

## BSO again asks for a hefty funding increase — more than Broward rejected last year



Broward County commissioners expressed sympathy for the sheriff's staffing challenges but signaled that this year, like last, is probably not the best time to expect a double-digit funding increase. "I'm looking at this and thinking, where are we going to get this money from?" said County Commissioner Nan Rich, seen here at an April 14 meeting. (Joe Cavaretta/South Florida Sun Sentinel)

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Less than a year after county commissioners shot down Broward Sheriff Gregory Tony's request for a hefty increase in his agency's 2026 budget, the Sheriff's Office returned Thursday for a new funding request — this time with a heftier increase.

Like last year's request, BSO's latest ask was pitched as an effort to boost the pay of thousands of deputies and support personnel who are constantly being lured by higher salaries offered by competing agencies, said Undersheriff Steve Robson, speaking Thursday at a County Commission budget workshop.

"BSO is lowest paid of all agencies in Broward County," he said, citing an average \$4,000 gap between deputies and officers with police departments in Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood. "We are just not competitive in the marketplace ... Law enforcement (at BSO) has lost 689 employees in the last three years." More than half of those said they were seeking "other opportunities," he said, suggesting inadequate pay was likely a major factor.

“The attrition rate is just not sustainable,” he said. “We are losing people literally every single week. BSO is not asking to be at the top. We’re asking to be competitive.”

Commissioners expressed sympathy for the sheriff’s position but signaled that this year, like last, is probably not the best time to expect a double-digit funding increase.

“I’m looking at this and thinking, where are we going to get this money from?” County Commissioner Nan Rich said.

Robson and BSO Colonel Oscar Llerena defended the funding request by emphasizing the intent that deputies would be the greatest beneficiaries. Llerena added that this year’s request would not have been as dramatic if last year’s request had been granted.

The Sheriff’s Office accounted for \$833.9 million of the \$1.8 billion [budget passed by the Broward County Commission](#) for the budget year that started Oct. 1, 2025, reflecting a 3.1%, \$22.8 million increase. It had asked for a 9%, \$79 million hike. [Tony appealed to the state](#) to force the county to cough up more money. With just over three months left in the fiscal year, that request is still pending.

This year’s request is for \$937.4 million, an increase of \$103.5 million.

Rich was not the only commissioner wondering how the county would pay for the hikes even if they somehow passed.

Commissioner Steve Geller, who has always been vocal about the inability to meet Tony’s growing funding requests, said the county can’t give BSO what it wants unless it makes crippling cuts elsewhere.

“Public safety is the single most important issue facing any local government,” Geller said. “But it is not the only issue. It may be our top priority, but it is not our only priority.”

The county has to save money for parks, libraries, healthcare, technical services, homeless services, and other needs, Geller said. “We’re not going to defund all of those to fund public safety.”

Adding to the complexity of the issue is the uncertainty over whether the governor will succeed in his effort to [eliminate property taxes for homesteaded residents](#), a constitutional amendment set to be decided by voters in November. If that passes, officials estimate Broward will lose 19% of its ad valorem tax revenue, or \$334 million.

Against that backdrop, commissioners wondered whether it would be responsible to promise BSO a funding stream it may not be able to deliver.

The next fiscal year begins Oct. 1. Last year, the county passed its budget in August.

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