

County budget public hearings set for September

By Hector Flores

With September approaching, I wanted to share with you the schedule for our upcoming budget public hearings and next steps toward developing our next budget. The first hearing is scheduled for 5:01 p.m., Sept. 7 in Room 119 of the Charlotte County Administration Center, 18500 Murdock Circle in Port Charlotte. The second hearing is scheduled for 5:01 p.m., Sept. 22 in the same place. The hearings are the culmination of our two-year budget cycle, with the new fiscal year 2022-23 beginning Oct. 1.

We are already working on the next two-year budget process, which includes a resident survey of 1,500 randomly selected households to be conducted by the National Research Center, a partner of the International City/County Management Association. All residents will be able to take part in an online survey, as well. The survey results enable us to measure satisfaction levels, gauge progress over the last several years, and benchmark ourselves against other local governments in Florida and nationwide.

The survey will cover investments in the community, public safety, quality of life, water resources, growth management, fiscal planning, human services, economic development and more. This will be the seventh National Citizen Survey we have conducted. To view results of past surveys, visit CharlotteCountyFL.gov and search for "Community Scorecard."

The County Commission will review the survey results as part of a workshop aimed at assessing its existing strategic focus areas and revising initiatives created to achieve its goals.

The commission's four strategic focus areas are public services, economic and community development, efficient and effective government and infrastructure.

In public services, our aim is to maintain a safe and healthy community by delivering essential services from skilled, professional and dedicated public servants.

In economic and community development we want to foster a business climate that promotes a diversified, growing economy consistent with sustainable growth management plans, environmental stewardship and enhanced quality of life.

Operating local government in an efficient and effective way, we seek to manage fiscally sound county operations with a culture of transparency, accountability, citizen engagement and innovation.

We build and maintain county infrastructure to meet our evolving needs and enhance our community's appearance, improve public safety and protect our natural resources.

All of the above are meant to fulfill our mission of delivering exceptional service to our residents and stakeholders.

The budget hearings are the end of this process, but the beginning of my team's efforts to execute the policies and programs approved by the board and adopted into the budget. I'm proud to work with such dedicated public servants who work purposefully each day to make that a reality.

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