

MINUTES
1st Budget Hearing
September 12, 2024
6:30 p.m.
Government Center
6601 Main Street
Miami Lakes, Florida 33014

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Town Clerk, Gina M. Inguanzo, called the roll at 6:31 pm. Councilmember Collazo, Councilmember Garcia, Councilmember Morera. Vice Mayor Fernandez and Mayor Cid were present. Councilmember Ruano joined the meeting via zoom at 6:35 pm and Councilmember Dieguez arrived at 6:39 pm.

2. MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Councilmember Collazo led the prayer.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Public Works Director, Mr. Omar Santos led the Pledge of the Allegiance.

4. ORDER OF BUSINESS (DEFERRALS/ADDITIONS/DELETIONS):

Councilmember Collazo motioned to adopt the Order of Business, and it was seconded by Vice Mayor Fernandez. All were in favor.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS: (13:08)

(Phonetic spelling of each speaker's name will be used throughout the minutes unless correct spelling is known.)

The Town Clerk, Gina M. Inguanzo, stated for the record that there was only one participant for public comments on-line.

Mr. Steven Herzberg, Councilmember-elect, participated in public comments via on-line. He stated that the proposed millage rate, keeping it flat, is the 4th lowest millage rate in Miami-Dade County, and he stated that the three town cities ahead of the Town of Miami Lakes, they have very different tax bases and different ways of having high assessments based off their commercial buildings, malls, condominiums. He stated that the millage rate now in the Town of Miami Lakes is doing the residents a service. He stated that lowering the millage rate would potentially harm

the residents and the level of service. He emphasized that he wants to keep -not the minimum level of service- but the best level of service. He stated that this town has an exceptionally low rate and with inflation and with increased cost for the Town, furthering lowering the rate could damage the level of service.

There being no one else wishing to speak, Mayor Cid then closed Public Comments.

6. ORDINANCES – FIRST READING:

- A. AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF MIAMI LAKES, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE MILLAGE RATE OF THE TOWN FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 2024, THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2025, PURSUANT TO SECTION 200.065, FLORIDA STATUTES; PROVIDING FOR DIRECTIONS TO TAX COLLECTOR; PROVIDING FOR NOTICE; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

The Deputy Town Attorney Lorenzo Cobiella read the title of the ordinance into the record.

The Town Manager, Edward Pidermann, read into the record the following statement: the proposed millage rate for Fiscal year 2024-25 is 2.0732 and this rate is the same as the current year. The gross taxable value for operating purposes is four billion, eight hundred and ninety-one million, nine hundred and thirty-one thousand and one hundred and six dollars (\$4,891,931,106). The proposed millage rate will generate nine million, six hundred and thirty-four thousand eight hundred and fifty-four dollars (\$9,634,854) in Ad Valorem revenue budgeted at 95% collection rate. The proposed millage rate of 2.0732 is 7.9% above the rollback rate 1.9208.

Councilmember Collazo made a motion to adopt the Millage Rate at 2.0732. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Morera.

During discussion, Mayor Cid stated that he is not proposing a full roll-back rate, but that he would like to see a 3% reduction in the millage rate. He then made a motion to do a 3% reduction in the millage rate. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Garcia.

The Budget Officer, Ms. Melissa Hernandez, answered questions posed by the Town Council. She stated that a 3% reduction in the millage rate means \$289,000 in revenues.

During discussion, Mayor Cid was asked where he would anticipate getting approximately \$300,000, without the residents losing level of service. Mayor Cid responded that he would get rid of the 2 Manager system – that he would get rid of one of them in the budget. He also stated that he would also take away the non-procured threshold- he would eliminate all the contracts that have not been procured and that are under the Town Manager's discretion, and this would decrease the number of contracts across the border.

The Deputy Town Attorney, Lorenzo Cobiella, answered questions posed by the Town Attorney. He stated that as per the Town Charter, there are specific provisions that discuss administration, and administration is with the Town Manager and that the job of the Town Council is to do policy. He stated that the Town Council controls the purse and that the

Town Council can eliminate line items but talking about particular provisions, the Town Council needs to be careful.

Vice Mayor Fernandez stated that his preference is to fund the \$289,000 from the amount that we are putting back to the sinking fund and to pledge to then fully fund the remaining amount into the sinking fund from the carryover.

Councilmember Collazo stated his thoughts regarding the sinking fund, and he stated that in years past, when the Town has had the luxury of having huge surpluses, they have been able to do that, but that unfortunately this year, the carryforward is not that ambitious. He stated that Town Staff has shared that it is approximately \$70,000. He stated that to remove the funding of the sinking fund at this point, would be undercutting future councils, and hurt our residents.

Councilmember Ruano then asked regarding the staffing and the proposal of Mayor Cid. She stated that the Town Council has the discretion to fund line items and that is just budgeting. Deputy Town Attorney Cobiella clarified that he had stated into the record earlier, that the Town Council can discuss to fund line items but, when you discuss particular positions or getting into discussions of personnel, you have to be careful. Deputy Town Attorney Cobiella ended up by stating that as far as line items, the Town Council has complete discretion to go line item by line item and make changes that you feel are appropriate.

After no further discussion, the Town Clerk called the roll, on Mayor Cid's motion, which was seconded by Councilmember Garcia, for a 3% reduction in the millage rate. The motion failed 4-3; Councilmember Collazo, Councilmember Dieguez, Councilmember Morera and Councilmember Ruano voted in opposition.

Then, the Town Clerk called the roll on the main motion, Ordinance in 1st Reading, Item 6A, motion to adopt the current Millage Rate, and the motion passed 4-3; Councilmember Garcia, Vice Mayor Fernandez and Mayor Cid voted in opposition.

- B. AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF MIAMI LAKES, FLORIDA, APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE BUDGET FOR THE TOWN OF MIAMI LAKES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025; PROVIDING FOR EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS; PROVIDING FOR AMENDMENTS; PROVIDING FOR CARRYOVER OF FUNDS; PROVIDING FOR THE INCORPORATION OF THE ADOPTED CAPITAL BUDGET AS THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT ELEMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

The Deputy Town Attorney, Lorenzo Cobiella read the title of the ordinance into the record.

Councilmember Collazo made a motion to move the ordinance in first reading as presented by Town Staff recommendation and Councilmember Morera seconded the motion.

Town Manager Pidermann presented a PowerPoint presentation and answered questions posed by Town Staff. He explained that the PowerPoint presentation highlights

modifications as a result of the conversations held during the Budget Workshop. He then proceeded to explain all the changes made since the Budget Workshop.

Town Manager Pidermann then introduced Ms. Melissa Hernandez, Budget Officer. They both answered questions posed by the Town Council. He emphasized that the only thing outstanding and not included in the PowerPoint presentation is the recently passed amendment to fund the LPR's from the General Fund. Town Manager Pidermann reminded the Town Council that this request was not included in the Budget Agenda, because it was recently approved at the Regular Council Meeting held on September 10th, prior to this Budget Agenda's publishing date. He stated that the Town Council would need to entertain an amendment to move and fund \$32,500 from the General Fund. He asked the Town Council to give Town Staff direction as to where make the cuts to be able to fund that amount from the General Fund.

During the discussion of the item, Councilmember Collazo asked the specific amount of dollars on the revenue side, in light of adjusting the unallocated fund balance ordinance, from being 16.67 to 15. The Town Manager responded the amount is a little over \$300,000. Then the Town Manager furthered explained that the fund balance revenue that is being utilized in this revenue would be \$48,035.00. Councilmember Collazo then asked what the projected carryforward amount is, and the Town Manager responded that the forecasted amount is \$74,000 -revenues over expenses.

Mayor Cid then asked where in the budget can we see the professional contracts that the Town Manager has discretion to award; he asked if there is a specific line item that shows these professional contracts. The Town Manager responded that there a very few professional contracts left- that through the years, he has been eliminating those kinds of contracts. It was explained that those contracts would show in the budget under the professional services account.

Councilmember Morera then made a motion to re-open Public Comments and the motion was seconded by Councilmember Dieguez. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Esther Colon came before the Town Council and stated that she is very upset with the budget because it is being proposed to take \$250,000 from the Capital Fund, which was designated for the senior center, and to put it under the General Fund. She also stated that the Town Council should start looking at salaries; that when she hears that the Town's employees -the ones that do the work, don't get COLA'S, something has to be done. She stated that it can't be that some salaries are administratively heavy, and that Town Staff is always in Town Hall doing the work. She also mentioned that in the area of aging, there is a lot of funding, and she asked for the seniors to have a home. She emphasized that regarding salaries, something must be done but that the Town Council has to start taking care of their employees' morale. She also mentioned that over 70% of the Town's services are being contracted.

Ms. Nancy Rogers came before the Town Council and stated that 14 years ago, she joined the Elderly Affairs Committee. She stated that the elderly have a senior center, and she asked the Town Council to not do away with it.

There being no one else for public comments, Mayor Cid closed public comments.

Councilmember Morera then stated that he knows the Town Council is dedicated and committed to providing a senior center, whether it be in the Graham's property or somewhere else, on an alternate location. and then asked for the Town Manager to provide clarification on the transferring of the senior center funds of \$250,000.

Town Manager Pidermann then stated that this Town Council, and the Town of Miami Lakes has valued our seniors for 25 years and that the Town of Miami Lakes hosts many programs for the seniors in the Mary Collins Community Center; he mentioned that this facility acts as a de facto senior center. Town Manager Pidermann also stated that at the September 10, 2024, RCM, Councilmember Collazo motion to have Town Staff to provide a backup plan, a contingency plan, in the event that the senior center that was promised to the town in the Graham's property (the originally called Senior Village), which is now being called Lakeside Village, is never provided to the town.

Town Manager Pidermann explained that Town Staff is going to identify whether it be an existing facility or some future facility, that Town Staff will continue to offer all the programming that the Town hosts for the seniors. He stated that there is half a million dollars sitting in the Capital Fund for the senior center, with the original expectation that the Grahams's would give us the shell in that development. However, he stated that the senior center on that property may not happen. Town Manager Pidermann then explained that in the Capital Fund of half a million for the senior center, \$250,000 of it came from the impact fees that are restricted, so they cannot be put into the General Fund. The other \$250,000 were monies that this Town Council transferred into that account, via a carry forward amendment one or two years ago, to finish the build out of the interior. He explained that in the proposed budget, Town Staff is transferring the \$250,000 of the General Fund dollars because the \$250,000 of the impact fees cannot be transferred. He stated that once Town Staff has a more complete plan with what is going to happen with the senior center, they will continue to devise a plan for a dedicated senior center.

After further discussion, Councilmember Morera made a motion for Town Staff to look at options of how to fund the \$32,500 of the LPR's and the motion was seconded by Councilmember Collazo.

Major Jose Gonzalez was asked to approach the podium. He answered questions posed by the Town Council.

The Town Clerk called the roll on the motion from Councilmember Morera for Town Staff to provide options to fund the \$32,500 of the LPR's and the motion passed 4-3; Councilmember Garcia, Vice Mayor Fernandez and Mayor Cid voted in opposition.

Then, the Town Call called the roll on the main motion, as amended, Ordinance in 1st Reading, Item 6B, and the motion passed 4-3; Councilmember Garcia, Vice Mayor Fernandez and Mayor Cid voted in opposition.

8. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Town Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.

Manny Cid, Mayor

Attest:

Gina M. Inguanzo, Town Clerk