seiler – Former Mayor of Fort Lauderdale, FL (954) 562-0958

Mr. Seiler has known Mr. Feldman for over a decade. After being mayor for 18 months, he hired Mr. Feldman as city manager. He has no complaints or criticisms about Mr. Feldman.

Mr. Feldman had an outstanding job performance. Even before he became city manager in Fort Lauderdale, he had a reputation for being a hard-worker, talented, and able to multitask. He is available at all times of the day, which means that he responds quickly to problems. He is also very customer service oriented.

Mr. Feldman is very good at mentoring and promoting deserving individuals. He makes excellent decisions when it comes to hiring personnel. He has the ability to delegate, but sometimes hesitates to because it is faster for him to complete tasks himself. He was able to successfully manage the 2500 employees that work for Fort Lauderdale.

Mr. Feldman is always out in the community. He is a good public speaker and also good with the public. He responds well to stress. It was nice to have someone around who never panicked. He has excellent financial skills and accomplishes tasks in a timely manner. For example, he saved the city for Fort Lauderdale over a hundred million dollars over 30 years by negotiating retirement bond issues and reforming union contracts.

Mr. Feldman is careful about who he associates with and how. He carries himself well publicly and privately. Mr. Seiler has no knowledge of anything in Mr. Feldman’s background that is controversial or embarrassing. He would hire Mr. Feldman again, if given the chance. The only reason he is not still working as the city manager of Fort Lauderdale is because the new mayor and he did not see eye-to-eye. It was not because of his skills or abilities, or lack thereof.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Feldman:

- Professional,
- Loyal,
- Responsive,
- Never panics,
- Hard worker, and
- Multitasker.

Strengths: Very bright, intelligent, multitasks, and a quick learner. Excels negotiating union contracts and bond deals.

Weaknesses: None identified

Reference Notes
Lee Feldman

Christopher Lagerbloom – City Manager, Fort Lauderdale, FL (954) 541-7953

Mr. Lagerbloom has known Mr. Feldman since 2010. He knew Mr. Feldman through professional contacts before being hired by Mr. Feldman as the assistant city manager for Fort Lauderdale. They keep in contact to this day. Mr. Feldman is a quiet leader. It is hard to outpace him with information because he has seen a little bit of everything.

Mr. Feldman is great at assembling teams. He prefers to recruit individuals for teams and positions that he works closely with himself. Mr. Lagerbloom has not dismantled any teams that Mr. Feldman placed because they do a great job. He is a good decision-maker, even if his decisions are not as quick as some would like.

Mr. Feldman was always spending time in the community. He made community appearances at all hours of the day and even on the weekends. He has experience working with community members in groups and one-on-one. He is constantly investing time in the next generation of city representatives.

Mr. Feldman oversaw many employees in Fort Lauderdale but was always able to make time to meet with department heads. They always felt informed and prepared for the next meeting or problems that arose. When hurricanes Matthew and Irma threatened Florida, he was quick to create storm response teams. He is good at making decisions while keeping in mind the government's or department's best interests. He is great at long-term planning.

Mr. Feldman does not panic when in stressful situations. He appears calm and does not freeze which enables him to make good decisions. He accomplishes tasks in a timely manner, or the best anyone can in a government setting where things tend to move at a slower pace.

Mr. Lagerbloom does not know of anything controversial in Mr. Feldman's background. There is nothing in his personal or professional conduct that would embarrass an employer.

Mr. Lagerbloom would hire Mr. Feldman if given the chance. Mr. Feldman is truly a good person. Mr. Lagerbloom thought enough of Mr. Feldman to move to South Florida as his assistant city manager and saw the position as the perfect opportunity to learn from Mr. Feldman.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Feldman:

- Will not find a better thinker,
- Witty,
- Good sense of humor,
- World's best multitasker,
- Master at public finance and budgeting, and
- Invested in the next generation.

**Reference Notes
Lee Feldman**

Strengths: Great with finances and budgets, creative, and good at building a team.

Weaknesses: He is not quick to confrontation, which can be good and bad.

Rick Maglione – Police Chief, Fort Lauderdale, FL (954) 931-1992

Mr. Maglione has known Mr. Feldman since 2012. Mr. Maglione worked with him as police chief from 2016 until Mr. Feldman left in 2018. Mr. Feldman is the most amazing leader Mr. Maglione has ever worked for.

Mr. Feldman is in continuous communication with department heads. He holds regular meetings and is always available if they need him. The most common way that Mr. Maglione communicates with him is on the telephone, but Mr. Feldman is always willing to do what it takes to accomplish tasks. He never shows stress. He seems to feed off the energy and it fuels him into accomplishing tasks.

Because of Mr. Feldman’s military background, he has special clearance. His special clearance status must be renewed every three years. This allows Mr. Maglione to share department information with him that a city manager would not normally be privy to. It has made their working relationship effective and pleasant. He is excellent at keeping things confidential that were shared in confidence. He also cares about the needs of the police department. With recent violent activities in other states, he saw a need for the police force to be outfitted more completely. The requested safety equipment was issued and by noon that same day the police department had rifle plates in their possession. When he sees a need, he is quick to fill it.

Mr. Feldman sometimes makes requests that are not understood at the time but benefit the city and community. For example, he asked the police cruisers to drive with safety lights on continuously, so the cruisers were more visible to the public. He also had the city team up with a home security system company to help police officers identify criminals quickly and effectively. The program cost nothing to the city and the crime rate in 2018 was the lowest it has been since the 1970s.

Mr. Feldman is continuously out in the community. He has been involved in park dedications, homeowner’s association meetings, and walking in parades. He believes spending time in the community is important, so much so that he changed the mission statement to “We build community.”

Mr. Feldman is no longer the city manager of Fort Lauderdale, not because of his skills, but because of a change in direction after a new mayor was elected. He was told in October of 2018 that his contract would not be renewed but was asked to stay on until the end of the year. That indicates much about his character, that he was trusted with city operations knowing that he would not have the job in a few months. No momentum was lost during that time. He conducted business as if nothing had changed.

Reference Notes
Lee Feldman

Mr. Maglione knows of nothing in Mr. Feldman's background that is controversial or that would cause embarrassment. He would, and tried to, hire Mr. Feldman. He believes that Mr. Feldman is the best manager there is and, as the former president of the IMCA, is the standard to which other managers are compared to.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Feldman:

- Commitment to duty,
- Tireless work ethic,
- Financially astute,
- Compassionate for his employees and community,
- Forward thinking, and
- Classy.

Strengths: Holds people to a high standard and there is nothing he cannot do.

Weaknesses: Ability to relax and take time off. He expects an immediate response.

Dan Lindblade - President/CEO, Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce
(954) 422-2171

Mr. Lindblade has known Mr. Feldman since 2011 when Mr. Lindblade was on the search committee that hired Mr. Feldman in Fort Lauderdale. Mr. Feldman is a great communicator and listens to differing viewpoints to gain consensus between the parties involved.

Mr. Feldman is known for being available, no matter the time of day or night. He holds regular meetings, sometimes over breakfast, to give and receive updates concerning city departments. He is always willing to communicate, whether through email, telephone, or text. Mr. Lindblade has Mr. Feldman on speed-dial and knows he will always return a call.

When hiring personnel, Mr. Feldman gives that responsibility to the department head or hiring manager of the department in need of filling a position. He then holds those department heads and hiring managers accountable for the decisions they make. When he is responsible for hiring, he takes responsibility for his decisions as well. He is generally known for making good decisions. You would never know when he is stressed because he does not show it.

Mr. Feldman is very visible when it comes to being in the community. He has spoken at and participated in events and has held telephonic town hall meetings for the public. He has experience working with both community groups and in one-on-one interactions with community members. He excels in both situations as he is approachable and patient. He is known for being customer service oriented as far as it is possible. Time limitations hold him back from helping everyone but he does good work with the time he has.

Reference Notes
Lee Feldman

There was a time when the sewer infrastructure in Fort Lauderdale needed to be replaced. Dealing with a sewage problem is a multi-layered process. Mr. Feldman found a quick and cost-effective solution. He suggested implementing sleeves and reduced the cost of fixing the problem over a short period of time. When it comes to fiscal responsibility, Mr. Feldman surpasses knowledge and ability over anyone Mr. Lindblade has ever worked with.

Mr. Lindblade is not aware of any controversy or anything from Mr. Feldman's past that would cause embarrassment to anyone that hired him. Mr. Feldman's contract was not renewed but that has nothing to do with his ability to manage a city. Mr. Lindblade would hire Mr. Feldman in a heartbeat if given the opportunity. He feels that Mr. Feldman would make a great manager, and any community would be lucky to have him.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Feldman:

- Unflappable,
- Good sense of humor,
- Professional,
- Conscientious,
- Good communicator, and
- Patient.

Strengths: Building community; communicating effectively with officials and neighborhood businesses; vision for the objectives for police, fire, and public works; brings teams together in a united focus; building effective teams in the government and from the community.

Weaknesses: Sometimes frustrated with the slow pace within a government.

Darin Atteberry – City Manager, Fort Collins, CO (970) 217-8889

Mr. Atteberry has known Mr. Feldman for the last 10 years. They worked together before and during the time that Mr. Feldman was the president of the IMCA, specifically on panels and boards. Mr. Atteberry does not have knowledge of how Mr. Feldman runs the day to day operations, since they have only worked on a national level. Mr. Feldman is effectively able to “zoom in” on local needs and “zoom out” to work on IMCA or global issues depending on where his attention is needed at the time.

Mr. Feldman is passionate about local government. He balances working in a political environment without being a politician. Stylistically, he has a presence while conducting meetings while still demonstrating humility. He understands the nuances and can see the details of a situation without becoming emotional. He is personable and friendly. Those with whom he works, within and outside of the government, respect him.

Reference Notes
Lee Feldman

A challenge that Mr. Feldman had to confront while being the president of the IMCA was time management. The IMCA president travels often but he was still able to attend local government meetings and be available to problem-solve. He never physically showed signs of stress. He asks hard questions which means that he is not always a popular person. However, asking the hard questions has led to some crystal-clear thinking. He does not get personal when he asks hard questions but is persistent. He is a driver for continuous improvement.

Mr. Feldman was a part of the Alliance Renovation Board, which addresses issues such as homelessness, transients, and budgeting. Policy-wise, these are sticky topics, but he proved to be responsive to concerns and differing opinions. The way he is able to lead in an innovative way while staying attentive to the everyday services provided by a local government is admirable.

Mr. Atteberry is not aware of any controversial situations in Mr. Feldman's past that would cause embarrassment to anyone that hired him. He has no concerns about Mr. Feldman's social behavior. He is an ethical person who is very committed to his family. Mr. Atteberry thinks he is a great manager and would hire him if given the opportunity. He would be a breath of fresh air anywhere he worked.

At a national level, Mr. Atteberry is not aware of anyone that would have a differing opinion of Mr. Feldman. All of those that work closely with him respect him greatly.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Feldman:

- Passionate about local government,
- Industry leader,
- Thoughtful,
- Well-read,
- Up to speed on issues,
- Pleasant, and
- Responsive.

Strengths: High energy innovative leader, industry driver, delivers on commitments, demonstrates humility, and he can laugh at himself.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Heather Moraitis – Commissioner, Fort Lauderdale City Commission, FL (954) 303-3448

Ms. Moraitis has known Mr. Feldman since 2013. She was elected as a Commissioner in 2017 and they worked together in this regard for a year. They see eye-to-eye on almost all political topics. They have a very good working relationship and Ms. Moraitis was impressed with his ability to see where the city could be on a global level.

Reference Notes
Lee Feldman

Mr. Feldman is very committed to the fiscal health of the city. The mayor expressed a desire to not raise taxes and gave him the challenge of finding other sources of income to make it possible. He was able to accomplish this task and the city did not raise taxes for 13 years. This did create a problem, as the return on investment allocated for water and sewer was legally transferred to the general fund. After many years of not maintaining the water and sewer pipes as needed, they have started to deteriorate and breakdown. However, Mr. Feldman was only doing what was asked of him but this practice should have been reversed sooner.

Mr. Feldman is constantly out in the community. When citizens' voice problems or concerns, he has been known to meet with them one-on-one. He makes it a point to handle these types of situations personally.

Mr. Feldman can see opportunities where others might not. For example, there was a piece of land owned by a private airport that was not being used. He worked with the airport to create a master plan for the property. The city then purchased the property for recreation purposes. They built parks on the land and are currently working with the David Beckham Soccer League to hold events and games there.

Mr. Feldman is an excellent communicator. He is always available through phone, text, and email. He holds regularly planned meetings and trainings where they dive deep into the needs and goals of the city. He is very committed to keep the commission informed on a regular basis.

If Mr. Feldman is stressed, it is hard to tell as he is even-keeled all the time. He makes good decisions when it comes to hiring. He hired as Assistant City Manager who is now the City Manager for Fort Lauderdale.

Mr. Feldman is an excellent manager and would be the perfect addition to any city looking to grow and expand. Ms. Moraitis has no knowledge of anything in his background or personal conduct that is controversial or would cause embarrassment for the city or county that hired him. She would definitely hire him if given the chance.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Feldman:

- Conscientious,
- Innovative,
- Collaborator,
- Good friend,
- Caring,
- Determined, and
- Hard worker.

Reference Notes
Lee Feldman

Strengths: Completes tasks quickly and effectively, receptive to taking direction from others, self-motivated, understands what is going on globally and nationally.

Weaknesses: Sometimes forgets that those he works with do not have as thorough of an understanding on specific topics as he does.

John Weber – John Weber, CPA, Partner, Crowe LLP (630) 254-6567

Mr. Weber has known Mr. Feldman since 2012. Mr. Weber was an external auditor for the city. They met four times a year for audit and budgeting purposes.

Mr. Feldman is an excellent manager, especially with the financial team. They were able to complete audits without problems or errors. Members of the team always spoke highly of him. They were all professional and easy to work with. Mr. Weber has high marks and praises for Mr. Feldman.

Being a member of the community, Mr. Weber saw Mr. Feldman often. He always attends events and actively participated in those events. He is customer service oriented and happy to help others.

Mr. Feldman is always available and willing to communicate. He uses all forms of communication; phone, text, email, or in-person, to accomplish what needs to be done. He is happy and able to meet one-on-one if that is what it takes to fix a problem. If there was a complex transaction, he worked to achieve the right result for accounting purposes and city purposes in financial reporting. He understands the finances of a city very well.

Mr. Weber is not aware of anything controversial that Mr. Feldman created, though as City Manager Mr. Feldman is involved in situations that might be considered controversial. To his knowledge, there is nothing embarrassing in Mr. Feldman's background or conduct. Mr. Feldman is a great manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Feldman:

- Cordial,
- Poised,
- Bright,
- Amiable,
- Team player, and
- Knowledgeable.

Strengths: Leadership abilities to manage finance team.

Weaknesses: None identified.

**Reference Notes
Lee Feldman**

Dean Trantalis – Mayor, Fort Lauderdale, FL (954) 295-2838

Mr. Trantalis has known Mr. Feldman since 2013. Before being Mayor, Mr. Trantalis was a commissioner in Fort Lauderdale. As a commissioner, he was commonly the opposing vote of the majority. The city manager's job is to carry out the wishes of the majority of the commission. Once Mr. Trantalis became Mayor, he no longer felt that Mr. Feldman was the right person to manage the city of Fort Lauderdale and declined to renew his contract.

Jonathan Lewis – County Administrator, Sarasota County, FL (941) 400-3660

Mr. Lewis has known Mr. Feldman since around 2007. They interacted while Mr. Feldman was on the Board of the Florida City and County Manager Association. Mr. Feldman has been a close colleague and mentor since that time. He is the benchmark of what a good manager is, and Mr. Lewis does not know anyone that performs higher.

Mr. Feldman always wants to know what is going on in the different departments. He wants to ensure they are being challenged and performing their jobs correctly. He is great at hiring personnel. He has the strategic vision to get the most out of the people who work for him.

Mr. Feldman is always looking for better ways to accomplish goals and tasks. He is known for being a change agent. He looks for ways to build communities and get to know the people who live there. He cannot go into the public without being recognized. People from all walks of life are comfortable talking to him.

Mr. Feldman thinks of innovative ways to improve situations. He partnered with Greyhound Communications to improve the city's emergency services. When other cities started using drones to assist the police force, he suggested using paragliders. The information collected with paragliders outperformed what you could get with a drone. The city was able to get DNA tests for free because they were part of a beta test.

Mr. Feldman never becomes frazzled when under stress and appears to be the calmest person in the room which helps him accomplish tasks. When presented with timelines for a project, he works efficiently and usually completes the task sooner than expected.

Mr. Lewis is not aware of any personal or professional conduct that is out of line or would be embarrassing for an employer. As a city manager, and being innovative as Mr. Feldman is, it is hard to avoid controversy. However, there is nothing that would cause concern for a future employer. Mr. Feldman is a great manager as he creates an environment that people want to work in.

**Reference Notes
Lee Feldman**

Words or phrases used to describe Lee Feldman:

- Innovative,
- Approachable,
- Financial guru,
- Community builder,
- Not a micromanager, and
- Mentor.

Strengths: Incredible amount of vision, looks for better ways to improve community and challenge staff, active as an international and city manager.

Weaknesses: He could probably get away from work more often but finds it difficult because work is his passion.

Prepared by: Cara Slade
Colin Baenziger & Associates

Section 7

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Search
Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
April 26, 2019

Hotel could be one of last mega-developments on Fort Lauderdale beach, as traffic piles up
Author: Brittany Wallman

Fort Lauderdale beach is reaching its development maximum. Under rules meant to prevent traffic gridlock, a beachfront hotel coming up for a vote in May could be one of the last major developments on the barrier island. The proposed Beach Boys Plaza hotel would fill in a vacant space on State Road A1A a few hundred feet south of Las Olas Boulevard, at 401 S. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd. It will attract more cars to the crowded beach roadways, pushing traffic volumes toward their legal maximum. Under a little-known development rule from the 1980s, new projects cannot be approved on the barrier island if the number of cars on the roadways during the busiest afternoon hour would exceed 3,220 cars, city officials and documents say. After Beach Boys hotel and a few other pending projects are approved, the afternoon beach traffic will be just 59 cars short of that cap, city development officials said. Beach redevelopment is expected to slow to a halt soon.

City elected officials were warned last summer that the development milestone -- a no-more-traffic moratorium -- was coming. "When the trips run out, the development opportunities run out," then-City Manager **Lee Feldman** warned commissioners in June. New City Manager Chris Lagerbloom said he agrees with his predecessor's assessment. If commissioners wanted to change the rules to allow more development and traffic, they'd need permission from the county -- an approval that is by no means guaranteed. The process for approval can take several years, **Feldman** warned last summer. Mayor Dean Trantalis said this week that it's a debate he anticipates, because there is still "quite a bit of redevelopment that needs to happen on the beach." Trantalis and two of his colleagues on the City Commission, Ben Sorensen and Steve Glassman, ran for election last year on slow-growth platforms. In addition, city residents say bad traffic is one of the city's worst problems. Trantalis said he'd need to see "clear and convincing evidence" that the traffic limit would be lifted but is open to discussing it. "We have to ask ourselves: Do we want to complete the beach projects and eliminate the balance of the slum and blight in exchange for additional traffic in order to accomplish it?" Trantalis said. A store, a hotel, a bar, a restaurant -- all would attract traffic.

Redevelopment will be limited to projects that wouldn't make traffic worse. For example, a hotel could be torn down and replaced with another, but only if the new hotel didn't bring more afternoon peak hour traffic than the original one did, city officials have said. Or a developer could buy up businesses, tear them down, and use the traffic allowances associated with them to build on another site. That might be good news for drivers, knowing that there is a limit to how bad traffic can get on the barrier island. But it likely will set off a scramble among developers. "There's no way every single project we've heard about can come to fruition under the present trip cap," Commissioner Glassman said.

Traffic rules

Internet – Newspaper Archives Search**Lee Feldman***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Under the 1989 agreement with Broward County, the city is required to keep tabs on beach traffic, to make sure beach traffic congestion doesn't get any worse than a "D" level on an A to F scale. Projects that will further congest the roadways would be required to come up with action plans to improve traffic flow, the 1989 agreement says. Despite that, State Road A1A in the central beach has descended to the worst traffic congestion on the scale -- an F -- in just the last few years, according to Florida Department of Transportation assessments. The 1989 agreement also restricts the number of residences on the beach to 5,500. A city memo from June said there were 391 remaining for future development projects. Commissioner Glassman, who represents the beach area, said residents are not interested in allowing more development and traffic. "Every meeting I go to on the barrier island, folks are really looking forward to the trips expiring," he said. The development limit applies to the central beach, from Sunrise Boulevard south to just south of the Bahia Mar property. Rights to the few remaining car "trips" will be given out on a first come, first served basis, a city memo says.

Beach Boys

Over the past 20 years, the beachfront has slowly transformed, as older, smaller businesses were torn down and replaced with giant high-rise hotels and condos. The Beach Boys Plaza hotel follows that trend, filling in a parking lot with a 16-story building. If approved next month, it will rise next to the city's Las Olas parking lot, which is currently being remade into a public park. An existing retail strip on the Beach Boys property will be renovated, lawyer-lobbyist Courtney Callahan Crush said. More retail and restaurants will be added with the new hotel. A garage will include an extra 162 spaces for the general public to park, the building plans say. The hotel will be designed like other beachfront architecture, with the tower portion of the building set back away from the shore in order to minimize shadows on beach sunbathers. Traffic forecasts say the new hotel will add 1,991 cars to the beach roads each day. But only the afternoon peak hour cars from the hotel -- 155, according to traffic forecasters -- count towards the traffic cap.

More cars coming

Several other big developments are in the works, and are factored in to the latest traffic tally, city Sustainable Development Director Anthony Fajardo said. The projects: Bayshore Hotel at 3016 Bayshore Drive, with 115 residential units, 168 hotel rooms and some retail-restaurant space, headed to a May 7 City Commission vote; 3000 Alhambra St., a tower with 311 residential units plus retail and restaurants at the formerly city-owned Sebastian parking lot property; and the Residence Inn at 425 Seabreeze Blvd., city development officials said. After those projects are approved, developers will be competing for the remaining 59 "trips."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Search
Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Bulldog (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
December 17, 2018

White property owners get full refunds for streetcar snafu, black community's CRA takes hit

Author: Noreen Marcus

This story was updated Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. When Fort Lauderdale officials pledged \$7.5 million, plus debt service, in poverty dollars for the Wave, it didn't make sense. The 2.7-mile streetcar line would serve only a few blocks of the Sistrunk corridor in the city's northwest section. And despite the many urgent needs of this blighted African-American neighborhood, it would be subsidizing a project to benefit, in particular, white downtown merchants, developers and more affluent property owners. The city finally bade goodbye to the Wave in May, dumping a boondoggle that wouldn't fulfill anyone's dream of transporting tourists or even lots of locals. Without laying a single track, project managers spent a reported \$33.7 million on lobbying, consulting, lawyers, etc., in a decade-long gamble to bring a controversial \$225 million proposal to life. Earlier this month the city announced that checks will go out on Feb. 1 to downtown property owners who paid a special tax for five years to raise the Wave. The refunds, with interest, will amount to almost \$10 million, according to the Sun Sentinel.

But with a little-noticed budget vote on Nov. 20, Fort Lauderdale commissioners, who also run the city's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), decided the Sistrunk district should take a hit of either \$1.67 million or \$2.9 million, depending on who's doing the math. The Northwest CRA shortfall plan was rubber-stamped at Tuesday's CRA board meeting, according to Frank Schnidman, an opponent of the plan who was there. "It seemed like they felt that the slum and blight and need for affordable housing of the Sistrunk CRA did not need the money, so why take it from the DDA [Downtown Development Authority], the white property owners, or the city?" he wrote in an email.

Activists angered

The prospect of Sistrunk losing money on a non-starter—while richer neighbors recoup every penny—saddens and angers the activists who have raged against the Wave's unfairness from the start. "I'd like to know how our 'trusted'—you can put that in quotes—city officials could allow something like this to happen, and no one wants to own up to the decision that was made," said Marie "Ms. Peaches" Huntley, a Sistrunk resident and businesswoman. She is CEO of On Call Leadership, a nonprofit that mentors disadvantaged youth. Huntley has two outspoken allies, Schnidman and Scott Strawbridge. "The CRA's money was hijacked by the city," said Schnidman, a retired Florida Atlantic University professor who is a consultant and expert on CRAs. "Shame on the politicians that support this reverse Robin Hood scheme." Strawbridge said, "I'm at a loss as to how this is a fair, right or equitable thing to do." A city housing authority employee, Strawbridge recently ended his voluntary service on the Northwest CRA advisory board—largely because of the refund gap, he told Florida Bulldog. Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis, a staunch Wave opponent who was elected in March, said, "We certainly do not intend

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Search
Lee Feldman**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

to shortchange the CRA and if necessary we will have to supplement it with whatever sources of funds that we can in order to make the CRA whole." He referred a reporter to City Manager **Lee Feldman** for a full explanation of the rationale behind the refund.

Not enough money for CRA

The mayor's commitment to the Sistrunk CRA was news to Strawbridge and Schnidman. They said **Feldman**, who is also the CRA's executive director, made it clear there wasn't enough money available for full refunds and the northwest CRA district would absorb the loss. Strawbridge calculated that loss would be almost \$3 million based on information shared at the Nov. 20 meeting. Following up on Dec. 10, he learned from Christopher Lagerbloom, who will replace **Feldman** next month, that **Feldman** wasn't budging. "Yes, my recommendation stays the same," Lagerbloom quoted **Feldman** in an email. "There's no requirement to repay the CRA and the city's general fund is taking a large enough hit at this point." Asked about that statement in an email, **Feldman** did not respond. Separately, **Feldman** wrote to Florida Bulldog that the shortfall will be \$1.67 million, not \$2.9 million. Why the disparate treatment of the city's downtown and northwest neighborhoods? "I feel everybody's beating around answering that particular question because they don't want to say the wrong thing or make it seem like it's a racist thing," Huntley said. "People don't want to pull the race card when it comes to issues like this, but why would we be the last kept secret?"

Third most segregated city

"This money is supposed to raise this community up," Strawbridge said. "Fort Lauderdale, regrettably, is the third most segregated city in Florida, and with this type of conduct, that would be expected." Asked to respond to the accusation of racism directed at the northwest CRA district, Trantalis sounded irritated. "It also includes the entire Flagler Village area, so why is that racism? If you look at the allocations of the CRA funds throughout the boundaries of the redevelopment area, you will see that the Sistrunk area has received more than the Flagler area, as it should because there's a greater need there," he said. "For them to say they didn't get their share is inaccurate and petty," Trantalis said. But Flagler Village, in the Flagler Heights neighborhood, is part of the problem, according to the Sistrunk activists. They say too many city resources are used for developer incentives there, rather than to encourage investment and build affordable housing in the poorer part of the same CRA district. The gentrified enclave east of the FEC railroad tracks has apartment rentals that far exceed the means of most Sistrunk residents living a few blocks to the west, Strawbridge said. At Flagler Village, a 600-square-foot unit can go for \$1,800 to \$2,000 a month. Schnidman, who wants a state audit of the Wave refund mechanism, called the unlamented project "a toy train going nowhere on 20th Century technology." He said the whole thing, including the way it's unraveling, is another misuse of "a politically favorable slush fund."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Search
Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
October 11, 2018

Who's going to foot the \$3 billion bill to fix aging Fort Lauderdale?

Author: Brittany Wallman

Fort Lauderdale is aging -- from the pipes to the roads to the sidewalks to the bridges to the buildings. And overhauling all of it will cost at least \$3 billion, city officials say. Everyone from property owners to renters paying utility bills will be burdened with the tab. At a workshop Wednesday, city leaders started the difficult discussion of how to collect an extra \$3 billion over the next 20 years. Property taxpayers could see tax rates increase for the first time since 2006, officials warned. Water and sewer customers already pay higher rates every year, but the increases could be even larger. Stormwater rates for flooding prevention also are expected to increase. In addition, the city might ask voters in March to tack on an additional property tax to pay for \$250 million in parks projects and a new police headquarters. "How did we get to this point where the police station is so far gone? How did we get to the point where the sewers are so far gone?" asked Ed Kwoka, a management consultant company owner who sits on the city's infrastructure task force.

The financially grim news is the result of years of neglect or lackluster maintenance in the 107-year-old city, particularly during the Great Recession that started 10 years ago, city officials said. "We kind of lost a lot of our buildings," Commissioner Robert McKinzie said. "Fort Lauderdale was not the only city. It's been throughout the country where the sanitary sewers were not maintained," said Ralph Zeltman, a former utilities worker and a member of the infrastructure task force, which was convened after unprecedented raw sewage spills in Fort Lauderdale waterways. "It was out of sight, out of mind." The workshop, a joint meeting of the task force and City Commission, laid the groundwork for next year's decisions about raising taxes and fees. Here's how the \$3 billion breaks down, and who might pay it:

* Water-sewer upgrades: \$1.4 billion. Already, \$200 million has been borrowed to start the most critical work. Utility rates go up 5 percent each year, which should pay for the first 10 years of the 20-year project schedule. More needs could be identified, though. Also, a rate study is under way that could result in higher costs for customers.

* Stormwater, or flooding prevention: About \$1 billion. For now, the city isn't sure how this will be paid. Commissioners will decide in the coming months whether to increase rates to cover it. Stormwater fees are found on the monthly utility bill. The rates went up 25 percent last year to \$10 a month for a residential property, but that wasn't nearly enough to cover the tab. Condo residents likely will pay more than they're used to paying, under a hybrid model that takes into consideration the traffic to and from a property, rather than just the surface area of the land.

* New City Hall and police headquarters: \$300 million. The city and county are in talks about construction of a city-county government center, and it could include a new police headquarters. The current headquarters, built in the 1950s on Broward Boulevard, would be demolished. There

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Lee Feldman**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

has been talk of a public-private deal involving public land downtown, but for now, the funding of the projects is unknown.

* Parks projects: \$150 million. The projects haven't been identified, but City Manager **Lee Feldman** said commissioners must decide by mid-December whether to ask voters in March to raise their property taxes for the work. He said voters could be asked to support a \$250 million bond for the parks improvements and a \$100 million new police headquarters. **Feldman** was fired Tuesday night and leaves at year's end.

* Roads, bridges, public seawalls and sidewalks: \$125.4 million. The city will use gas taxes, stormwater fees and general tax dollars for these projects. A property tax increase could contribute toward this work. If the city raises its property tax rate, it could collect an additional \$35 million for every extra "mill." One mill equates to a \$1 in property tax, charged on every \$1,000 of property value. A one mill increase on a \$300,000 house, for example, would raise the tax bill \$300, plus any increase from a rise in property values.

Feldman said the city also should start considering building a broadband network for high-capacity computer data transfers, in order to stay competitive to businesses. "You need to be looking at the infrastructure for the future as well," he said. "You don't want to put yourself in catch-up mode there, too." City commissioners will discuss the potential parks-police bond issue at their Oct. 23 meeting. "You can't nickel and dime your way out of this problem," said Marilyn Mammano, a former member of the New York City Planning Commission and chairwoman of the infrastructure task force. " ... These are painful decisions."

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
October 10, 2018

Fort Lauderdale city manager fired as city heads in 'new direction'

Author: Brittany Wallman

Fort Lauderdale City Manager **Lee Feldman** was fired Tuesday night, bringing to an end an administration that oversaw one of the city's biggest building booms and struggled to maintain its failing infrastructure. By a 3-2 vote, Mayor Dean Trantalis and Commissioners Steve Glassman and Ben Sorensen said **Feldman** should leave at year's end, to be replaced by someone more in line with their "new direction." The three won their seats in the city's spring elections, and promised closer scrutiny to development, and more attention to the aging water-sewer system. Commissioners Robert McKinzie and Heather Moraitis voted not to fire **Feldman**. All five praised **Feldman**, and agreed he shouldn't leave immediately. "**Lee** has done an excellent job in a lot of ways for the city," Sorensen said, making the motion to terminate his contract. "With the new City Commission and a slightly new direction, I think it's time for a new direction in the city manager office."

Feldman sat silent through the discussion. Afterward he said he would approach the job in the coming months with the same "vigor and professionalism" he'd always carried to work. "I think we've made a lot of good progress in building up a professional organization that has attained both statewide and national recognition in lots of areas," **Feldman** said, calling the job "exciting and exhilarating." Under the terms of his contract, he is to receive a lump sum severance payment equal to six months of salary and benefits. That would be \$169,233, based on his \$255,523 annual salary and \$82,943 in benefits. **Feldman** had just received a three percent raise in June.

"I just want to publicly thank **Lee** for all he's done," Commissioner McKinzie said. "I hate to see **Lee** go, but that's the way the ball bounces sometimes." "I'd keep you if I could," Commissioner Moraitis said. "You've been great and your staff's been great. I think a great staff is indicative of great leadership. ... Another city will be fortunate to have you." The average tenure of a city manager is 7.3 years, according to the International City/County Management Association.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
August 28, 2018

Spending diet coming for city of Fort Lauderdale

Author: Brittany Wallman

Fort Lauderdale will kick into budget-cutting mode for the first time in years. On the potential chopping block: vacant city jobs, financial support for nonprofit organizations and park improvements. A majority of commissioners agreed informally Monday that the city should stop balancing the budget using money siphoned from the water-sewer fund but shouldn't raise property taxes to make up for the loss. Those decisions, if finalized in September, would put the city on a spending diet. Over a period of four years, commissioners said the city would be weaned off of the \$20-million-a-year transfers. For the budget that's in the works now, \$5.1 million must be removed, commissioners said. Only police and fire services are off limits for the cuts, they said. "This is some serious stuff," Commissioner Robert McKinzie warned his colleagues. McKinzie said he would support what his colleagues wanted to do, but he suggested they be upfront about exactly what they want cut. "Next year we can't blame the previous commission," he said, alluding to the fact that Mayor Dean Trantalis and Commissioners Steve Glassman and Ben Sorensen won their seats in the spring elections, after campaigning in part on complaints about their predecessors' decisions.

The discussion Monday put a firmer resolve on an issue the city has been grappling with all year. A potential property tax increase was discussed several months ago, but Monday, that idea fell flat. The workshop was the last scheduled budget discussion before final hearings in September. The city for years has been balancing the budget using money from the water-sewer fund. But as the city's sewer pipes burst all over town, that practice became controversial. City Manager **Lee Feldman** has warned in the past that cutting \$5.1 million would prevent the city from moving forward on some of its priorities, like helping the homeless or looking into creating an aviation-focused city charter school. The \$5.1 million would be about 1.4 percent of the \$363 million general fund budget. **Feldman** said about 60 percent of it is salaries and benefits, making cuts difficult. Next year, the city would go through a similar exercise, removing an additional \$5 million from the budget. That would repeat the following two years so that five years from now, no money from the water-sewer fund would be propping up the city's general budget. The city has had the same property tax rate for 12 years. The city will glean an extra \$10.5 million in the coming budget by keeping the tax rate the same, because rising property values will cause tax bills to increase. So even with the \$5 million "cut," the city will take in more property tax money. But **Feldman** noted that the cost of running the city -- and paying its employees -- rises each year.

The potential budget cuts would cut from these areas:

* **NONPROFITS**: The city was proposing to contribute \$1.2 million to nonprofit organizations through grants. The money goes to the Winterfest Inc. boat parade, Summer Youth Employment

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Lee Feldman

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Program, Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale Inc., and the Downtown Development Authority security program, among other things. Some or all of that could be cut.

* **OPEN JOBS:** The city budget advisory board suggested that jobs that have gone unfilled for several months be eliminated from the budget. The city manager said some of those openings, like for police officers or beach lifeguards, shouldn't be cut. Some other jobs were created to follow commissioners' recently stated goals, he said. For example, he created a position for an education expert to help the city consider creation of a school. He created one full-time and one part-time position people to coordinate a "food repatriation" program to get food from restaurants or other food providers to homeless people. **Feldman** said he thinks he could cut six open positions from the proposed budget.

* **PROJECTS:** With \$9 million in parks and roadway improvements proposed, much of the \$5 million could be reached by cutting from that list, commissioners said. Most of the projects are in city parks. For example, \$497,250 is programmed for citywide playground replacements. The city could ask voters in a potential spring special election to approve a parks bond issue that could pick up some of the killed projects, commissioners said.

* **EXTRAS:** New items that weren't in last year's budget could be examined for cuts, according to commissioners. A \$3.1 million list provided by the city manager to the budget board showed vehicle purchases, a new computer software program, an audit of city purchasing cards and enhanced median maintenance, among other things.

Feldman said he's still developing his list of proposed cuts. The first budget hearing for the total \$790.3 million budget is Sept. 6 in City Hall at 6 p.m. The second and final hearing is Sept. 12, same time, same place. The budget year starts Oct. 1.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
August 24, 2018

Fort Lauderdale will enforce limit on marijuana clinics, despite state law saying it can't
Author: Brittany Wallman

A state law says cities cannot limit the number of medical marijuana dispensaries, but Fort Lauderdale plans to do it anyway, officials said this week. Fort Lauderdale officials said they will reject several medical marijuana dispensaries in the northeast part of the city, even while acknowledging that a city law limiting clinic numbers likely won't hold up in court. The city's law allows a maximum of four medical marijuana dispensaries citywide, one in each City Commission district. And four businesses are seeking to open in District 1, the Northeast. "We wanted to alert you we have more than one," City Manager **Lee Feldman** advised city commissioners at a meeting Tuesday. "We will be denying the second, third and fourth." The problem is a state law prohibits cities from limiting the number of dispensaries. A city is allowed to ban them outright, the state law says, but if a city chooses to allow the marijuana treatment centers, they must be treated like any ordinary pharmacy. Fort Lauderdale passed its restrictive law before the state law was approved. So some parts of it, including a ban on dispensaries within 1,500 feet of parks, and a distance between them of at least 1,000 feet, are grandfathered in, Interim City Attorney Alain Boileau advised commissioners this week.

Only the portion limiting the number of clinics is likely to collapse in court, Boileau said, because state law explicitly prohibits that. "Challenged on that issue," Boileau said, "we're likely to lose." Boileau said the city could keep the law in place but just stop enforcing the per-district limit. He explained that the city cannot amend the law to remove that limit without jeopardizing the rest of it. **Feldman** said he'd have a hard time telling homeowner associations that "we are just not going to enforce an ordinance because it may be challenged." He suggested the city stick to what's on the books. "If someone believes it is unlawful," **Feldman** said, "they can challenge us in court." Boileau countered soon after: "We can wait for the court to tell us that, or we can deem ourselves it's unconstitutional and avoid the battle." City commissioners Tuesday said they didn't want to take any action. **Feldman** said the city will continue enforcing the existing law with the limits.

The application that was submitted first to the city was for a clinic at 4500 N. Federal Highway. It is working its way through the approval process. Neighbors in Coral Ridge Country Club Estates already have complained that it won't have enough parking and landscaping, among other things. "While we have no position on Cannabis Dispensaries, we strongly object to this poorly conceived proposal," homeowner association President Peter Cooper wrote to City Commissioner Heather Moraitis, who represents that district. Second in the door was an application for 2949 N. Federal Highway, a city memo says. **Feldman** did not disclose the locations of the two additional potential applicants except to say they're also in that district. No formal applications have been submitted, he said. Florida voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment in November 2016 allowing the use of medical marijuana. According to the state health department, 14 businesses have been approved to dispense medical marijuana.

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They have opened 49 medical marijuana treatment centers around state, according to a state list updated Wednesday. For now, there is no dispensary open in Broward County. One is expected to open soon, in Deerfield Beach. Orders by card-carrying medical marijuana patients can be made by mail.

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Lee Feldman
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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
July 10, 2018

Fort Lauderdale plans to use water-sewer money to balance budget – again

Author: Brittany Wallman

Fort Lauderdale is poised to remove millions of dollars from its water-sewer system fund, a controversial practice that a majority of city elected officials pledged to stop. A proposed \$20.4 million transfer from the water-sewer fund would be used to balance the city budget, under a draft spending plan unveiled in recent days by the city manager. The withdrawal would bring to at least \$126.6 million the total amount removed from the water-sewer fund since 2012, to spend on unrelated city expenses. The city's aging infrastructure -- and pending wave of development -- have been a top issue in the past year. A recent citizen survey found infrastructure heavy on residents' minds. A majority of the City Commission elected in March -- Mayor Dean Trantalis and commissioners Steve Glassman and Ben Sorensen -- campaigned on the issue of strengthening the water-sewer system and ending the financial transfers. "Three of you campaigned on the promise to eliminate this practice," city resident Joseph Maus emailed commissioners Saturday, "and I hope you live up to your promise."

Glassman emailed back that the reliance on water-sewer funds could be phased out over time, so as not to "blow a \$20 million hole in the budget." "I am extremely disappointed that the propose[d] budget ignores the consensus of the Commission," Glassman wrote in the email, "and I will be expressing that on Tuesday." Sorensen said in a text message Monday that the transfers "need to begin to be phased out immediately and ultimately eliminated." Fort Lauderdale's utility rates automatically increase 5 percent each year, and customers outside the city limits pay a 25 percent rate surcharge, but the city doesn't use all of the money to rebuild the system. The South Florida Sun Sentinel reported last year that while the city's water-sewer system has been deteriorating, the city has systemically removed millions. A consultant last year determined that the system needs \$1.4 billion in repairs and upgrades in the coming 20 years, and recommended the transfers cease. The aging city pipes suffered a series of failures in the past four years that crippled the ability to transport sewage from toilets to the wastewater plant. Sewage flooded a neighborhood in 2016 and overflowed from manholes last year. The large sewage spills into local waterways prompted the state Department of Environmental Protection to take enforcement action, negotiating a consent order with the city to force repairs to be made.

City Auditor John Herbst said the "return on investment" transfers, though rarely used in Florida, are legal and proper. City Commissioner Heather Moraitis said she supports it, particularly in order to prevent an increase in the property tax rate. She said she doesn't agree with the terminology some critics use to describe it. Trantalis has referred to it as "stealing" from the fund. "We're allowed to do it," Moraitis said at a recent budget workshop. "We're allowed to take profit. We're allowed to use it, obviously, for stuff in our city, like we are doing. I am definitely not at the point where I think we need to raise taxes." Commissioner Robert McKinzie said he favored continuing the withdrawals until there's a "solid solution" to relying on it. City Manager **Lee Feldman's** proposed \$790.3 million total budget also rests on maintaining the

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same property tax rate the city has used for the past 11 years -- about \$412 for every \$100,000 of taxable property value. The rate hasn't been lower since 1986, city officials confirmed. That still would result in \$10.4 million more taxes for the city, because property values rose 6.34 percent, not counting new buildings that also will generate more taxes. That almost covers the \$10.7 million **Feldman** said the city needs for employee raises. He also proposes hiring an additional 33.5 employees, adding to the team of 2,776. Nearly 61 percent of the city's general fund budget of \$362.2 million goes to police and fire-rescue services, the proposed budget says.

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Lee Feldman
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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
June 23, 2018

Fort Lauderdale city manager defying mayor's call to move on

Author: Meryl Kornfield

Despite a suggestion to quit from the mayor, Fort Lauderdale's city manager **Lee Feldman** said he's not going anywhere. "Honestly, **Lee**, I think you need to think about moving on," Mayor Dean Trantalis told **Feldman** during Tuesday's City Commission meeting. "And I think that based on the experiences that you've exposed the city to, I really don't think that we can continue to suffer under your leadership." After Trantalis finished speaking, Commissioner Robert McKinzie moved to give **Feldman** a three percent raise, and Commissioners Heather Moraitis and Ben Sorensen agreed. **Feldman**'s new base pay is \$255,523 a year. His total compensation, including benefits like life insurance and contributions to his retirement, is \$338,466.94. **Feldman** told the South Florida Sun Sentinel he isn't seeking new employment and won't be -- despite Trantalis' comments. "I enjoy what I'm doing and I look forward to doing that for the foreseeable future," he said.

Trantalis wasn't the only person to criticize **Feldman**. Eight residents spoke during public comment, most questioning his handling of "flex units" on the barrier islands. The units can be reserved by developers to allow for new residential development. A March 6 memo signed by **Feldman** said the commission had directed city staff to move units off the barrier island, but the staff analyzed it and put them back on the island's map. The commission then voted for the changed map at the March meeting. Some commissioners spoke with Stephanie Toothaker, a lobbyist for the Pier 66 project that needs those flex units, in January and told **Feldman** the developer was possibly entitled to the units, he said. He and city staff agreed and added them back to the map. Toothaker said she likely discussed the flex unit map with commissioners over the phone any time between January and the March 6 meeting but didn't remember when. A record of meetings lobbyists have with city commissioners didn't show any meetings or calls with Toothaker during this time period. Lobbyists are required to file all contact with Broward elected officials within three days, according to the county's code of ethics. Toothaker said the city's lobbying logs are not correct and do not show other meetings she knows she documented during that time. Although she doesn't recall if she logged her phone calls about the flex unit map, it's also possible the city might have made an error in not posting them, she said.

Paul Chettle, who lives near the Las Olas Boulevard causeway to the barrier island, was one of the eight, criticizing **Feldman** for adding the units back and calling for commissioners to sack the city manager. "Everyday the city commission allows the city manager to sit in that seat, you are endorsing and supporting his behavior," he said to the commission. No changes will be made to alleviate the concerns shared by the eight people who spoke, **Feldman** said. "I don't take the comments of eight individuals as representative of the 180,000 people that live in the city," **Feldman** said. This wasn't the first time **Feldman** faced flak when his yearly raise came before the City Commission. Trantalis has voted against his salary bump two years in a row.

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Lee Feldman**

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Commissioner McKinzie, who had voted against raises for **Feldman** in the past, said he deserved it this year for his leadership. "Before I didn't see eye-to-eye with the manager, and I gave him directive, and he accomplished that," Commissioner McKinzie said during the meeting. Commissioner Moraitis agreed that **Feldman** had worked to fix issues with the city, including when sewage flooded Fort Lauderdale streets, costing the city millions to repair pipes, truck liquid waste away and pay back residents for damage to their homes and cars. From 2014 to last year, the city had 49 spills -- causing the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to order the city to clean up the mess. "I think we have problems in the city, we can't blame them all on **Lee**," she said. The city commissioned an independent report on the sewage crisis, which Trantalis mentioned during the meeting, that estimated repairs would cost \$1.4 billion over 20 years. **Feldman** called the report an exaggeration and said a previous report that called the sewage system well maintained is closer to the truth. Trantalis raised concerns that costly fixes to the sewage system and a diversion of infrastructure funding would further burden the city's coffers. "While I think **Lee** has done his best effort in what he could do in trying to keep this city together, I think his best efforts are tapped out," Trantalis said. Despite applause from the audience after Trantalis' comments at Tuesday's meeting, **Feldman** disagreed. "I don't think my talents are tapped out," he said. "I'll continue to work just as hard, if not harder."

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Lee Feldman
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Youtube.com
June 1, 2018

ICMA Interviews: Lee Feldman of Fort Lauderdale, FL at ICMA Annual Conference in San Antonio, TX

Lee Feldman was the ICMA President from 2016-2017. He is the City Manager of Fort Lauderdale, FL.

The ICMA Annual Conference is an educational and networking opportunity that those in local government can't afford to miss! Each year, through its highly praised Annual Conference, ICMA continues its tradition of offering an abundance of educational, information-sharing, and networking tools to help you manage your community in today's complex environment:
<https://icma.org/annual-conference/>

The video can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wQXjcw6b9Po> (3:39)

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Lee Feldman
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PR Newswire (USA)
October 5, 2017

3,500+ Key Local Government Decision Makers to Convene at 2017 ICMA Annual Conference in San Antonio

World's leading international event for local government management officials takes place at the Henry B. González Convention Center, October 22-25, 2017.

Author: ICMA

More than 3,500 key local government decision makers, exhibitors, and guests from cities, towns, counties, related entities, and private-sector firms throughout the world will convene in San Antonio, Texas, October 22-25, to attend the 103rd Annual Conference of ICMA, the International City/County Management Association. "San Antonio provides an excellent backdrop for the ICMA Annual Conference," said **Lee Feldman**, city manager, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and 2016-17 ICMA President. "This year's theme, "Building Bridges: Serving Our Whole Community," along with the cadre of excellent keynote and featured speakers and educational sessions will provide a tremendous opportunity for ICMA members and colleagues from communities around the world to engage and learn together." The 2017 ICMA Annual Conference offers solutions to the growing challenges-such as contemporary law enforcement; diversity, inclusivity, and social justice; emerging technology; preparing for and managing 21st-century threats; and the National Divide-that professional city, town, and county managers face now and in the years ahead. These issues serve as conference theme tracks around which the 2017 ICMA Annual Conference program was developed.

"We believe the ICMA Annual Conference is an excellent way for local government managers to come together to discuss current trends and take advantage of a wide variety of professional development opportunities," said Bob Schultze, president and CEO of ICMA-RC. "As principal sponsor for the ICMA Annual Conference, we value the role the conference plays in the well-being of the communities that local governments serve." Media representatives also receive complimentary registration to attend any ICMA conference educational, special, keynote, or featured speaker session or field demonstration (must provide own transportation). To cover the ICMA Annual Conference or schedule interviews with ICMA member experts on a variety of topics, contact Michele Frisby at mfrisby@icma.org or at 202-962-3658 (by or before October 18) or 301-646-1918 after October 18. Or bring your press credentials and register onsite at the ICMA conference registration area located in Exhibit Hall 3, Street Level, of the Henry B. González Convention Center. Members of the media should also mark their calendars for a special telephonic media call, "Immigration Issues: Local Government Challenges and Successes," featuring key local government leaders and experts on Tuesday, October 24, from 12:00-1:00 p.m. ET/11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. CT/10:00-11:00 a.m. MT/9:00-10:00 a.m. PT. Details, including instructions on how to access the call, will be available in October. Contact Michele Frisby at mfrisby@icma.org if you are interested in participating in the call.

Conference keynote speakers will address topics from a range of perspectives:

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- Sunday, October 22, 3:00-5:00 p.m.-ICMA's Conference Opening General Session will feature an inspirational presentation by Rabia Siddique, a former war crimes and terrorism prosecutor, international humanitarian, retired British Army officer, hostage survivor, and mother of triplets. Having battled abuse, discrimination, chronic health problems, and trauma, she is a fighter, trailblazer, and eternal optimist. Her story will inspire and motivate attendees and empower them to display courage under fire.
- Monday, October 23, 8:30-9:30 a.m.-In recent years, the young, educated, and affluent have surged back into our cities, reversing decades of suburban flight and urban decline. One of the first scholars to anticipate this movement in his groundbreaking book *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida now believes that the same forces that power the growth of the world's superstar cities also generate their vexing challenges: gentrification, unaffordability, segregation, and inequality. Meanwhile, other cities still stagnate, and middle-class neighborhoods are disappearing. In his latest book, *The New Urban Crisis*, Richard offers a compelling diagnosis of our economic ills and a bold prescription for more inclusive cities capable of ensuring growth and prosperity for all.
- Tuesday, October 24, 8:30-9:30 a.m.-In 2016, Anna Maria Chá vez was named by *Fortune* magazine as one of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders. Propelled by a lifelong desire to transform the world through servant leadership, Anna's career of public service led her to become CEO of Girl Scouts of the USA. The first woman of color to hold the Girl Scouts' top leadership position, she was cited for her vision and creativity in working to revitalize the organization's brand for a new century. With a message centered on true moral leadership, Anna examines what it takes to empower women and girls to advance into leadership positions.
- Wednesday, October 25, 8:30-10:30 a.m.-In addition to the induction of ICMA's incoming Executive Board and recognition of the organization's 2017 award recipients, ICMA's Celebration of Service to the Profession culminates with a presentation by leadership catalyst Simon T. Bailey, former leader of the Disney Institute and founder of the Brilliance Institute, Inc. Simon's expertise equips leaders with tools and techniques to unleash the potential in their organizations' most important asset: people. Simon will share core principles for acquiring a forward-looking mindset and discovering the insight needed to be a leader for the future. In addition to an outstanding program of educational sessions, featured speakers, and ICMA University forums and workshops, the 1034rd ICMA Annual Conference will also feature a series of field demonstrations that highlight the City of San Antonio's continued success as a professionally managed, council-manager community.

For detailed information, visit the ICMA Annual Conference website at <https://icma.org/icma-annual-conference>. About ICMA ICMA, the International City/County Management Association, advances professional local government worldwide through leadership, management, innovation, and ethics. ICMA provides member support, publications, data and information, peer and results-oriented assistance, and training and professional development to more than 11,000 appointed city, town, and county leaders and other individuals and organizations throughout the world. The management decisions made by ICMA's members affect millions of individuals living in thousands of communities throughout the world, from small villages and towns to large metropolitan areas.

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Lee Feldman
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Miami New Times (FL)
July 10, 2017

Fort Lauderdale Wants to Ban Feeding the Homeless Again

Author: Jerry Iannelli

Remember three years ago, when the City of Fort Lauderdale passed a series of extremely restrictive laws that basically outlawed feeding the homeless in public, arrested a 90-year-old for giving food to the poor, and got slapped down by a judge in one of the biggest public-relations fiascos in Florida history? Well, Fort Lauderdale apparently wants to repeat that nationally embarrassing boondoggle. After the city's so-called homeless hate law was nationally ridiculed for being spiteful and mean, the city commission will consider passing an amended version of that same law at its meeting tomorrow night. In a memo to the commission, City Manager **Lee Feldman** wrote that the new crackdown was allegedly written in the name of safeguarding "the health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the residents and visitors of the City of Fort Lauderdale, as well as protecting individuals' freedom of speech, assembly, and association." Mayor Jack Seiler did not immediately respond to an email and phone call to his office. An assistant in **Feldman's** office referred New Times to city spokesperson Chaz Adams, who did not immediately respond to an email.

But groups that feed the homeless in the city, such as Food Not Bombs, have already warned that the law is little more than a "sharing ban v2." Due to pending lawsuits, the original 2014 "sharing ban" is not being enforced. (A Food Not Bombs representative declined to speak to New Times because of ongoing litigation with the city.) The new ordinance comes two months after the city reported itself to the Florida Department of Health in order to justify bulldozing a homeless encampment in Stranahan Park. (The city claimed the park was infested with rats, which might or might not have been true, but the complaint actually came from one of the city's own employees.) After homeless residents lost laptops, birth certificates, passports, and other vital belongings in the raid, the American Civil Liberties Union sued the city. That suit remains open. But an ACLU lawsuit has not stopped the city from continually threatening to confiscate the belongings of displaced people and apparently pitching an entirely new version of the much-ballyhooed food-sharing ban. The original 2014 law banned food-sharing events that were within 500 feet of residential properties, prohibited more than one sharing event to take place on a city block, forced sharing groups to warm food to specific temperatures, and outlawed giving food away without also providing bathrooms, hand-washing facilities, and trash cans for the homeless. (The rule exempted indoor sharing events from many of those restrictions.)

The proposed rules are nearly identical to the original, albeit slightly less severe: The new ordinance doesn't mandate bathroom and hand-washing facilities and technically doesn't set temperature guidelines for food preparers. The new rule does, however, include a provision forcing charitable groups to "have adequate storage of food from the time of preparation to the time of service." Most notable, the new version, like the original, stipulates that if groups want to share food outdoors, they must obtain written consent from whoever owns the property where the food-sharing will take place. In Fort Lauderdale, the majority of sharing events take place on

Internet – Newspaper Archives Search**Lee Feldman***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

city-owned land: If passed, the ordinance would force charities to get written approval from city officials before offering the most downtrodden members of society a tray of baked ziti.

The original rule was proposed alongside a chunk of other laws designed to criminalize the act of being homeless. The laws outlawed placing bags on the ground, sleeping in public, and other acts that are simply unavoidable if you don't have a roof to sleep under. The original ban passed at an October 21, 2014 city commission meeting, where scores of protesters asked Mayor Seiler and the commissioners how they could live with themselves. "Hey, Jack, what do you say? How many homeless did you starve today?" protesters chanted, according to the Sun Sentinel. But the bill also had a powerful South Florida force putting his thumb on the scale: Ron Book, one of the most powerful government lobbyists in the state. Book has run Miami-Dade County's Homeless Trust since 2004 and believes in funding social services for the homeless, such as shelters and drug-treatment programs, but Book also argues that local governments should make day-to-day street life for the homeless as difficult as possible to encourage them to find permanent housing. (In 2015, Book fought hard against a Miami-Dade measure to provide sleeping mats for the homeless; he claimed the mats would discourage displaced people from seeking help. He also fought a plan for outdoor bathrooms downtown Miami.)

At 2014's Fort Lauderdale commission meeting, Book praised commissioners for somehow helping homeless people by making it more difficult for them to find food. "Feeding people on the streets is sanctioning homelessness," Book said, per the Sun Sentinel. "Whatever discourages feeding people on the streets is a positive thing." But a month after the ban passed, Arnold Abbott, a 90-year-old advocate for the homeless, held an unsanctioned food-sharing event in the city. Rather than shooing Abbott away or just giving him a pass, Fort Lauderdale Police arrested him in one of the worst PR gaffes in state history. #Fort #Lauderdale #Florida PD Halts Food Aid 2 #Homeless People #resisthomelesshatelaws #OpSafeWinter <http://t.co/5vQE94xYQ5> via @YouTube — Global Homeless Day (@UnOccupyAmerica) November 3, 2014

A judge then placed a temporary ban on the ordinance, which stood until multiple groups, including Food Not Bombs, sued the city to strike down the law. Food Not Bombs' lawsuit is ongoing in the Third District Court of Appeals; the city cannot enforce the original ban until the lawsuits end. In the meantime, however, the city continues to bother the homeless residents in Stranahan Park. The city does provide housing for some homeless residents, but claims that those living in Stranahan routinely refuse help. The park's residents, however, say they're not bothering anyone and simply claim the park is one of the only places in town where they can sleep without encroaching on private property.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
June 7, 2017

Fort Lauderdale approves loan for Sistrunk apartment building

Author: Larry Barszewski

A new residential and retail complex that will bring 142 affordably priced apartments next to downtown received the backing Tuesday of city commissioners. They approved a \$7 million loan using city redevelopment money to support the 11-story building planned along Sistrunk Boulevard. The city loan, which will not have to be paid back if the developer meets rent and other goals set by the city, is the largest awarded for a redevelopment project in the city's northwest area. The money comes from property taxes paid on increased property values in the redevelopment area. "All of the apartment units will be affordable to teachers, nurses, community builders, hospital employees and small business owners -- a segment of the community that is currently being priced out of the downtown Fort Lauderdale market," City Manager **Lee Feldman** said in his memo to commissioners. Affiliated Development will offer one- and two-bedroom apartments in its Six13 project at Northwest Third Avenue and Sistrunk Boulevard at rents starting at about \$1,100 a month, developer Jeff Burns said.

The city is requiring the market-rate pricing be affordable to a two-person household earning as much as \$97,600 a year, using current county medium income levels, and that pricing be in effect for at least 10 years. Burns said his goal is to have the rents be affordable to a couple earning as little as \$61,000 a year. Apartments in the \$41.8-million project will include granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. The complex will have a fifth-floor amenity deck that includes an infinity swimming pool and a rooftop dog park. The mixed-use project will have 8,300 square feet of retail space on the ground level. Affiliated Development also plans to move its headquarters into the building. The city for years has been trying to redevelop the Sistrunk Boulevard corridor west of the Florida East Coast Railway tracks. The city pumped \$15 million of redevelopment dollars into redoing the boulevard, installing new pipes, landscaping and decorative lighting. That project was completed in 2012.

City officials hope to see the redevelopment success of Flagler Village to the east eventually move west along Sistrunk Boulevard. Affiliated Development officials say without the city loan, they wouldn't be able to get the rest of the money they need to build the 1.2-acre project. "We truly believe it's going to create the momentum we need to get other projects going," said Jonathan Brown, who oversees the area's redevelopment projects for the city. Burns anticipates construction starting early next year and taking a little more than a year to build. The project is receiving federal support in the form of mortgage insurance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Burns said.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
April 18, 2017

Fort Lauderdale improperly collected millions from executive airport, FAA says

Author: Larry Barszewski

The Federal Aviation Administration says Fort Lauderdale illegally used executive airport dollars to support the city's operating budget and it wants \$5 million paid back. The amount could be reduced if city officials provide justification for the payments that satisfies FAA regulations, federal officials said. City Manager **Lee Feldman**, who has hired a consultant to assist with a plan, said he thinks the final result "will be pretty much a wash" and the city might not have to pay any money back. The federal government turned Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport over to the city after World War II, but it maintains oversight "to make sure the revenue generated by the airport is not used inappropriately," **Feldman** said. Because the airport is city-owned, it doesn't pay property taxes. Instead, the airport pays the city a fee equal to what it would pay in taxes for fire and police services, road and infrastructure maintenance, and transportation and mobility services.

But that didn't fly with the FAA, which began looking into the situation last year after an article mentioning the payments was brought to its attention. "The FAA has made a preliminary finding that there has been unlawful diversion of airport revenues," the FAA's director of airport compliance, Kevin C. Willis, wrote in a March 31 letter to the city seeking repayment. **Feldman** said the city thought it was following regulations, but because of the FAA's concern, it stopped the annual transfer for the current budget year that began in October. "The city has always believed that [the payment], and the city's applied methodology, was acceptable" under FAA rules, **Feldman** wrote in a Nov. 21 letter to the FAA after it first questioned the payments. Although the payments have been being made for at least 18 years, FAA regulations only allow it to go back six years in recovering illegally diverted funds. The payments over the past six fiscal years total \$5 million, ranging from \$526,837 in 2012 to \$1.32 million in 2016.

City consultants are in the process of developing a "cost allocation plan" for charging the airport for direct services the city provides, **Feldman** said. It is expected to be ready by June. Commissioners on Wednesday will consider hiring a special counsel for \$150,000 to help in negotiations with the FAA regarding the payments and on another airport matter. The city over the years has relied on money from its revenue-generating enterprises to help offset the city's own operating expenses. Besides the executive airport, other enterprise funds include water and sewer, storm water, wastewater treatment plant and parking funds. The water and sewer and wastewater treatment plant funds contributed \$20 million to the city's budget this year. Some critics have said the money collected should stay in these funds and be used to replace or repair aging city pipes.

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Lee Feldman
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Public News Service (PNS) (USA)
September 28, 2016

Florida Leader Offers Hope, Strategies for Confronting Opioid Epidemic

Author: Mona Shand

An estimated 129 people die each day in this country from an overdose of heroin or other opioid drugs, and the leader of one Florida community that has been on the front lines says awareness is key. Fort Lauderdale once was considered ground zero for so-called "pill mills," or rogue clinics dispensing prescription painkillers. That has changed, said city manager **Lee Feldman**, thanks in part to an aggressive coordination of efforts across law enforcement, public health, legislative and community lines. However, **Feldman** warned that the crisis continues. "This epidemic is one that crosses races and ethnicities, ages, income levels. It's urban, it's suburban, it's rural," he said. "This is truly a nationwide crisis." **Feldman** said the drug Narcan, which can counter the effects of an overdose long enough to get the patient to a hospital, is playing a big role in the city's efforts. All front-line fire and EMS personnel now carry Narcan, and it's available to city employees through their health plan. Legislation passed this year also allows Florida pharmacists to dispense Narcan without a prescription.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, more people died across the United States from drug overdoses in 2014 than in any year on record. **Feldman** said turning things around will require every city, large and small, to take aggressive preventive steps. "First, you need to recognize that you have a problem," he said. "Then, you need to be able to convene the community together to address that problem, but you also have to recognize that the problem does not stop at your borders." The topic of opioid abuse is on the table this week at the International City/County Management Association's annual meeting. Last month, the U.S. surgeon general noted in a letter to the American medical community that everywhere he travels, he sees communities devastated by the opioid epidemic.

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Lee Feldman
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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
August 15, 2016

Fort Lauderdale police get upgraded protection following recent nationwide shootings

Author: Larry Barszewski

The recent shooting deaths of police in Dallas and Baton Rouge -- and the mass shootings at an Orlando nightclub -- have led the city to spend more than a half-million dollars on increased protection for its officers. Police now have active shooter protection kits, including upgraded shields capable of stopping rifle-caliber rounds. City Manager **Lee Feldman** authorized the emergency expenditure of \$569,000 to buy the kits in July. "The emergency purchase was required due to the significant increase in threats and attacks on law enforcement personnel throughout the country," **Feldman** said in a memo to commissioners. Five officers were killed in Dallas and three in Baton Rouge in July. Police Chief Frank Adderley, noting the Dallas officers were targeted by a gunman following a peaceful protest of a police shooting in Minnesota, said his officers handled a similar rally involving several hundred people recently.

While Adderley said the protesters weren't disruptive, there's no guarantee that will always be the case and police need better protection easily accessible to them. "I think that's going to be a national trend now. Everyone's going to be prepared," Adderley said. **Feldman** told commissioners the department's old shields were "antiquated and are only capable of stopping pistol ammunition," not rifle fire that "has been a real and repeated occurrence recently." The new shields are vital for police attempting to rescue a civilian or fellow officer from a shooter with a rifle, **Feldman** said. The purchase also includes body armor that can be placed over a vest. Sgt. Mike Tucker, vice president of the department's Fraternal Order of Police union, said it's important for officers outside of SWAT units to have the gear. "Some of these incidents that are occurring are escalating very quickly," Tucker said. "Now, unfortunately, we're in a time when we need our officers to be as equipped as possible."

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Lee Feldman
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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
July 21, 2016

Computer glitches add to Fort Lauderdale permitting problems

Author: Larry Barszewski

Computer problems at the city's Building Services Division Tuesday and Wednesday kept many customers from getting the inspections or permits they needed. The situation exacerbated problems the division has been having in quickly reviewing plans, issuing permits and conducting inspections. "The delays are aggravating," said Michael Finseth, who was trying to schedule an inspection for the framing on a second-story addition he is building on his home east of Federal Highway. Finseth said he called the automated inspection line on Tuesday and earlier Wednesday to schedule an appointment, but the call disconnected. He wasn't any more successful at the office, but said a city employee had taken his information in case it was possible to enter the information later in the afternoon. Contractor Wolfgang Scharnoff didn't stick around Wednesday morning when the permitting office "was busier than I've ever seen it" because of the computer glitches. He returned in the afternoon but couldn't schedule a needed inspection. "Hopefully, they have this resolved tomorrow," Scharnoff said. "It's not conducive to doing business."

An employee who asked not to be identified said the computer problems began Tuesday and was also delaying permit reviews, because reviewers could not enter information into the system. On Wednesday afternoon, employees were telling visitors that the system was running, but very slowly. Some individuals said they were able to drop off plans. City spokesman Chaz Adams said the department's software hasn't been "functioning optimally" for the past two days because of maintenance being done to the system. Adams said it took "a bit longer today to complete intake, post comments and results, and input scheduling," but the system is now running normally. The system is on its last legs. City commissioners on July 12 approved the \$5.3 million purchase of a new platform and software to replace the current one. In a memo to commissioners, City Manager **Lee Feldman** described the current system as "obsolete software" on "unsupported hardware" that's part of an old database system. He said a hardware failure could have "disastrous effects," such as the shutdown of numerous city departments, not just the building division.

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Lee Feldman
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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
July 1, 2016

Historic blunder: South Side School's original flooring left to rot

Author: Larry Barszewski

The 12-year effort to restore the 94-year-old South Side School is once again testing the city. And as before, the city has found itself unprepared. In the latest case, the city just learned that the structure's original Dade County Pine flooring, which was removed shortly after renovation work started in 2004, was left to rot in padlocked containers outdoors. Its deteriorating condition went unnoticed until a new contractor started preparing to reinstall it in May. The contractor also uncovered ongoing water damage inside the building, even though a new roof was installed in 2009 and the windows were recaulked in 2012. "It just seems unbelievable, the neglect on our part," Vice Mayor Dean Trantalis said. Officials didn't expect the 1922 school at Andrews Avenue and Southwest Seventh Street to be vacant for so long after they bought it in 2004. Nor did they expect that the cost for the project and adjacent Hardy Park improvements would top \$15 million. Construction has been sporadic. By 2011, mildew had covered much of the interior work. The city released the original architect, Richard Heisenbottle, in 2011 because of rising fees and it fired contractor West Construction Co. in 2012 over construction deficiencies and missed schedules. West sued and the city settled for \$500,000 in 2013.

"I think it's time the city called for an investigation of this entire debacle, a formal investigation, because it's one thing after another," said Steve Glassman, president of the Broward Trust for Historic Preservation. "When you have a historic building, someone's got to be on top of it." Officials have not determined how much it will cost to replace the flooring, fix the leaks and make other changes identified by the contractor, Di Pompeo Construction, which currently has a \$2.8 million contract with the city. Commissioners are incredulous that Dade County Pine, an extremely resilient material, couldn't be salvaged and the city now has to buy 6,000 square feet of new flooring. A 2012 city memo said the flooring was being properly protected. Commissioners asked to see samples of the ruined floor at a recent meeting, only to be told it had been thrown out weeks earlier. "It was all moldy," said Scott Teschky, the city's senior project manager. "You could smell it just standing outside even. It was warped." City Auditor John Herbst wasn't so sure the highly desired wood would have been dumped. "I would be willing to bet it didn't go to the landfill," Herbst said. "There's a huge industry in reclaimed wood."

City spokesman Chaz Adams said Friday he expected more information to be presented to commissioners on or before their July 12 meeting. As for the leaks inside the building, they are extensive, City Manager **Lee Feldman** said. "The building has severe water infiltration issues caused by roof leaks, stucco failures on the roof parapet walls leading to water infiltration in the exterior walls, window leaks, and leaks under the exterior stair on south elevation of the building," **Feldman** wrote in a memo to commissioners. "The roof repairs are not covered under warranty and staff is exploring the option of installing a new cap sheet over the entire roof as well as a new parapet coping cap on the roof parapet walls." The leaking windows surprised commissioners, since the city had done the caulking work. It turns out, **Feldman** told

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commissioners, the window manufacturer recommended using flashing -- not caulking -- to prevent seepage. "We went through the whole thing with the windows leaking," Commissioner Bruce Roberts said. "We let it deteriorate again."

The city is also checking to see if it has any legal recourse against West Construction despite the settlement. In addition to the floor and leaking problems, the new contractor found a new fire line tap supposedly installed for the building sprinkler system is missing, **Feldman** said. Some of the project's delays in the past have been beyond the city's control. The city negotiated with Nova Southeastern University for almost three years for it to use the space for art classes before the university backed out of the arrangement in 2013. That delayed construction because the interior design was put on hold and was to be done by the university to meet its needs. The city now has plans to use the upper floor for offices for its parks department and let the main floor be used for community activities. Before the latest issues were uncovered, the work was scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Broward-Palm Beach New Times (FL)
June 22, 2016

Fort Lauderdale Will Return Grant Money Originally Intended for Homeless

Author: Antonia Noori Farzan

Fort Lauderdale is going to return over \$40,000 in grant money that was supposed to be used to house the homeless. As New Times previously reported, the Office of the Inspector General found that \$78,231 in grant funds intended to help the homeless in Fort Lauderdale was "inappropriately spent." The city overbilled the county for the cost of providing apartments to the chronically homeless, charging between \$988 and \$1,187 a month when the reasonable rent for those same apartments was between \$450 and \$700. Meanwhile, residents were complaining that their neighborhoods were unsafe and that they'd been burglarized. Advocates for the homeless in Fort Lauderdale argue that this amounts to inexcusable negligence on the city's part. "What it translates to is that chronically homeless people were not taken off the street, and very possibly died because of this commission's negligence," Jeff Weinberger, an activist with the October 22nd Alliance to End Homelessness, said at last night's City Commission meeting.

Fort Lauderdale has already returned \$61,836 in grant money to the Broward County Continuum of Care program and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Last night, the commission voted to return the remaining \$42,669. That money was supposed to be used to support a "housing first" model — the idea being that providing safe, secure housing to the homeless is ultimately a lot cheaper to taxpayers than the costs of repeated emergency room and jail visits. It's been incredibly successful elsewhere — like in Utah, which reduced chronic homelessness by 91 percent. Weinberger argues that the city has now failed twice — first by wasting money that could have been spent on housing more homeless people, and secondly by failing to provide a stable environment for the people who did get apartments through the program. "You'd think the last place you'd put people is a place where there is a ton of drama and crime going on right outside their door, but that's exactly what Fort Lauderdale did," he told New Times. "It's almost like they wanted the program to fail."

Chaz Adams, Fort Lauderdale's public affairs manager, said the people who were responsible for overseeing the program back when the issues noted in the inspector general's report occurred are no longer working for the city. Meanwhile, City Manager **Lee Feldman** said that despite the setbacks, he considers the program to be a success. "I think the most important aspect is to recognize that there were 22 individuals and families that were taken off the streets," he said.

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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
June 22, 2016

Fort Lauderdale city manager receives rocky evaluation

Author: Larry Barszewski

It's a little early for a seven-year itch, but some city commissioners evaluating City Manager **Lee Feldman** have seen enough in his five-year tenure to want somebody else at the helm. **Feldman** still has the support of a majority of the commission -- Mayor Jack Seiler and commissioners Bruce Roberts and Romney Rogers, who all had a hand in hiring him in 2011 -- but he faced a much harsher review Tuesday from Vice Mayor Dean Trantalis and Commissioner Robert McKinzie. Even supporters said the city has had a rough time in some areas, such as lengthy delays for people seeking permits from the building department and the recent overhaul of the city's Community Redevelopment Agency. They disputed whether **Feldman** was to blame for other problems, such as the collapsed plans for a new Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Center and the handling of the public uproar over the Bahia Mar redevelopment plans, or whether commissioners were culpable, too.

Trantalis said instead of thinking about what raise **Feldman** deserves, the question might be "whether this job is too much for you." McKinzie told **Feldman** he's "just not satisfied where you are operationally with the city." But Seiler said the city manager had done a "remarkable job," especially with the city budget and keeping the city's tax rate steady. He said **Feldman** is a hard worker whose problems come from not delegating enough duties. Roberts agreed **Feldman** has done a good job, but he said it's time for the city to start seeing more results. Rogers said the commission has to accept some of the blame for problems that have surfaced over the past five years. "Overall, I am still pleased with the direction that this city is going, apart from all the potholes along the way, of which there are many," Rogers said. "If I thought **Lee** had created them all, I think then I would feel differently." Commissioners will discuss pay raises for **Feldman** and City Attorney Cynthia Everett, who was also evaluated Tuesday, at a July 12 meeting. Everett received mixed reviews as well, although not as critical.

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Lee Feldman
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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
April 2, 2016

Fort Lauderdale becomes first city to test sign language translation software

Author: Ron Hurtibise

Not all deaf people can read well. That might sound counter-intuitive to anyone familiar with closed-captioning on television screens. But many people who were born deaf see the printed word as a foreign language. That's why a New York software company developed iSigner a sign language translation tool that can be plugged into any website. Fort Lauderdale recently became the first city to incorporate the software into its website, and while the tool is being met with both praise and criticism within South Florida's deaf community, its developer says it's the most advanced automated sign language translator possible right now. The city decided to beta test the iSigner software at the request of one of its owners, Fort Lauderdale City Manager **Lee Feldman** said last week. The city is testing the software for free but expects to pay a license fee if it wants to continue offering it after the test period concludes, **Feldman** said. "I think the intent is to get this out there and find out what features others may want." iSigner is simple to use on a desktop or laptop computer. Web visitors can go to the city's website, fortlauderdale.gov and click on the far-right circular icon at the top of the home page. That brings up a square video window. As the user moves the mouse over sections of printed text, the cursor changes into a teardrop-shaped icon. Clicking the mouse starts the translation. A sign language interpreter appears in the video window, signing the words in the text.

Steve Bruner, iSigner vice president, said the software has been in development for several years as engineers perfected the streaming technology and ease of installation. "The streaming technology was very difficult to get just right," Bruner said. "We're proud of it." Now, getting it to work on a website "is as simple as installing Google Analytics tracking code," Bruner said. "(Insert) one piece of JavaScript. It just works. Installation takes minutes." The software evolved from a standalone desktop application called iCommunicator that turned spoken words into text and sign language for deaf people. It was featured a decade ago on an episode of Extreme Makeover: Home Edition that showed a blind father and his deaf son conversing without an interpreter, the New York Daily News reported in 2007. As the company readied the software for deployment, one of its owners, Leonard Feldman, a Fort Lauderdale resident, met city officials at a function and told them about the product, city manager **Lee Feldman** (no relation) said. The company's owners had noticed the city's website was already accessible to blind users. So "we reached out to them and they were receptive," Bruner said. "We're hoping this becomes a role model for other cities and companies," said iSigner spokeswoman Elyse Blazey Gentile. But the company faces a hurdle: Some deaf people who have tried the software don't like how it translates words not stored in its library. In 2014, the software was demonstrated for about 10 staff members of the Center for Hearing and Communication, a non-profit health care center in Fort Lauderdale, according to Margaret (Peggy) Brown, the center's regional executive director. "None of the staff thought it was a good idea," Brown said. That's because the translation video jumps back and forth between images of a human translator, seen from the waist up, signing complete words and a hand against a black background spelling out words one letter at a time,

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she said. For example, the word Lauderdale is translated by the hand spelling out L-A-U-D-E-R-D-A-L-E. Such "finger spelling" is considered "insulting to the deaf community," Brown said. "When you are interpreting, you don't just use your hands but your whole body." Added Tracy Perez, the center's director of social services: "We told them, 'You might be inviting criticism.' When you are finger spelling, your hand is not viewed by itself, but often close to (the signer's) mouth so you can mouth the words." The iSigner software delivers a verbatim English translation, while American Sign Language -- just as in everyday life -- incorporates regional idioms, context-sensitive expressions, even slang, Brown and Perez said.

Bruner said he's heard similar criticism and understands the software isn't going to be accepted by all deaf people or for all situations. Since the first iCommunicator program was developed 16 or 17 years ago, the company has solicited user feedback and developed improvements whenever it could, he said. "We've always had people who said, 'This is the greatest thing I've ever used.' Others said, 'This is not for me.' And another said, 'I'll use it when I need it.'" Bruner said his company knows of no way to deliver an automated version of true American Sign Language. "We know we're translating it in English Word Order. This is the only way we can do it." A big reason Fort Lauderdale was excited to install the software, Bruner said, is its ability to translate information during emergencies as quickly as that information can be posted on the city's website. "Getting information out to the community in a timely manner is incredibly important to them." Victor Solano, who describes himself as "profoundly deaf," tried the software at the Sun Sentinel's request and wrote in an email, "It definitely has its pros and cons." "If anyone has difficulty reading the words on the site they would still have difficulty understanding all the finger spelling," Solano wrote. "I tried following along with the signing and reading the text, with my eyes going back and forth. The signer was too fast for me to do that easily." Bruner said he recently heard a similar comment from the owner of a deaf services website interested in adopting the tool. The company is looking into ways to slow down the videos, he said.

Salono said the software serves a need for deaf people who read English as a second language. "If I had to understand what was being signed to me with the amount of finger spelling sign uses, I don't think I'd be able to continue using it with ease and comfort," he said. "However, that said, I'd probably still use it as a backup as I read the text on the page. Being able to go back and play it again also is good if I can't catch the vocabulary the first or even second time." Solano said he'd like to install the software on the website of his non-profit organization, South Florida Deaf Recreation Association. Solano's attitude is what the company likes to hear, Bruner said. "He will use it when he needs it. If he doesn't need it, great. But it's there."

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Lee Feldman
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Florida Bulldog (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
March 30, 2016

Tired of problems, Fort Lauderdale audits its community redevelopment agencies

Author: William Gjebre

Fed up with project failures, management problems and possible city overcharges, Fort Lauderdale commissioners have ordered an extensive audit of the city's Community Redevelopment Agencies. In a little-noted action, commissioners directed the audit of three CRAs at a conference meeting earlier this year. The audit was triggered by the million-dollar failure of the Sixth Street Plaza project. Some commissioners expressed additional concerns about the findings of a city auditor's report on CRAs that they said indicate the city had unfairly overcharged the CRAs for services during the past five years. Commissioners ordered "a full audit" of the Northwest/Progresso/Flagler Heights (NWP) Community Redevelopment Agency, the Central Beach (CB) CRA and the Central City (CC) CRA, City Auditor John Herbst said in an interview. He said the audit, now under way, may be completed in two months. Herbst said the audit was undertaken because the city wants to get in front of the matter, knowing the Broward Inspector General's Office has been investigating CRAs around the county for some time. Herbst said he expects the audit to determine whether CRA spending was "in compliance with state law and CRA bylaws," and whether the CRAs were properly managed and contracts adhered to the CRAs' limitations. "We want to make sure money was spent in accordance with governing legislation," Herbst said. The audit will cover the past three years – a reasonable time period, the auditor added. Herbst said the troubled Sixth Street Plaza project is a key factor in the ongoing audit. Last May, the city auditor's office criticized the CRA for poor oversight of a taxpayer-supported office and retail plaza that was to be the centerpiece of the city's ambitious plans to revitalize the Sistrunk Boulevard corridor. But the 23,000-square-foot building at 900 NW Sixth St. filed for bankruptcy, jeopardizing the repayment of \$1 million in taxpayer loans. Following that finding, Vice Mayor Robert McKinzie's staff asked Herbst in a memo to conduct "a complete audit of the day to day operations of the CRA." Herbst said Mayor Jack Seiler and his fellow commissioners backed the call for the audit in a consensus vote during a city commission conference meeting in January.

'Inconsistent leadership' Herbst said the city's CRAs have had problems because of frequent management shuffling. "There was inconsistent leadership due to transfers," he said. A report by his office noted that the Northwest/Progresso/Flagler Heights CRA, in a less-affluent area, was charged \$1.7 million for city services over the past five years, while the Central Beach CRA, in a wealthier area, was charged \$909,000 during that same period. The finding upset City Commissioner Dean Trantalis, who said an "excessive amount of money is charged for administration, denying the neighborhood that is suffering blight and neglect and so much money being used for staff." Trantalis said he has asked City Manager **Lee Feldman** about correcting CRA allocation issues, but "he hasn't been responding. We need to change the practice. We discovered that the city manager, to shore up the budget, has been attributing staff time to the CRA." **Feldman** did not respond to requests for comment before deadline after promising to make himself available for an interview. At the city commission meeting in January, others

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expressed their concern about the auditor's findings. Minutes of the meetings say McKinzie "questioned why such a large portion of funds was allocated [to] the [Northwest/Progresso/Flagler Heights] CRA for administration and resources when the CRA did not have a director." Commissioner Bruce Roberts suggested the matter be referred to the State Attorney's Office or some other investigative agency for a criminal probe. "Many feel CRA funds have been drained for administrative services, and there is a lopsided disparity," Trantalis said at the January meeting. The mayor and the city's four commissioners also serve as directors of the CRAs.

Problems found

Herbst's audit report mainly delved into the current fiscal year salary allocations of the two CRA offices, Northwest/Progresso/Flagler Heights and Central Beach. But it found problems. "The method used to allocate personnel costs may lead to excessive General Fund expenses being allocated to the CRA, a violation of Florida Statute 163.370(3)(c)," the report stated. The state provision prohibits the tax-increment funds that CRAs receive from covering general government operating expenses unrelated to planning and carrying out a CRA plan. The report goes on, "We determined that the Department of Sustainable Development (DSD) and the Budget Office were not able to provide adequate support for the percentages used for personnel cost allocations to/from the CRA fund and the sub-funds. Additionally, they are allocating charges to the CRA for personnel positions which are vacant for either a portion of the fiscal year or the entire fiscal year. "The budgeted allocations are then charged to the CRA throughout the year without reconciling those estimates to actual costs incurred, resulting in an excess of allocation over actual cost," according to the report. The faulty allocations can negatively impact the CRAs' ability to achieve their goals, the report aid. The city charged the CRAs for hours city employees spent working on agency matters. In one instance, the report said the Northwest/Progresso/Flagler Heights CRA was "overcharged" \$30,000, which should have been charged to the Central Beach CRA. That happened after an employee was promoted from assistant to the city manager to the position of economic and business development manager in charge of the Central Beach CRA. For three months, he was paid from funds allocated to a vacant position in the Northwest/Progresso/Flagler Heights CRA, the report said. A correction was later made, but "the prior overcharging was not corrected timely" and ate into how much funding was available to meet the CRA's goals.

Since the report, the city has begun making changes. Trantalis said in an interview that city commissioners have removed the CRAs from reporting to the Department of Sustainable Development and made them separate entities with their own managers to oversee day-to-day operations. State law requires CRAs to operate independently of other departments. City Manager **Feldman**, however, will continue to function as executive director of the CRAs. Other changes call for improved financial oversight from the city finance director and the city auditor, identifying a separate CRA funding and accounting structure, and allocating additional funds for the two CRAs to implement changes during the current fiscal year.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
February 19, 2016

Fort Lauderdale could cut back beach parking

Author: Larry Barszewski

Try wrapping your head around this: A planned parking garage at the base of the Las Olas Boulevard bridge could make it harder for beach-goers to find a place to park. Millions of dollars in improvements are coming to the city's central beach area to make it more of a family friendly destination with wider sidewalks, lush open spaces, water play features and other attractions. But the new design eliminates a large oceanfront parking lot on the south side of Las Olas Boulevard and other lots north and south of the bridge near the Las Olas Marina -- 835 spaces in all. It replaces them with a four-level, 428-space garage next to the marina on the north side of the bridge. The redevelopment project wasn't supposed to affect the amount of beach parking, but that was before a proposed garage at the International Swimming Hall of Fame site bit the dust last year and a proposed parking garage at the Bahia Mar resort and marina came under strong criticism this month. Without those garages to make up the difference, the beach could lose hundreds of parking spaces. "It seems to me 400 missing spaces will be pretty drastic," said Patrick McTigue, chairman of the city's Planning and Zoning Board that reviewed the project plans on Wednesday.

City Manager **Lee Feldman** told board members lost spaces might not be a bad thing if more visitors park west of the Intracoastal Waterway and take public transportation to the beach. The city "is encouraging people not to drive to the beach," **Feldman** said. "We'd much rather keep vehicles off the beach." The city has also been investigating a land swap that might provide space for a parking garage on the north side of Vistamar Street near the Bonnet House. Critics fear the parking reduction could make the beach even more congested with drivers continuously circling around for spaces that are no longer there. The oceanfront lot will be turned into event space, a beach drop-off spot, police substation, public bathrooms, a water play area and open space. Planning board members were concerned about the reduced parking. They voted 5-1 in favor of the Las Olas garage and other elements of the new design, with the condition that open space to the north of the parking garage be used for overflow parking and that a fifth-floor restaurant that's part of the garage be eliminated. The project and the board's recommendation is expected to go before the City Commission in April.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
December 18, 2015

Lauderdale's police watchdog group feels constrained

Author: Larry Barszewski

With police misconduct allegations receiving increased scrutiny nationally, Fort Lauderdale's city-appointed watchdogs are struggling to find their footing. Some members of the 20-year-old Citizens Police Review Board say their hands are tied when it comes to holding police accountable. "Our role has to be more than just to say, 'Yes, you did a good job' or 'No, you did not do a good job,'" board member Skeet Jernigan said of the Internal Affairs investigations the board reviews. "What are we doing? We're doing nothing." When the board reviewed the firing of three officers in March and the resignation of a fourth over racist text messages and a video, it requested a new investigation. The board said Internal Affairs didn't go far enough and was too quick to give other officers interviewed the benefit of the doubt. But the board didn't get everything it wanted. City Manager **Lee Feldman** upheld the terminations recommended by Police Chief Frank Adderley. He didn't ask Adderley to reopen the case, in part because of limits placed on misconduct investigations by the state's Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights and the union contract. The officers are still appealing their firings.

In June, the board wasn't asked its opinion when Adderley recommended the firing of another officer for racially charged Facebook postings, because the investigation didn't stem from a citizen's complaint. Adderley's recommendation went straight to **Feldman**, who reduced the punishment to an unpaid suspension. "My feeling about the board is that there are well-intentioned people on that board, but because of amendments in the law, the board has no teeth whatsoever," said Jeff Weinberger, an activist who protested **Feldman's** decision to reduce the discipline meted out to Officer Jeffery Feldewert. Some of the limitations: Any investigation has to be completed within 180 days; investigators only get one chance to interview the officer under review; the case doesn't go to the board until it is closed; and a case can't be reopened unless new evidence is presented. The nine-member board, one of about 10 in the state and the only one in Broward County, includes six residents appointed by city commissioners and three officers appointed by Adderley.

The board's only charge is to review closed investigations that result from citizen complaints. It recommends to **Feldman** if the allegations against an officer should be sustained or not sustained, if the investigation exonerated the officer of wrongdoing or if the charges were unfounded to begin with. A majority of board members would like to see their role expanded. They just can't agree how. They have discussed having the board review all investigations, allowing it to recommend modifications to proposed disciplines or permitting it to send investigations back for more work. However, a majority of the members couldn't agree on supporting any specific recommendation. Instead, they decided to forward all proposals to city commissioners, who would have to approve any changes to the board's responsibilities. Adderley is pushing for the board to do more. He has asked it to review the department's policies on use of force and on handling citizen complaints, topics being evaluated by departments across the

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country. Fort Lauderdale's policies were developed and reviewed by the department's brass, but they're missing input from the community, a role Adderley thinks the board is perfectly suited to fill. "We have topics that are hot," Adderley said. "This is how we can make it better." While some board members doubted they were authorized to do such a review, Chairman Kevin Borwick was all for tapping the board's talents -- even if the policy reviews have to be done informally. "We're getting exactly what you asked for on a silver platter," Borwick told his fellow members. Liana Perez, operations director for the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement, agrees with Borwick's thinking. Perez said review boards can't be timid about finding ways to make a difference. They have to establish "credibility with the community that they're doing everything they can within their limitations," she said. Perez urges boards to "push the envelope," whether that's receiving statistics about the cases they aren't reviewing to see if there are trends in the types of violations that are occurring, or reviewing department policies with a citizens-first perspective.

Mayor Jack Seiler likes the idea of the board reviewing department policies. The City Commission is going to discuss the use of police body cameras in January and Seiler said that's another issue where board input would be valuable. "I would not have any objection to them having an expanded role with expanded responsibilities," Seiler said. But he'd also like the board to figure out what responsibilities are appropriate, rather than leaving it up to the commission to decide. "If they couldn't obtain a consensus on something, I can't imagine we're going to take action," Seiler said. Orlando has a board similar to Fort Lauderdale's, that reviews investigations to determine if Internal Affairs did a proper job. But its mission also includes reviewing policies and procedures "pertaining to the use of force and police conduct toward citizens" -- just what Adderley was suggesting Fort Lauderdale's board do. In Fort Myers, unlike Fort Lauderdale, police officers and their family members aren't allowed to sit on the review board. Jernigan said that's a practice he would like to see here, but other board members said officers are part of the community, too. Perez said most boards with officers have them in non-voting roles, so they can provide needed perspective while not skewing the vote of the citizen members.

Besides looking at citizen complaints, the Fort Myers board is charged with reviewing closed investigations involving the use of deadly or excessive force, any police action resulting in death or serious injury, or any complaint a majority of the board desires to review. In Tampa, Mayor Bob Buckhorn used an executive order to create a review board this year. Besides reviewing disciplinary cases, the Tampa board will also look at "issues of importance or interest to the community and the Police Department." Miami's Civilian Investigative Panel, created in 2002, has the most power. It's able to conduct its own investigations into police misconduct and has a paid staff. But even those elevated powers can't guarantee success. An independent review committee in 2014 recommended the Miami board's procedures be overhauled to make it more effective.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
October 27, 2015

Lauderdale supervisors leave during investigation

Author: Larry Barszewski

A yearlong investigation into employee complaints in the city's Public Works Department has resulted in no disciplinary action so far, but three of seven managers singled out by employees have left the city for other positions. Those remaining will be "counseled on the severity of the situation and the importance of professional and courteous behavior," the city said in its response to the investigation's recommendations. City Manager **Lee Feldman** authorized the investigation last year after 26 employees in the department's engineering section complained to city commissioners about discrimination and bullying by supervisors. Another six employees later added their names to the complaint. The employees in the engineering division took their action after being told they were going to be laid off as part of a department reorganization. **Feldman** said that was a misunderstanding and the reorganization was merely a proposal that was being discussed. Employees also complained of harassment and unwarranted disciplinary actions being taken against them. Investigator Rosilyn Dickerson interviewed 45 employees and managers and said "the facts reveal a breach of trust at multiple levels." She said the managers' responses were "evasive or they failed to provide the investigator with enough facts to dispute the allegations."

The report reached no conclusion of its own. City officials said they have determined that no discrimination occurred. **Feldman** said his review of the report shows that "while there may have been some management challenges and communication issues, the actions complained of do not rise to the level of discrimination, hostile work environment or retaliation." Also, **Feldman** said two of seven complaints filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission have been found to be without merit. The others are pending. Public Works Director Hardeep Anand, whose last day with the city was Friday, resigned to take a job with Miami-Dade County. The assistant city engineer and a construction manager also have taken jobs elsewhere. In addition, Assistant City Manager Susanne Torriente, who hired Anand and oversaw the department, took a job in Miami Beach in September. Although Torriente was not a subject of the investigation, several employees mentioned Torriente in their comments, with one alleging Torriente referring to Anand as "my guy...if he is embarrassed, I am embarrassed."

Anand defended his work with the city, saying he took over the director's position shortly after a city employee buyout program that left him with about half the usual staff. He said the department was having to hire new employees without providing sufficient training, was relying on outdated technology, had no formal policies or procedures and was enduring ongoing project delays and change orders. Because of an "obsession for results," Anand said "there was a collective oversight of employee burnout and workload stress the situation was creating." **Feldman** has ordered human resource officials to have monthly interviews over the next six months with the employees who brought complaints to ensure no retaliation occurs. The city is also implementing training, development and other programs to address some of the other needs identified in the investigation, and hiring additional human resource workers.

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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
October 9, 2015

Lauderdale has 106 miles worth of bad sidewalks

Author: Larry Barszewski

Imagine a sidewalk on Federal Highway stretching from Broward Boulevard to Fort Pierce, every slab in need of repair. That's how much sidewalk -- 106 miles' worth -- that needs fixing in the city. Then take all the city's 425 miles of current sidewalks and double them -- that's still not enough to put sidewalks on all the roads where there are none. Although the city strives to be pedestrian-friendly and walkable, it faces a stiff challenge. A consultant's study concluded a quarter of the city's sidewalks are cracked, pock-marked or uneven and will cost \$16 million to repair. City Manager **Lee Feldman** has proposed spending \$2.1 million from the city's risk insurance funds to target some of the most severe problems over the next year. Those sidewalks would be in front of city-owned property, in high traffic areas like the downtown corridor and in front of schools and hospitals, and in other areas where damage has been caused by the roots of trees planted in roadside swales. No estimate was given on the cost of adding another 600 miles of sidewalk to finish the city's walkway system, although even a conservative calculation of \$8 per square foot would reach \$100 million.

Resident Camille Hansen said it's difficult getting around the Flagler Village section of downtown because of missing and broken sidewalks. "If you're a jogger, runner or walker on [Northeast] Third Avenue, you have to be careful, you cannot do it in the dark," said Hansen, because so many slabs are sticking up. "I would say they're pretty bad." City officials want to correct the situation, but the big question comes down to who will pay -- or where will the city get the money if it covers the costs. Since 1980, the city has required property owners to install and repair sidewalks adjacent to them, although officials said enforcement has been lax. "Most of the homeowners have absolutely no idea that they are responsible for the costs of their own sidewalk," beach resident Abby Laughlin said during a commissioners discussion this year about the sidewalks. The city has only spent \$750,000 on sidewalk repair the past five years, with about \$94,000 reimbursed by adjacent property owners, fixing just five miles' worth of sidewalks.

But not fixing the sidewalks is also costing the city. It has paid more than \$250,000 a year to settle trip-and-fall claims by people injured because of the poor sidewalk conditions -- \$1.3 million in the past five years. Some of the problems have been of the city's own making. It held tree give-aways over the years, encouraging residents to plant them in swales to create a shade canopy over the sidewalks and streets -- only to see the trees' roots ravage sidewalks. The city now promotes a "right tree in the right place" initiative, which would plant smaller-growing trees in narrower swales. **Feldman** said this year's sidewalk repair proposal would cover 14 percent of the damaged sidewalks and greatly reduce the city's exposure to trip-and-fall claims. Paying for the rest of the repairs, though, has become "a ball of string that you can't quite find the end on," said Bob Oelke, a member of the city's Budget Advisory Board who has been advocating for improved sidewalks for years. Oelke thinks the city should be treating sidewalks with the same

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degree of importance as it does streets and canals, not leaving them to be the responsibility of the adjacent property owners. Commissioners have been mulling over suggestions on how to pay for sidewalks, but have reached no consensus yet. The city could decide it will be responsible for the sidewalks and set up an annual assessment similar to its stormwater fee to cover repair and installation costs. Commissioners have talked about a 50-50 incentive plan to encourage property owners to fix or add sidewalks, with the city picking up half the cost. The city could also expand a 10-year installment payment plan now offered to single-family homeowners to more property owners, to make it less financially burdensome to do the work. Or the city, which has been reluctant to go after property owners, could do a better job enforcing the current laws and make sure needed repairs are done. Commissioner Dean Trantalis would like to see repairs speeded up and more sidewalks added. He said his neighborhood has virtually no sidewalks and people walk their dogs in the middle of the street. "It's not working," Trantalis said of the current situation. "If we want sidewalks that are safe and attractive, we have to be proactive."

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Lee Feldman
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Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
July 24, 2015

Broward's emergency 911 system still troubled

Author: Brittany Wallman and Linda Trischitta

The caller to 911 is panting, panicked. People are screaming in the background. A pit bull named Kane is mauling a mother and her 9-year-old son in Fort Lauderdale. She pleads for help: "Please come!" Suddenly, a recording interrupts her frantic appeal. "You have reached the Broward County Communications Center." She's been transferred to a non-emergency line. Cut to another caller. He's witnessing what he thinks might be a double drowning in the Intracoastal Waterway behind his home. After repeated questions from a confused 911 call-taker who sounds unfamiliar with Pompano Beach, he gives up. "You're too stupid," he says, and hangs up. Another emergency, another 911 call: A woman leaves french-fries cooking on her stove and they catch fire, just a couple of miles from a Fort Lauderdale fire station. But dispatchers send the trucks to the wrong address. "They're so close to here. Why are they not here already?" a 911 caller asked. By the time firefighters arrive, the 88-year-old woman has suffered \$25,000 in damage to her uninsured home. Nine months into the historic creation of a countywide system -- one of the largest consolidated 911 systems in the country -- Broward's emergency 911 service is facing serious difficulties.

Call-takers and dispatchers are still struggling in their new roles, sending first-responders to wrong addresses, or the right address in the wrong city, or simply making critical mistakes. Dangerous failures plague the hand-held radios police and firefighters depend on to communicate with dispatchers. The system that was supposed to save money is over budget for the coming year. And calls during the busiest hours continue to ring for too long before operators pick up, according to the county. Following a 2002 voter dictate, emergency dispatching was consolidated last October from eight locations to three: Pembroke Pines, Coconut Creek and Sunrise. Two cities, Coral Springs and Plantation, declined to join and maintain their own dispatch operations. The new system has had its successes. It quickly met its chief goal: cutting down on time-absorbing call transfers when victims dialed 911 on cellular phones and reached the wrong dispatch center. And the Broward Sheriff's Office, which has a contract to run the call centers for Broward County, has consistently succeeded in meeting one overall standard -- that 90 percent of the 911 calls are answered within 10 seconds.

But the system's other challenges, evident early on, remain unresolved, the Sun Sentinel found, in interviews with key officials and a review of public records. "I am absolutely disappointed where it stands," said Rick Carpani, who as director of Broward County's Office of Regional Communications and Technology is in charge of the system. "Everybody has to "give up the sandbox mentality and say, 'We're all in this together.' " The troubles have proven so stubborn, Broward County is hiring a consultant to examine it. "We're now into this thing and we have to hire a consultant to find out what we did wrong?" Commissioner Chip LaMarca asked at a budget workshop in May.

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Operator error

Early in July, an 18-month old child was found in a neighbor's Hollywood pool. A man at the scene called 911 with sparse details, saying "there's somebody who's passed out." The call-taker didn't ask for details to share with paramedics, or offer life-saving instructions as required. As has happened repeatedly under the new system, responders were given only the most basic information. Police weren't initially called, another dispatcher error. One Hollywood officer later complained bitterly: "I was only a block away," the unidentified officer wrote to superiors, saying an officer could have beat paramedics to the scene and helped the child. "In this situation, time was of the essence in possibly saving this toddler's life," the officer wrote. "Unfortunately, this ended with a tragic outcome for everyone involved." The child's fate after being hospitalized was unclear; Hollywood police said they did not have an update on the child's condition. The dispatcher was punished with counseling, based on the "egregiousness and severity" of the case, records from the incident say.

But it's not an isolated case. Those close to the system, including Carpani, say they expected better performance by now from call centers. Though the consolidation itself has many supporters, some remain frustrated. "I think the intentions ... [are] good. But they are struggling to achieve this," said John Wolmer, who with his wife, Jan, has spent his days and nights over the last three decades listening to police radios in all three South Florida counties. Their company, News Busters, culls the airwaves for crime and fire news, sending text alerts to more than 100 subscribers, including radio and TV stations and the Sun Sentinel. "The Broward County taxpayer deserves better," he said. "The firefighters have shown a lot of restraint in dealing with the inexperienced dispatchers. ... There are still things where they're sending the wrong trucks to a zone, and this goes on all day long." Wolmer said he believes the new system suffers a "training and management" problem. Before consolidation, dispatchers were familiar with their city's terrain and firefighter lingo, he said. "Plantation and Coral Springs, the two holdouts, they did it right," he said. "I'm sure they're thrilled to death they're not a part of this." As complaints from agencies rolled in, the county set up a database system to track each one. According to that data, of 373 complaints between October and the end of April, the greatest number, 157 or 42 percent, were the fault of the operator or dispatcher. Only 10 were caller errors. "The operator-related tickets lead to delayed response times, first responder safety concerns and administrative overhead," a county report from February reads.

Local knowledge lacking

The problems range from operators being rude or unprofessional to sending units to the wrong address -- or even the wrong city -- to not redialing callers who were disconnected. Fort Lauderdale City Manager **Lee Feldman** said the address issue needs to be resolved by the county. A single address can exist in three, four, even five Broward cities. Ask the caller where they are, **Feldman** said, and often they incorrectly say "Fort Lauderdale." Call-takers were recently trained on mapping tools. But they lack local geographic knowledge in many cases, officials have complained. "If you had a boater inside or outside of the inlet calling for immediate help, in the past we'd have a dispatcher who knew where the inlet was and that there

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was a bridge and the ocean outside of it," said Pompano Beach Fire Rescue Division Chief of Operations Chester Bolton. "Now they don't ask boaters if they can see land or the lighthouse. They don't know the landmarks or ask appropriate questions to get us to the patient." Still, Bolton said the operation has improved in quickly addressing issues raised by cities still adapting to the loss of the "one-on-one" service they were used to. Likewise, **Feldman** said he still believes "its advantages outweigh its disadvantages." At the Sheriff's Office, Robert Pusins, head of the Department of Community Services, told county commissioners his agency underestimated how much training would be needed for dispatchers and call-takers who were new to the job or the cities where they're now working. "We took in employees from other agencies that didn't have the same level of training and certifications that we needed," he said. Pusins told the Sun Sentinel that operators are learning the geography and adapting to the faster pace, but it takes time. Of the 1.4 million calls so far this year, only about 1 percent drew complaints from the cities, he said. "Are we satisfied?" he asked. "Are we where we want to be? Of course not. We're still striving every day to be better."

JoAnne Alvarez, Federation Of Public Employees union leader for the approximately 400 call-takers and dispatchers, emphasized that this remains a transition year, and mistakes and complaints are declining. Too, operators are still getting used to being watched "like a hawk," with every second away from the phones noted. "There was no playbook for any of this. We are pretty much the guinea pig in this whole situation," Alvarez said. "I think we've done a phenomenal job. The operators have gone above and beyond." Public records shows the call centers have failed to meet county standards every month since consolidation. During the busiest hour of the day, 90 percent of the 911 calls must be answered within 10 seconds. That's not consistently happening, Carpani says. He has repeatedly questioned the Sheriff's Office's management of 911 operators' time. "This is a seconds game," said Carpani. "So if you come back from break one or two minutes late, guess what happens?"

Pusins said the county doesn't give the Sheriff's Office credit for its successes and its work toward improvement. And he calls the busy-hour calculation "junk science" and unfair. "I don't think you'll find a 911 center anywhere in the country that's under the scrutiny we are," he said. Paid for with a countywide property tax increase, the system is expected to save taxpayers money. Someday. But Sheriff's officials asked for \$43.2 million for dispatch in the coming budget, a 14.6 percent increase. "It's going up, up, up," Commissioner Lois Wexler groused at a budget workshop earlier this year. Wexler was one of the "yes" votes in the contentious 5-4 split to create the system. "I'm not going to be part of that fraud. I'm just not. This onion's going to have to be peeled way, way back." Pusins said he needs to hire more operators and spend more money on training, to deliver the system the county is asking for.

Radio danger

For months, law enforcement personnel in South Florida had a mystery they couldn't solve. Something fiercely powerful was interfering with their radio signals. Atop two condo towers in Hallandale Beach and Aventura, amplifiers meant to allow law enforcement signals to be heard inside the buildings were configured incorrectly. Instead, the signals were magnified and blasted

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Lee Feldman**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

back into the South Florida police and fire radio system. Though the source of the interference was at long last discovered several months ago, smaller hindrances continue to vex the system. And more frightening, to people like Fort Lauderdale City Manager **Feldman**, is the age and state of Broward's radios in the first place. In a June letter to Broward County Administrator Bertha Henry, the Broward County Chiefs of Police Association complained about outages and static on the radios used by police and fire personnel to communicate with dispatchers. Wilton Manors Police Chief Paul O'Connell, president of the group, told Henry the weaknesses caused police departments in Davie, Miramar, Pembroke Pines and Sunrise to switch to two-person patrols, and perform a roll call every hour. "These ongoing problems have been and continue to be a hindrance to officer and public safety," he wrote.

Carpani says the Motorola radio system is at "end of life," a problem known well before 911 consolidation. He expects a new system to be in testing in 2018. But **Feldman** didn't trust the county's radios to last till replacement, which he figures will take five years, not three. The radios are old, and he said even getting spare parts can be difficult. So his city declined to use the county radios, and spent \$5 million to extend their radios' lives another five years. "Dispatch seems to be working OK," **Feldman** said. "What was keeping me up at night is the radio system. The radio system is ... the part where people shouldn't be sleeping."

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
June 13, 2015

State water rules create Fort Lauderdale chaos

Author: Larry Barszewski

The city has halted a new program that required some homeowners to install special devices on their lawn irrigation systems because it's not clear if the state is demanding the work be done. The suspension comes too late for a number of residents who spent hundreds of dollars on the work in the face of a city threat to cut off their irrigation water if they don't comply. City officials Thursday halted the program they said the state was mandating after receiving a letter from a state environmental official saying that no such requirement had been made. City Manager **Lee Feldman** said he needs to investigate more because an October email from another state environmental official said the changes are required because the old systems that many homes use are no longer adequate. John Beauchamp of Las Olas Isles isn't sure what to make of the situation. He already had the device, called a backflow preventer, but spent \$186 to have a plumber come out and certify it as the city was also requiring. He moved quickly because his notice said he had to do it by June 28. "I pay to have the plumber come out and do this and I find out, well, they've changed their mind," Beauchamp said.

Some others actually installed new backflow preventers, paying generally between \$500 and \$1,000. There have been 65 residential installations since May 1, officials said, although they could not say how many were done because of the notices that were sent out. **Feldman** said the work may still be required. "I don't know that I have an answer yet. I'm not sure whether they needed to or not," **Feldman** said. "Clearly, it's an inconsistent messaging from the state. We want to do what is right." Dee Ann Miller, a spokeswoman for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, said Friday "the department has reached out to the city of Fort Lauderdale to coordinate the grandfathering" of older irrigation lines "to avoid unnecessary burden on homeowners." The backflow preventers keep pesticides and other contaminants that may seep into irrigation lines from being sucked back into the city's main water lines if there is a change in water pressure. Properties that were put on notice have their irrigation on a separate line with a separate meter. City rules say the installation can be done only by qualified licensed plumbers and requires the pulling of permits and annual inspections.

Many of the first batch of notices went out to property owners in Commissioner Dean Trantalis' district, including Las Olas Isles, the central beach area and Coral Ridge. "It's a shame that this happened," Trantalis said. "Clearly the city needs to have a firmer understanding of its role here before it starts sending out notices to our residents to install these backflow devices." Steve Chase of Lauderdale Beach received a notice, which went out to individuals who have their irrigation lines on a separate meter to avoid sewer charges that can double water costs. "I opened it up and initially I thought it was a scam," Chase said. "Everyone has been taken offguard." Even Mayor Jack Seiler, who received his own notice. "I'm looking at this letter saying, 'Wow, this is not what I understood we were doing,'" Seiler said. The city backed off its interpretation after receiving a copy of a letter the state Environmental Protection department sent to Rep.

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Lee Feldman

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George Moraitis, R-Fort Lauderdale, who was doing his own investigation after hearing from constituents upset by the new requirements. "The rule update did not introduce any new requirements for homeowners, did not remove the grandfathering clause for existing irrigation systems," the department's director of water resource management, Frederick L. Aschauer Jr., wrote in the letter to Moraitis. The city says it had acted on an Oct. 24 email from John Sowerby, a professional engineer for the state Environmental department, that says no properties are grandfathered in and that the old backflow preventer systems that many homes use are no longer adequate.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
April 25, 2015

Lauderdale city manager upholds dismissal of cops fired over racist texts

Author: Emily Miller and Larry Barszewski

In the five weeks since being ousted over slur-filled text messages, three former Fort Lauderdale police officers have appealed their dismissals to no avail. On Friday, City Manager **Lee Feldman** confirmed he has denied the ex-officers' requests for their jobs back. It is now up to Jason Holding, 31, James Wells, 30, and Christopher Sousa, 25, to decide whether they will continue with the appeals process. The men were fired March 20 following a five-month investigation into text messages sent from their personal phones that included racist, sexist and ethnically inappropriate images and remarks. Each ex-officer met with Fort Lauderdale Police Chief Frank Adderley on April 15, and he denied their requests for reinstatement the next day, Adderley said in an email Friday. In letters dated April 17, **Feldman** said he concurs with Adderley's recommendation.

"I have handled this matter consistently with other actions I've taken" on police matters, **Feldman** said Friday. **Feldman** said Holding's letter was hand-delivered to him Friday. He said Sousa and Wells were not in town, and letters will be sent to them by certified mail. Jack Lokeinsky, president of the local Fraternal Order of Police union, said he had not received copies of **Feldman's** letters as of Friday afternoon. Once received, the officers will have 10 days to appeal **Feldman's** decision.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Search
Lee Feldman**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
March 15, 2015

Lauderdale could sell future park site to cover bills

Author: Larry Barszewski

A valuable city-owned property once designated for a downtown park could be sold off to earn the city some quick cash -- making the city center a little more concrete and a little less green. Flagler Village residents have mounted a #OurNextPark campaign to convince commissioners to hold onto the 3.5-acre site on the west side of Andrews Avenue between Northwest Second and Fourth streets for a future park. City Manager **Lee Feldman** said selling the property could provide much needed dollars to the city, while a park there would likely become a hangout for homeless people. A recent real estate consultant's report by CBRE said the property "is a prime candidate for redevelopment," possibly for a multi-family or senior-living development, and pegged its value between \$11 million and \$13 million. The residents see the former City Hall site -- often called the "One Stop Shop" site from the days it was used by the city's building department -- as a perfect "Central Park" location because of its proximity to the planned All Aboard Florida train station and the future Wave streetcar system. The property has a number of large, older trees, including a rare dragon's blood tree, named for its red sap.

Sheila Franklin, who lives at Avenue Lofts on Andrews Avenue, said she was lured to the area a decade ago because of the city's "vision and promise of Flagler Village." "As someone who took a chance, I feel used and abused," said Franklin, who thinks the park is needed. "Like all the possibilities that have been presented over the past 10 years, it's being erased for expediency." **Feldman** told the city's parks advisory board recently that money from selling the land could fill any number of city needs: helping to cover its \$10.5 million commitment to the Wave streetcar program; paying for its share of beach renourishment costs that could reach \$11 million; or going toward the cost of sea wall repairs along Riverwalk on the New River. **Feldman** said the city could work with a developer to include needed parking in the Andrews Avenue area. However, he said putting a park next to the city's transportation hub might not be a good idea because "that's where your transient individuals do tend to congregate," which might "cause other people not to use the park." He said the land was "clearly the gem of the [city's] portfolio." Commissioner Dean Trantalis, who represents the area, is against the land sale for that very reason. "My position is you don't sell the family jewels to pay the light bill," Trantalis said. "It would be shameful if we discarded it for redevelopment."

In recent years, the property was supposed to include the park and a maintenance facility for the Wave streetcars. The city is now working to swap a vacant lot it owns immediately south of the property for one near Southwest 17th Street, where it would place the Wave facility. The vacant lot would go to All Aboard Florida to develop. The park site is only two blocks north of Stranahan Park, which has been heavily landscaped and gated to discourage its use by homeless people. Dylan Lagi, president of the Flagler Village Civic Association, said the city has already done a good job of keeping the homeless off the vacant property and the vacant lot south of it, which had been a popular gathering spot. He said the village plans to have security ambassadors

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Lee Feldman

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to help keep a park open to all. "We can't just not do parks because we're working on a management issue with homeless people. We need to do both," Lagi said. Flagler Village has become a hot commodity, he said, and it needs to include park space as well as more development. The village's only park is Peter Feldman Park at Northeast Sixth Street and Third Avenue, about a half-acre in size, Lagi said.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
February 12, 2015

Fort Lauderdale cops, firefighters train to rescue shooting victims faster

Author: Linda Trischitta

At a Fort Lauderdale cinema Wednesday, two men in camouflage gear calmly walked down the aisle and fired rifles and handguns at moviegoers. Twenty-seven volunteers were "injured" in three theaters during the drill. Fort Lauderdale police guarded and escorted paramedics wearing protective gear to tend to the wounded actors, even though the "shooters" weren't captured and blank gunfire echoed elsewhere in the Riverwalk movie complex. The agencies' goal is to speed up paramedics' responses during mass killings, domestic calls and other violent incidents. The new tactics that lead responders into the "warm zone" of an active crime scene may save lives, but they also put firefighters and paramedics closer to gunmen or other threats. Wednesday's rehearsal was reminiscent of the 2012 shooting at a theater in Aurora, Colo., when 12 people were killed and 58 wounded. The FBI says there were 486 people killed and 557 injured in 160 mass shootings between 2000 and 2013. A gruesome trend became apparent: Paramedics stood ready in a safe location until police stopped the gunman, and victims often bled to death.

Fort Lauderdale officials say that if a madman strikes, they don't want such potentially lethal delays to happen in the city. "Basically about two years ago, around the time of the Boston Marathon bombing, there was a paradigm shift at the national level that there has to be a different way of handling these things," said Fort Lauderdale City Manager **Lee Feldman**. "We're not the first city to do this, but we're in front, even locally. You can be a city of two thousand or a city of two million, and an active shooter can happen." The Fire Chiefs Association of Broward County and the Broward County Chiefs of Police are working on a response policy similar to Fort Lauderdale's. The agreement may be finalized in a month, said Seminole Fire Chief Donald DiPetrillo, president of the fire chiefs' association. Protective gear and training would follow. "Agencies can choose whether to participate directly," DiPetrillo said. He called South Florida "a target. It's probably a fair assessment to say we've been lucky so far." Fort Lauderdale's cops and firefighters have trained together for eight months. The city spent about \$100,000 for 112 sets of navy blue helmets and vests marked "fire rescue" that are shared by each shift, said Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue Deputy Fire Chief Timothy Heiser.

Lighthouse Point Fire Rescue Chief David Donzella said his agency will train and follow any new active shooter procedures that are begun countywide, but he won't equip his 24 responders with body armor. "Lighthouse Point is the smallest fire rescue agency in Broward County, and we will not put our firefighter-paramedics in harm's way," Donzella said. "We'll rely on our police department and outside agencies should we come into that situation." Fort Lauderdale's firefighters' duties have changed and they aren't getting paid extra for these new responsibilities. "Their jobs are to save lives," **Feldman** said. "And we don't want them to get shot at. That's why they come in with [police protection]. One of our concerns was if our guys were to say, 'This isn't in my job description.' And to their credit, not one of them has raised it as an issue." Fort Lauderdale Professional Firefighters Union President Scott Bayne said the new safety equipment

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"is a good thing." He was not concerned with firefighters wearing the extra gear, but is worried that the vests are blue, like police uniforms, and that firefighters will be mistaken for cops. He said he was also worried that firefighters may in the future be asked to go into hostile situations before police arrive, though no official has said that is going to be a new procedure.

The International Association of Firefighters in 2012 recommended unarmed firefighters train with police for rescues in so-called warm zones. The IAFF's local president, Broward Sheriff Fire Rescue Capt. Walter Dix, said he supports the new tactics as long as firefighter-paramedics are protected. "Firefighters aren't going to carry firearms," Dix said. "That's not our job." He called rushing into warm zones "another piece of our job, rescuing people in dangerous situations. "The quicker we can get in, the quicker we can get them out and get them treatment," Dix said. "It's an evolving profession. It will take people time to adjust to this new world we live in."

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tribune Content Agency News Service (USA)
December 17, 2014

Lauderdale water tower becomes \$655,000 public art project

Author: Larry Barszewski

The dingy downtown water tower could be transformed into an iconic fixture that puts the city's name up in lights -- with ever-changing colors picked by the public. The city plans to turn the hulking utilitarian landmark on Northwest Second Avenue north of Sistrunk Boulevard into a 150-foot-tall example of interactive public art. The water tower now "really kind of overpowers that part of town and it's just terribly ugly," said Leah Brown, a partner in the Art+Light+Space design firm that came up with idea. Commissioners on Wednesday gave their support for the project, Tower Lights: An Interactive Experience, which will cost about \$655,000. The city has already scheduled the water tower for its once-a-decade rehabilitation, and the art component will be incorporated into the overall work. "At night, when you're flying in, you'll be able to see it," City Manager **Lee Feldman** said. "If you're coming south on Andrews [Avenue], you can actually see the tower from Commercial Boulevard." **Feldman** said there is money to do most of the work and the city is reviewing additional sources, including grants. He said there is still \$150,000 left over from the city's centennial celebration and the city could also use water utility and community redevelopment dollars for the work.

Brown said she has passed by the water tower almost daily for the past five years to get to her business in FAT Village, the city's emerging arts district. The tower stands just a couple of blocks away. "It has so much potential," Brown said. The tower's current design has the city's seal and the city's name visible on only one side of the tank, and the lettering isn't even straight or spaced evenly. The new proposal would have the city's name repeated so it is at least partially visible from any direction. And it adds the All America City title. The proposal uses reflective paint with designs and hues that will shimmer in the daylight and with the evening lighting. The lights would pulse and change colors synchronized to music heard on a Tower Lights online streaming radio station. The public would be allowed to pick the colors they want to see at any given time through a phone app or online access. The requests would be cued and people notified when their requested colors would appear.

Feldman said there are days when the city may want to lock out people from making color changes, such as on Christmas when a green and red scheme could be used all night. Brown said there are uniquely shaped water towers -- such as one made to look like a giant peach in Gaffney, S.C. -- and some cities project video displays on their towers. She knows of none that light up to colors picked by the public.

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Lee Feldman
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McClatchy-Tribune Regional News (USA)
July 1, 2014

Fort Lauderdale budget includes 64 new positions

Author: Larry Barszewski

City Manager **Lee Feldman** wants to put more lifeguards on the beaches, more rangers in the parks and more police officers on horses -- without raising the city's tax rate. **Feldman's** proposed budget includes 64 new positions, and would bring the city's total workforce to 2,330 -- still 164 fewer employees than in 2010. "These proposed recommendations will serve to restore the staffing back to a more suitable level for the continued heightened volume of work that we now recognize as the new 'normal,' " **Feldman** said in his budget message to commissioners. There would be seven new ocean-rescue positions, which will allow the city to extend the hours its beaches are guarded till 7 pm. Currently, city lifeguards are on duty between 9:45 a.m. and 5 p.m. The city has the fewest supervised bathing hours of "any lifeguarded beach in Florida," officials said. "It makes the beach safer," Mayor Jack Seiler said, supporting the increase. "We need to have a lifeguard presence throughout the daylight hours." The police department would get three crowd-control mounted units for the beach and downtown areas, **Feldman** said. They would be part of 10 newly dedicated police positions to those areas.

The Parks Department would receive 10 new positions, including a homeless activity coordinator to oversee a comprehensive homeless strategy. Another 13 positions are dedicated to "citywide lot clearing, street sweeping and park maintenance," **Feldman** said. Commissioners are expected to give tentative approval to **Feldman's** proposal on Tuesday, and then hold public hearings at 6 p.m. Sept. 3 and 10 at City Hall. **Feldman's** plan -- based on direction he received from commissioners -- is to keep the city's property tax rate for its operating budget at \$4.12 for each \$100,000 of assessed value for the eighth consecutive year. The city's overall tax rate, when debt service is included, would drop by a penny, from \$4.33 to \$4.32 for each \$100,000 of assessed value. The owner of a \$200,000 home who receives a \$50,000 homestead exemption would pay \$648 in city taxes. The city's fire fee for residential property owners would stay at \$225. **Feldman's** proposal is based on a 6.2 percent increase in the city's tax base and would bring in \$103.1 million in property taxes. While the tax rate might not be increasing, the city would collect about \$5.5 million more than in the current budget because of the higher values and new construction. The city's overall operating budget is \$293.8 million, a 2 percent increase over the current budget, **Feldman** said.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

McClatchy-Tribune Regional News (USA)
May 26, 2014

Fort Lauderdale seeks to reduce dredging costs

Author: Larry Barszewski

The city could save millions by having the private operators who will benefit from planned dredging work foot the bill, City Manager **Lee Feldman** says. But city commissioners, who say they don't want to renege on past commitments, suggested **Feldman** meet with the operators to see what they would be willing to do. The Florida Inland Navigation District hopes to begin dredging the Intracoastal Waterway channel this fall from the 17th Street Causeway to about a mile north of the Las Olas Boulevard Bridge. It will cost about \$11 million to connect the Bahia Mar Yachting Center, the Hall of Fame Marina and the city-owned Las Olas Marina to the deeper channel, and to dredge the Las Olas Marina basin. The city had planned to fund the project with grants and redevelopment dollars but **Feldman** questioned why the city should pay for work benefiting private operators. He said the city could save \$6.5 million that could be used on other beach projects.

Commissioners, however, said the channel-dredging project was dependent on past city commitments and they did not want to take a chance of jeopardizing the project. "It's too big an issue for our marine industry not to remain committed to doing this," Commissioner Bruce Roberts said. Still, commissioners said there may be a portion of the work the city could consider removing. The \$3.6 million needed to dredge the basin of the Las Olas Marina would be needed to accommodate mega yachts and a marina expansion. The city has not yet identified a way of making the expansion financially feasible. "There's a big difference in making a way there and dredging the whole marina," Vice Mayor Romney Rogers said.

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McClatchy-Tribune Regional News (USA)
September 1, 2013

Fort Lauderdale broaches tax referendum

Author: Larry Barszewski

A bond referendum could be in the city's future as early as next year if commissioners decide it's the best way to pay for repairs and improvements that were placed on the back burner after the economy tanked five years ago. City Manager **Lee Feldman** suggested it may even be time to see if Broward County and its other cities want to pursue a countywide sales tax increase to address critical needs that have been neglected since 2008. "In Broward County, we tend to -- for whatever reason -- not look at the governmental infrastructure sales tax option," **Feldman** said at a budget workshop recently, estimating such a tax could provide the city with \$16 million per year. "That would provide a very significant amount countywide for infrastructure." County voters in 2006 turned down a penny sales tax increase that had been proposed for transportation projects. Now that the economy is improving, city commissioners are hoping to begin dealing with deferred maintenance and on-hold capital improvement projects. **Feldman** revised his proposed budget to squeeze in \$2.1 million for maintenance projects, but Commissioner Dean Trantalis is looking for something more. "I see where we're throwing what I consider relative pennies toward the infrastructure challenges we have in this city," Trantalis said. "The question has to be asked: Are we prepared to take on the challenge of funding a comprehensive infrastructure improvement undertaking over the next five to ten years?"

Feldman's proposal for the coming year has five roof replacements -- including at City Hall and at War Memorial Auditorium -- playground replacements at seven parks, three park restroom renovations and a sewer pipe repair. Besides the need for repair work, the city's Budget Advisory Board said it's time for the commission to start including projects that enhance life in the city if it is serious about the 20-year future vision of the city it recently adopted. The advisory board initially recommended a tax increase, which commissioners rejected. It is now urging the commission "to plan on making serious funding available" beginning in the city's 2015 budget. "We believe you must begin investing in Fort Lauderdale's future growth to keep it competitive with other cities," board Chairwoman June Page said. "If we do not make Fort Lauderdale a more desirable place to live by investing in the vision plan for its future, we will lose our most precious assets -- people." Bridges, roads and buildings are deteriorating and need attention also, she said.

Currently, the city's proposed operating tax rate isn't changing, but commissioners are weighing a hefty increase in the city's fire assessment fee. It is proposed to go up \$90 -- to \$225 for a single-family home -- for the fiscal year starting Oct. 1. That increase is supposed to cover the city's full cost of providing fire services, while freeing up money in the general budget for other critical needs. The commission will hold its first public hearing on the city's proposed budget and tax rate on Tuesday. If the commission is interested in seeking voter approval of a bond issue in November 2014, planning will have to start soon, **Feldman** said. He also said commissioners might consider approaching the county and other cities about forming a united approach to a

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penny sales tax increase. "I see an understanding and a willingness for people to pay a little bit more right now," Vice Mayor Bruce Roberts said. "We definitely need sources of revenue to make those things happen." Trantalis said the city will need to be very specific about the projects that would be included in a bond or sales tax referendum -- and more work needs to be done fleshing those projects out. "There was not enough specifics for us to use as guideposts," Trantalis said of the city's vision plan. But Page said the vision plan isn't "all vague" and had items the commission can consider. "There are things that are pretty concrete, like police radios not working on the barrier island," Page said. "That's an easy way to see how you improve public safety right there. If the radios don't work, that's a good way to spend money."

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

McClatchy-Tribune Regional News (USA)
May 3, 2013

It's getting harder for Fort Lauderdale to avoid tax increase

Author: Larry Barszewski

In the five years since the nation's economy tanked, commissioners have refused to raise the city's property tax rate or fire assessment fee. This year, they're being told that's no longer an option, unless they're willing to let city services take a big hit. City Manager **Lee Feldman** estimates next year's revenue will be short \$22.4 million just to keep things as they are now. The shortfall could drop to \$15.4 million if Broward County commissioners move ahead with their plan to take over the full cost of public safety dispatch services in October. **Feldman** doesn't see anything else on the horizon that will significantly close the remaining gap. "We're at a point now where we don't have sufficient reserves to keep dipping into," **Feldman** told city commissioners this week. "We were basically spending more than we were taking in from 2006 onward." June Page, chairwoman of the city Budget Advisory Board, said it's time to raise taxes. "We unanimously supported a [property tax] increase and/or an increase in the fire assessment fee," Page told commissioners. "The only other option for you is significant service reductions." Page warned: "You're going to cut things that affect people's lives."

Commissioners have relied on raiding reserves, reducing employee positions and cutting back services to avoid increasing the tax rate (the eighth-lowest in the county) and fire assessment fee (the county's sixth-lowest). Upkeep and capital improvement projects have been among the hardest-hit areas. **Feldman** said the city can't keep postponing needed purchases or projects without raising the potential for significant trouble down the road -- and he said there's barely enough staff to get work done. Mayor Jack Seiler said he and fellow commissioners have done the right thing by using reserves and reducing payroll to protect taxpayers who were already hurting. If there is a tax increase, he expects to keep it to a minimum. "We're going to have to find more cuts," Seiler said. That's something Commissioner Bruce Roberts isn't willing to accept, especially given the city's recent goal-setting effort, which had significant community participation. "We need to get more revenue to meet the goals that are in this plan," Roberts said. "If we do it on the cheap, it's going to hurt in the long run."

One option commissioners discussed is an increase in the fire assessment fee, because they generally support imposing user fees for services. The current \$135 annual assessment for each single-family home doesn't cover the full cost of fire services. It would have to be raised \$78, to \$213, to fully fund operations, **Feldman** said. That increase, by itself, would pretty much wipe out the city's projected shortfall. Several Budget Advisory Board members cautioned that the fire assessment is a regressive tax that will hurt poorer property owners more. They urged a combination of fire assessment fee and property tax increases.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

McClatchy-Tribune Regional News (USA)
April 7, 2013

Fort Lauderdale owes \$592,000 to grant program

Author: Larry Barszewski

The city cannot prove it followed proper procedures spending federal affordable housing grant money between 1995 and 2008, so now it must put \$592,000 of its own money into the program to make up the difference. Rather than raid savings, City Manager **Lee Feldman** has recommended raising money by selling to its Community Redevelopment Agency dozens of city-owned properties acquired for affordable housing purposes. "This has to be paid back from nonfederal sources," **Feldman** said. The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development initially sought more than \$1.7 million in reimbursements, **Feldman** said. However, the city negotiated a lower payment after providing HUD with additional documentation. Because some date files do not exist or cannot be found, the city was unable to show all grant requirements were met, **Feldman** said. "It's just stuff we're still cleaning up," he said. The money from the sale of the 37 northwest properties would be placed in the HOME program, which provides down payment assistance and home rehabilitation grants to eligible residents. The city may still have to dip into its reserves -- at least temporarily.

The HOME grant money needs to be spent by Oct. 30, or the city risks losing it. So even before the property sale, **Feldman** is recommending the city take the money out of reserves as a loan until the CRA sale is complete. The money would go into the grant program and be spent as quickly as possible. The CRA would use the properties to attract private developers to build affordable housing. "We put the land up. They put up their equity to construct the houses," **Feldman** said. Commissioners fear they may be saddling the CRA with unmarketable properties. "I'm sure we would have sold it if somebody wanted it," Commissioner Romney Rogers said. Commissioners, meeting as the CRA board, agreed the property sale may be needed but said they want the CRA out of the property-acquisition business in the future. "I do think we need to shift from acquiring property to bringing in investment, private investment, private development," Mayor Jack Seiler said.

Commissioner Dean Trantalis said the CRA needs to use its money to attract development. "Maybe we should come up with the [HOME] money from some other source," Trantalis said. "I'd rather use this [CRA] money for its intended purpose." The properties are technically owned by the Northwest Neighborhood Improvement District, a separate governmental entity. **Feldman** is recommending the district, which has not met in at least four years, be dissolved.

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Lee Feldman
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Broward Bulldog (FL)
February 19, 2013

Fort Lauderdale draws up vision for the future

Author: Ann Henson Feltgen

Within the next few months, if city commissioners approve, Fort Lauderdale residents will have the option of receiving and paying their bills for city services online. The savings in postage and personnel will be used to purchase shade trees for residents who use the online pay system, or be placed elsewhere around the city. That's one proposed outcome of a new plan, called Vision Plan 2035, offering residents' views of what the city should become. Many who spoke up said they wanted "more walkability and bikeability, getting out of the car and into more public transit and other alternatives," according to Susy Torriente, the assistant city manager who is overseeing the Vision Plan. Shade trees are an important part of the budding plan – intended to encourage people to get out and walk or bike. Residents who opt to use online billing will be first in line to get them if they choose. "There are ways to get things done," said City Manager **Lee Feldman**, who envisions a tree canopy all around the city. "We can come up with solutions without increasing the budget." Commissioners will get a look at the Vision Plan's survey results during today's (Feb. 19) meeting at 1:30 p.m. at City Hall. The full plan is to be presented to the commission for its consideration on April 16. This isn't the first time community members have been involved in the city's long-range planning. In the 1980s, such plans were drawn up in advance of development of the Riverwalk complex and the Museum of Discovery and Science. Today's long-range planning effort began as a citizens' initiative in 2008 led by a local discussion group headed by former Mayor Robert Dressler. Dressler, who served as mayor from 1982-1986, runs The Fort Lauderdale Forum. In the spring of 2009, a proposal to create a new plan was presented to the city commission, which appointed an eleven-member "Visioning Committee." "Called 'Our City, Our Vision,' the process aims to determine what our citizens want Fort Lauderdale to be in 2035, and a specific goal has been to reach out to citizens not normally involved in city government," Dressler wrote in a recent article for CityView Newsmagazine. In early 2011, the commission hired the Philadelphia-based planning firm Wallace, Roberts and Todd to complete the first phase of the project – public outreach. The firm was paid \$55,000. The commission had approved another \$250,000 for the contractor to complete the remaining two phases, but after **Feldman** was hired a few months later he decided to save money and take the planning in-house. **Feldman**'s budget for the remaining work is \$42,000. Both **Feldman** and Torriente have extensive experience with long range city planning. The city's planning department also contributed.

VISION PROVIDES FRAMEWORK. Through a variety of methods, residents and city staff discussed the challenges and opportunities the city will face in coming years and came up with a framework for what residents would like to see happen. From there, it is up to the city to develop innovative projects and funding, such as online bill paying to pay for shade trees. Another project that fits under the Vision Plan's transportation component is already underway – linking rapid transit with trolleys and the WAVE streetcar to help lessen the number of cars on the roadways. The Visioning Committee conducted a survey that collected more than 1,500

Internet – Newspaper Archives Search**Lee Feldman***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

comments that amount to a “wish list” from residents across the city. For the plan to work correctly, **Feldman** said, every city project should fall within the vision. “If they don’t, I will recommend to the commission that they are contrary to the vision,” he said. The survey was conducted using one-on-one interviews, town hall meetings and local summit groups. “This allowed as many people to participate as possible,” said Torriente. A recent Downtown Walkability study for downtown Fort Lauderdale, paid for by the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority and others, offers specifics for how to encourage people to get out of their cars. For example, the study noted that people need a reason or destination to walk to, using a safe, comfortable and interesting route. To provide those elements, the report suggested that walking routes be lined with shade trees rather than palms, and that roads be narrower, which can be accomplished by a low-cost method of new striping that narrows lanes and slows down cars. “The Vision Plan is an aspirational message for 2035 not necessarily linked to one project or one thing,” **Feldman** said. The study with its specific suggestions fits into the Vision Plan nicely and is an example of where project ideas can come from, he added. The city’s five-year strategic plan outlines specific projects within that time period and the city’s annual plan dictates when the project will be done and how it is funded.

PLAN INTRODUCTION MET WITH NAYSAYERS. The Vision Plan has had detractors. According to Vision Committee chairman Randall Vitale, an executive with Gibraltar Private Bank and Trust, complaints surfaced when the city hired consultants to do the work. “It was felt that they were out-of-town consultants who didn’t know the community,” Vitale said. There were also objections about the cost, but those dissipated after the project was brought in house. City resident Dennis Ulmer attended the most recent Vision Committee meeting last week and said that while he supports the Vision Plan, the committee needs to better consider how global warming will affect city projects, such as putting utilities underground. Even **Feldman** said the plan is not without pitfalls. “The plan could get so aspirational that it’s not achievable,” **Feldman** said.

PLAN TIMING IS STRATEGIC. Supporters say the strength of the Visioning Plan is that it sets a destination for the city – a roadmap to the future. **Feldman** said the Vision Plan would not become another public document that sits on a shelf. Instead, he says he will measure city performance against what is in the plan. “We’ll be talking about ‘this is our vision, this is where we are, let’s develop priorities for next year’s budget.’” And the timing is right. **Feldman** said that building permits for 3,800 housing units in the downtown area have been requested and are currently under review. “People are coming back to the city,” he said. “And these condos and multi-family units will be above [ground floor] retail businesses.” Some buildings in that mixed development will have retail, with parking above and residential on top of that, he said. Others will have retail, with parking, office space and finally residential on top. “With increased density, we’re going to see increased retail, mass transit working better and walkability is vital,” **Feldman** said. The timing is also strategic because city staff is beginning to think about the 2014 budget. If all goes as **Feldman** hopes, that new budget could be structured under the Vision Plan.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Bond Buyer, The (USA)
September 21, 2012

Investor Interest Prompts Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to Price Pension Bonds Early

Author: Shelly Sigo

Favorable market conditions and investor interest led Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to price \$338 million of taxable pension obligation bonds on Wednesday, a day earlier than originally planned. The city received \$642 million in orders for the deal, and many maturities were oversubscribed. As a result, Fort Lauderdale received a benefit during the early pricing with the yield on some maturities lowered by 5 basis points to 10 basis points from rates being sought during the pre-marketing period, according to city manager **Lee Feldman**. The deal achieved an all-in true interest cost of 4.168%. The city's maximum limit on the TIC going into the deal was 4.5%. "The numbers work for us," **Feldman** said. Though the transaction was set to price on Thursday, **Feldman** said conditions and investor interest came together a day early. "We saw a rally in the Treasuries that we thought was favorable to us. We decided that to avoid market risk that we would go early," he said Thursday morning. "We were getting investor interest on the calls that the underwriters making and just decided to go into the market [Wednesday] versus worrying what would happen overnight."

The final structure of the deal sold as \$258.24 million of serial bonds maturing between 2013 and 2027, and \$79.5 million of term bonds with final maturity in 2032. The serial bonds priced with yields ranging from 0.57% in 2013, to 3.024% in 2020, to 4.57% in 2027. The final term bond priced to yield 5.14% in 2032. Citi was book-runner for a syndicate that also consisted of Bank of America Merrill Lynch, JPMorgan, and Morgan Stanley. Bond proceeds are being used to discharge \$300 million, or 75%, of the city's unfunded actuarially required liability over the next 20 years for its two pension plans - the general employees' plan and the police/fire plan.

Had the city continued to pay the unfunded liability annually, it would have been required to pay between 7.5% to 7.75% in interest. The interest cost on the pension obligation bond sale resulted in net present value savings of \$82.4 million, or 25.7%, over the life of the bonds, according to pricing details. The city also plans to use \$16.1 million of bond proceeds to repay a loan last year that pre-funded a portion of the police/fire plan's annually required contribution, or ARC. The special obligation bonds are rated A1 by Moody's Investors Service and AA-minus by Standard & Poor's. Both agencies placed stable outlooks on the bonds.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

McClatchy-Tribune Regional News (USA)
June 21, 2012

Fort Lauderdale plans to hedge its fuel costs

Author: Larry Barszewski

Taking a page from the airline industry, City Manager **Lee Feldman** wants the city to start hedging its fuel costs by buying oil, gas and diesel futures. Call it insurance or call it gambling, **Feldman** sees it as an effective way to budget the city's money more accurately in the face of volatile fuel prices. "What I'm looking at is budget certainty," **Feldman** said. "When we start budgeting, we don't want to artificially inflate our budget to make sure we have enough money in our fuel budget to protect against price increases." Over-budgeting for fuel could force the city to cut positions or programs, while not budgeting enough could lead to emergency cuts later on or force the city to dip into its reserves. The idea of using futures isn't to speculate in the market, but to keep costs under control, said Mayor Jack Seiler, who supports the idea. The commission is expected to vote on **Feldman's** proposal in July. "We're not in the business of playing the market," Seiler said. "The problem we have is you have such a fluctuation in gas prices."

Jeffrey LeMunyon, a financial adviser with Linwood Capital in Minnesota, estimated about 50 to 100 cities nationwide use futures to hedge their fuel costs. Many aren't large enough to take advantage of the futures market, said LeMunyon, who the city may hire as an adviser for its program. **Feldman** used fuel hedging in Palm Bay, where he was city manager before coming to Fort Lauderdale. Palm Bay accumulated almost \$600,000 in savings during the three years the program was in place, said John Cady, the city's fleet services division manager. "By far, the gains outweighed the losses," Cady said. Palm Bay's fleet is about a third of the size of Fort Lauderdale's, **Feldman** said. Fort Lauderdale spent \$4.5 million on fuel in its last budget, while Palm Bay spent \$1.36 million, officials said. Palm Bay only budgeted \$1.1 million for fuel last year, but was more than able to make up the difference with \$312,000 it made from its oil futures, Cady said. Fort Lauderdale would continue to buy its fuel on the spot market under the plan.

However, as prices rise, the value of its oil futures would increase and offset higher fuel prices. If the price falls too far, the city could end up paying more than budgeted for fuel. "That's why you want to have somebody on your team, basically an adviser in the fuel market, telling you now's the time to place your hedge and now's the time not to," **Feldman** said. The goal over time is to have the gains and losses balance out, said LeMunyon, who would be paid \$2,000 a month by the city. "When you buy homeowners insurance, you don't expect to save anything," LeMunyon said. "What you're looking for is a reduction in your risk. If that risk ever happens, your life becomes very bad."

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Examiner (FL)
June 12, 2011

Lee Feldman promises changes as new Fort Lauderdale city manager

On June 13, **Lee Feldman** will take office as the new Fort Lauderdale City Manager. He has promised some changes and may change some job responsibilities. **Feldman** wants to create a more open government with more community involvement. "We need to stop thinking of our citizens as customers and start thinking of them as neighbors," said **Feldman**. **Feldman** will earn a salary of \$199,000 to oversee Fort Lauderdale government's 2,500 employees and a \$611million budget.

Now, Fort Lauderdale faces a difficult budget because the city's property taxes continue to decline.**Feldman** wants to hold property taxes at their current rates and did not know if there would have to be cuts in staff or services. **Feldman** will reorganize city hall to focus on public safety, neighborhood enhancement, business development, infrastructure and public places. The police and fire chief will report directly to him. Under the administration of George Gretsas, an aide watched over the police and fire departments. Many of Gretsas top aides left with him and so **Feldman** can easily create his own top management team. **Feldman** is in the process of selecting a professional staff. **Feldman** wants a more transparent government and wants to put the city's financial information online.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Search**Lee Feldman***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
September 24, 2010

Firefighters' pension loss fuels council races

Author: Dan Garcia

The City Council's 3-2 vote to scale back firefighters' pensions, salaries and other labor benefits has shifted the fight to another arena: the voting booth. And the fight promises to be a doozy. The International Association of Firefighters Local 2446, representing the majority of Palm Bay firefighters, has vowed to unseat two council members who voted to cut back their pensions and benefits. The union is targeting council members Milo Zonka and Kristine Isnardi because they voted to reduce firefighters' pensions. Fire Lt. David Ginsburg, president of Local 2446, said the firefighters union plans to be "a major part of this election." "We've been gutted like a dead fish," Mr. Ginsburg said. "It appears we have enemies on the council. Naturally, we have our reasons for wanting to get Ms. Isnardi and Mr. Zonka not re-elected." The bad blood stems from the city's year-long contract impasse with the firefighters union.

The City Council voted 3-2 on Sept. 15 in favor of pension cutbacks recommended by city manager **Lee Feldman**. The council backed Mr. **Feldman**'s proposed cutbacks in the majority of 24 articles at impasse, including pensions, overtime pay, holiday pay, health benefits and numerous other economic issues. Firefighters who packed the council chambers vowed to get even in the Nov. 2 election. "You'll regret this," one fireman shouted after the vote. "See you in November," another one yelled. Local 2446 has endorsed candidates Ben Kiszkiel for Seat 4 against Ms. Isnardi and Ken Greene for Seat 5 against Mr. Zonka. Mr. Kiszkiel is a former president of the firefighters union and is retired on medical disability, although he still teaches at the fire academy. Mr. Greene, a former councilman, vowed to overturn the council's ruling on firefighters' pensions if elected to a four-year term. Ms. Isnardi, Mr. Zonka and Mayor John Mazziotti, who is not up for re-election, led the 3-2 vote to reduce the firefighters' pensions. Council members Michele Paccione and William Capote, who are not up for re-election, voted to retain the pension benefits.

Mr. Ginsburg said the highest-paid paramedics lost \$260 in biweekly bonus pay, "not per month or per year, but per paycheck." "They could go to Domino's Pizza and deliver," for similar wages, Mr. Ginsburg said. However, Mr. Kiszkiel said paramedics did not technically lose the extra \$260 per month. He said paramedics instead will receive a lump sum each November capped at \$5,000, but the lump sum will not accrue pension benefits as the biweekly \$260 bonus did. Melbourne attorney Andrew S. Hament, pension attorney Jim Linn and Mr. **Feldman** told the council that firefighters' pensions and assorted perks threaten the city's fiscal stability. Mr. Hament pointed out that while the city has slashed more than 100 jobs since 2007, canceled raises and imposed a hiring freeze, firefighters cost the city \$24,000 per holiday in overtime pay. He said firefighters earn double-time and a half in "emergency pay" and can get 12 hours of overtime holiday pay if they work one hour, and also receive eight hours of overtime holiday pay even if they don't work. "It defies logic to count hours not worked toward overtime," Mr. Hament said. Of emergency pay at double-time and a half - paid when firefighters work during a

Internet – Newspaper Archives Search**Lee Feldman***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

crisis, such as a hurricane - Mr. Hamant said: "It doesn't make sense to pay firefighters overtime for hazardous work. That's their job." The overtime system also allows higher-ranking officers to substitute for lower-paid employees, while collecting overtime pay at a higher wage level.

Mr. **Feldman** said the city has paid firefighters \$642,000 in overtime this year, compared to \$360,000 for police and \$2,400 for public works. Mr. Ginsburg, 58, cited his own projected pension as an example of unfairness, saying he will earn just \$74,000 in annual pension and supplemental pay instead of \$80,000 if the union had not made concessions. "We gave up good benefits for these pensions," Mr. Ginsburg said of union give-backs in step pay, longevity pay, holidays and health costs. Mr. Linn said Mr. Ginsburg's pension plan is an example of skyrocketing pension costs. "His pension is more than his current salary," Mr. Linn said. "This is an example of why the pension program is not sustainable." Mr. Linn cited other examples, including a current fire lieutenant earning \$75,540, who would receive an \$86,580 annual pension after 27 years of service. Last year, a dozen Palm Bay firefighters earned more than \$100,000 in salary. The city's proposal calls for a hybrid pension plan that combines the current system with a 401(k) plan which would lower payouts from \$2 million this year to \$1.5 by 2014. Under the previous contract, the city would shell out \$3.2 million by 2014.

Mayor Mazziotti, Ms. Isnardi and Mr. Zonka said it was extremely difficult to reduce firefighters' compensation. "I was one of those who gave them those pensions, I was on council then," Mayor Mazziotti said. "But that was a different time. That's why we have negotiations." Mr. Kiszkiel and Mr. Greene said they are not running just on behalf of the firefighters. They faulted the City Council for borrowing \$2.6 million to buy garbage and recycling carts instead of letting Waste Management pay for them. "I would have allowed Waste Management to keep control, and the city gets the cans for free," Mr. Kiszkiel said. "The city wants to get control of the cans and the billing so they can raise the fees." Mr. Greene called the Waste Management issue "terribly flawed." Ms. Isnardi said: "We could have let Waste Management buy the carts, but at a higher cost to our residents." Mr. Zonka said because Palm Bay has a better credit rating than Waste Management, the city's borrowing costs are lower than those of Waste Management, which would have passed its higher costs on to residents. "We're running against two single-issue candidates," Mr. Zonka said. "Where is their vision for the rest of the citizens of Palm Bay?"

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
April 23, 2010

City officials are seeing 'green'

Author: Tony Judnich

The city's new, far-reaching sustainability master plan aims to make city departments, private businesses and residences more energy-efficient. The plan includes numerous ways of helping the city reach its goal of "sustainable growth." "In its classical definition, sustainability means "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,"" officials said in a summary of the plan. Last fall, the U.S. Department of Energy awarded Palm Bay with a \$904,000 grant to help the city in its sustainability efforts. Since then, city officials have earmarked almost \$198,000 from the grant to pay Shaw Environmental and Infrastructure Group - which has an office in Melbourne - for various energy consultant services. The firm's work thus far has included assisting the city in developing the sustainability master plan, which the City Council adopted on April 1. The plan includes 34 proposed activities, or projects, that aim to benefit the environment and save money in the long run.

"The plan will likely be updated as the (city) staff makes progress on several elements in the plan" using the remaining grant money, city manager **Lee Feldman** said in a memo to the council. "Based on activities in the plan, council will have the opportunity to consider subsequent capital investments and policy changes relating to sustainability concepts." The plan calls for Shaw Environmental and Infrastructure Group to develop incentive-based, green-oriented development standards, conduct a community-wide greenhouse gas emissions inventory and perform energy audits at seven municipal facilities, including the City Hall complex. The audits could lead to "retrofits," such as replacing lighting fixtures and upgrading heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems. The master plan also suggests providing \$230,000 in loans to city residents and \$300,000 in loans to businesses for making energy efficiency improvements to their properties. Such improvements could include the use of solar water heaters, efficient lighting fixtures, programmable thermostats and ENERGY STAR appliances, according to the master plan.

Other proposed projects in the plan include: -Using solar-powered water heaters in the city's fire stations -Installing high-reflectivity roofing materials on city buildings -Installing wind turbines and solar panels on various city properties -Replacing some gasoline-powered city vehicles with more fuel-efficient ones -Working with Space Coast Area Transit to develop a local transit circulator system in Palm Bay that would feed into existing regional bus routes -Building more sidewalks and bicycle paths -Implementing a program to recycle electronic equipment such as computers, printers and phones

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
August 21, 2009

High crime border area targeted by police

Author: Tony Judnich

The police departments of Palm Bay and Melbourne plan on teaming up to help reduce violent crime and drug violations in an area that borders the two cities. A proposed interlocal, mutual-aid agreement between the cities would allow officers from both departments to patrol and make arrests for traffic and criminal violations in the so-called "joint enforcement zone." The zone is bordered on the north by Crane Creek in Melbourne, to the west by Dairy Road in Melbourne, to the south by Palm Bay Road Northeast and to the east by the Indian River Lagoon in Melbourne and Palm Bay. "The primary source of a lot of the crime there is drug use," said Marc Claycomb, acting commander of the Melbourne Police Department. While community leaders often have asked police to help reduce crime in this area, Cmdr. Claycomb said some residents who live there do not feel comfortable in providing police with tips on criminal suspects. Officials said the proposed agreement aims to end a long-standing jurisdictional problem that criminals have used to evade police. The agreement would allow police to "actively patrol problem areas, conduct traffic stops, stop suspicious people and do field interviews without involving the other agency," Cmdr. Claycomb said.

"Right now, if I see you run a stop sign (outside my jurisdiction), I can't stop you. Under the agreement, I could make that traffic stop," he said. "It will allow us to patrol over that (border) line. The line will basically disappear, so we can be not just reactive, but proactive." According to the agreement, "For more than two decades, narcotics and violent persons crimes have been specifically identified" in the border area. "Command, investigative and uniform staff of both (police departments) have statistical evidence of an unusually high rate of victimization of violent crime, to include the use of firearms and homicides of juveniles and young adults." The state attorney's office is willing to support prosecutions of arrests made under the proposed agreement, Palm Bay city manager **Lee Feldman** said in an Aug. 6 memo to the Palm Bay City Council.

The agreement does have limitations. For example, it "does not allow for independent investigations or special details into the other agency's jurisdiction without joint operational pre-planning," Mr. **Feldman** said. The Palm Bay City Council gave initial approval of the agreement Aug. 6, and the Melbourne City Council could consider it at its Aug. 25 meeting. If approved, the agreement would stay in effect for a trial period of 180 days, or six months. It could later be extended or made permanent, Cmdr. Claycomb said.

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Lee Feldman
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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
July 18, 2008

City manager chosen for FEMA board

Author: Tony Judnich

Lee Feldman is no stranger to the workings of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. About two years after becoming Palm Bay's city manager in October 2002, Mr. **Feldman** was called upon to help direct the city's recovery efforts after being hit by hurricanes Frances and Jeanne. "I think we received more than \$3 million in federal assistance," he said about the city's recovery from those storms. Now, Mr. **Feldman** will serve as one of 33 members of FEMA's National Advisory Council. He recently was appointed to a three-year term on the council, which assists in all aspects of preparedness and emergency management. "The board is set up to advise the (FEMA) administrator on policy issues regarding the administration of FEMA," Mr. **Feldman** said.

The agency's administrator appoints the members to the council, which was formed under the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006. "(Council) members contribute their wide range of knowledge and expertise to helping make their neighbors, communities and our entire nation stronger and better prepared to respond to any disaster," FEMA administrator David Paulison said in a news release. On the council, Mr. **Feldman** said he is in a position to represent non-elected public government officials. The council also includes mayors, state emergency officials and legislators, he said. "It's a wide range of people to comment on topics," Mr. **Feldman** said. Palm Bay was not eligible to receive federal money for the damage caused by last May's brush fires because the affected area was not declared a federal disaster area, he said.

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Lee Feldman
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Vero Beach Press Journal (FL)
August 26, 2007

State concerned by Palm Bay's growth plans

Author: LAMAUR STANCIL

State officials are echoing the concerns of Micco residents who said Palm Bay's growth plans along Micco Road don't take into consideration endangered lands in the community. Last year, the city annexed 1,500 acres on the south side of Micco Road, just west of Barefoot Bay. There's a handful of homes and many empty acres on the road between Barefoot Bay and Babcock Street, but the city's plans could place subdivisions there in several years. The city submitted comprehensive land-use plan amendments for the property to the state's Department of Community Affairs. In its first review, state officials said Palm Bay's residential plans would put too many new homes near the St. Sebastian Buffer Preserve State Park to the south and various preserve land owned by Brevard County to the north. "They basically advised Palm Bay not to adopt any of these amendments, not just the ones for Micco Road," said Micco resident Vicki Benoit, who has lobbied against Palm Bay's growth efforts through her grass-roots group, Concerned Citizens of the South Mainland.

Overall, Palm Bay submitted 21 amendments involving various parts of the city. Many of the amendments, including those on Micco Road, increase residential density. City Manager **Lee Feldman** said the city will need to show their plans are aware of the endangered lands near Micco Road. "We've always said we will not harm the surrounding area," **Feldman** said. "The density for the area will be less dense than the maximum level and will be concentrated near the interchange." City leaders will decide Tuesday how the city will respond to the state's objections and recommendations, which were issued in late June. From there, the state will spend six weeks evaluating Palm Bay's response. Palm Bay's plans must meet the approval of the state. The land along Micco Road is zoned at one unit per 2.5 acres. **Feldman** said the city's comprehensive land-use plan changes would allow up to three units per acre.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
December 8, 2006

Palm Bay to sue actuary of police, fire pension board

Author: Jennifer Stahl

The Palm Bay City Council voted 4-0 last week to begin litigation proceedings against the actuary retained to oversee the city's police and fire pension. Councilwoman Donna Brooks was absent from the meeting. The city maintains that the actuary firm, Public Pension Professionals Inc., retained by the police and fire pension board, which is responsible for hiring its own actuary, made errors in its calculations of benefits. Palm Bay city manager **Lee Feldman** said the firm was supposed to maintain a \$3 million errors and omissions insurance policy on the pension. Also, members of the police and fire pension board were supposed to obtain a certificate of insurance as evidence of the policy. They did not, and as it turns out, Public Pension Professionals Inc. allowed the policy to lapse. "Subsequently, in October, the actuary wrote a letter to the pension board informing them that (the firm) made some errors totaling more than \$650,000, which the actuary says the city should be responsible for," Mr. **Feldman** said. In fact, the actuary made two errors in its calculations of benefits, Mr. **Feldman** said. The first was a miscalculation of the administrative cost of maintaining the pension. Instead of adding the amount to the benefit contribution - more than \$650,000 - the firm subtracted it. "It was sort of like making a mistake in a checkbook," Mr. **Feldman** said. The second error occurred when the firm miscalculated the supplemental pension benefit, which the city agreed to with the pension board during the last negotiating session. Eligible employees are supposed to receive \$25 for each year of service per month to supplement healthcare costs. However, instead of figuring the cost at \$25 for each year of service per month, the actuary figured it at only \$25 a month. For example, employees with 10 years of service are entitled to \$250 per month. The actuary figured the benefit at \$250 per year. The deficit is approximately \$236,000 a year for the next 30 years, which the actuary maintains is the city's responsibility. "Under Florida law, the city has the responsibility of making the plan actuarially sound," Mr. **Feldman** said. "These errors make the plan actuarially unsound.

"Now normally, when the actuary makes a mistake, we say, 'You have errors and omissions insurance. Pony up,'" Mr. **Feldman** said. "But the pension board never got the certificate of insurance, Public Pension Professionals let (the policy) lapse and now they have no insurance coverage." The pension board has its own \$1 million insurance policy; however, that amount is not enough to cover the total loss, and in fact, the total loss amount is still unknown, Mr. **Feldman** said. "At this point we don't know what the cost is because we don't have any reliable information," he said. City officials recently met with the pension board to discuss options. "We met with the union, explained where we were, and they agreed no fault lies with the city or themselves," Mr. **Feldman** said. "They've agreed to suspend the benefit for 90-100 days for us to get our own actuary on board to get real numbers so we can be confident we're moving to the right point."

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Lee Feldman

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The city has said it will sue Public Pension Professionals, and it will hire Jacksonville-based Actuarial Concepts to represent its interests. Once the firm is able to provide the city with accurate figures, officials will again meet with pension board members to decide what to do about the benefit, Mr. **Feldman** said. "Once we know what the numbers are, we have to look at renegotiating the benefit, which can be anything from taking it away, fully funding it or somewhere in between," he said. The error affects 165 sworn police officers. Members of the pension board did not immediately return calls for comment.

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Lee Feldman
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Hometown News (Fort Pierce, FL)
December 1, 2006

Florida League of Cities names Lee Feldman city manager of the year

Author: Jennifer Stahl

The Florida League of Cities recently chose Palm Bay city manager **Lee Feldman** as its city manager of the year. "This is truly an honor," Mr. **Feldman** said. "I am fortunate to lead a team of dedicated professionals committed to making a difference in the community they serve." City officials founded the Florida League of Cities in 1922. Each year, the league recognizes city leaders for their judgment, initiative, integrity, innovation, professionalism, commitment to community and involvement in professional associations. Rene Flowers, president of the Florida League of Cities, offered her congratulations to Mr. **Feldman**. "(Mr. **Feldman**) deserves to be commended for his accomplishments," Ms. Flowers said. "These winners exemplify the honor, valor and integrity of true public service." Mr. **Feldman** was hired as Palm Bay's city manager in October 2002. Formerly, he acted as North Miami's city manager.

Mr. **Feldman** has spearheaded several initiatives during his tenure as Palm Bay city manager, such as the development of a strategic plan, which is incorporated in the budget message, annual report, state of the city address, Web site and staff meetings. Mr. **Feldman** also instituted the city's performance management system, called Palm Stat, in which departments report to senior staff and department heads monthly on progress, challenges and other issues. The program has improved accountability and inspired departments to work together on the city's more challenging problems. Mr. **Feldman** also led the development of the city's first municipally run charter school, Palm Bay Community Charter School-Patriot Campus.

The school opened last August with an enrollment of approximately 800 students. The Patriot Campus is managed by Fort Lauderdale-based Charter Schools USA, and policy is set by the city's Municipal Charter School Authority. Mr. **Feldman** serves as the president of the Florida City and County Management Association, and is a member of the International City/County Management Association delegation, which is assisting India with its tsunami recovery. Under Mr. **Feldman**'s leadership, Palm Bay is developing a small business incubator, a program designed to assist small business owners with a weekly seminar series on business-related topics. Mr. **Feldman** is also credited with strengthening the relationship between city government and the residents. He meets quarterly with homeowners' association presidents and personally meets with residents to discuss issues of concern. Mr. **Feldman** also launched the annual resident survey, which is used to track trends and shape city policy. Palm Bay Mayor John Mazziotti said Mr. **Feldman**'s work and dedication to Palm Bay are exemplary. "I can't think of anyone more deserving of this award," Mr. Mazziotti said. "He is dedicated to this city and it shows."

Deputy Mayor Ed Geier agreed. "This is another example of the progress we have made," he said. "**Lee** has not only raised the level of professionalism within the city, but has developed cooperation with other cities across the state and the rest of the country." Mr. **Feldman** graduated from Lexington, Va.-based Washington and Lee University, and earned a master's

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Lee Feldman

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degree in governmental administration from the Fels Center of Government at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He also completed coursework in the Senior Executive in State and Local Government program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in Cambridge, Mass. Additionally, Mr. **Feldman** is an ICMA credentialed city manager.

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Lee Feldman
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Stuart News, The (FL)
July 25, 2004

Growing pains felt as far north as Palm Bay

Author: Lamaur Stancil

More fresh doormats are being laid out in Palm Bay each month. "We have folks coming here for a variety of reasons," City Manager **Lee Feldman** said. "We have good schools and good services. The area is well laid out and not congested." Palm Bay, with a population of 88,256 and counting, is filling up with new homes. Developers are seeking annexation into the city to add more. But some residents of south Brevard County express growing concerns that Palm Bay's growth is detrimental to the area. "People are thinking differently about Palm Bay," said former City Councilwoman Fran Wales, who has lived in the city for 16 years. "The newer homes show that it's no longer just a working man's community." **Feldman** credited manufacturing, retail and defense-related government jobs for providing an economic environment that led to the rise in home building. School officials said south Brevard is in need of new schools because of the growth in Palm Bay. Children from Micco and Grant are bused to schools in Palm Bay. The School Board wants to open an \$8 million unnamed elementary, referred to as School "S," in August 2006. The school would alleviate crowding at Westside Elementary School. One of the proposed sites for the school off Babcock could be donated by the Bayside Lakes Development Corp. The developers and the School Board are waiting for the state to approve the city's request to annex the land.

Way through Palm Bay

The population increase should lead to new and expanded roads for Palm Bay in the next decade, **Feldman** said. The county's Metropolitan Planning Organization is considering a major north-south thoroughfare that would start at State Road 192 west of Interstate 95, extend south on the west side of the city and loop to the east to connect to the Bayside Lakes area. The road, proposed as the Palm Bay Parkway, could be part of a new Interstate 95 interchange. Residents south of Palm Bay are concerned the city's growth could adversely affect Babcock Street. The road is two lanes south of Malabar Road. Grant resident Lisette Kolar said she avoids Babcock because it's often crowded. "It's equidistant for me to do my grocery shopping in Palm Bay or Barefoot Bay," she said. "I'd rather take U.S. 1 down to the Winn-Dixie in Barefoot Bay because of all the dump trucks on Babcock." Kolar estimates the addition of a subdivision proposed by developers would add more than 17,000 vehicles on Babcock between Micco Road and Palm Bay city limits. The increased traffic would require more lanes, she said.

Adding to the landscape

In its growth spurt, the city has pursued a handful of voluntary annexations, with some igniting concerns from county residents fearing urbanization. "It would be different if we were grabbing up property in an empirical manner, but we're not," **Feldman** said. "People have the idea that we want to incorporate Grant and Valkaria, but there's no plans for that." The city's annexations are

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Lee Feldman

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to provide services to property owners who want them, **Feldman** said. The city is facing objections for a 1,700-acre annexation it has applied for. The acreage straddles I-95 south of Palm Bay, just west of Grant. "It's troubling because there's no details on it," said Mel Scott, former director of the county's Planning and Zoning Office. The South Mainland Long Range Planning Committee, which includes residents from south Brevard, organized a letter-writing campaign to the state Department of Community Affairs, asking officials to turn down the request. "Our contention has been that Palm Bay hasn't been able to take care of what it has now," Micco resident Mike Cunningham said. "There's derelict places along U.S. 1 you wouldn't want to write home to your mother about."

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Lee Feldman
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The Miami Herald
September 8, 2002

N. MIAMI'S MANAGER TO TAKE SAME JOB IN BREVARD

Author: NICHOLAS SPANGLER

Every budget **Lee Feldman** has prepared since he took the job of North Miami city manager has come with an epigraph, a few lines of wisdom taken from one of the great poets or thinkers that precedes the 300 or 400 pages of spreadsheets that paint the city's fiscal welfare in excruciating detail. In 1996, when **Feldman** took the helm after a seven-year tenure as deputy city manager, the epigraph was courtesy of baseball great Casey Stengel: "A nickel ain't worth a dime anymore." **Feldman** won't include an epigraph in this year's budget. He said Wednesday he will resign in early October to take the city manager's job in Palm Bay. Council members for the Brevard County city of 84,000 selected him in a unanimous vote Tuesday night from a pool of 90 candidates. "People come home now and they stay inside," he said. "They don't talk to their neighbors. You don't see them watching the kids play football out in the streets anymore. There's no time for it, the way people live now." Palm Bay is different, he said. "There's a different lifestyle up there, one that I want to bring my family to. There's a kind of optimism up there. I want my kids to grow up in a place that is more conducive to growing up than southern Florida."

Council members in Palm Bay, a city that began as a retirement community in the 1970s and has been growing rapidly ever since, said they were glad to get him. "One of our biggest struggles is to balance commercial with residential development," said Councilman Tres Holton. "The residential is growing every year and we just spent millions to expand our water and sewer infrastructure. We need to bring in more businesses and we're hoping that a man of **Lee Feldman's** stature and credentials can help us with that." **Feldman** was one of the top candidates all through the selection process, Holton said, but he seemed tense during the final interview stage. "My first impression was that he was very intellectual, very focused, kind of reserved," he said. "It was hard to say how to react to him. Then toward the end of the interview he made a joke. It just opened things up, to see the lighter side of him." **Feldman** never had a contract at North Miami, a rarity in a profession where job security is a misnomer and managers serve at the whim of sometimes capricious councils. It is all the more remarkable if one recognizes the changes the city has undergone in the past decade. The city has grown from 50,000 to 60,000, in large part because of an influx of Caribbean immigrants; and blacks, who used to make up 32 percent of the city's population, now account for more than half.

When **Feldman** took office as manager, there were no black department heads and the first black councilman in the city's history, Arthur "Duke" Sorey, had just been elected. Today, the city has the first Haitian-American mayor in the nation and on Oct. 1, voters in District 4 will elect a councilman from a field of two African-Americans and a Haitian-American to join the mayor and another Haitian-American on the council. The city staff looks different as well. Five of **Feldman's** top deputies are black; the city now has its first black deputy city manager in Anita Taylor and its first black police chief in Gwendolyn Boyd-Savage.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald
August 1, 2002

CITY MANAGER IS ACCUSED OF DISCRIMINATION
Author: NICHOLAS SPANGLER

A former assistant chief of police has filed a discrimination complaint against the city. Arthur Washington, who served as assistant chief in the North Miami Police Department from late 1998 through April of this year, when he resigned, said he was the victim of racial discrimination by City Manager **Lee Feldman**, and that **Feldman** retaliated against him when he complained. Washington is black, and **Feldman** is white. Washington filed a formal charge of discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in May, a prerequisite to filing a claim in federal court. He has hired an attorney and said he wants the city to pay him a severance package of a year's salary with benefits, worth around \$83,000. The discrimination began almost immediately after he was hired, Washington said, when he was assigned an office that was isolated from the rest of the top officers. In his EEOC charge, Washington says that "**Lee Feldman** would undermine my command by communicating directly with my subordinate personnel rather than speaking to me about critical matters." He also says **Feldman** prevented him from serving as acting chief when then-Chief Tom Hood left town, favoring instead a "white colleague, Assistant Chief Steven Stepp;" and that when he filed a complaint with the city on Feb. 21, 2000, **Feldman** retaliated by taking his city-issued police car for himself.

But Jenna Rassif, an attorney for Muller, Mintz - the firm that handles labor and employment issues for the city - said last week that Washington's charges were "flat wrong." "The city did not discriminate at all and that is the position we've taken," Rassif said. "I think the fact that a black police chief was taken as the candidate most qualified shows that the city did not discriminate." Gwendolyn Boyd-Savage, a black woman with experience as a chief in Miramar and Prichard, Ala., was hired as chief in January. Washington's attorney, Jose Arroyo, said that proves nothing: "Before and after the current chief was hired, the authority was the city manager. The complaints are against him [**Feldman**]. And while the city may be able to say it doesn't discriminate against African Americans, it's in a much more difficult position to explain what happened to the chief during his tenure there. The manager was a white male, the chief of police was a white male and the other assistant chief of police was a white male." Washington also was a chief for three years in Florida City.

Rassif countered that Washington had more lieutenants and sergeants under his command than Stepp did, and that Washington chose his own office, which was next to then-Chief Hood's. Furthermore, she said, Washington's car was only taken away for a few hours while **Feldman's** was serviced at the city motor pool. The EEOC investigates every discrimination claim. If it finds sufficient cause, the commission attempts mediation; if mediation fails, it issues the complainant a right to sue letter. The entire process, now underway in Washington's case, usually takes three to six months.

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Lee Feldman
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Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 19, 1999

CITIES PASS HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS TEST A FEW GAFFES WILL BE FIXED FOR NEXT TIME

Author: IVONNE PEREZ and ROXANA A. SOTO

When the fierce winds of Hurricane Floyd missed South Florida last week, Northeast Dade communities dubbed the massive preparation for the storm-that-wasn't a good hurricane drill for the region. Floyd may have passed us by, they said, but the neighborhoods would have been ready if the hurricane had hit. "We were very prepared," said North Miami City Manager **Lee Feldman**. "These experiences are always good learning experiences," said Aventura City Manager Eric Soroka. "I don't think it was for nothing. This kind of thing helps make sure you're fully prepared. One little turn and it could've been us." In North Miami Beach, the drill helped the city figure out how to make two new city buildings secure. One was the Public Services Administration building. The other one was the Marjorie and William McDonald Center and the Ronald A. Silver Youth Enrichment Services Center. "We found out which shutters wouldn't fit quite right. It was a challenge getting them up quickly," said Assistant City Manager Keven Klopp. "Next time, it'll go smoother. Other than that, we were very prepared."

Although by 5 p.m. Tuesday Floyd was no longer a threat to Miami-Dade County, Miami Shores Police Chief Richard Masten said all the preparations were worth it. "Better safe than sorry," he said. "Prior to Hurricane Andrew, there were a lot of people who were complacent. That was the big lesson. We all learned a lot. The images of Andrew are hard to ignore." The city of North Miami closed all its facilities at 6 p.m. Monday and set up an Emergency Operation Center at City Hall on Tuesday to take calls from residents. Later in the week, North Miami officials identified a few loopholes in its hurricane plan. "We are going to have a supply of signs to say the parks are closed," **Feldman** said. "People decided to use the parks, even though they were chained and locked. We will do a better job of noting the parks as closed." The city also plans to buy a freezer to store both perishable and nonperishable food that is brought in to feed city workers. "The idea is if a storm does hit, we can run crews 24 hours a day," **Feldman** said. "We need to feed them." In the Shores, City Manager Tom Benton said a shortage of food for city workers had been a problem during past storms, but this year they were covered.

The police department is the center for the village's operation. "I really think we are getting the routine down," Masten said. "All the hurricane preparations went smoothly for us." Getting updated information out to the public was done through TV, radio and newspapers. The Haitian community in Little Haiti, North Miami and elsewhere was able to get Floyd tips and updated storm news in Creole by listening to WLQY 1320 AM radio. The station devoted all its air time to storm coverage. By 11 a.m. Tuesday, however, the station had to move its Biscayne Boulevard and Northeast 116th Street studio and broadcast from Radio Collective International offices on Northwest Seventh Avenue. In North Miami Beach, the tiny Highland Village trailer park was the only area under a mandatory evacuation order. Two area schools served as evacuation shelters. Both Highland Oaks Middle and Dr. Michael Krop Senior High opened their doors at 6

Internet – Newspaper Archives Search**Lee Feldman***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

p.m. Monday. ``We have nowhere else to go, so we went to a shelter," said Leonard Geller, 77, an Aventura resident who spent Monday night at the special needs shelter at Highland Oaks. Geller and his wife, Toby, decided to evacuate - even though they weren't under mandatory evacuation - because she has special medical needs and they live in a high-rise condominium. ``We went early and the people at the shelter did a magnificent job," Leonard Geller said.

Almost 200 people took shelter at Highland Oaks. Another 860 went to Krop. Most of those using the shelters came from Sunny Isles Beach and Miami Beach - areas under a mandatory evacuation order. Aventura and North Miami Beach began preparing for the possibility of getting hit by the hurricane early on by securing their buildings, parks and pools. In Aventura, the Florida Department of Transportation picked up all the barricades in the construction area along Biscayne Boulevard and Ives Dairy Road. City officials kept in touch with condominium presidents by using a fax machine to send Floyd updates. North Miami Beach's police department, home of one of the county's six divisional emergency operation centers, kept busy communicating with smaller municipalities like Golden Beach and Sunny Isles. No problems with shelters or transportation were reported. ``Everything went according to plan, other than the storm coming," said North Miami Beach Police Chief William Berger. ``I'd rather go through this a million times than ever have to deal with the devastation of a hurricane."

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 20, 1998

BUDGET COULD GIVE N. MIAMI TAXPAYERS MORE FOR LESS

Author: IVONNE PEREZ

The average homeowner in North Miami could pay about \$7 less in taxes this year -- while keeping all programs and adding a few new ones if the council approves the proposed budget on Wednesday. The \$82.8 million budget, which was prepared by the city manager and his staff, was changed a bit at the first budget hearing earlier this month. The council decided to lower the tax rate to \$7.83 per \$1,000 of assessed property value instead of keeping the proposed \$8 per \$1,000. "We lowered the millage rate," said Mayor Howard Premer. "To me that is significant." The council will vote on the budget at a hearing at 5 p.m. Wednesday at City Hall, 776 NE 125th St. The regular council meeting will be at 7 p.m., following the hearing. Residents are still paying back an \$11.2 million bond issue from 1992, which funded the construction of the new police building and re-funded a 1970 bond used to buy the Interama property. Homeowners pay an additional \$1.17 in property taxes, bringing the total rate to \$9 per \$1,000 of assessed value, said City Manager **Lee Feldman**. That means a homeowner with an assessed value of \$90,000, taking the standard \$25,000 homestead exemption, will owe \$585 in city taxes. The same homeowner paid about \$592 last year.

The council added a few new projects to the budget, including \$20,000 to replace trees along 125th Street's downtown area. The Breezeswept Tot-Lot at 12501 NE Second Ave. is getting new playground equipment for \$17,700 and new pavers will be installed at the Gwen Margolis Community Center, 1590 NE 123rd St., for \$6,800. Other projects planned include improvements to the boardwalk at Bayshore Park, construction of a water playground at Sasso Pool and installing a water slide and renovating the building at Gribble Pool. Police will get 58 laptop computers for \$306,000, residents will have access to the Internet at the library and an Interama Bike Path will be built for \$1.2 million. The path will start at 135th Street and Biscayne Boulevard and lead to Oleta State Park, Florida International University and the Interama property. Money for that project is coming for the city, the state and the federal government.

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Lee Feldman
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Miami Herald, The (FL)
May 1, 1997

STORES GET SHOPPING CARTS BACK -- BUT NOT AT A BARGAIN PRICE
Author: ALESSANDRA SOLER

North Miami store owners who can't keep up with shopping cart bandits are paying hefty fines to get their stolen buggies back, thanks to a citywide plan to keep the ``abandoned nuisances" off the streets. And the merchants are not thrilled -- to say the least -- about the new rule. ``We're being penalized for customers who steal shopping carts off our own property," said Bill Thornton, manager of the Hyde Park at 880 NE 125th St. The city recently sent out a memo ordering all employees to report abandoned shopping carts to sanitation department workers, who would then pick up the carts and store them at the North Miami Motor Pool. Sanitation superintendent Donald Smathers said workers bring in about 20 carts a day -- at times up to 80 on a given day. ``It was getting to be a real problem for the city," he said. ``I mean, you would see them everywhere. Hopefully, store owners are going to be more cautious about tracking down the carts themselves." After picking up the shopping carts, owners are notified -- by phone and a follow-up letter -- to reclaim the stolen carts within 10 working days. The catch: They've got to pay \$10 a piece to get them back.

Last week, Thornton had to pay \$90 for his carts, which cost about \$125 each. ``It's absurd," he added. ``It's not going to deter people from taking the shopping carts. The only thing that will is if they get arrested." Patrick Murphy, the store manager at Publix at 12855 NE Sixth Ave., said even though his employees try to prevent customers from leaving the store with carts, he is missing nearly half of his 200 shopping carts, 50 of which the city has at the motor pool. On weekends, we're running out of shopping carts and it's just not right," Murphy said. ``I could understand if I wasn't being responsible, but I have a lot crew out in the parking lot every day." He added: ``What are they going to start doing, charging you to recover your car after it has been stolen? I mean, what are the boundaries, what if it's right across the street, are they going to take those, too?" The fee, according to the memo, covers storage and handling costs. ``If the stores aren't going to pick them up off of the public-right-of-ways, then they're going to have to compensate the city for our time and effort," said City Manager **Lee Feldman**. ``I think there are things they can do to prevent the carts from being stolen."

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Lee Feldman
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Miami Herald, The (FL)
February 18, 1996

PAY RAISE OKD FOR NEW NORTH MIAMI CITY MANAGER

Author: CHERIE HENDERSON

North Miami's incoming city manager, **Lee Feldman**, will get a nice pay raise -- more than \$30,000 -- when he takes over the job in May under a deal approved by the City Council last week. **Feldman**, 33, now earns \$67,000 as the city's deputy city manager. He replaces Larry Casey, 63, who is retiring at the end of April after 24 years as city manager. Casey, who now makes \$108,784, helped negotiate **Feldman's** salary, along with Councilman Anthony D. Caserta and City Clerk Simon Bloom. The City Council approved the salary package Tuesday night. Bloom told the council that the negotiating team based its work on the city's pay scale, as well as salaries for other area city managers. North Miami Beach, which has 35,000 residents, pays a base annual wage of \$100,000 to its chief of staff, Mike Roberto. In Coral Gables, with a population of 43,000, City Manager Jack Eads earns \$113,000. Both took their posts in 1988.

Also Tuesday, City Attorney John Dellagloria announced new, lower fees for the lawyer tracking down the cities and companies that dumped garbage at the Munisport landfill in the 1970s. North Miami sued last year, seeking help in paying for the multimillion cleanup of the site, which is east of Biscayne Boulevard between 137th and 151st streets. The city had agreed to pay two lawyers -- Richard Hopen of Plantation and Gregg Schwartz of Miami -- \$100 per hour, plus one-third of any money they collected. "When I first reviewed the agreement, I didn't believe the amount being paid was equitable, based on the large potential for recovery," Dellagloria said. Under the new agreement, only Hopen will continue working the case. He will still receive \$100 per hour, but that amount will count toward his contingency fees. The percentage for the contingency fee was also cut for most of the defendants, some to 15 percent and others to 25 percent. So far, the city has collected \$160,600 from 33 defendants.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
May 30, 1993

STORM WATER UTILITY FEES APPROVED

Author: OLYMPIA DUHART

Starting next month, residents of North Miami will pay an extra storm water utility fee to help keep drains open throughout the city. The new bill will add \$2.50 a month on water bills for single-family homes. However, commercial buildings such as grocery stores can expect to pay thousands of dollars a year under the new fee. The rate structure was approved by the North Miami City Council Tuesday night as part of an agreement between the city and Metro-Dade County storm water utility. "Just as a formality, we needed to adopt this resolution to keep our residents at the same rate as people who live in unincorporated Dade," said **Lee Feldman**, deputy city manager for North Miami. "Our city opted to remain in the Dade County storm water utility, we're one of several cities that decided to do that." The storm water utility fee, which goes into effect Tuesday, will generate about \$719,000 annually. The money will be used to keep the drains clean, pay for employees, buy equipment and sweep the streets to keep the drains from clogging, **Feldman** said. Lead, petroleum and other contaminants have been found in storm water runoff, which drains into canals and other bodies of water. Those pollutants affect water quality. "Cities around the country have to make sure that the storm water -- before it runs off into public bodies of water -- has minimum pollutants," **Feldman** said.

The storm water utility fee was passed countywide by the Metro Commission two years ago in response to a federal mandate that set stricter guidelines for storm water control. The state passed a law allowing local municipalities to create a fee so they could comply with the federal law. Metro- Dade customers have been billed since October 1991. Municipalities had a choice of joining with the county or forming their own storm water utility. Hialeah and Miami Shores, among others, opted to join the county. Last December, the North Miami City Council passed a resolution approving the interlocal agreement between the city and the Metro-Dade storm water utility. Hardest hit by the new fee will be owners of commercial properties.

Also Tuesday, the council:

- * Approved a request from Police Chief Kenneth Each to purchase \$23,400 in equipment -- including police jackets, unmarked vehicles and hand-held radios -- from the law enforcement trust fund.
- * Awarded a bid to Tropics North Inc. for \$166,706 to replace trees damaged by Hurricane Andrew.
- * Passed an emergency ordinance amending the city code to comply with revisions made to the South Florida Building Code.

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Lee Feldman
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Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 12, 1992

N. MIAMI TAKES TRASH OUT -- OF DADE

Author: HAROLD MAASS

North Miami hopes to help its taxpayers by exporting their garbage -- to Broward. The Broward County incinerator is closer than Dade's, and Broward promises to keep its disposal price as low or lower than Metro-Dade's. Those factors add up to savings of \$90,000 for North Miami in the first year. "The beauty of this is that we would have a fixed amount to pay that we could budget for each year," City Manager Larry Casey said. In a memo to the City Council, Deputy Manager **Lee Feldman** detailed several advantages offered by the shift, which could start in late July or early August.

The round trip between North Miami and the Broward County facility is 25 miles, while the drive to and from Dade's resource recovery center is 40 miles. Some of the savings each year would come from reduced wear and tear on city trucks and decreased labor necessary to transport trash. Broward also committed to a rate for the next five years, making it easier for North Miami budget analysts to know what costs to expect each year. Broward also promised never to charge more than Dade, although its rate would increase from \$45 per ton in the first year to \$53. Dade now charges \$45 a ton but plans a \$10 increase next year, **Feldman** wrote. A final advantage would be directly visible to residents. Dade requires that yard trash and household garbage be separated at the curb. Broward would not mandate separating yard trash.

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
December 21, 1989

N. MIAMI LOOKS TO BOOST BUSINESS CLIMATE

Author: DAN KEATING

North Miami is allowing advertising balloons on top of stores and easing the permit process in an attempt to change its reputation as a bad place to do business. "Perception is critical with business," said City Council member Howard Premer. "It's a step in the right direction. It tells people this is a good place to do business." Local shops will be able to put up balloons, banners and pennants once a year for a special event under an ordinance that received preliminary approval last week. Final approval is expected Jan. 9. The ordinance also eliminates the need for a city permit to put up small signs in store windows, and allows merchants to put their phone number in the sign. Friendliness to business arose as a campaign issue in council races last spring. Shortly before the election, the council allowed all new businesses to put up banners and flags for 30 days and rooftop balloons for a week. Last week's vote expanded the grand-opening exception so that existing businesses can enjoy the same privileges for one special event a year.

Council member Shelly Gassner said signs were regulated in the mid-1970s after a picture of Biscayne Boulevard appeared in a National Geographic article on visual pollution. "We're dealing with a situation that has been cleaned up," she said. "Now we're adding some back." Ron Russo, who oversees the city's seven code enforcement officers, said storekeepers complained bitterly about needing a permit for a window sign. "That was a major sticking point with people. They put that sign up and got popped. That really frustrated the new business owners," Russo said. The city has appointed Deputy City Manager **Lee Feldman** as a business ombudsman to ease the permit process. His first chore in the role arose three weeks ago when the manager of the new Blockbuster Video on Biscayne Boulevard wanted a permit to open that day. Permits normally take as long as a week to go through several departments. "I didn't understand the process," said manager David Goodrowe. "My district manager just told me to go in and get the permit. They were very helpful. I was out of there in 20 minutes."

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Lee Feldman
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 17, 1988

CITIES PRESSURE COUNTY FOR CLEANUP

Author: IAN KATZ

Mayors of several North Dade cities, in a meeting with county officials on cleaning up areas of unincorporated Dade, proposed extending their building codes into neighborhoods beyond their borders. Several city officials, including Mayors Joe Moffat of North Miami Beach, Howard Neu of North Miami, Spero Canton of Miami Shores and George Eckert of El Portal, also pressured the Dade officials Thursday to improve the appearance of county areas near their cities. "I have found that if the county ignores the area, the homeowners will do the same," Neu said. He and the other city officials made their complaints to two county Building and Zoning officials, Acting Director Jorge Rodriguez and Enforcement Division Director Ron Szep. Canton, who was host of the informal meeting in Miami Shores, cited substandard homes and roads, abandoned cars and garbage dumps in what he called enclaves -- unincorporated areas that do not connect with other county land and are surrounded by municipalities. He has said that areas north, south and west of Miami Shores -- especially between Interstate 95 and the village limits -- have deteriorated rapidly. "The difference between the county and the municipalities is stark," he said. "The enclave areas are slowly turning into ghettos."

Canton has been talking with the county about letting the Shores take over code enforcement, garbage collection and law enforcement in some unincorporated areas. He says he wants to improve those neighborhoods because their condition affects property values in Miami Shores. **Lee Feldman**, assistant city manager of North Miami Beach, suggested extending building codes and other regulations of the municipalities into the bordering unincorporated areas. **Feldman** and the other officials did not specify how much of the county areas should fall under municipal standards. But they agreed that they should compile a list of places that need better code enforcement and give it to the county. Rodriguez and Szep said they were willing to cooperate with the municipalities, but added that any changes in jurisdiction of code enforcement must be approved by the County Commission.

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Lee Feldman
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Miami Herald, The (FL)
May 10, 1987

NMB GOES FOR THE GREEN ON 163RD ST.

Author: KATHY McCARTHY

An oasis of tropical palms and greenery may soon replace the barren concrete medians on Northeast 163rd Street, the cluttered, commercial heart of North Miami Beach. Led by City Council member Jule Littman, city and business leaders are trying to persuade the state to help pay for the first major beautification of the city's main highway, which becomes 167th Street as it approaches the Golden Glades Interchange. The work would include planting grass and palm trees and installing irrigation lines along a five-mile strip of median from the Golden Glades to the Intracoastal Waterway near Northeast 35th Avenue. Of the five-mile stretch, the city shares 1.8 miles with Dade County. Its appearance varies from block to block. While the median is well-maintained near The Mall at 163rd Street between 12th and 15th avenues, where jurisdiction is shared, areas west of Northeast Eighth Avenue have medians without any grass. "Your perception is that they're all concrete," Assistant City Manager **Lee Feldman** said. "What's there is arbitrary. The reason we're working for this is our people drive on that road. People still think of that entire street as North Miami Beach."

Littman traveled to Tallahassee a few weeks ago to ask the state for \$415,000, which is needed largely for the water pumps and irrigation lines. The city, county and state would share the projected \$54,600-a-year cost of maintenance, which would be done entirely by city workers, **Feldman** said. The work is now shared by the city and county. The state has agreed to contribute \$11,000 toward maintenance, and the city plans to ask the county to contribute \$7,900 per year, **Feldman** said. "Right now, our hopes are with the state," **Feldman** said. "My aim is to make it as pretty as Northeast 19th and 35th avenues," Littman said. "If we could do that, we could attract the people traveling through the city, or from I-95 or the turnpike to Sunny Isles on the beach." Littman said the state has promised to assist the city with providing plants from its nursery. "I hope to start seeing trees along the median within two to three months," Littman said.

Business owners are hailing the project. "This is something that is essential not only for beautification of the city, but for the business people," said Belle Shane, president of the North Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce. "The street has to be more attractive especially because of the shopping mall," she said, referring to The Mall at 163rd Street, which sits in county jurisdiction and attracts customers from smaller businesses across the street in North Miami Beach. "People coming into our community have to be a little more comfortable in shopping with our merchants across the street," Shane said.

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Lee Feldman
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Miami Herald, The (FL)
August 11, 1985

CITY RETAKES CONTROL OF REC CENTER

Author: CRAIG GEMOULES

North Miami Beach city administrators took back control of the Highland Village Community Center Wednesday, locking out homeowners who fought to keep a group of Israeli folk dancers from using the building. "We will not quit," said Dora Tyson, wife of Highland Village Residents Association President Robert Tyson. "If we have to, we'll meet on the street." Highland Village, a small North Miami Beach neighborhood consisting of mobile homes and houses, has for years had significant input over what groups get to use the city building. The residents' association met there one Thursday a month, and at other times used the building for games and get-togethers. But when the city's recreation department allowed a group of Israeli folk dancers to use the building on Tuesday nights, association members were infuriated. They told city administrators they wanted the dancers to leave.

The city refused. The dancers left anyway, moving their meetings to another of the city's five community centers. A karate group still uses the building two or three times a week. Tuesday night, the city council voted unanimously to have McGill change the locks on the building. The locks were changed Wednesday, and the Tysons discovered Thursday their keys no longer worked. Dora Tyson blamed city officials' angry reaction on the association's year-long push to get the neighborhood better street lighting, more playground equipment and more police patrols. "We pushed too hard," she said. **Lee Feldman**, assistant to the city manager, said neighborhood groups can still use the building, but must schedule meetings with the recreation department. Then, before such meetings, a city worker will be dispatched to unlock the doors.

Research Compiled by: Amanda Kuhl
 Colin Baenziger & Associates