



**2015 City Commission Retreat  
Loews Hotel, 1601 Collins Avenue, Poinciana Salon  
May 29, 2015**

City Commission Retreat called to order at 8:56 a.m.

In attendance:

Mayor Philip Levine  
Vice-Mayor Jonah Wolfson  
Commissioner Michael Grieco  
Commissioner Joy Malakoff  
Commissioner Micky Steinberg  
Commissioner Edward L. Tobin  
Commissioner Deede Weithorn

City Manager Jimmy L. Morales  
City Attorney Raul J. Aguila  
City Clerk Rafael E. Granado

Mayor's Chief of Staff Fatima Perez  
Assistant City Manager Kathie G. Brooks  
Assistant City Manager Mark Taxis  
Assistant City Manager Joe Jimenez  
Budget Director John Woodruff  
Fire Chief Virgil Fernandez  
Police Chief Dan Oates  
Deputy City Attorney Eve A. Boutsis  
Chief Learning and Development Officer Dr. Leslie Rosenfeld,  
Senior Management Consultant Katherine Gonzalez  
Office Associate Regis Barbou (Office of the City Clerk)  
Commission Aide Dani Bonini

In attendance from the public:

Joe Elizabeth Aleman  
Richard McKinnon  
Stanley K. Shapiro  
Robert Reilly  
Ron Starkman  
Craig Yakcpenic

### Welcome & Overview of Retreat

City Manager Morales gave an update on the initiative to assist legal residents to become U.S. Citizens, and stated that Miami Beach is the first City in the country to do such a program. New York City will soon start a similar program.

**Clerk's Note:** See Resolution 2014-2845 - A Resolution Approving And Authorizing The Mayor And City Clerk To Execute An Agreement With The National Immigration Forum To Work With The City Of Miami Beach To Assist Eligible Employees To Obtain Their Citizenship Through A Series Of Outreach Events, Workshops, And Civic Instruction.

Mr. Morales explained that there is a movement to identify legal residents and others qualified to become U.S. Citizens. There are a half million legal residents in Miami-Dade County that are eligible to become U.S. Citizens. City Manager Morales clarified that we were only referring to legal residents who are eligible to become Citizens.

Mr. Morales stated that this meeting will overview the City's budget, which will be discussed in detail at the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee meeting of June 3, 2015.

Ron Starkman (Budget Advisory Board Member) spoke. Mr. Starkman explained that the BAC is pleased with this year's budgetary process. Mr. Starkman encouraged the building of reserves.

### Budget Update and OpenGov Demo

John Woodruff, Budget Director, introduced Katherine Gonzalez, Senior Management Consultant, who will help him throughout the presentation. Mr. Woodruff spoke about the transparency tool: "OpenGov," which will add more interactivity to the City's website, and allow residents to research different aspects of the City's budget at their leisure. He added that the Cities of Miami and Fort Lauderdale have already implemented OpenGov on their websites.

**TO DO:** Issue a Community Press Release in the MB Line Magazine informing the public on OpenGov. **John Woodruff to handle.**

Mr. Woodruff explained that in June 2015, the City launched an interactive financial transparency portal, which provides the public with unprecedented access to the City's fiscal information. The portal provides online access to the budget, and displays multiple views of current and historic revenue and expenses down to the fund, department and object code level. This powerful visualization software transforms volumes of raw data into actionable insight and information, enabling better analysis and understanding of the City's budget and how taxpayer money is allocated. To access the platform, visit:  
<https://miamibeachfl.opengov.com/transparency>.

Mr. Woodruff provided an overview of the Current Service Level Budget (CSL), the Community Survey, and informed that the Environmental Scan will be ready on June 1, 2015.

Commissioner Malakoff asked for an opportunity to review the latest Community Survey, prior to its launch, because the previous sets of surveys had leading questions. **John Woodruff and Dr. Leslie Rosenfeld to handle.**

Discussion held.

John Woodruff, Budget Director, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the budget.

**Clerk's Note:** To view the PowerPoint presentation, please press [here](#).

Mr. Woodruff explained that on June 1, 2015, the City will receive the preliminary taxable values and on July 1, 2015, they will receive the certification of the taxable values. Mr. Woodruff proceeded to discuss the budget trends of the last nine years, and highlighted items such as budget increase, public safety budget increase, position cuts, and millage rate.

Commissioner Weithorn stated that there are many positions that are never filled, and asked how many bodies-to-bodies they have in regards to the jobs offered. **John Woodruff to provide vacancy list.**

Discussion held.

Mr. Woodruff commented that City services and budgetary needs must take into consideration the City's daily average population.

Discussion held regarding daily average population to the City of Miami Beach and how it is calculated.

Commissioner Tobin suggested the City Commission look at the Walker Parking Consultants study, and stated that the City needs to consider that many people coming to Miami Beach are commuters and visitors.

Discussion held.

John Woodruff, Budget Director, detailed property values, which rose 9-10% from the previous year. He stated that the figure is extremely high, given that a 4% increase in value is considered high.

Vice-Mayor Wolfson stated that this positive trend in property values will not continue, and it may even go the other way.

Commissioner Weithorn agreed with Vice-Mayor Wolfson and stated that there may be a correction in property values in the future.

John Woodruff, Budget Director, stated that they are trying to have "shock absorbers" for any future problems with property value corrections so that it does not cause a strong impact. He listed the enhancements taking place.

Discussion held regarding programs that will begin to be funded this November 2015.

John Woodruff detailed the CSL, which he explained is taking last year's budget, and determine what it will cost this year. He stated that he will be receiving the Property Appraiser numbers on June 1, 2015.

Commissioner Tobin stated that the Miami Beach Employees' Retirement Plan (MBERP) is putting more of a financial weight on the City than the Police and Fire Department plans, and compared the reduction numbers for next year's budget.

Vice-Mayor Wolfson stated that MBERP is dealing with unrealistic rates of return, and he is glad

the City Commission is dealing with this issue now, rather than facing massive unfunded liabilities at a later point in time.

### **Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK)**

City Manager Morales introduced State House Representative Erik Fresen, who has been invited to the retreat to present to the City Commission information on the VPK program.

Commissioner Grieco stated that the City Commission needs to address the issue of the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) and the 50 or 60 children in Miami Beach who are not in this program and feel left out.

Florida House Representative Erik Fresen explained VPK, which is a program that prepares children for school and enhances their pre-reading, pre-math, language and social skills. The State of Florida offers free VPK to children four years of age and younger. He highlighted the differences between VPK and Head Start, which mainly Head Start does not pay for schooling, but it is more for after school programs.

Commissioner Tobin stated that he was unaware that children under four were entitled to VPK, and he doubts many other parents know this.

Florida House Representative Erik Fresen stated that Miami Beach pays plenty in taxes, but it has not gotten adequate Returns-on-Investment. He gave examples of the City of Doral using Charter Schools, at no cost to the City. Representative Fresen described Miami Beach as a donor City.

Commissioner Malakoff stated that Public Charter Schools are the same as Charter Schools. They are built and then leased to private providers. The perception is that children with low IQs and troublemakers will not be accepted at the schools.

Discussion held.

Florida House Representative Erik Fresen stated that in the VPK program, some children have not found providers, because of lack of space. Mr. Fresen added that Miami-Dade County Public Schools must find suitable facilities that can be used.

Commissioner Tobin asked how the City can avoid being taxed double, and what can be done to have Charter Schools.

Commissioner Grieco stated that there are 55 families in Miami Beach without VPK. This is a specific Miami Beach problem due to the unavailability in the private sector. This problem needs to be solved soon. He mentioned the approximately \$400,000 the City has in the bank, from the waste haulers fund, that can be used to help these families get into VPK.

Florida House Representative Erik Fresen stated that this is not a funding issue, because VPK is funded by the State. If the children can be housed - a location found by Miami-Dade Public Schools - then the classrooms need to be repurposed.

Discussion continued regarding housing children in the VPK program at Miami Beach public schools.

Dr. Leslie Rosenfeld, Chief Learning Development Officer, stated that her issue is with the

limited number of Pre-K providers. The providers must be certified; otherwise, they cannot be reimbursed by the State. She explained that this is not a capacity issue, but a funding issue, because the cost goes beyond what the State covers, and as such, the local schools refuse to change their model.

Commissioner Tobin stated that they need to provide documentation that the State's model is insufficient.

Commissioner Weithorn stated that the City Commission needs to create competition, because the Schools Board has not demonstrated that there currently is competition.

Discussion continued regarding VPK.

Florida House Representative Erik Fresen excused himself and left the meeting for another engagement.

### **Budget Update Continued**

John Woodruff, Budget Director, continued his presentation on the budget.

Commissioner Weithorn brought up overtime payments, and asked how close they are from staying on budget. She asked whether 3.7% of City expenses could be cut without reducing quality of life.

City Manager Morales stated that he is currently asking all Departments to list 5% savings from their expenses.

Vice-Mayor Wolfson added that he would like the City to be on a more sustainable budgetary path. Commissioner Weithorn agreed.

John Woodruff, Budget Director, went over the Strategic Work Plan, which includes the Key Intended Outcomes, Policing Culture, and Public Safety Change.

Commissioner Weithorn stated that she is concerned with the projects the City intended to do, but never fulfilled.

Mayor Levine expressed his agreement; the City should look into the items on hold.

#### **TO DO: John Woodruff to provide LTC regarding items on hold.**

Commissioner Tobin asked if the Key Intended Outcomes are in fact working, and whether the City is closer to reaching its goal.

Discussion held.

Mayor Levine stated that there is a \$10,000 bicycle safety lane program that would protect bicyclists with different colored pavement.

Commissioner Weithorn stated that a protected bicycle lane would be a lot easier to have on the MacArthur Causeway rather than the Julia Tuttle Causeway.

Discussion continued regarding bicycle lanes.

Commissioner Malakoff expressed her concerns regarding the Scott Rakow Center's capability to accommodate all the teens that may go to it during the summer months.

Discussion held regarding to the location of the teen center. Possible alternatives discussed.

Commission requested additional information. **John Rebar and Office of the City Manager to handle.**

Discussion continued.

### **Munis/EnerGov Project Update**

Craig Yakcpenic and Robert Reilly provided an updated regarding the Munis/EnerGov transition. This is a two-phased project:

Phase One - Improve practices. For example:

- a. Expedite the hiring process;
- b. Simplify the fee structures;
- c. Transition to electronic payments;
- d. Improve Business Tax Receipt (BTR) process; and
- e. Reduce the high level overhead requiring multiple signoffs, without removing the necessary oversight.

Phase Two - Enhance technology

**TO DO:** The City Commission requested continuous updates on the progress with the implementation of the Munis/EnerGov Project. **Office of the City Manager to handle.**

### **Strategic Work Plan Initiatives**

Key Intended Outcomes (KIO) reviewed. Mr. Woodruff suggested adding, deleting and combining KIO.

- "Policing Culture" should be renamed "Public Safety";
- Add "Enhance Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness" as a KIO under Public Safety
- Remove "Enhance Pedestrian Safety Universally" under "Infrastructure."
- Amend "Elevate Walkability and Pedestrian Safety to Frist Criteria Of All Development Decisions, Including reconstruction and Planning." Under "Premier Neighborhoods."
- Add "Enhance Cultural and Recreational Activities" under "Premier Neighborhoods."

Consensus reached to bring item back as a resolution.

**Clerk's Note:** See Resolution 2015-29077 – A Resolution Adopting The FY 2014/15 Revised Amendment To The Key Intended Outcomes In The City Of Miami Beach's Strategic Plan As Set Forth Herein To Guide The Design Of Programs And Services Provided By The City.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.