



**TOWN OF LAUDERDALE-BY-THE-SEA
TOWN COMMISSION WORKSHOP
Jarvis Hall
4505 N. Ocean Drive
Tuesday, February 10, 2026
5:00 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER, MAYOR EDMUND MALKOON

Mayor Edmund Malkoon called the workshop to order at 5:00 p.m. Also present were Vice Mayor Randy Strauss, Commissioner Richard DeNapoli, Commissioner John A. Graziano, Commissioner Theo Pouloupoulos, Town Manager Ken Rubach, Town Attorney Susan Trevarthen, Finance Director Lucila Lang, Assistant Finance Director Edner Saint-Jean, Development Services Director Jhanelle Campbell, Assistant to the Town Manager/Acting Town Clerk Courtney Easley, and Events and Marketing Manager Katie Anderson.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

It was determined that Public Comment would be heard following the presentations.

4. DISCUSSION ITEM

Mayor Malkoon explained that tonight's workshop addresses public safety, specifically including Fire Rescue services. Representatives of the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) and Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue are present to provide presentations. He emphasized that no decisions will be made at this workshop.

a. Fire Rescue Provider Discussion

Fire Chief Timothy Keefe, representing BSO, gave a PowerPoint presentation on Fire Rescue services, noting that Lauderdale-By-The-Sea will need fire suppression as well as Emergency Medical Services (EMS) capabilities. BSO proposes to allocate one engine and one rescue vehicle to the Town. They will use an automated computer-aided dispatch (CAD) -based response in order to provide more operational flexibility, including relocation of BSO units if needed. If selected, BSO would participate in closest-unit and fastest-unit responses with neighboring partner agencies, including units from Pompano Beach and Fort Lauderdale.

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
Town Commission Workshop
February 10, 2026

If BSO's Fire Rescue Department is selected, they would oversee all needs in terms of labor negotiations, medical director, hiring and recruitment, risk management, legal defense, workers' compensation, promotional processes, administration, fire prevention and EMS training, and logistics.

In order to realize continuous quality improvement, BSO contracts with the Aldridge Group for EMS customer service satisfaction surveys. Their scores are consistently above the 80th percentile for patient engagement and satisfaction. BSO can provide life safety education staff for various safety talks and general safety messages. BSO also has an Office of Emergency Management (OEM) with personnel who can serve as liaisons to Town Staff during emergency events.

Chief Keefe stated that the Town would be served by an Advanced Life Support (ALS) engine with an Officer driver/engineer and a Firefighter/paramedic, as well as a second ALS unit with two Firefighter/paramedics and an Officer. There would also be a Fire Prevention Officer to assist with plan review and regular inspections.

At present, BSO provides seven Battalion Chief zones and a 24-hour, seven-day Staff Duty Officer who serves as direct liaison to the Fire Chief's Office. They have a Fire Code Official and provide a logistics regional warehouse for all Broward County municipalities, a Heavy Fleet Center, Training Division, Health and Safety Division, EMS Division with EMS Captains, and Shift Division Chiefs.

The proposed cost of two service apparatus with three personnel each, as well as one Fire Prevention Officer, carries a personnel cost of \$7.2 million, with operating costs of \$900,000. Capital costs are estimated at \$176,000 for startup. Total cost of service is estimated at \$8.3 million. BSO would meet with the Town Manager for negotiations, as there may be aspects of the proposal which could increase or reduce costs.

Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue Chief Steven Gollan provided an overview of staffing and apparatus costs, pointing out that Fort Lauderdale's services are very similar to those offered by BSO. They offer the same certifications, accreditations, and ratings as BSO. Fort Lauderdale proposes a five-year period with renewal options and an 18-month prior termination. They have provided services to Wilton Manors for more than 25 years.

Services to Lauderdale-By-The-Sea would be broken down in a similar manner to services for Wilton Manors, based on equal monthly payments. The Town would be afforded access to the same resources that are available to Fort Lauderdale, including

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
Town Commission Workshop
February 10, 2026

emergency management, tactical rescue, hazardous materials, a marine division, mobile integrated health, and various safety-related programs.

Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue has also been successful in securing grant funds for both their Department and the entities they serve. Over the last two years, they have received \$12.7 million in federal grant funding. The Fire boat and marine team have both responded to calls in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea through closest unit response.

Chief Gollan noted the proximity of Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue's stations to the Town's existing Fire Station as well as the availability of resources. Effective response forces (ERF) are estimated at 16 personnel on-scene for a residential fire and 22 personnel for a commercial fire. Fort Lauderdale has the only Fire Rescue in Broward County that can provide this recommended level of service due to the proximity of its stations, including nearby Stations 54 and 35.

Chief Gollan advised that the standard of cover offered by Fort Lauderdale is the same as offered by BSO: three personnel on a rescue vehicle and three personnel on an engine, with appropriate rank designations. A Fire Inspector would also be assigned to Lauderdale-By-The-Sea. The proposal includes the Town providing the Fire apparatus, while Fort Lauderdale would supply the rescue vehicle. The total cost proposed for the first year would be \$6.8 million.

At this time Mayor Malkoon opened public comment.

John Alexander, resident, requested clarification of the amount of BSO's proposed personnel costs over a specific time period. He also asked if the Town's existing public safety facilities would be satisfactory for both agencies, or if capital investment by the Town would be required.

Chief Keefe replied that BSO's proposed personnel costs are \$7.2 million, which is subject to negotiations based on the Town's specified needs. He noted that the Town's facilities are the same as the ones in place when he was District Chief in the late 1990s, and would need to undergo upgrades to living conditions for Fire/Rescue personnel over time.

Laura Reese, Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for the City of Fort Lauderdale, stated that proposed staffing costs are \$5,824,684 for the first year. The one-time capital costs included in the proposal was \$595,405 for the purchase of a rescue

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
Town Commission Workshop
February 10, 2026

vehicle, as noted by Chief Gollan. The total proposed costs for the first year are \$6.8 million.

Director Reese continued that Fort Lauderdale staff had spoken with the Town Manager with regard to the Town's existing public safety facility, indicating that more in-depth research would be necessary before an agreement could be reached. The facility has not yet been surveyed.

Chief Gollan advised that Fort Lauderdale would make the same recommendations for the public safety facility as BSO, primarily due to equipment needs. He pointed out that the Town's current Fire apparatus is constantly exposed to salt air and other elements with only a canvas covering. Moving the apparatus into the building would also help improve response times.

With no other individuals wishing to speak at this time, Mayor Malkoon closed public comment.

Mayor Malkoon requested information on how service levels would be maintained or improved in comparison to the levels currently received by the Town, as well as how reliability of response would be handled during peak demand times, including seasonal population increases or major national/regional emergencies. Chief Keefe advised that station location would be a challenge, and would determine the base service level.

Chief Keefe continued that BSO is able to leverage its size to keep all of its Fire Stations operable in the event of emergencies. They are also available to move up additional units during large-scale or catastrophic events.

Chief Gollan emphasized that Fort Lauderdale is the only agency that can mobilize additional resources to meet an effective response profile due to its staffing, again citing the proximity of Station 35 as an example. Ladder, engine, and rescue companies are available from that station, as is a Fire Chief. Engine and rescue vehicles are also available from the Galt Ocean Mile area.

Commissioner Poulopoulos noted that Fort Lauderdale assigns \$595,000 to the purchase or lease of a rescue unit and Fire Inspector vehicle. Director Reese confirmed that this would be a one-time cost associated with the purchase of this equipment. Fort Lauderdale would recover these costs over multiple years so money is set aside to replace that equipment at the end of its useful life.

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
Town Commission Workshop
February 10, 2026

Commissioner Pouloupoulos asked if this purchase would be necessary because the Town does not have a rescue unit or Fire Inspector vehicle, or because the Town's current apparatus are insufficient. Town Manager Ken Rubach replied that the Town currently does not have these units. Year two costs would include an amount that would be recovered each year to ensure the vehicle can be replaced.

Chief Keefe advised that BSO's proposal includes a Fire prevention vehicle among the capital costs listed. The rescue vehicle is built into the proposed operating costs. If BSO is selected as provider, they would then reach out to the City for the purchase or lease of a rescue vehicle. He concluded that BSO's proposal "leaves the door open" for negotiations with the Town on the purchase of a rescue vehicle.

Commissioner Pouloupoulos clarified that the cost of the rescue vehicle is included in the \$927,000 in operating costs. Chief Keefe confirmed this. Commissioner Pouloupoulos continued that the Town would also be looking at an additional purchase on top of those costs, as the Town would need to either purchase or lease the rescue vehicle. Chief Keefe added that the time of this purchase is left open-ended so the Town can determine whether they would like to realize those costs up front or upon delivery.

Commissioner Graziano addressed BSO's proposed personnel costs of \$7.2 million, which include a 5% annual escalator. He recalled that the Town had been surprised when BSO had confirmed the current fiscal year's costs, which were significantly higher than what had been paid in the past. Chief Keefe replied that the contract for Fire services would be the same as in law enforcement, pointing out that Florida Retirement System (FRS) rates are not set by BSO but by a state entity and passed along to the City. He added that over time, most BSO contracts come in lower than the 5% escalator, particularly if they are longtime contracts.

Chief Keefe continued that in recent years BSO has had difficulty recruiting Firefighter/paramedics; they currently have 80 to 90 vacancies and it is difficult to recruit and retain Fire Rescue staff.

Commissioner Graziano asked if the leadership of BSO's Fire services is the same as its leadership for law enforcement. Chief Keefe stated that he reports to the Undersheriff, who reports directly to the Sheriff. He added that BSO cannot offer the Town a better or worse rate than what they offer to other municipalities or contracting entities.

Vice Mayor Strauss asked if Chief Gollan had directly inspected the Town's existing public safety facilities. Chief Gollan replied that he has not done this. Vice Mayor Strauss asked

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
Town Commission Workshop
February 10, 2026

if Fort Lauderdale's proposal might change once this inspection has taken place. Chief Gollan stated that the facility should not result in a staffing variance; the only potential variance from the proposal should be related to the apparatus currently owned by the Town. The facility is separate from the contract and the Town would be solely responsible for it.

Vice Mayor Strauss asked if it could be possible for Fort Lauderdale to serve as service provider for the Town without a facility located in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea. Chief Gollan replied that the Town would ultimately dictate the level of service it wants for the community; should the Town choose to rely on other locations rather than its own facility, this would affect the distance of the response profile, resulting in delays. He emphasized the importance of immediate response to significant incidents, but acknowledged that there may be alternative solutions based on the Town's wishes.

Vice Mayor Strauss asked if the proposal would decrease or increase in cost if there was no facility based in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea. Chief Gollan replied that the cost would not increase, but would depend upon the level of service the Town wanted. If they wanted the existing level of service from a different location, the cost would be the same. He noted, however, that with the call volume existing in the area, Fort Lauderdale would not be able to meet the Town's demands without increasing their own levels of staffing at other facilities. Ultimately, they would still need another apparatus as well as more staffing in order to ensure units are available to respond to calls.

Vice Mayor Strauss concluded that if the Town's facility were taken out of consideration, this would not decrease the costs of what is provided to the Town. Chief Gollan confirmed this, reiterating that the cost burdens associated with the facility are the Town's responsibility and not included in the contract.

Commissioner Pouloupoulos observed that Fort Lauderdale's proposal includes indirect administrative service charges of \$584,000 in year one. He requested clarification of this term. Fort Lauderdale Assistant City Manager Yvette Matthews stated that overhead costs are based on the actual costs required to support the staffing that would be provided at the Town's facility.

Commissioner DeNapoli stated that he had reached out to Pompano Beach Fire Rescue (PBFR), which had indicated the possibility of renewing their contract with the Town if they did not have to serve the area south of Commercial Boulevard. He asked if a bifurcated system is possible in which BSO or Fort Lauderdale would provide service to part of the Town while another provider served another area.

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
Town Commission Workshop
February 10, 2026

Town Manager Rubach advised that Pompano Beach's City Manager had informed him that PBFR would not submit an application to provide service to Lauderdale-By-The-Sea.

Chief Keefe strongly emphasized that BSO has always participated in mutual aid partnerships and agreements with other service providers and is open to the possibility. He recalled that his own previous communication with PBFR's Chief had seemed to indicate that provider was not interested in continuing to provide service to the Town, but confirmed that he would be willing to listen to proposals from other providers, including BSO as well as PBFR.

Commissioner DeNapoli observed that PBFR currently provides service to Sea Ranch Lakes, but serving the area south of Commercial Boulevard could result in increased response times. He reiterated that a bifurcated approach could result in cost savings for all involved.

Chief Gollan expressed concern with the potential impact of a bifurcated approach on fastest unit response. Closest unit response would mean that Fort Lauderdale's units would be dispatched to the call even if Commercial Boulevard was established as a service cutoff point. It would also mean the Town would not have a dedicated unit located within its boundaries. He recommended additional discussion of levels of service in order to determine cost solutions.

Commissioner DeNapoli addressed termination provisions, noting that BSO's proposal refers to a 12-month period while Fort Lauderdale mentions an 18-month convenience period. He requested additional information on these scenarios. Chief Gollan replied that while Fort Lauderdale's goal would be to move away from a situation if that was deemed necessary, there would be an accompanying challenge related to financials, ranging from apparatus to personnel. Fort Lauderdale Fire Rescue would take on an additional 28 personnel if they enter into a contract with the Town. The 18-month time frame is intended to ensure that these personnel could be absorbed back into Fort Lauderdale's own system.

Commissioner DeNapoli explained that Fort Lauderdale's proposal had referred to termination time frames in three separate sections. Chief Gollan confirmed that the 18-month time frame would be the minimum.

Commissioner DeNapoli continued that the Town currently receives monthly performance reports from PBFR, noting that BSO's proposal refers to annual and semi-annual reports

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
Town Commission Workshop
February 10, 2026

while Fort Lauderdale's proposal refers to annual and quarterly reports in addition to automated daily run reports if necessary. Both proposals indicate that the providers would send representatives to at least 50% of the Town's Commission meetings.

Chief Gollan explained that one challenge with providing data for brief periods of time is that the data is less accurate and likely to be skewed by outlying events, such as bridge delays or special circumstances. He emphasized that daily feedback can be provided to show where units are responding and to what types of calls, but cautioned against making decisions based on possible outlier events.

Commissioner Graziano commented that he had found PBFR to be an unreliable partner based on their previous actions, and would have expected them to be present at tonight's workshop and/or submit a written proposal if they were interested in participating in another contract with the Town.

Mayor Malkoon asked what type of community engagement and public prevention programs would be included to assist residents and strengthen the overall public safety of the Town. Chief Gollan replied that Fort Lauderdale offers different levels of service, including the following:

- A mobile integrated health team to provide continuity of care to households in order to reduce calls and ensure residents are receiving proper care
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program to assist during emergencies such as hurricanes
- Explorer program to involve young people in public safety
- Stop the Bleed, CPR, and other teaching programs for the community

Chief Keefe explained that BSO and Fort Lauderdale offer very similar community engagement programs, citing a recent community paramedic program, life safety educators, and presences at community events or homeowners' association meetings.

Commissioner Pouloupoulos observed that regardless of the contractor, Fire Rescue services would constitute a major cost for the Town, and the Commission would need to determine how to meet this cost. At present, the Town is paying for PBFR's services at cost, which he estimated at roughly \$3.9 million to \$4 million in the current fiscal year; a change to a new provider would increase this cost to roughly \$6.8 million to \$8.5 million.

Commissioner Pouloupoulos continued that he felt the Vice Mayor's proposal to consider using facilities outside the Town was worth consideration, but cautioned against

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
Town Commission Workshop
February 10, 2026

sacrificing response times. He also noted that the Commissioners review the activity logs provided by Fire Rescue services.

Commissioner Pouloupoulos continued that the possibility of property tax reform at the state level presents an additional challenge to municipalities paying for public safety services. The necessary funds can be provided either through the Town's millage rate or its Fire assessment. He requested clarification of the pros and cons of increasing either of these two options.

Town Manager Rubach advised that 60% of Fire Rescue costs are provided through the Town's Fire fee, while the remaining 40% for EMS comes from the General Fund. The Town may explore other avenues, such as stormwater fees, to raise additional revenue. The Town currently collects roughly \$14 million in ad valorem tax revenue each year; he concluded that the Town will need to see an increase in revenue to pay for these services.

Commissioner Graziano also expressed concern with how to pay for services going forward in light of potential property tax reform at the state level. He was confident that the Commission will be able to meet this challenge.

Town Manager Rubach further clarified that the Town may not exceed a 60% contribution from the Fire assessment unless a study is done to justify moving a greater percentage toward the millage rate.

Vice Mayor Strauss noted that while Lauderdale-By-The-Sea's residential Fire assessment is a flat fee, its commercial assessment is based on square footage. Town businesses have expressed concern with the potential impacts of a higher Fire assessment. He requested clarification of whether condominiums are considered residential or commercial in terms of the Fire assessment. Town Manager Rubach replied that condominiums are residential, further clarifying that the Town does not provide additional categories for businesses under its Fire assessment.

Vice Mayor Strauss also asked for information regarding the percentage of the Town's Fire assessment that goes toward condominiums or businesses. He wished to provide some assistance for businesses when future assessments are expanded by the Town, such as reducing square footage for businesses that do not typically make the majority of Fire Rescue calls from the Town. He concluded that in the past, the Town kept its millage rate low as a means of demonstrating steady fiscal responsibility; however, the time may be approaching when they need to increase this rate to pay for necessary services.

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
Town Commission Workshop
February 10, 2026

Commissioner DeNapoli emphasized the importance of bringing forward different ideas on how to pay for services while acting as responsible stewards of taxpayer money. He proposed the following options regarding public safety:

- Negotiate with PBFR for bifurcated service north of Commercial Boulevard, with another provider responsible for the area south of Commercial Boulevard
- Select Fort Lauderdale as a provider
- Select BSO as a provider
- Develop Fire Control Districts, which are effectively regional Fire Departments with elected Fire Commissioners
- Develop a Fire Department for the Town

Commissioner DeNapoli noted that it is possible either Fort Lauderdale or BSO may be willing to negotiate for a bifurcated contract. He recommended discussing the options in detail to determine what is best in terms of both safety and pricing.

Vice Mayor Strauss recalled that many residents have asked why the Town has not considered reinstating its own Volunteer Fire Department (VFD). He requested additional information on this option. Town Manager Rubach recalled that the Town's previous VFD served as a vendor for the Town. If the Town were to create its own Fire Department, they would need to include all the administrative costs reflected in Fort Lauderdale's and BSO's proposals as well as firefighting personnel, additional personnel and backup equipment, and new human resources staff to accommodate a larger Town Staff. Union, pension, and insurance costs would also need to be considered. He concluded that he was not certain this option would be beneficial for a community of the Town's size, and the costs that the Town would share with providers such as Fort Lauderdale and BSO would have to be borne by the Town alone if they proceed with a VFD.

Commissioner Graziano addressed the possibility of breaking the Town's Fire assessment into separate categories for residential properties, commercial businesses, and condominiums. He asked if Staff could provide estimated figures for this option. Town Manager Rubach replied that Staff is currently looking at other communities' Fire assessments; he was not aware of whether or not the Town could proceed with that reorganization, and would need to reach out to consultants for additional information.

Town Attorney Susan Trevarthen also advised that Staff would need to speak with consultants to validate whether or not this may be an appropriate change.

Town Manager Rubach recalled that the original timeline of the Town's contract with PBFR was for 24 months before the cancellation clause was invoked. Town Attorney

Lauderdale-By-The-Sea
Town Commission Workshop
February 10, 2026

Trevarthen characterized this as having “at least 24 months” before the Commission needs to make a decision on a future contract.

Commissioner Poulopoulos stated that he would like to see a comparison of raising Fire assessment rates and raising millage rates at a future meeting. This would provide the Commissioners with a more realistic appreciation of what they would need to discuss during budget and millage rate discussions for FY 2026-2027.

Commissioner DeNapoli requested estimated costs for the development of a Town Fire Department so the public can see and discuss these comparisons, adding that it may be possible to compile estimates for bifurcated service or Fire Control Districts as well.

The Mayor and Commissioners thanked all who participated in tonight’s discussion. Mayor Malkoon deferred the beginning of tonight’s Commission meeting until 7 p.m.

5. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to come before the Commission at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Mayor Edmund Malkoon

Mayor Edmund Malkoon

ATTEST:

Courtney Easley

Courtney Easley, Acting Town Clerk

3/16/2026 | 3:59 PM EDT

Date