

## **From the Desk of Vice Mayor Weinroth**

### **No increase in property tax rate**

For the 11<sup>th</sup> straight year, the Board of County Commissioners voted to maintain the current tax rate at the 4.78 millage rate which is the tax rate per \$1,000 of your real property's "taxable" value. Due to the increase in property values, this will generate a 5.6% increase in tax revenue generating a total of \$1.1 billion. Notwithstanding the recent surge in property values, the taxable value of residential real estate protected by homestead will only increase by a maximum of 1.4%.

Property taxes represents 63% of the county's general fund revenue source. Other sources include excess fund assets over liabilities (17%), intergovernmental revenues such as grants (13%), licenses, permits and fees (3%) and charges for services (3%).

The budget process presented us with a number of challenges as a result of the pandemic which caused a \$74 million decrease in revenues compared to prepandemic fiscal year 2019. The areas most negatively impacted was revenue generated by gas taxes, half-cent sales tax, and parks and recreation fees.

The Board was able to offset these losses with \$46.4 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for eligible expenses (such as capital improvement projects). This was a small portion of the \$291 million in ARPA funds the county received.

In the next few months, the Board will discuss ARPA funding priorities which need to be set by 2024 and spent by 2026 with a focus on impactful, long-term projects concerning infrastructure, cybersecurity/broadband, housing, hunger relief and more.

We anticipate a gradual return of county revenues to prepandemic levels over the next five years.

### **More job openings than unemployed**

The county's unemployment rate was reported at just 4.7% for August, well below national and state averages. There are more job openings than unemployed for the second consecutive month – 37,267 job openings vs. 35,320 unemployed people according to CareerSource Palm Beach County that offers services for both business and job seekers. Some of its services include career counseling, business coaching, training programs, and employment assistance.

For more information, visit [careersourcepb.com](https://careersourcepb.com).

### **Lien Amnesty Program**

A Code Enforcement Lien Amnesty Program was recently approved by the Board for residential and nonresidential property owners located in unincorporated Palm Beach County.

This is a terrific program providing property and lien holders with an opportunity to have their entire outstanding lien balance forgiven.

In addition to other requirements, the subject property must be in full compliance with all county codes to have the outstanding lien balance forgiven. The deadline to apply is November 30, 2021 and must include a nonrefundable \$250 application fee.

For more information, please contact Marie Jasmin at (561) 355-4010.

### **New electric vehicle charging stations at Governmental Center**

The county recently installed electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at the Governmental Center parking garage in West Palm Beach for the public and county employees.

Moving forward, this pilot program will include the installation of additional charging stations at other county facilities such as the convention center and courthouses. The county has contracted with a private company who will install and maintain the stations, charging market rates for its users.

As the vice-chair of the Palm Beach County Transportation Planning Agency, I will continue to advocate for new and innovative technology in addressing future transportation challenges.

### **Fun things to do in Palm Beach County**

The county's website features a unique page that provides links to over 50 websites such as museums, sporting and entertainment venues, natural areas and so much more.

It is a resourceful one-stop opportunity to explore the best of everything Palm Beach County has to offer at [discover.pbcgov.org/Pages/Things-To-Do.aspx](https://discover.pbcgov.org/Pages/Things-To-Do.aspx).

### **Nonprofit highlight: Junior League of Boca Raton**

Congratulations to the [Junior League of Boca Raton](https://www.jlbr.org/) (JLBR) on its 50th Anniversary!

Since its inception in 1971, JLBR has provided over a million hours of community service; and each year, donates \$250,000 to community projects.

JLBR consists of over 600 members who are committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving the community through the effective action of trained volunteers.

Some key projects of the Junior League of Boca Raton include founding the Boca Raton Historical Society, restoring Singing Pines, and founding the Junior League of Boca Raton Diaper Bank.

For more information, visit [jlbr.org](https://www.jlbr.org).

**If you require assistance, please contact our office at 561-355-2204 and/or email me at [rweinroth@pbcgov.org](mailto:rweinroth@pbcgov.org).**