MAYOR

SHEILA DeCiccio

CITY of WINTER PARK

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Last week, the City Commission spent several hours going line by line through the proposed Fiscal Year (FY)2027 budget, looking for places where we could reduce expenses while continuing to provide the level of service our residents expect.

The charts below show where we found savings, where we may generate additional revenue, and what some of these decisions could mean for City services.

This work is especially important as we prepare for uncertainty surrounding future property tax revenues. If Amendment 3 passes, the impact would become significantly greater in the years ahead. With a $150,000 homestead exemption, the city projects approximately $3.6 million in General Fund reductions for 2028. When the exemption rises to $250,000 in 2029, that projected reduction grows to approximately $6.7 million.

Some changes will be incorporated into the FY2027 budget, while others will be implemented and reviewed at our mid-year budget amendment. We also identified several larger issues that require more study before the FY2028 budget.

Changes to Implement and Review at Mid-Year:

These items will be implemented with the start of fiscal year but will not be formally recognized as part of the budget until a mid-year review takes place. The Commission identified approximately $941,000 in potential expenditure reductions, including:

Proposed Change	Amount
Freeze vacant Code Enforcement position	$75,000
Reduce legal fees	$80,000
Freeze two vacant Fire positions	$200,000
Reduce seasonal hours at pools	$100,000
Contract golf maintenance services	$150,000
Pass through of credit card fees	$336,000

Potential Revenue Enhancements

We also identified approximately $900,000 in potential additional revenue:

Potential Revenue	Amount
Paid parking pilot: for non-residents at Dinky Dock & Dog Park	$150,000

Add additional Red-light traffic cameras	$750,000

It is unlikely that these will materially impact the FY2027 budget as they require study and processes before beginning. As these figures remain estimates, the final amounts will become clearer as we implement and evaluate the changes.

Changes to the FY2027 Budget

The Commission also agreed to approximately $512,000 in General Fund spending reductions that will be incorporated into the FY2027 budget:

Budget Change	Reduction
Reduce the Library budget	$25,000
Cancel the Annual Board Appreciation event	$12,000
Reduce the scope of Halloween & Easter events	$20,000
Eliminate the monthly printed utility bill calendars	$25,938
Remove the watering truck	$65,000
Reduce tree plantings to 50%	$210,000
Eliminate vacant Tree Specialist position	$73,680
Eliminate vacant Tree Permitting position	$60,000
Reduce mailroom postage and operating supplies	$20,000
Total	**$511,618**

At the same time, updated state revenue estimates and property tax projections reduced anticipated General Fund revenue by approximately $354,711. After accounting for both the lower revenue and the spending reductions, approximately $156,907 would be added to the city's General Fund contingency.

Budget decisions are not easy, and the numbers alone do not tell the whole story. Every reduction requires us to weigh the savings against the effect on the services residents rely on. For example, freezing the two vacant Fire positions saves approximately $200,000, but leaving those positions unfilled can affect fire prevention, inspections, public education, emergency-response capacity and the workload of our existing personnel. Reducing seasonal pool hours saves approximately $100,000, but it also means less public access and fewer recreational opportunities during the off-season.

The same is true of decisions involving our tree program, library, events and other city services. These are real choices with real consequences, and residents deserve to understand both sides of the ledger.

There were also two larger issues that we agreed require further study as we begin planning for FY2028: whether certain costs should appropriately move to the Water & Wastewater and Stormwater funds, and whether the Electric Utility should assume responsibility for electric street-lighting costs.

Those changes are unlikely to materially affect FY2027, but they could become important as we look for ways to reduce pressure on the General Fund in future years.

I believe this budget review accomplished something valuable. We found areas where we can reduce spending and operate differently. We also saw clearly where additional cuts begin to affect services that residents use and value.

We will have a full year to see how many of these changes work in practice, and we will revisit them as we prepare the FY2028 budget. If a change saves taxpayers money without compromising an important service, we should keep it. If the consequences prove greater than anticipated, we should be willing to reconsider it.

The budget will return to the Commission for its first reading Wednesday, September 9, 2026, where additional changes may be made. I will continue to share updates as decisions are made so you can see where your money goes, what is changing, and why.

You can access the full proposed budget here:
https://cityofwinterpark.org/docs/departments/finance/budget/proposed-budget-2027.pdf

Warmly,

Mayor Sheila DeCiccio

Sheila DeCiccio