Keri O'Brien

From: gregory lloyd <glloyd7@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, February 6, 2026 5:51 PM
To: Keri O'Brien
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda item #32 Opposition letter

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Mayor and Commissioners,

We respectfully submit this letter in opposition to the proposed ordinance amending the City's purchasing, contracting, budget transfer, and asset-disposition authorities.

This ordinance warrants heightened scrutiny not because of any single provision, but because of its cumulative effect, its sponsorship, its impact on oversight structures, and its direct conflict with the findings and recommendations of the Monroe County Grand Jury.

1. The ordinance is sponsored by the City Manager and materially expands the City Manager's authority.

The proposed amendments uniformly increase the City Manager's unilateral authority over spending, contracts, budget transfers, fund increases, change orders, emergency procurements, sole-source procurements, and disposal of City assets, while simultaneously reducing the scope of City Commission oversight. When an ordinance that diminishes oversight and expands discretion is sponsored by the official who directly benefits from those changes, it creates a structural conflict of institutional interest and undermines the appearance of impartial governance.

2. The Finance Director reports directly to the City Manager, who possesses discretionary termination authority.

The staff memorandum justifying this ordinance is authored by the Director of Finance, who reports directly to the City Manager. The City Manager also possesses broad discretionary authority over personnel decisions. Under this reporting structure, representations by subordinate officials regarding the prudence or necessity of expanding the City Manager's authority cannot reasonably be viewed as independent. This dynamic mirrors the chain-of-command pressure concerns explicitly identified by the Grand Jury.

3. Oversight thresholds are doubled across nearly every financial control mechanism without evidence-based justification.

Staff asserts that increasing thresholds will improve efficiency and timeliness, yet provides no data demonstrating that current thresholds have caused procurement delays, operational failures, or material harm. The Finance memorandum offers no metrics, no backlog analysis, and no examples tying inefficiency to the existing $50,000 threshold. Assertions of efficiency, without supporting evidence, are not a sufficient basis to reduce elected oversight across the Code.

4. The redefinition of "small purchase" to include up to $100,000 materially alters transparency safeguards.

Labeling six-figure expenditures as "small purchases" is not a semantic change. It allows substantial public spending to occur outside the public agenda process, without Commission vote, and without real-time public scrutiny. The Finance memorandum characterizes these as "routine purchases," yet fails to distinguish routine operational needs from discretionary six-figure commitments. This change removes meaningful oversight from significant expenditures.

5. Prior approval is replaced with retroactive reporting, which does not constitute accountability.

The ordinance relies heavily on quarterly reporting after funds are expended. Reporting after the fact does not provide meaningful oversight, nor does it allow the Commission to prevent or condition expenditures. The Grand Jury repeatedly emphasized that systemic failures occurred precisely because issues were discovered too late, after harm had already occurred.

6. Expanded budget transfer and fund increase authority weakens fiscal control.

The ordinance authorizes the City Manager to transfer and increase funds up to $100,000 without Commission approval, provided a fund "remains in balance." This standard does not address policy intent, voter priorities, or interdepartmental impacts. It permits material reprioritization of public funds without public deliberation or elected consent.

7. Authority is expanded in areas historically associated with heightened risk.

Change orders, emergency procurements, and sole-source contracts are well-recognized risk areas in public finance. Expanding unilateral authority in these categories without enhanced safeguards increases exposure to cost escalation, reduced competition, and post-hoc justification. The Grand Jury identified failures in precisely these types of discretionary environments.

8. The ordinance directly conflicts with the Grand Jury's core recommendations.

The Grand Jury's findings consistently call for stronger oversight, independent review, reduced concentration of authority, and safeguards against chain-of-command pressure and retaliation. This ordinance moves in the opposite direction by centralizing authority, reducing Commission review, relying on internal reporting relationships, and eliminating pre-decision oversight. Rather than correcting the governance weaknesses identified by the Grand Jury, the ordinance recreates and reinforces them.

9. Experience and institutional risk further heighten concern.

The City Manager has served in the role for slightly over one year. While experience accrues over time, expanded unilateral authority combined with reduced oversight is least advisable during periods when institutional knowledge and historical context are still being established. Strong governance structures are most critical during such transitional periods.

10. No compensating safeguards accompany the loss of oversight.

Despite the breadth of authority expansion, the ordinance includes no cumulative annual caps, no independent review triggers, no enhanced audit requirements, no sunset provision, and no strengthened public-notice requirements. Authority is expanded while accountability mechanisms remain unchanged.

For these reasons, I urge the Commission to reject this ordinance or return it for substantial revision. At a minimum, any changes of this magnitude should originate from the Commission itself, be narrowly tailored, and incorporate safeguards consistent with the Grand Jury's recommendations to restore transparency, accountability, and public trust.

Respectfully,

Gregory and Jennifer Lloyd
805 United Street

Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer