

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item A-1
September 28, 2016
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

**Mayor Jim Cason
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick**

City Staff

**City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
Assistant City Manager/Public Safety Director, Frank Fernandez
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Police Chief, Ed Hudak
Union President, John Baublitz**

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz, Coral Gables Resident

Agenda Item A-1 [9:08:27 a.m.]

Presentation of the Coral Gables Neighborhood Safety Aide Program

Mayor Cason: Alright, the first thing we are going to do is have a presentation on the Neighborhood Safety Aide Program, and then we are going to go down and cut the ribbon on our five new safety vehicles. City Manager.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And Mr. Mayor, you know that we responded to your request for a full all-court strategy related to public safety involving all departments, involving clearly Police, Fire, the Emergency Management, but also Public Works, also Parks, all of the different departments, Information Technology that can bring together a unified strategy for the

community, so that the neighborhoods, so that the commercial district and that everyone feels very safe in a very already safe City. And so, several initiatives have been launched during the last year. You have a brochure that outlines them. Some of them included the neighborhood team leaders, so that we had neighborhood team leaders really own what was happening in the districts, communicating with the residents, giving them tips, but also hearing back from them what their needs were. Another strategy that was launched was Neighborhood Safety Aides. I will tell you, I don't know any City certainly in Florida, if not the country that has this kind of Neighborhood Safety Aide Program, where they are not there with a gun, they are there with a radio. They have AED train, they are CPR trained, but they are added eyes out in the neighborhood, so that our residents, our community can know that we are watching, we are a part of it, and we are communicating and can know that we are watching, we are a part of it, and we are communicating with our Police Department. The Neighborhood Safety Aide Program was budgeted and we thank you for four, and then you've asked us to continue to grow it. We are excited that we have two that have already gone through training. We had two that were in the process of final selection, but I will tell you they didn't pass the background check. We are not compromising our neighborhoods for an effort to rush in this kind of recruitment and training process. We have 200 hundred other applications, we are going to go through those, we are going to vet them, and we are confident that we'll have additional Neighborhood Safety members, but today we wanted to bring our Neighborhood Safety Aides forward. We have two that are out in the community. We've already briefed you, we have a third for night for temporary, that is out with our security, because of the delay of background checks that didn't come through, but our goal is to start in one area and grow it citywide. I think the biggest comment that we get from our residents are, when is it coming to our neighborhood?- not, why are we doing it? They understand this really high touch, high service that is a signature to Coral Gables. And so, with that I'll call both the Assistant City Manager, Director of Public Safety, the Police Chief, and I believe the Major in charge of patrols, because all three of them are a part of this program.

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: Mayor, members of the Commission, it's truly an exciting day for us as we launch our Neighborhood Safety Aide Program. They have been patrolling the streets, so today I'd like them to come up and introduce themselves to you, as well as we do here the electric vehicles outside, and I know that Commissioner Lago is very focused in making sure they are eco-friendly.

Commissioner Lago: I think the whole Commission.

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: The whole Commission sir, but you've been one of...

Commissioner Lago: I'll take the credit.

[Laughter]

Commissioner Lago: I think to me and my colleagues, I think every single time we talked about something that deals with sustainability it's a 5-0 vote. Any opportunity I can to reiterate sustainability, and I appreciate that you bring it up, it's important, in all aspects. Thank you.

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: So we are excited, we have the vehicles outside, we'd like to do a ribbon-cutting, if you will, and go out and take a spin around the neighborhood so you can see what they go through on a daily basis, but it's been well received by the community. I'd like for them to come up and introduce themselves, and give you a little overview of what they've seen and what they've heard from the community, so you get it firsthand. So Chief you can introduce them, I'd appreciate it.

Chief Hudak: As everyone said, our two newest members of what we believe is going to be a long standing program, so I'll let them introduce themselves to you so get a little bit of your background.

Ms. Tai: Hi, my name is Jessica Tai and I'm new to the City and I'm from Miami, but I don't live in Coral Gables and I'm very happy to be here, and I'm very excited and the residents are very excited that we are out there too.

Mayor Cason: Great.

Commissioner Lago: Perfect.

Ms. Lands: Good morning, my name is Carmen Lands, and it is an honor to be here to have been chosen to represent the Coral Gables Police Department, and I am happier than the residents and they are very happy.

Mayor Cason: I hope that all of the residents will get out and introduce themselves to you and you to them, because for this to work, as you patrol your neighborhoods, we want everybody to know who you are, the services you can provide. You've got defibrulators, you've got radios for any kind of problems, and even if you don't have a gun, you don't need a gun, which a radio is probably just as important because you can call in for whatever the problem is.

Ms. Lands: In the little time that we have been out there, they are already recognizing us and not waiting for us to wave, they are waving first.

Mayor Cason: Alright, that's great.

Ms. Lands: So they know who we are.

Commissioner Lago: I want to thank you also, Mayor if I may, the work that you are going to be doing is very crucial, especially in neighborhoods that have been affected with some minor issues in reference to car break-ins, a lot of them were left open, but the residents are really looking forward to this. This is the type of concierge service that sets Coral Gables apart from every other municipality in Dade County, so I think we are raising the bar, we are expecting a lot from you, we are expecting for you just to offer the quality service that I can see that you probably already do, and you are going to see that the residents in the City of Coral Gables are a special bunch, and I mean it. They are great people, they are really excited about the Police, they are really excited about Fire, they are excited about this new layer under Police. So thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Mr. Mayor we also have neighborhood team leaders here, which are a leadership portion of the zone, and Chief, if you want to introduce the neighborhood team leaders or Major Pedroso.

Major Pedroso: Good morning everyone. Well it's a pleasure to introduce, you've met them before, but to bring them forward, they are instrumental and have been instrumental in bringing this program forward, growing it, and they've been responsible for providing the training and the structure for our new Neighborhood Safety Aides. And that's Officer Joe Fierres and Officer Bo Williams, and they are under the leadership of Lieutenant David Lemon, so I just want to introduce them again to you and thank them for all the work that they've done to get this program moving.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: You'll also remember Officer Rhonda Jenkins; she has recently been promoted to Sergeant Rhonda Jenkins. She was a neighborhood team leader in the south and she has been blessed with mid-nights, so we suggested that she, while she's helping out as the new promotion happens related to Neighborhood Team Leader for the south, we suggested that she sleep in.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you. Can I ask one question before we go forward? I know we've got a few e-mails to do something with the security company or something else, and it was my understanding that the recommendation for using the security company came through...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: As a stop-gap measure, because of the delay that we've had.

Commissioner Keon: I wondered if maybe Chief Hudak could just tell us about that, because I understand it was at his suggestion that we were using a security company. I think people had raised some concern that they want our own police officers and whatever else. My understanding was is that you were very comfortable with that as a stop-gap measure until we can get through those other 200 applications to find the Safety Aides and the people that we need to be out there on the street.

Chief Hudak: The recommendation upon the spec that we talked about before was to how we enhance that. There were some calls from the community to actually add security guards that neighborhoods wanted to do. The decision was then made to supplement people using our FPI security company to put them out on the mid-night shift. So it wasn't the original proposal that we had talked about the Neighborhood Safety Aides, but then those people were put into place.

Commissioner Keon: They were put into place because of the difficulty in going through and finding the right people to do it. Is that group, the safety company that we use, is the security company that we use, have we used them before in the City?

Chief Hudak: I think that's the one that we have the contract.

Commissioner Keon: We have a contract with them?

Chief Hudak: The same people that we have here....

Commissioner Keon: So they are the same people that are here at City Hall and provide security in other parts of the City.

Chief Hudak: Correct.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: They are in City Hall, they are at 72nd Avenue, they are at City facilities, including garages. We have had great success with the firm, and so given the desire to respond quickly into the neighborhood and the resources, I supported the Chief's recommendation.

Commissioner Keon: OK. So it's perfectly acceptable to you as the Police Chief.

Chief Hudak: I mean it's not the ultimate, obviously we want somebody that can respond, but as a stop-gap measure I concurred with the recommendation that was put on there. There was a meeting, the Director, the Assistant Chief, I was out of town, and they had an assessment of the

evening and Major Pedroso met with the security company and kind of arranged the contract, we ran it out of their division from the supplements of the Neighborhood Safety Aides to pay for that, so that was part of that issue has come up. That was put into place; I want to say last Friday night – two Fridays ago, so there was a look at what the job description was, I wasn't present.

Commissioner Keon: I just want to make sure the residents that it's something that you as our Police Chief are comfortable with.

Chief Hudak: I'm comfortable with it in the short term. I don't think that's something that we should rely on as a Police Department. I think that the training and everything else that we are putting into the individuals that you just met is something above and beyond, that goes along with what Commissioner Lago said as far as what we are going to do.

Commissioner Lago: Sorry to interrupt you, but you mentioned the key word is temporary, and I mentioned it before, once we found individuals who within that list of 200 individuals who have applied for these positions, once we've met and we've qualified those individuals we are going to fill these positions, we are going to phase out, correct me if I'm wrong, we are going to phase out the security company in reference to the NSA's, and we'll supply them with individuals out of that list of 200, hopefully that we found qualified. They are always under the auspice and the guidance of the Police Department. We are not supplanting police officers, all we are doing is offering the police officers another set of eyes and ears on the ground, another set of boots, individuals who are talking to the residents, keeping contacts with people, following up on leads, making sure there is a Code Enforcement issue they can call, say look, there is a Code Enforcement issue, there is construction going on, on a Sunday, whatever it may be. Again, my intent and I want to be clear, this is temporary. I just want to be clear, and I think that my Commissioners agree with me on that issue that we are not going to have this as a long running program.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: The Neighborhood Safety Aides we believe is a long running program.

Commissioner Lago: I think so.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: The access to the security firm for a temporary basis was viewed as a stop-gap measure.

Commissioner Keon: And I just wanted to be assured...I asked the Chief that he has no problem with that. That you endorsed that and was my understanding you were comfortable in recommending that.

Chief Hudak: I was comfortable with the recommendation. This was part of – when we talked in the PSI meetings, and as far as problem solving issues, how do we address the issues that came up in Zone 203.

Commissioner Keon: To deal with it now.

Chief Hudak: And this was the recommendation that was made up through the chain, Major Pedroso was spearheading putting that together as far as the FPI contract and everything else like that. Is it the ultimate as far as the Chief of Police?- no, not necessarily. I think we are responsible for all the NSA's. What I am saying though is that on Robio we have an unmanned security car with cameras on it, and what I am concerned about is that, that starts to pop up throughout where residents are taking security measures into their own hands or having somebody with cameras sitting in front of their house. That was a conversation, e-mails that went out as far as two days ago, when I asked about it, when I saw the truck myself, so I'm concerned about that. These security guard companies, even ours, are not our employees, so I don't know what they are doing.

Commissioner Lago: And I want to be clear just so everybody is aware. I'm the one that notified staff in reference to the property on Robia that I guess the owners were out of town, or for some reason they required for there to be 24-hour surveillance with two giant spotlights at night and constant surveillance; and again, that's an area where I live, three blocks away from that home where we have overlapping security in reference to both the City of Coral Gables and the City of Miami, so we do pretty well. You don't see many break-ins, many robberies there, the City and the University of Miami have done a great job, but for some reason this resident felt that there needed to be a heightened vigilance and they hired this firm. Again, it caught me off guard; it caught several residents who called me.

Chief Hudak: It caught me off guard Commissioner. I didn't know it was there until you sent...

Commissioner Lago: And again, I would rather see the NSA's become standard protocol in the City under the auspice of Police and under the vigilance and leadership of the Police than have residents hiring private security firms to be outside their home. The City of Coral Gables no matter what anybody says, the facts are the facts, and the bottom line is as follows, this year we have the lowest crime rate in close to 20-something years. We dropped by 14.9 percent and correct me if I'm wrong, Mr. Fernandez, by 14.9 percent from last year and the year before we dropped by 9 percent. We have the lowest crime rate in the City's history, 20-25 years to some numbers, our police officers are doing an exceptional job, nobody will replace our police officers. I will never allow that to happen. The job of the NSA is to aide and assist the police

officers, to offer another layer, to offer another type of concierge service like we do on many fronts, backdoor pickup for garbage, all these services that our staff members do in reference to Code Enforcement, in reference to a litany of opportunities and services that the City provides that no other City provides. This is what sets Coral Gables apart. I agree with Commissioner Keon's comments and I want to be very clear that if you don't support this and the Police Department doesn't support using a security firm temporarily, I won't support it. If you tell me that you feel comfortable with this and the Police Department feels comfortable with this, for temporary, again I keep using that word, for temporary to fill the short term, I'll stand down and I will make sure that, again like we always have, we'll support it for the temporary time being.

Mayor Cason: What is the timeframe for going through the 200 to get the other three that we need?

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: We anticipate that within the next month and-a-half, or so, we should have some good individuals that will go through that process; there are 200 applications and we'll go through them now. I do want to add that...great, great value as the Manager said, no other community has this, it's an added benefit to the officers and more eyes and ears that all of you have said before. We've talked about it for a long time, it's been very difficult to find people like the ones qualified you see behind me here today, these are great, great two individuals that provide great added value to the City. We wanted to make sure that we tested on mid-nights as well, given the break-ins, and most recently the Chief and the departments have done a great, great job of apprehending individuals who broke into 14 vehicles. After they broke into that car, and Major Molina who is here today, did an awesome job in making sure that beyond the investigative interrogations, interviews, they actually asked these individuals why Coral Gables?- the ones that broke into cars, they asked them, why did you pick Coral Gables?- why that area?- why that block?- and we found out some very good information of how they think and why they chose certain areas; and Coral Gables for some of these car-hoppers as they call them, has become a crime of opportunity for them.

Mayor Cason: How many other cars of those 14 were unlocked?

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: It's my understanding that there were no signs of forced entry on any of the vehicles, doesn't mean they were locked or unlocked, but all of them had no signs of forced entry, is that correct?

Mayor Cason: So unless they had a magic wand to open the lock they were unlocked.

Chief Hudak: I don't know about a magic wand, but I mean...

Mayor Cason: Let's just use our common sense, they were unlocked.

Commissioner Lago: But that's important what the Mayor is saying right now and he's touching on a point that I think that we as a City, again the residents at the end of the day, they are the ones that are the ultimate responsible party in making sure that they close their cars, but when you look up the fact that, I think we had about 1,700 incidents last year in reference to crime, a major magnitude, a major portion, excuse me, is the correct word of those crimes that were committed could have been avoided. By the way, it's happened to me, it's happened to me. I've been one of those individuals that's run out of the car, I got the 2 year old that's running on the other side, she is going to run to the street, I leave the car door open, I get back into the car at 6 in the morning and guess what happens?- someone's been in my car, that's why number one, I don't leave anything in my car ever, and I make sure that I close the car at some point, that I make a point to go again before I go to bed, I click my alarm. We've just got to be more vigilant and at some point we also have to accept responsibility and nobody wants to hear that. As a community you have to accept responsibility and that's tough for me to say, because the easy route here is just say, yes, you know crime happens, and we are trying to do the NSA and the police are doing a spectacular job, lowest crime rate in 20-25 years, but we as a community have to accept responsibility. We can't put it on the police and say, the police have to do more, the police are doing a lot, a lot. We have the best police force in South Florida and you guys can only do so much, if the community isn't cooperating and close the doors, we don't have those 14 break-ins.

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: Well, we did find out from these individuals that the reason why they chose Coral Gables in that particular area is because they know that vehicles are left unlocked, that's number one; number two, is because the area is very, very dark and that's why they chose to come here according to them, these are the criminal mindset, but they also that night before they came and broke into those 14 vehicles, they had come in to break into cars, but they saw a police officer patrolling and seeing those patrols they decided to go to Kendall, so they broke into several cars in Kendall and they came back the next day. Our officers were patrolling, the Chief had...Major Pedroso had...unfortunately they can't be everywhere and we all know that. This is why the NSA's provide good value, because it's an extra set of eyes and ears.

Mayor Cason: This is why the Commission approved it and we approved this a long time ago.

Commissioner Keon: Absolutely.

Mayor Cason: So there is no doubt about it that this was not approved by the Commission, these are eyes and ears. I think they are going to be accepted and acceptable.

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: I firmly believe in this NSA program and I will tell you that the security guard, we don't intend to cause any type of frustration, we want to test the program further with those four, and it's a stop-gap measure, keep in mind that these security guards today provide services here at City Hall, they provide services at parking lots throughout the City, they patrol the area around the parking lots, they also patrol our parks, so it was an easy recommendation from staff to be able to push that forward and say, why not try this out in an extended area, and I believe it's a good added process to go through. If it doesn't work there is no harm no foul, we'll just go back, as soon as we hire the next set of NSA's we'll put them on the street, if it doesn't work we'll reassess and we engage. The good thought is that there is something being tried to be able to make the City safer and stronger under your vision.

Mayor Cason: Will the Safety Aides have calling cards that they can hand out or something to each person in their area; they are going to stay in the same area, right?

Chief Hudak: The Safety Aides or the security?

Mayor Cason: The Safety Aides.

Chief Hudak: They'll actually have cards. The one thing I think unlike the Neighborhood Team Leaders, once their eight hours are over, and I don't know if we want them to be fielding phone calls as a police officer would, they will have cards to identify themselves, but I don't think we'll give them the same access that we would, I don't envision it, so to speak.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

Chief Hudak: To answer your question in a nut shell, I can't take credit for putting the security guards out there, it was not my idea; however staff, we had discussions about the way it was. I'll report back to you as far as the background checks and everything else that we've done to keep in line with something parallel that we are doing with our NSA's, again, not our employees versus our employees. My hope is that we have control, and those employees that are driving around in our cars that you'll see that represent us, are our employees and I think that goes along with what the Manager has done as far as getting away from the temporary employees to full-time employees and that's our ultimate goal.

Commissioner Keon: But even though it is a contracted employee, aren't they answerable to the Police Chief?

Chief Hudak: Well they are answerable through the contract, but yes, ultimately if they are driving around in these cars.

Commissioner Keon: They still take direction from you, and you still have the right to supervise and to ensure if they are not doing what you think they are supposed to be doing that they be replaced, you have that authority, right?

Chief Hudak: Yes. We have a model set up as far as our supervisors are checking on them.

Commissioner Keon: Yes. So you have the authority to either keep them or to dismiss them if you don't think that they are working as you would like to see them working as a Police Chief, because if you're not comfortable with it, I'm going to tell you right now I will ask them not to do this. If you can tell me you are comfortable, I'm fine with it. I'm not out on the street, I'm not the Police Chief, I'm relying on you to say to me, I am comfortable with this as a temporary measure.

Chief Hudak: Let me check the backgrounds, because I haven't seen that and see exactly what the rules are and what we've done, because we haven't actually gotten that far along, and I'll report back.

Commissioner Keon: OK. Before this Commission is over, meeting is over today, you'll come back and tell me that either you are comfortable, or you are not, while we still have time to discuss it at this meeting.

Chief Hudak: Yes, I will.

Commissioner Keon: OK. Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Comfortable with the use of....

Commissioner Keon: Uses of the security aide as a temporary measure.

Chief Hudak: We are talking about the FPI...

Commissioner Keon: OK. Come back and tell me.

Commissioner Slesnick: Before you get off of this subject too. You are saying that this is a stop-gap measure until you hire two more people for the midnight shift as a Safety Aide?

Chief Hudak: Well there's been no discussion on our level about putting people out on midnights; this was something specific that was geared toward what we had seen over night. So the original plan unless it's morphed into something different, has been the days and afternoons and working on those hours, we never really originally planned in the NSA program to have them out there overnight, something we can look at as well.

Commissioner Slesnick: You do have a regular police car patrolling the neighborhood?

Chief Hudak: Yes. This doesn't take away from the people that we have in the zones. As a matter of fact, along with Major Lawrence we had the midnight shift patrolled by motorcycle cops up along that area, and they stopped 100 people and wrote 88 tickets in a five hour period of time.

Mayor Cason: Wow.

Chief Hudak: So we are doing a lot of different things, again, I can't take credit for putting the security guard out there, it wasn't my idea, but as we continue to try and find different things that will work and help deter and give us a set of eyes. Right now they drive our cars, our carts I should say, and they have our radio to talk to our dispatchers on and off name frequency for a set of eyes.

Commissioner Slesnick: So we are going to keep the security guards, because you have no plans for putting the Safety Aides up there at night.

Chief Hudak: In the long term, I don't know. I don't plan on having somebody out there on midnights on a regular basis as far as a security guard, that's something that we would have to look at, if it makes sense for us to do.

Commissioner Slesnick: What's the plan, I mean if you are not going to be keeping the security guards up there at night, are we just going to say, we'll keep them up there until the crime rate, or until the break-ins cease?

Mayor Cason: That's never going to happen, there's never going to be a time that there is not going to be break-ins...

Commissioner Slesnick: I know, so are we keeping security guards. I just want to know why we are keeping...?

Commissioner Lago: We need to be a little bit careful, because again, this is being televised and some of the words that we use today can scare people. There is not a wave of crime here, OK, let's be clear. When did these break-ins happen?- the 14 break-ins.

Commissioner Slesnick: Labor Day weekend.

Commissioner Lago: The individuals were caught. Has this happened again?

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: No. As a matter of fact in the last seven days since the NSA's have been out with the security guards, we've had zero break-ins.

Commissioner Lago: Zero. Let's also – I'm in favor of having the NSA's and I keep going back to this point, and I'm going to reiterate it and it's never going to change, it's going to be the same story, it's like a broken record. These guys work, excuse me, these ladies currently work under the auspice of the men and women in blue, OK, they work for them, they answer to them, they answer to the City Manager, they answer to staff. They are going to do a job, which is sorely needed. Again, they will never receive, we should honor them with proclamations in the future and awards, but they'll never be recognized for the crime that they deter. There are no statistics that say, hey, 500 crimes didn't happen today or this month or this year, because we have people who are on the street being vigilant and interacting with people. Do you understand how happy it is it makes people on my block when they know their garbage men, when they know the person they are dealing with, when the person takes that extra moment to close the gate, when the person takes that extra moment to actually just be careful in reference to a statue, in reference to the blade of grass, their landscaping, that's what we sell in the City of Coral Gables, I hate to use the word sell, but that's what the City of Coral Gables is about, that's why people move in here. My biggest concern here is not the program; I love the program. Everybody I've spoken to loves the program, especially the residents in North Gables who deserve this, because they've been dealing with a lot of issues for a long time and they are Coral Gables residents, and they haven't gotten their just due. My biggest concern here is the issue of the security company going from temporary, which again is a perfectly stop-gap measure to being permanent, and from the fact that, I want to make it clear, these people are not police officers, these people are NSA members who what they are supposed to do is just provide eyes and ears on the street. So that's why I'm going to keep repeating that, because if we get away from that, then I'm going to have a problem, and I want to make sure that the Police Chief along with Commissioner Keon said is deems it appropriate to use this company temporarily; and just so the residents are aware, when are the highest probabilities that somebody will come and break into your home, which by the way, I think there was like 20 home burglaries last year or 21 home burglaries, and we caught 19, was it 22 and we caught 20, I think the number was?

Chief Hudak: No, those were robberies.

Commissioner Lago: Robberies, I'm sorry, I apologize, but again, 20 out of 22...

Chief Hudak: Residential burglaries were down and continue to trend in the downward direction.

Commissioner Lago: Downward direction. When is the hottest time in the City for people to break into cars and break into homes?

Chief Hudak: We've seen fluctuations, sometimes its overnight; we may not see too many overnight residential burglaries unless it's somebody where there are people in the house.

Commissioner Lago: During the day, correct?

Chief Hudak: Correct. So during the day we have them. Vehicle burglaries, the car hopping that has been prolific, and what we talked about a lot on the dais, has been the overnight hours.

Mayor Cason: Three in the morning.

Chief Hudak: Because people are home, cars are home.

Mayor Cason: Doors are unlocked and they left something on the front seat.

Commissioner Lago: And let's be honest, again, I'm not targeting North Gables, but North Gables is a working community, a lot of parental units are going to work, so a lot of the homes are left open, it's an issue. So again, I think this is a necessary measure the City is taking and it's just again, a quality of life issue.

Commissioner Slesnick: I didn't hear the answer to my question though. You are looking to hire two more Neighborhood Safety Aides out of the 200 that have applied, but those are only for the daytime...

Chief Hudak: Days and afternoons.

Commissioner Slesnick: So there are no plans now, right now for the stop-gap measure of hiring security guards unless we have more officers out there in the evening, is that true?- or we have more motorcycle police officers?

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: Commissioner, the purpose of using these security guards in that one area is to validate and test and see if it's valuable to add additional presence to that neighborhood. If we see it as positive results from that, then we'll have to reassess and see whether we hire more additional Neighborhood Safety Aides, as the Manager said to...

Commissioner Slesnick: You mean to work at night.

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: Yes ma'am, to expand the program, but we are validating and we are assessing that now. I do want to put something in perspective; I want to make sure we don't have any miscommunication. Many months ago, these communications took place and maybe we forget what was happening, but I will tell you, I take full responsibility for the NSA Program. If it works it works, if it doesn't work, I brought that to the table, nobody else.

Commissioner Slesnick: Most neighbors going to like it.

Commissioner Lago: It's going to work.

Commissioner Slesnick: It's going to work. It's going to work.

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: If it works then I'll ask you to please pass that credit on to the Chief, pass it on to the staff. If it doesn't work then pass it onto me. I'll take full responsibility, and if it works pass it on to them. And will say this, the security guards is only a measure to try to help out the situation, and to help out the men and women out there that they cannot be everywhere, and it becomes very, very difficult. That particular night when these 14 cars were broken into, we've probably done a great, great job year round of preventing -- car break-ins in that area has been in a downward trend significantly with the efforts pushed forward by Major Pedroso and Chief Hudak and Major Molina and the rest of the staff, but I'll tell you that night, that officer patrolling, they tracked them down, tracked her down to where she was the whole night. She was patrolling, she was doing every check just south of that location, so it's not like they are not out there. The Chief has plenty of officers out there, every zone has an officer, right Chief?- every zone has an officer. This is not to replace at all, they are supplements.

Mayor Cason: Frank another perspective too. We've got all departments in the City with their eyes open during the day going particular points, so in essence this is another set of eyes on top of the garbage collectors, the Code Enforcement people, they are going to the areas that are potential targets and if they see anything they call in. So it seems to me it's a stop-gap measure, it's yet another set of eyes.

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: We have put together, as you all are aware, we've done many presentations for the Commission, a citywide public safety strategy, that means that I think every employee by now has been trained or been talked to, coached, directed, guided on how to be an extension to that public safety mindset. So we have waypoint checks that we put out and that basically means that, as an example, the Fire Department has a waypoint check, so Major Pedroso puts out every other week a different location that he sees an area of concern. And after every call that the Fire Department goes out to, on the way back to the Fire Station they go by that call, and the Fire Chief directs them on that. I like that public safety...Public Works and if they are out there working on the street doing what they do to provide services to the City, they are also protecting the City what to look for and how to report it. Our Code Enforcement officers get those waypoint checks as they are out there enforcing the Code; they are going by those critical locations that the Police Department deems to be an area that needs higher presence or higher vigilance. This is a citywide approach, the NSA is an extension of that, the security guard is a measure, one measure, and mind you it's just one guard that's out there, one, to see and validate does it work?- is it viable to have someone out on midnights patrolling to augment what the patrol officers are doing, to add value and security and peace of mind to those residents, that's all it is. So we will validate it, if it doesn't work then we'll stop doing it, it's a simple process.

Commissioner Keon: Mr. Fernandez, I'm really very happy that you are here. I'm glad that we have brought somebody in that can bring us new ideas and more things that we can do to protect the people that live here in the City of Coral Gables that we do have a staff-wide safety plan and everything else. So, I'm very grateful to you. As Commissioner Lago said, when you wanted to give him credit for the fleet, he generously shared all of his credit with all of us, because we know that when we work together and we have a collegial relationship on this dais, it is better for everyone in this City, and we know that your Police Department does the same thing. I know each and every one of you work together to improve the quality of life and the public safety in our community. So I thank you very much for working as a team and for all of the work you do, and you'll let us know at the end before it's over. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: At this point, we are going to go down and cut the ribbon, we are way behind, and then we'll come back up and if we want to continue the discussion we will. Let's take care of the ribbon cutting for the vehicles.

[Note for the Record: At this point in time (9:43:14 a.m.), the Commission went outside the view the new electric vehicles].

[Meeting Resumed 9:54:06 a.m.]

Mayor Cason: I think we have Maria Cruz, who wanted to speak. I'll give her two minutes if she's out there because we are way behind, we have a time certain at 10:15 a.m. and we have a number of other people that are waiting, so two minutes.

Ms. Cruz: My name is Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road and I can tell you that this morning I felt like I was back in Cuba. I have never been so insulted, let me tell you what happened and this has nothing to do with what I was going to say, what I was going to say is going to be second. While I was standing there, because I couldn't see, because we had several bigger people than me standing in front, I was texting someone, actually I texted a few people and I got a text from somebody that I don't know who it is saying, stop texting – eyes. So I looked around and I found a Police Major was keeping track of what I was texting. Are we under surveillance here? Do I need to get a security company to protect me? This is sad. This is sad when we have a police officer surveilling somebody who's here as a resident in a free country. This is not Cuba Mr. Cason and that should not be allowed. OK. I am very impressed with all of the beautiful things that we did this morning, all the beautiful ways that we are going to keep our City safe. You know what the solution to that is?- hire enough police officers, so we do not need “Mickey Mouse” officers, I'm sorry, number one. I spoke to Elsa yesterday; actually I've spoken to her several times and different than what the City Manager told me that there are 17 vacancies. Let me tell you how many vacancies we have in the Police Department as of yesterday – 16 Police Officers, 2 Majors, 1 Assistant Chief, 1 Internal Affairs Commander that's coming up soon; there are 5 people on military leave, that is up to 25 people. Let me tell you also, that from January 1st to yesterday, we have hired 10 people plus one that's on the way, but you'd be surprised to hear that yes, we have hired 11 – you know how many people have left?- exactly 11, so we have made no progress, absolutely zero progress. Now...

Mayor Cason: One minute.

Ms. Cruz: OK. Now, out of the people that we have hired there are 8 in the Police Academy. You know I was a teacher for many years, the fact that they are in the Police Academy doesn't guarantee that they are going to successfully complete. So that means that we are down not 25, we are down 33 at this point, OK, enough smoking mirrors, OK. If we had enough police officers, if we have our budgeted positions covered we would not need all this, number one; number two, if in fact, the idea of having security guards for a short term was a good idea, why didn't it come from the Police Chief?- and as much as you all want to believe that it came from him, he said it very clearly, it did not come from him. It came from the chain, and he did not see anything wrong with it. I worked for a big institution many years, you know what?- when your boss tells you what to do, you do it. OK.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Ms. Cruz: This is sad.

Mayor Cason: One more speaker, two minutes, Ariel Fernandez.

Commissioner Lago: Hold on, hold on, hold on...

Mayor Cason: No disruptions please.

Commissioner Lago: Mr. Fernandez, Mr. Fernandez, give me one second, you mind taking a seat for a second please. I apologize.

City Attorney Leen: You are allowed to text Commissioners, please be clear about that.

Commissioner Lago: Craig, Craig, Craig, if I may, just give me one second and I apologize. This is a problem. I wasn't going to say anything, because – Maria texted me, she texted me, now we have a problem, now we have a big problem, because the issue here is, I take great pride if any resident calls me, writes me a text message, writes me an e-mail, everybody in this room who has written me an e-mail, has called me, has gotten a response from me, and my colleagues again, can take also great pride in responding. So if anybody calls me and they write me a text message saying that they want to be recognized, I don't have an issue with recognizing them, but I have a concern when the resident comes to me, when the resident comes up to me at the intermission while we are in a moment of celebrating something spectacular in the City, and they tell me that while they were texting me they were being watched by another police officer. And let me be clear, as a son of immigrants who came to this country, who came to this country with nothing, a lot of you are not aware of it, because a lot of you are multi-generations deep in this country and I have the utmost respect for you, my parents came from Cuba with nothing. My family was imprisoned in Cuba, OK, and we fought for human rights in this country, not me, because I benefited from my parents coming here and fighting on my behalf, like Commissioner Quesada whose parents and family fled their country. When a resident tells me that they are being surveilled, they are being reviewed, they are being stared at while they are texting me, every single resident can have a conversation with me at any time of the day, and right now the interaction that you had with that resident is completely and utterly inappropriate, both of you are inappropriate; both of you should not even be having a discussion like that, because at the end of the day you are too much of a professional to be interacting with a resident in that capacity. So what I'm telling you is, guys today is about celebrating what we are rolling out in the City, the fact that we are supporting the police officers, that we are offering the residents another tool to make Coral Gables special. Why are we bickering back and forth?- and please, I don't want to hear about factions in the Police Department and we are texting, so and so is speaking with a

certain Commissioner on the dais. If you want to text me on the dais its real simple, 786-397-3957, call me, text me, I look forward to hearing from you; and if you have information about how we can make our City better, text me, because by the way, when I look around I see two people there who text me, two people here who text me, it's a lot of people in this room that text me, every single day, and if they are not complaining about the City, they are saying listen, we can do this better, look at the following piece of property to buy as a park, a lot of people have great input. So if Maria Cruz is texting me in a meeting, she is texting me and I will read exactly what she did to put it on the record, very clearly, and I put it on the record. OK. The comments are, "please recognize me to speak on the Commission, they won't allow me to speak," and I said, I will do my best. Again, that's my job; my job is to interact with every single employee and every single resident in this community and every single business owner, and I will never stop doing that. So let's conduct ourselves appropriately like professionals, OK, by the way, this is not Coral Gables behavior.

Mayor Cason: We are going to – you want to say something and then...

Chief Hudak: I want to put this to rest right now as far as, I will look into it, we will have them look into it, we'll talk to Ms. Cruz through Internal Affairs and we'll air that out in the spirit of transparency and that's all I can...

Mayor Cason: And you are going to be coming back at the end of the day to give us your view.

Chief Hudak: Well, I don't know if I'll have the answer on this, but we'll push it forward on that and we'll look into this, and we'll move on from there, so we'll have those answers for you as we go forward for what you guys...

Mayor Cason: We are going to continue this discussion later on today. We are so far behind right now we have some time certain, so those of you who want to continue to speak on this, it will be later, right now we are going to move to Agenda Item A-2 and at 10:15, we have a gentleman from the University of Miami is going to be speaking on Zika.

[End: 10:02:54 a.m.]

[Note for the Record: This item resumed at 11:36:32 a.m.]

Mayor Cason: We have two speaker cards, which will close the discussion on the Neighborhood Safety Aides, we have three minutes each, normal amount of time, Ariel Fernandez and then Mr. Baublitz.

Mr. Fernandez: Thank you Mr. Mayor, thank you Commissioners. I want to start off by thanking all of you for the work that you do for our City, you play an integral role in our daily lives, and particularly in our public safety. I want to take the opportunity to thank Vice Mayor Lago, I'm sorry, Commissioner Lago...

Commissioner Lago: I wish I was Vice Mayor, but I got overlooked. Mayor what happened?

[Laughter]

Mayor Cason: You were being groomed.

Commissioner Lago: I was not even up for consideration and tried to make Commissioner Keon Vice Mayor one day and...

Mayor Cason: I'll make you the honorary Second Vice Mayor.

Commissioner Lago: No, but he's back, he will get mad. He's watching from the Commission window. He gets mad if you take the Vice Mayorship away from him.

Mr. Fernandez: I want to thank Vice Mayor Quesada, Commissioner Lago, Commissioner Slesnick, and Commissioner Keon for responding to my e-mails regarding this issue. The public safety of our residents should be our most important role here in the City Commission. Making sure that residents go on vacation and don't have to worry about their cars being broken into, their houses being broken into, should be our number one priority; and I think this Commission has been proactive on approving the overtime work for our police officers to be patrolling our streets when we don't have the necessary number of police officers. We still have a large number of vacancies, the number that was given to Channel 10 was 17, the number that I got was about 36 vacancies in the Police Department at present moment. This is a large number, and this is something that needs to be addressed. As a resident as somebody who was a victim of the Labor Day crime spree, it's really a slap in the face to see the security guards are the ones that are patrolling our streets at night and not police officers, and to hear on this dais a little while ago that one police officer patrolling the area north of Coral Way between 57th and 42nd Avenue is enough police officers on a weekend that is traditionally a high crime weekend. That is unacceptable and having the security guards, yes, does it make it seem like there is more security in the City?- absolutely, but these security guards are not armed, they are not police officers, they cannot conduct an arrest, they cannot hold somebody who was committing a crime, they can't prevent a crime. All they can do is patrol our streets and inform police officers, so they are no more than a resident with a cell phone, and unfortunately that is what we are seeing. We had a beautiful ceremony downstairs, cutting a ribbon for these carts, beautiful little carts, but they

should be used for something else. We should not have a security guard from a private agency with a logo of Coral Gables Police Department. As far as I know that's impersonating a police officer. This is unacceptable, and as a resident, as somebody who was a victim of this crime, I ask this Commission to look into what is happening right now under the leadership of Frank Fernandez as Public Safety Director in the City of Coral Gables. I've brought this to your attention numerous times, each and every one of you I've met with you, some of you have been proactive on the issue and I appreciate that, but we need to take action now. The safety of our residents needs to be our priority and it has to be our priority now.

Mayor Cason: Thank you. Mr. Baublitz.

Mr. Baublitz: Good afternoon Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, Madam City Manager, Walter, good to see everyone. We were approached with the NSA program during the day. We understood what the program was about and how it was going to operate.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Did you say during the day?

Mr. Baublitz: During the day – that's how it was originally started.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I'm sorry, I just couldn't hear you.

Mr. Baublitz: That's OK. And we were part of those discussions; we knew they were going to be City employees. Once we found out about what was going on with the security guards driving around at night, we asked for a meeting with the City, they've obliged with a meeting on Friday to discuss our concerns, but I wanted to share some of my concerns with you so you kind of have an idea where we are coming from. Our officers go through about a year's worth of training and continuous training to our job. What the NSA's are doing during the day is not what the security guards are now doing at night. They are patrolling zones, they are acting as a police officer, and that's a concern for us. We don't know what training they've had, what backgrounds have been completed, not really sure what we are working with here. And it brings up other safety issues for us as far as if they do come across something and our officers show up, again, that's where the training comes in, do we need to worry about them now?- do we need to worry about what they are doing?- and honestly, they are not armed, they are out there, they could become victims themselves, so we have great concerns about this. There are solutions and we've done it in the past. Again, nothing against the program that is set up originally during the day, but if you are going to ask people to do the job of a police officer, make sure it's a police officer, make sure it's someone trained that knows what they are doing, that understands where they are at in the City, understands when they turn the corner they need to know what street they are on, what they are looking for, what's out of place, that's why you send us to an academy, that's why you give that

extra training when we get back. So my solution would be is, do what we've done in the past. If you have a spike in crime or if you see a trend in crime, add an extra officer to that zone, if you have to pay the overtime, listen, I'm pretty sure the citizens of Coral Gables would appreciate that little extra expenditure to make them safe; and then you are getting a police officer, you know what you are getting at. So it could be an extra marked vehicle, it could be unmarked units, but there is a solution to this. I will go in further detail and our concerns on Friday with the City, but I'll close with this. In our opinion, it's not a good idea. There are a lot of issues with it, so we'd appreciate it if you allow the police officers to do our job. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you, appreciate it. So, City Manager you are going to have a meeting...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: The meeting has already been set.

Mayor Cason: OK. And you'll come back to us and tell us?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Absolutely. We have – we know that the Commission has fully supported and provided whatever resources are necessary, we understand that; and so, we look forward to meeting with them and talking through their concerns.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Commissioner Keon had a question earlier of Chief Hudak, I don't see him in the room now, is he nearby?- is he here?

Commissioner Keon: Are we done?- have we finished?

Commissioner Lago: I don't think we are finished.

Mayor Cason: No, no, we'll finish in a few minutes.

Commissioner Keon: It could be at the end of the day.

Vice Mayor Quesada: OK. Because I want to know the answer as well.

Commissioner Lago: I want to mention a few issues that we basically haven't discussed. I don't want to disparage under any circumstances the security company that we have here. They've done an exceptional job for many, many years, a lot of portions of our City, which can be manned by security guards, do not have to be manned by police like City Hall. They know their job. If something were to happen in City Hall you call police, we are not going to put a police officer to sit at a desk in City Hall, we need that person on the street as a beat, and I want to reiterate, I am a supporter of the NSA program, it works, the proof is there and I mentioned now

we are using security guards for the time being, and I am implore staff to get through those 200 applicants as quickly as possible and do not compromise on quality, and let's plant them. But in reference to the staff that we have here that we are using the firm, what is the name of the...?

Chief Hudak: FPI.

Commissioner Lago: FBI?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: FPI.

Chief Hudak: P-P-P.

Commissioner Lago: I have the utmost confidence that they are beyond professional, and not only do they serve a service where they are here at night, but they are also very cordial with staff, they are very cordial with people who come and visit the City, people feel that they have a little bit of, they give a little bit of law and order and protection. I just want to be careful we don't –, because we are saying we keep saying that we don't want to use the guards, the guards serve their purpose.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I got that. I agree to disagree. The union said something, Mr. Baublitz said something that I hadn't thought of, but he helped me remember it again. The overtime, I feel like you've told me before that the officers working too much overtime, and now you are telling me that they could be doing this additional overtime to do this, so I'm a little confused. Can you clarify that for me? I'm sorry Mr. Mayor, if that's OK with you?

Mayor Cason: That's fine.

Commissioner Lago: And also clarify also the issue too of vacancies, because I forgot to mention that in my statement and that was the number one point that I wanted to make. Again, some people are saying 17, now 30, now 36; those are not the numbers that I'm getting.

Commissioner Keon: I would rather hear the number of vacancies from the Manager.

Commissioner Lago: And I want to hear from the Manager too, but again, you're a police officer in the City of Coral Gables, you may work and be directly with the union, but at the end of the day, if you are telling me something that would be fact, because if not you are misleading me. So I want to make sure, what is the real number and how are we getting to these numbers; five people away on leave, because they are serving this country, again, they are not here serving us, do we consider that position vacant?

Commissioner Keon: No.

Commissioner Lago: How is it?

Vice Mayor Quesada: First, clarify that if I'm misremembering something or not.

Mr. Baublitz: No, no, no. I had mentioned that the overtime and the work in the past. What has kind of occurred over time is patrol, there were vacancies and they were being filled with overtime, now patrol is a set number. We are at 72 – 72, so that has filled the vacancies. Now the policy is the won't go under the 72 now, so that's helped fill some of the overtime.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Got it.

Mr. Baublitz: But we've always done – and there is a difference between constant overtime, because we are short and then overtime, because like I said we have a crime spike in our trend and we want to address it and you do it for a couple of days or a couple of weeks to address it that way. So I hope that answers your question on that one.

Vice Mayor Quesada: OK. So then what I took from what you just told me is the circumstances have changed.

Mr. Baublitz: They have changed.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Got it.

Mr. Baublitz: But with having that 72 also means that we aren't able to fill other positions in the police department, so bike patrol might be short, CID might be short.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Got it.

Mr. Baublitz: There are different units that aren't being covered.

Mayor Cason: But we've always said that you will move people around depending on the problem to solve in that day or that shift.

Chief Hudak: The deployment of when there are incidents of crime throughout the City is where we are going to put our resources, whether it is overtime or adjusting schedules. I think the concerns that were brought up previous where we were holding people over unexpectedly.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Define holding people over.

Chief Hudak: If I'm working afternoon shift and I'm scheduled to get off at 11 o'clock, and we don't have the staffing...

Vice Mayor Quesada: You move that person to the next shift.

Chief Hudak:...a junior person, which was the concern, was the junior person, because everything is by seniority, you don't have a choice, you are working midnights.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Got it.

Chief Hudak: So, I believe we've rectified that situation and the President was correct in saying that we have a minimum staffing of 72 that was recommended by the Division Commander we talked about. So if that goes below 72, take the five people that are deployed, those count as vacancies because we have to fill those positions, so I may be taking detectives or motorcycle cops or somebody else to put in there to make sure we always have 12 people on the street three shifts a day.

Commissioner Keon: But I think what we have to remember are those five positions that are not here, although they may not be currently here, you are obligated to hold those positions for them.

Chief Hudak: Yes...

Commissioner Keon: So although someone may not be present, you cannot refer to them as vacancies, because they are filled, they are filled.

Chief Hudak: There are not bodies here.

Commissioner Keon: They are protected by federal law to be filled, and we can't turn around and put someone in that spot, we cannot do that.

Chief Hudak: Correct.

Commissioner Keon: So you know what, this issue of people that are on furlough or that have been assigned to fight the war in the military, you include those numbers in your issue of vacancies you are being duplicitous.

Mr. Baublitz: First of all, I'm not saying that those are vacancies.

Mayor Cason: Some people have today said they are vacancies.

Mr. Baublitz: What I will say is that to answer Commissioner Lago's question, and I'm not part of HR and I'm not sure exactly the exact number of people hired. I can tell you I believe that we're probably at 16 officers down, but that number – you've got to look at it, officers down and budgeted positions. We are also two Sergeants that just retired in September, there are two Major's positions, there is a Lieutenant Affairs Commander position, an Assistant Chief position, so those are all budgeted sworn officer positions that aren't filled. Now we can't fill them or we are probably going to have issues filling them, because we don't have the officers on the road. So when we hopefully promote the two Sergeants coming up, hopefully in October, that's going to take two more officers off the road. So those officers have to be backed up, so that is an issue that is a concern. I hope that answers the questions of the vacancies. Now you do have to take into account and we do take into account the fact that there are eight people in the academy and that's a good thing, but they are not helping us right now in the road. So when you add that and then the five people on military leave, they can't help us right now, they are in training.

Commissioner Keon: So what do you do about that? What do you do when you take, when you go through a search and you go through a process and you hire people, and you want to ensure that they are the best, most qualified people in an applicant pool and you hire them, you do the background checks before you give them a gun and a car, and the ability to take away your civil rights, and you send them to the academy, you train them, you take them out, you assign them to an officer and you do it. So like what are you supposed to do?- you have temporary people come in? I don't understand.

Mr. Baublitz: I'm not sure why, honestly Commissioner, I don't understand why you are getting so upset about this. What I'm trying to tell you...

Commissioner Keon: Because you continue to talk about vacancies and you, and the public is listening to you believes that we are not making the effort to fill the things, that's what's happening. That's the unintended consequences of your discussion and that's not what you wish to convey, and you wish to convey that the community is safe and that everything is being done to staff our police department, what you're saying isn't doing that. You're not doing that.

Commissioner Lago: I think you are also falling short on one issue. Not only is this community safe, we are the envy of every community in South Florida. You haven't had hard crime in this community in I don't know how long.

Mr. Baublitz: OK. I was asked a question.

Commissioner Lago: But I just want to be clear.

Mr. Baublitz: No, no, no. I'm trying to answer the question that...

Commissioner Lago: We would all love to have every vacancy full and be at capacity.

Mayor Cason: Not only in Police and Fire – we have 93 vacancies...

Commissioner Lago: Just so people are aware, because I have people writing e-mails saying, you invested on the sculptures or you are investing on Miracle Mile, you should be investing in police. Guys they are budgeted, they are budgeted. We are out there trying to hire people. We've also already had a long discussion and we've tackled some of our, in my opinion, a little excessive requirements like how many letters you need of recommendation to get a job here, if whether you have one parking ticket, I'm sorry, one driving ticket, again staff is looking at that and making sure that we are a little bit more flexible. We are not going to relinquish or basically put ourselves in a situation where we hire somebody that's not appropriate to represent the City of Coral Gables. I'm not going to look past somebody who is qualified based on the fact that they only gave me six letters of recommendation versus twelve, and if staff ever comes to me and tells me that's the issue that's going on here, then we have a problem.

Mayor Cason: Let me ask you because this is an area of your expertise. People throw numbers around all the time; we are always going to have vacancies for one reason or another, not only in Police and Fire, but across the board. We budget for them, this is where our overtime money comes from, because the money that we would spend for the person goes back into the overtime pot, we've given you all the overtime you need to play with to fill vacancies as we move forward in attempting to hire the best people. My question is, you had an observation a couple of months ago about the question of the speeding tickets, and I think we addressed that in the brochures, is there anything else that you think we could do now to recruit?

Mr. Baublitz: Yes – and let me go back and start from the beginning. Everything I've give up here and I've said has been fact. The vacancies are the vacancies; you can bring up the HR Director and she can tell you the vacancies, she can show you the list, they have it printed out. Nothing in here should be considered as misleading or I'm trying to scare anybody, first. Secondly, it is important to know what our men and women are doing to keep the City safe without the full resources.

Mayor Cason: You are doing a great job.

Mr. Baublitz: And I appreciate that, but that is the eight people in the academy, which is a great thing, they'll help us one day, but they can't help us now and that's the point I'm trying to make. The people in the military serving our country, God bless them, and we thank them for their service, but they can't help us right now, and that's what I'm trying to say. When you have the vacancies that we have and then you add the people that they just can't help us at this moment, and that could be people on light duty or disability that affects the performance and what we can do as a law enforcement community.

Mayor Cason: Let me ask you at that point. Given all of that's correct, what more can we do to fill the vacancies? You are talking about a reality that there will always be certain vacancies, whatever the number is it's going to change by day, probably somebody is sick, somebody died, somebody went on DROP, so you are never going to have a number that's not moving. The question is what else...?

Mr. Baublitz: What you need to do, and this is my opinion, I've also in the past given this Commission credit for mandating the twelve officers in the 1-8 zone, so I've given this Commission credit, and I've said it so that the citizens in the community know that that is one of the things that has helped reduce crime and we've had the vehicles, the marked vehicles in the zones. What we need to do and I know that it seems like everything comes back to bargaining, and currently we are bargaining with the City, but you have to be competitive. This is a great, great City, it is a great place to work, and I've said it and I'll say it again; I've been able to support my family and have a good living protecting the citizens of Coral Gables. I love this City, but the circumstances when I got hired and when a lot of the other officers got hired has changed. You have today, the County I think is graduating a class of 144, City of Miami, I was just at a, what we call our District Six meeting with other FOP's, they graduated two or three classes very recently; and the issue is you've got to be competitive. I'm not telling you that we need to be number one, that we need to be the highest paid with the best benefits, but I'm telling you, you have to be competitive. You have to be competitive with Miami-Dade County, with City of Miami, Miami Beach, if you want to get the recruits, because our standards are higher. So when you have higher standards and lower benefits that's an issue.

Commissioner Lago: But let me ask you a quick question. Again, correct me if I'm wrong, I've sat in several meetings with our staff and I've been made aware of our benefits package and this Commission took the necessary measures to raise pay for our newest and youngest recruits police officers, so that put us in a position out of 34 municipalities that we are ranked, what are we ranked right now?

Mr. Baublitz: I don't know what the ranking is right now. I know that City of Miami, Miami Beach and the County just all signed new contracts.

Commissioner Lago: My understanding was that I think we were like six or seven out of 34 municipalities, OK. Again, I'm not speaking for the Commission; I'm speaking for Vince Lago now, let's be clear about that. If you have the opportunity to work in the City of Coral Gables and be a police officer in the City and deal with the caliber of resident and business owner that you are dealing with here, where there is no hard crime and where you are paid an honest wage, and we have raised the salaries of police officers, you are telling me right now that you wouldn't want to be a police officer in the City of Coral Gables, but be a police officer in another City where you come face to face on a daily basis with crimes that have not occurred in the City, I apologize. My number one goal besides providing an honest living and making an honest living is making sure I make it home to my family and to my two young girls, and I'm not being overly dramatic, but at the end of the day, I have gone on patrol on four occasions with the City of Miami, I have gone to Overtown, I have gone to Pork and Beans, I have gone to Liberty City, I have gone to Alapatta, I have seen what those police officers have to go through. I have been to all the calls that don't happen in the City of Coral Gables – the drug sales, the prostitution, the murders, the stabbings, I have been there and it's happening all over this County and it's not happening here in this City, and all the police officers that are on the night calls are all young, fresh, out of the academy that represent the City of Miami and they are doing the hardest to protect the residents of those cities. But when you are a City of Coral Gables police officer it's a different level of individual that we expect here in the sense of, you have to be sensitive to Coral Gables needs and we have raised, we have raised significantly the entrance pay for police officers in this community, and correct me if I'm wrong. I want staff to tell me that I'm wrong today or that I'm correct. Mr. Fernandez tell me that is the truth or not, because I need to know, because we need to debunk some of these myths that we are not paying people appropriately, is that true, yes or no?

Public Safety Director Fernandez: Commissioner, we are in the process right now of negotiating with the union, I don't have the ranking of the department. I do know and I was not here, I've only been here for 15 months, so the last negotiation as I understand it, they increased the base salary or the maximum of 14 percent, that's my understanding.

Mayor Cason: That's the same argument that you are using now....

Commissioner Lago: I don't want to get into negotiations and I got that, but this Commission and again, I'm speaking for Vince Lago, I don't want to get any of my colleagues in trouble here, the Vice Mayor is an attorney, he likes to interject and save our behinds, because he does a good job of that, but I want to be very clear, this Commission listened and said that for us to recruit

and bring in the best officers we need to raise pay, so we raised pay by 14 percent. If there are other issues that you need to make me aware of that basically, so you have less crime in the City, you deal with a different type of criminal in this City, you have higher paying, now you are falling within a bracket of top ten in this community, tell me what is the problem why people don't want to become officers, is it the backgrounds, is it they don't like to deal with certain people, is it they don't like to deal with this Commission, they don't like to deal with me, what is it?

Mr. Baublitz: First of all, and again, I'm going to try to start from the beginning. The last contract we signed it was a 12 percent increase that was several years ago, but that 12 percent was, because we contributed more to the pension, you remember we went from zero to ten percent, but also we took a five percent pay cut...

Commissioner Lago: But let me explain to you, but let me stop you, because I don't want to get into those issues right now. I don't want to get into those issues, because then I can go back at you and say, this Commission is the first Commission in 90 years that's paid the unfunded liability down on top of that. I could have spent that \$4 million, I could have given it to the residents in this community which deserves it, I could have paved more roads, which we did, I could have fixed more sidewalks, I don't want to get into that. The bottom line is, my understanding is, what do I need to do? I'm not going to lower your pension contribution, so don't ask. I told you that to your face.

Mr. Baublitz: We have not asked for that.

Commissioner Lago: My question is, what do I need to do, excuse me on second, what do I need to do, give me tangible things that I need to do, so that I can get people to come to this community and be proud of being a police officer here, because the people we have on this force today are the best police officers in this County. Tell me what I need to do to attract the best?

Mr. Baublitz: I've always said that this is by far the best City to work for, we have great residents, but when you're 21, 22, 23 years old you are not thinking about the residents; you are thinking about going out there, being a police officer, serving your community, fighting crime, trying to put the bad guys in jail, that's what you are thinking about. And I want this to be clear to everyone, the City of Coral Gables is a very safe City, police officers are out there doing their job, but don't ever mistake that we are still in Dade County. We run across criminals, do you want to say bad people, people that stab people, murderers, we run across them all the time. My officers, the men and women of this police department have done things and seen things that people up here will never see. So it's one thing to say that you went somewhere else and you saw these crimes happen or you heard it on the radio, it's another thing, and it might not be on the

same volume, obviously as some of these other cities, but my men and women in this department still do that stuff. They still encounter people with guns...

Commissioner Lago: Just so you are aware and the Chief is aware of this. I've ridden with the City of Coral Gables police officers and I'm extremely proud of the individuals that we have representing this community, and I've seen it in the City of Coral Gables. I've seen people come into the City of Coral Gables and leave our City, and they were committing crimes in the City and were following them with the City of Miami and the Chief is very clear of that, our Public Safety Director and our City Manager is very clear of that, I've told them what was going on. At the end of the day that's not in discussion here. I'm asking you to give me a solution; give me a solution how I can help the men and women who protect us or individuals who are considering coming to Coral Gables say, I want to work, I want to be proud, I want to work for the City of Coral Gables. If they are looking for more crime then they've got to go somewhere else, because we don't have bank robberies, thank God, we don't have any armed robberies.

Mayor Cason: Let me suggest this, you are going to be having meetings with the City Manager on Friday, if you have any other ideas other than the things we've been discussing over and over and over again over the last few months, to equipment or technology or anything else we can do let us know.

Commissioner Lago: Can I ask you a question, one thing, I want it in writing, I want it in writing, and I want you to answer my question in writing, I want you to answer my question in writing, because I want it to be memorialized and I want every Commissioner here to see it, because I don't want to deal with rumors and I'm hearing this, and so and so is saying this. I want real tangible facts.

Mr. Baublitz: I will be happy to give you in writing, but I will be happy to tell you here right now.

Mayor Cason: Just do it in writing.

Mr. Baublitz: I need to respond, because you asked me over and over again a question; I hope I get to answer it. The multiplier is a huge issue.

Mayor Cason: We are not going to get into union negotiations, I'm sorry. City Manager...

Commissioner Keon: Mr. Baublitz, we said that we do not bargain from the dais.

Mr. Baublitz: But you asked me, let me answer.

City Attorney Leen: It's getting too specific. Ultimately the City Manager is the bargaining agent for the City.

Mayor Cason: Thank you for your comments. We'll look for them in writing; we don't want to get into union negotiations, which we are getting very far into right now. Whatever thoughts you have as to how to increase recruitment, please let the City Manager know, let us know any other way. We think we've done everything we can; there are vacancies, there will always be crime as well, so if you think we're never going to have a crime, never going to have a vacancy, you're wrong, you're living on a different planet; and I'd like the City Manager to have final comments on this and then the Chief, if you'd like, because we'd have to move on other matters.

Mr. Baublitz: If I may, before closing, if there isn't issues just look around you and see the other departments how they are hiring and then ask yourself why we are not hiring, that's all I ask. Thank you very much.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you sir.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Mr. Mayor it's an important discussion, so important that you all have an Executive Session today after your legal Executive Session. I have heard back from our negotiating team that negotiations are going well, they are going to continue to go well, we are confident that we'll reach a contract that works for everyone. I just needed to comment on the issue of vacancies. When the comment was that there were two vacancies, two vacant major positions, we are having Acting Major Lawrence and Acting Major Ellenport serve in that capacity for right now, correct Chief?

Chief Hudak: Correct.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: On the issue of the Assistant Chief vacancy, it's been explained to me that that position has been vacant since 2009, is that correct Chief?

Chief Hudak: That's correct. That's correct.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: On the issue of the IA Commander, it is a new position that you allowed to be funded, so that is in the recruitment process, so that is an additional position. You also in, I believe 2013 and 2014 increased the total compliment of police officers by an additional eight and those positions are included in the 17, 16 vacancies.

Chief Hudak: That's correct.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: You just hired a certified officer from Atlanta and I believe that with that certified officer they come sooner, they don't go through academy, and so they are not included in the 17 count, correct sir?

Chief Hudak: That is correct.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And then on the issue of the decisions associated with the major positions are being filled, the Assistant Chief position is on hold, the IA Commander is in the recruitment process, no selection yet, but it's in the recruitment process, so that we can continue to make sure that we've honored your patrol, number of people on patrol. So at any time if the numbers fall down below 72, what is the procedure that you follow?

Chief Hudak: I select personally who we are going to put back in there based on whatever the contract may be temporarily, so I don't push that down, because it affects and I'm responsible for everything. When we have a vacancy somebody moves on, somebody is going to be gone for a three to six month period of time, I will decide who from what area within the department will go to patrol for that time being.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: So at all times there are 72 officers there and you have the authority to tap whoever you need to make sure that happens.

Chief Hudak: Yes.

Mayor Cason: And you have the overtime you need to, if that's part of the mix as well.

Chief Hudak: Yes. The overtime again, the only overtime numbers we can't touch in salary savings to your point Commissioner Keon, is anybody who is in the military, that money is put off to the side and that's not anything that we can legally touch, we understand that. Everything else that's paid for, the task force and any other kind of objectivity things that we need to get done in an objective manner, I should say, is we have been allowed, because of the Manager, because of you all have allowed us to do that and we continue that staffing issue. Everything else and as I'm being briefed, to go back to you questions this morning, I'm being briefed on what backgrounds we've done on the security guards that are driving. My answer to you all is, I'm going to take it week by week, I'm going to get this information about what it is. I have some concerns about, and this is something that I'm going to address through the Major about if a security guard yells for help how do we know where they were at. We have them in an area if

they can't get on those radios; it's a little bit different. We know if somebody comes on the radio for City Hall and we have an identifier, we know the security guard here has an issue, if they are permanently stationed. It's a little bit different on the roving, so these are the questions that I've asked, I'm going to get those answers. I understand that, you know what are the quote-unquote rules of engagement, and Police Chiefs don't like to say rules of engagement, but rules of interaction I would say, so we are looking at that. I will give you an answer through the Manager, obviously about where we are going, what I decide to do on that. To answer just two other questions – We can put our applicants through the most rigorous process and we have, we always have, and we will continue to do that. At the end of the day and having been here since you've appointed me, I have told you all from the beginning in my opinion, the biggest threat to our agency was the hiring, we had to get our staffing up. So now, the only thing that's changed in that is that now there is a heck of a lot more competition. When 140 senior level people from the City of Miami walk out, when 400 officers from Miami-Dade estimated to walk out on one day, we are now going after everyone, so (a) how do we make our recruiting more attractive?- I think we are working on that, we are doing a lot of it, but at the end of the day no matter how wonderful or how much we put them through, if they can't get through the first six months then I have to fire them, and we have. So our process is fantastic, we are constantly tweaking it, we are applying it to everyone, which raises the question of the security guards of how much have we done more so; and this isn't a shot, I don't want it to be a shot at FPI, they've done a great job, they continue to be very responsive. We've given them a different task. As soon as my staff gives me the information then I'm prepared to answer that question in more detail on where we've been.

Mayor Cason: That's fair.

Chief Hudak: Everything else is negotiations.

Commissioner Slesnick: I understand on motorcycle patrols, we're supposed to have 11; we have maybe 6 or 7.

Chief Hudak: That's correct.

Commissioner Slesnick: And that's what I'm really concerned is speed, enforcement, and so forth and regulations in Coral Gables and I keep getting letters from people that have speeding on their streets and we are talking about lowering the speed limit, which we haven't done yet, but I really would like to see traffic enforcement as far as catching the speeders, and I know you've caught a lot, but if we don't have the motorcycle police officers out there what are we doing?- are we recruiting more motorcycles?

Chief Hudak: We are looking at the six part-time positions that were put into the budget going forward, and they are going to be specifically on traffic.

Commissioner Slesnick: And I appreciate that we have those in the budget, but are we hiring those people?- are we actually getting those people?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Excellent question. So the Chief had to attend an emergency court hearing yesterday, and so he was not able to attend the problem solving initiative meeting, but Sergeant Alemont gave his presentation with over 1600 tickets having been issued. The motormen and the other police officers are doing a really good job. He explained to me that in many instances and it was interesting, because I asked the question at the PSI meeting, he said, in many instances neighbors or residents feel that there is speeding, they go and they use their radar gun, I'm not an expert on it, and they call the resident out with them and he gave as an example yesterday, how fast do you think this guy is going?- and the person would say, it looks like 50 miles per hour, and he shows it on his radar gun and it shows 32, that was his yesterday report. So there is a perception...

Commissioner Slesnick: And I've been practicing driving 30 miles an hour.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I understand Commissioner, and I know you are going to be successful at that.

Mayor Cason: Very successful – 25 miles.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: The other piece of it that he has shared with me, they have the pulse of the people that are concerned about traffic and speed and volume in their neighborhoods, and from his mind, because I asked him I said, don't look at them, what do you think that the City should be doing to help, and he said that it's a volume issue, not a speed issue and you've got a \$300,000 citywide traffic, multi-modal transportation plan to help with that, but the important thing is Public Works, the Police Department, all of the different departments are working really closely together; and the issue of the FPI and they have been doing a wonderful job, just so that the Commission is aware, in the old days security used to report to Public Works, love Public Works, but that doesn't make sense. So today where does the FPI contract report to?

Chief Hudak: Well its going through the Patrol Division, the contract itself is working as well...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: But the Police Department manages that. No disrespect to our new Public Works Director, but we needed it to report to Police and they manage that contract, and I just felt that that needed to be clarified.

Mayor Cason: Thank you. Anything else you wanted to mention on this?

Chief Hudak: To Commissioner Lago's point, and I say this a lot and it's something I don't think a lot of our residents realize, and I know Commissioner Lago and I have had this conversation, although we may not have the frequency, we have the same imminent threat being that your police officers in the history of this department, we have suffered per capita, we've suffered more officers killed in the line of duty than any other department in Miami-Dade County. So with an average of 41,000, we've lost nine officers in the line of duty, killed in the line of duty in this City, going back to 1925, so from the beginning we have to train them differently in the sense that their skill set may not be, because they are not always on edge, but at a moment's notice whether it's a roving security guard or a resident whose husband is yelling from inside the house, our officers have to be ready to make those calls, and we have to train, and I think that's why you saw yesterday in the budget there is more training dollars in for us and everything else like that...

Mayor Cason: A new vehicle.

Chief Hudak: The new vehicle, yes. We've upgraded and again, we are going to be the only one that has a vehicle that you approve today in Consent, the Bear Cat, that has a fire extinguishing system on it and that's so we can safely if we have somebody, and we've seen these kinds of trends throughout the country where somebody will set a house on fire with another hostage inside. So this is something that I thought we needed to do and the director brought it up as well, so we are upgrading our SWAT capabilities. So, I appreciate everyone's concern. Again, my position hasn't changed on hiring is our biggest threat to the department and will continue to move forward.

Mayor Cason: To be continued, I'm sure.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much.

[End: 12:17:22 p.m.]