

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-5
October 10, 2023
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Melissa Castro

Commissioner Ariel Fernandez

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Deputy City Attorney, Stephanie Throckmorton

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

Agenda Item E-5 [11:50 a.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission amending City Code Chapter 2 “Administration,” Article II “City Commission,” Section 2-29 “Compensation of Mayor, Commissioners, Travel Allowance, Office Expense, Car Allowance,” to adjust the compensation and expense allowance of Mayor and Vice Mayor and to eliminate the car allowance for Mayor and Vice Mayor and providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and an effective date.

(Sponsored by Mayor Lago) (Co-Sponsored by Vice Mayor Anderson)

Mayor Lago: The final item before we go to a quick lunch will be E-5.

City Commission Meeting

October 10, 2023

Agenda Item E-5 - Ordinance of the City Commission amending City Code Chapter 2, Section 2-29, to adjust the compensation and expense allowance of Mayor and Vice Mayor and to eliminate the car allowance for Mayor and Vice Mayor.

City Attorney Suárez: E-5 is an ordinance of the City Commission amending City Code Chapter 2, "Administration," Article 2, "City Commission," Section 2-29, "Compensation of Mayor, Commissioners, Travel Allowance, Office Expense, Car Allowance," to adjust the compensation and expense allowance of Mayor and Vice Mayor and to eliminate the car allowance for Mayor and Vice Mayor and providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and an effective date. This is a public hearing item. The Deputy City Attorney will explain what the ordinance provides.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Good morning.

Mayor Lago: Deputy City Attorney, thank you for being here.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Good morning, Mayor, Vice...

Mayor Lago: Thank you for your work on this.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Mayor and Commissioners. As the City Attorney mentioned in the title, it's pretty straightforward. This ordinance adjusts the compensation and expense allowance for the Mayor and Vice Mayor and eliminates the car allowance and it sets forth those reductions in the Code. The Mayor and Vice Mayor salaries return in the Code to the 2022-2023 compensation plus CPIW.

Mayor Lago: Again, Madam -- I think it's pretty self-explanatory. After the raises that were provided, I want to be very clear on the record. Myself and the Vice Mayor -- the Vice Mayor will probably make some comments on the issue -- we'll only be accepting the CPI adjustment. We will not be moving our salaries from where they currently stand for the increase, and we will not be accepting the car allowance or the local expense allowance increase, which in my case is a \$3,600 increase. And I will not be accepting the \$8,446 car allowance or the \$23,000 and change increase to my salary, which would mean a total of -- again, I don't have the whole total here, but it would be a pretty significant amount. Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Well, I'll just highlight a couple of things that I said in as far as the reason I chose not to vote for this item on the budget. Number one was the process that was used, the lack of transparency. Was I aware that there were some discussions about having a raise? Do I believe that elected officials overall, including those in Tallahassee, are underpaid in the county for the amount of hours they're putting? Yes, I do. But when you have three different numbers being discussed as far as salary increases and no discussion item on the agenda, no ordinance that the public could have participated in, and no opportunity for public comment as to whether this should be a valid item or not, I cannot, you know, accept the money on that basis because then I'm becoming part of the problem and I don't want to be part of the problem. I want open discourse on all these issues so the public can weigh in. So, it's based upon the process that was used and that I am declining this raise. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, do we have any comments?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor. Maria Cruz.

Maria Cruz: Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. Mr. Mayor, it seems that you choose what you're going to talk about very carefully. Let's talk about salaries instead of discussing the elephant in the room. All the rumors, including your public comments, public comments in front of people that had nothing to do with administration about you getting arrested. And that was made recently. Mayor, I do not know what your dealings are, but you need to stop the smoke and mirrors and the innuendos and discuss publicly what is out there in the media. The *bochorno* that you have brought about because your chosen candidates did not win. I think enough is enough. I think the salaries have been discussed to the maximum. Any media that would take it has been approached. Anyone that would hear it has heard it. I think it's time to move on and stop the divisiveness.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. Have a wonderful day. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: I'll entertain a motion.

Commissioner Fernandez: I would like to comment.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, go ahead.

Commissioner Fernandez: Mr. Clerk, did you receive the email I sent you?

City Clerk Urquia: I can, sir, and we're trying to see if we can run. So, make the request and we'll try -- we'll do our best.

Commissioner Fernandez: All right. This is now the fourth meeting in a row that we discuss this item. Let's not lie to residents, though. Let's call it for what it is. This is an attempt by the Mayor and the Vice Mayor, who are up for re-election, to limit the number of people who can potentially run against them in our next election. But the election is over a year and a half away. You're Mayor today, you're Vice Mayor today, but we have no assurances that'll be the case tomorrow. You have both said you do not wish to accept the compensation, and just like Donald Trump and John F. Kennedy, you can choose to redirect the funds to any City department or any charity. But bringing this back up for a fourth time is not about your compensation, is it? Over the last month, you, Mr. Mayor, have been calling in favors to Spanish television and radio, which are not watched by or heard by Coral Gables residents, in order to portray false crisis and deflect from the real issues people are concerned with in our City Beautiful, issues I know residents have spoken to all of us about. I've also heard from members of the media who have told me that you've had your henchmen go out and try to bully them into compliance when they have written articles you disagree with. Is that something the Mayor of Coral Gables should be doing? I don't think so. Residents are concerned about the articles they have been reading in the Miami Herald, the Real

Deal, Political Cortadito, article after article over the last six months questioning your actions and business dealings. But that is not all. You have been in full control of the Commission for years. Now you're in a position where you have three individuals who are willing to vote their conscience and prioritize residents' initiatives over so-called legacy projects or pledging allegiance to you. Your response was to take the airways and publicly attack your colleagues who haven't voted the way you wanted them to. Let's talk about what you've said. Are the videos ready? The Commissioners are uneducated. Please play Video 2. There's no audio.

City Clerk Urquia: It'll play here, but it won't play.

(Video 2 played.)

Commissioner Fernandez: Commissioner Castro has a PhD. Commissioner Menendez has a law degree. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and International Relations and spent 13 years working in the United States Congress. I'd say that's far from uneducated and unprepared. Number two, you said the Commissioners do not work. Please play Video 3.

(Video 3 played.)

Commissioner Fernandez: Every member of this Commission puts countless hours of work for this community without counting their full-time jobs and other commitments to the community. Who are you to say that we don't work?

(Video 3 replayed.)

Commissioner Fernandez: Number three, you attack the integrity of the late Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick and Vice Mayor Bill Kerdyk. This one really upsets me. Please play Video 3. I'm sorry, Video 4.

(Video 4 played.)

Commissioner Fernandez: Casting shadows of doubt about someone who is deceased and cannot speak for herself in order to defend herself is unconscionable. Number four, you criticize the first of its kind Senior Relief Grant Program, which provided immediate relief and aid to seniors below the poverty line. Please play Video number 5.

(Video 5 played.)

Commissioner Fernandez: You criticized it for being too small an aid, but your 5 percent millage rate cut would have only aided the wealthiest in this community and provided these seniors with a relief of under \$20. I accomplished this with the help of this Commission in just five months in office. In 10 years, you never gave them a penny in relief. Number five, you even went as far as saying, the Commissioners are thieves, please play Video number 6.

(Video 6 played.)

Commissioner Fernandez: You may disagree with us, Mr. Mayor, but falsely accusing members of this Commission of being thieves because they are not in your pockets is a far-fetched even for you. As if this was not taking things far enough, I can tell you one thing, you and I have disagreed on many things, but I can tell you that I wholeheartedly disagree with your view of women in our society. Last Saturday, during our launch of the City's Downtown Express Trolley Tour, you said that, and I quote, "Real men do not let their wives work." You said they should be like you and tell her to, and I quote, "Stay home with the children." Mr. Mayor, it's the 21st century. Look around you. We're in a room of full -- of fully capable, qualified and dedicated women who have been forced to work twice as hard to advance their careers because of men like you, who believe they need your permission. You added to this during your radio interview, disparaging Maria Teresa Ason and my wife, Monica, to attack Commissioner Menendez and myself. Please play Video number 7.

(Video 7 played.)

Commissioner Fernandez: Mr. Mayor, my wife is an accomplished attorney. She worked her way up in her career and faced men like you every step of the way, who added hurdles and roadblocks every chance they got to ensure she did not succeed. And I stand here proud to let you and those men know she not only succeeded, she is tops in her field. She manages a team of litigators, has been a member of the boards of the Cuban American Bar Association, the Florida Young -- Bar Young Lawyers Division, the Florida Association of Women Lawyers, has served as town magistrate for Miami Lakes, and as the chair of the Professionalism Panel for the 11th Judicial Circuit. You owe Monica, Maria Teresa, and all women in our city an apology. On July 13th of 2021, you signed a resolution which you brought to this Commission, re-adopting the City's Civility Code. I took the time to review it. I have it right here in case you need to review it. I found that you have violated five of the seven clauses in that civility code during the last two weeks alone in your radio and TV tour. Number one, work to foster an atmosphere of respect and civility among colleagues, City employees, and members of the public. I think your comments during your radio and TV tour clearly violate this. Number two, be professional and respectful in all interactions with each other and members of the public. There are too many examples to count the ways you have violated this clause. Just the things you said about members of the media during your radio tour to try to disparage anything that they have written about you. Number three, work to promote in the general public an understanding of the role of elected officials and accurate information regarding City matters. The lies you've spread about your colleagues are a clear violation of this clause. Number four, attempt not to abruptly interrupt each other and members of the public. How many times over the last five months have you interrupted us when you have disagreed with what we've been saying? Number five, refrain from using profanity or other disparaging remarks towards each other or towards members of the public. There have been numerous disparaging remarks you have made over the last five months towards members of this body, including those on these video clips today. Mr. Mayor, the City of Coral Gables deserves

better from its mayor. On September 13th, you were asked by Commissioner Castro if you agreed to treat your colleagues with respect. You brushed her off and instructed staff to move on to the next item on the agenda. The tactics we have seen from the individual currently holding the office of mayor are a clear violation of the Civility Code and reprehensible. You speak about your legacy. This is your legacy. Coral Gables deserves better. Madam City Attorney, what options do we have as a Commission to reprimand the Mayor for violating the Civility Code?

City Attorney Suárez: Mr. Commissioner, the resolution adopting the Civility Code for the members of the City Commission does not provide any repercussions or any consequences. There are provisions in the Charter for censuring members of the Commission, but I would have -- would need an opportunity to review that.

Commissioner Fernandez: I did review it and there really isn't much. It just says that the Commission has the right to censure its own members. That's pretty much it. There's no parameters as to what it is, any penalties. I would like to see us going forward, take a look at the Civility Code and actually put some teeth in it because the actions that have been taken by the Mayor are just totally unacceptable. I'm going to make a motion to deny the item that's on the table.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I will, through the Mayor, ask to speak and respond to comments that you've made about me on this dais here today implying that this is some charade by me on some plot to get re-elected. You failed to see the impact that you have on the residents, as well as the tax impact choices that I have to make on whether or not to accept this raise, a raise that there was three levels, ranging from 52 all the way up to the 101 percent increase. And I was rather shocked to see not only that it wasn't brought as a discussion item, but you chose the largest amount out of the three. Let's go back to transparency. Aside from the tax impact -- and I have to have a right to make a choice of whether or not I want to be able to have to take the money first, pay the taxes on it, and then designate it to a particular project, as opposed to allowing this body to determine where the money goes. I have been approached by numerous residents while either walking, attending events, going to meetings, thanking me for being transparent about it, not taking a raise without making it a public disclosure, not involving the residents in the choices that were made. People agree that we're underpaid, but the way it was done on this Commission is disgraceful. And for you to imply that I am doing this as a plot to get reelected is equally a charade by you. I take exception to that. And for you to dress me down to say that this is some plot to get re-elected, it's not. It is clearly a matter of transparency to the residents that I'm not going to sneak something into the budget at the last minute, not putting it into a draft of a budget, not discussing it with my colleagues on the dais in the sunlight where residents can make a comment as to whether you should be getting a \$52,000 raise or a \$68,000 raise and putting on top of that payment of \$700 a month for a car and an expense account that you don't have to provide receipts for as to where you spent the money. There's a dramatic difference between what was the low end and the high end because the low end didn't have the monthly car allowance. I don't know if you've ever clocked how many miles we actually drive on this job, but it's not enough to warrant \$700 a month in a car allowance. For the past two and a half years, yes, I do live rather close to City Hall, but it

hasn't dented my budget that much. For me to look the residents in the face and say I should get a \$700 a month car allowance based upon the little bit of driving we do in the City, even if I do go to the southernmost point down to the northernmost point, this city is not that big to warrant that. And on top of it, I have employees that get a 2 percent raise on a small amount that are out there picking up garbage every day. For me to be able to look them in the face and say, "Sorry, you can only have 2 or 3 percent on that low wage that you get, but I'm going to give myself a 101 percent," is just simply something I can't do, and I won't. Therefore, I have joined on this item to not accept the raise. I need to be able to look these employees in the face and be able to tell them why we need to budget this way. I'd rather focus on getting them the raises that they deserve than think about myself. And that's why I've declined this raise.

Mayor Lago: So, I'll respond very briefly. I've tried to keep the Commission, as you can tell, as respectful and collegial as possible. If you are explaining you're losing, and that's what your goal is. You've done it at every single Commission meeting from affidavits about my brother, where he lives. As the City Attorney can tell you -- and I'll send a copy of it to the Herald -- we always publish it. My brother does not have a conflict, you got a copy of that. It is a whole dog and pony show in an effort to try to undermine me and demean me. Please, let us not forget -- and people don't forget, people don't forget -- you were the one that started Gables Insider, one of the most diabolical, disrespectful blogs in this community that demeaned Miriam Ramos, that demeaned Mike Mena, that demeaned employees, that was so disrespectful that it -- I mean, in my opinion, I can't believe it still continues. It was a breeding ground for people to be disrespectful towards employees, towards residents. But again, don't lecture me about how to behave when you were the one that started Gables Insider. Another point that's very clear that I've heard from many people in this community is that you spend your time calling FDLE against me. That you spend your time, you know, calling Politico Cortadito and, you know, and all these other blogs in an effort, along with Actualidad Radio, in an effort to try to undermine me. But when I come to the Commission, I try to be as collegial and respectful here in the Commission to get the business done on behalf of the residents. You always have some sort of got you moment, always a got you moment in an attempt to undermine me, to find a way to chip away at my integrity and what I stand for and the service that I've done here in the City. Enough is enough with me. You can say whatever you like. You're entitled to your opinion. You have made comments that were cut and paste that were not the full comments. You have said things that were taken completely out of context. That's completely within your right and how you've conducted yourself since you were in Gables Insider. And everybody knows it. Everybody knows it. And it's perfectly fine because that is your legacy, not my legacy so..

Commissioner Fernandez: Mr. Clerk, I'll be sending you the full interview with Nelson Rubio, all 21 minutes of it, so that you can make them available to the public. They can make up their own minds.

Mayor Lago: Just like we also put up the affidavit for my -- excuse me, the affidavit and also the findings from the City Attorney, which show that my brother does not have a conflict for living in High Pines and Ponce Davis. And we're also in the process now of almost six months waiting for

the final rendering from the Ethics Commission, because thanks to the Miami-Dade County firefighters and other individuals that continue to send ethics, I will be cleared of that also. And the moment I'm cleared, I will be publishing it also with the City Attorney. And also, Mr. Corben, who was here today before, making outlandish, insane comments that are not true, which will be addressed also formally in a lawsuit that I will be bringing forward. But it is what it is. Again, I will not move in that direction. You've decided to continue to do that here on the Commission floor, which again, takes away of the job that we're here to do, and it chips away at the City's integrity, in my opinion.

Commissioner Fernandez: But you are the Mayor, and you have gone on all these radio and TV shows as Mayor of Coral Gables, not as Vince Lago, the resident. So, when you have been saying all these disparaging comments -- it's very easy to say, I'm here in the dais and I'm going to keep it clean, but when I'm out there, I'm spreading all sorts of false information and lies about you. And now you go after Gables Insider, the publication that most residents trust in the City of Coral Gables. The reason they trust it is because every single thing that Gables Insider has written about in the past has been proven to be right to your detriment and to the detriment of the people that you mentioned before. But again, I made a motion and I stand by that motion.

Commissioner Castro: I have a question. Mr. Mayor, do you own your own company?

Mayor Lago: I do.

Commissioner Castro: You do.

Mayor Lago: I own multiple different companies, but we're not going to -- you're not going to interrogate me here on the Commission floor.

Commissioner Castro: No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

Mayor Lago: So, we can -- you know, you can stand down on that.

Commissioner Castro: That's the same question. You can answer it or you cannot answer it. And that's the end of it, okay? I own my own company. I just heard you saying right now that nobody does payroll. I have employees, right? I do, I run payroll. In fact, I've gone to school almost my whole life for you to say I'm uneducated. I take great offense to that. But what I take most offense to is you saying that women should stay home.

Mayor Lago: I never said that. That's not what I said.

Commissioner Castro: I think that's what I heard.

Mayor Lago: I never said that.

Mayor Lago: That's what you heard from where? From what?

Commissioner Castro: Right now.

Mayor Lago: From...

Commissioner Castro: Right now.

Mayor Lago: From Commissioner Fernandez? That's not the case.

Commissioner Castro: So, what was it that you said?

Mayor Lago: That's not the case.

Commissioner Castro: Okay, you want to clarify? Because I take great offense.

Mayor Lago: You're not going to cross-examine me on the Commission floor. So, let me -- and let me tell you something, just for your honesty. We're going to talk about -- if we're going to talk about employment here, let's be very clear, okay? First off, you inherited your company, number one. Number two, Maria Cruz takes so much pleasure in stating my business interests here in the City when I've done restaurants and I've done offices building, you know, the interior construction of office buildings and things like that, which I take a lot of pride in. I'm entitled to work here in the City of Coral Gables. The City Attorney will tell you, I am entitled to work. Madam City Attorney, am I entitled to work in the City of Coral Gables? Yes or no?

City Attorney Suárez: Yes, sir.

Mayor Lago: I am. I have every right to. We've done through the Ethics Commission and the whole nine yards. You also work in the City of Coral Gables because I pulled all the permits and it's pages and pages and pages and pages of your business running...

Commissioner Castro: 25 years.

Mayor Lago: Running -- but you're still...

Commissioner Castro: 25 years.

Mayor Lago: But you're still running -- you're still running business -- you're still running business. You're running permits in a permit department that runs -- that handles -- is directly involved with the City, with the approvals or not. And I don't bring it up, I don't keep continuing to bring it up, but you have your henchmen, like Commissioner Fernandez says, who constantly bring up the fact that I've done a restaurant, that I've done an office, that I've done good work, honest work. But you also do business in the City. You've been doing it for years, and you

continue, because if you pull all the permits right now for all the work that you're doing, it's over 50 jobs that you're involved with in the City over the last year. And that's fine.

Commissioner Castro: How many? I didn't even know.

Mayor Lago: Yeah, it's over 50 jobs. So, at the end of the day, what -- why am I being prosecuted for building three or four different jobs in the last four years where you have 50 jobs in the City, where you're dealing with staff every single day?

Commissioner Castro: I don't deal with staff. I'm sorry. I haven't even been into my office

Mayor Lago: We're still waiting for an ethics interpretation from the County Commission and they have not returned that so I don't -- we're still waiting six months from that ethics interpretation to see what your position is and whether your business can be involved in the City of Coral Gables. So, let's be very, very careful with the stones that we throw because this is a glass house and we need to be very, very thoughtful about how we conduct ourselves because...

Commissioner Castro: How funny how aware...

Mayor Lago: Because you're -- because...

Commissioner Castro: You are of all my business. Very, very funny. Very funny.

Mayor Lago: Again...

Commissioner Castro: You're so...

Mayor Lago: Again, because some of the...

Commissioner Castro: I would say you're obsessed with me at this point, really.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, with all due respect, we have a lot of business to conduct here and we'll move on with this item because this is exactly what...

Commissioner Castro: I took offense...

Mayor Lago: The type of circus -- this is the type of circus...

Commissioner Castro: I took offense to the woman comment.

Mayor Lago: This is...

Commissioner Castro: And I would appreciate...

Mayor Lago: There was not a woman comment.

Commissioner Castro: And I would appreciate for you to...

Mayor Lago: As a father of two young girls, there's no woman comment, trust me.

Commissioner Castro: I know, that's really sad.

Mayor Lago: There's no woman comment.

Commissioner Castro: That's really sad. That's really, really sad. What a disrespect.

Mayor Lago: Moving on. Commissioner, do you have anything else you'd like to add?

Commissioner Menendez: No.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Menendez? Okay, perfect.

City Clerk Urquia: I have a motion. I don't have a second.

Commissioner Castro: I second.

Mayor Lago: What are we seconding exactly? Because I put it on the record.

City Clerk Urquia: It's going to be a motion to deny agenda item E-5.

Commissioner Castro: Great.

Mayor Lago: Madam City Attorney, what are our options? Tell me.

City Attorney Suárez: So, I would say it's a motion to reject this item, meaning not approve it. I guess it's...

Mayor Lago: Okay, so let me explain to you what's going to happen. If we are forced to take this increase in salaries, you're -- the money's going to be double taxed. So, you're going to give me the money, then instead of me being able to give a full chunk of money to, you know, whatever the Commission deems appropriate, if that would be historic preservation, if that would be an issue with, for example, the garden club or maybe the museum, whatever the issue is at hand, that money's going to be taxed if it comes to me because I'm going to give it back to a charity. I'm not going to accept it. So, what I'm proposing today is to not accept it so that we can make that money be as effective as possible to do as much good as possible. So, why don't we try to do what's good, not try to hurt each other by actually saying, he doesn't want the money, she doesn't

want the money, we won't accept it, and we'll use it for a worthy cause. That's what I think is the most beneficial thing for the City.

Commissioner Fernandez: Madam City Attorney, if we were to do a resolution instructing staff to allow for members of the Commission to have a mechanism where they can donate part of their salary pre-tax, is that something that the City would be able to do?

City Attorney Suárez: I would have to research that, Commissioner. If you want to do a resolution directing staff to see if that's a possibility, we could do that.

Commissioner Fernandez: I would like to see this item done today. Can you bring it back later in the meeting?

City Attorney Suárez: We can -- so it could be -- so here's what we could do.

Mayor Lago: If you want -- you want to speak with a tax attorney, correct?

City Attorney Suárez: No, I don't need to speak with a -- so here's what we need to do, or what can be done. You all can direct staff that, if it's possible, you know, if it's legally possible so that the -- that portion of the salary that represents the increase not be paid directly to the elected officials, that we find a mechanism for doing that.

Commissioner Fernandez: Right, or if an elected official...

City Attorney Suárez: And if it's not possible -- and if it's not possible, then they would have to -- we'd have to follow the ordinance. The issue is that there's an ordinance -- and that's my concern -- there's an ordinance that directs that they receive their payment.

Commissioner Fernandez: Correct, but we can create a mechanism where, let's say somebody is elected to the Commission, independently wealthy, they don't want to take any of their salary, where they can defer that salary directly to a charity.

City Attorney Suárez: So, we don't have that mechanism. I don't know if we can do that.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay.

City Attorney Suárez: If -- there's an ordinance setting the salaries and compensation of the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners. Staff has to do that and has to process it through payroll so...

Commissioner Fernandez: I stick y my motion.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, let me just add some comments. What you're talking about is a mess tax-wise.

Mayor Lago: That's why I said a tax attorney.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Because you get -- not only get taxed on it, but you're talking about donation. Donation is not 100 percent of taking away the tax implications on that increased salary. I'll go back to my original comment. I cannot look at the employees here that have gotten small percentages of increases and then say that I'm fine and good with taking a 101 percent increase. That's the principle underlying this. I should not have to suffer because you've made the choice yourself to take the increases for yourselves going forward.

Mayor Lago: So, it's simple. Let's set the egos aside. Let's allow this ordinance that I'm proffering to come forward, address the issue. We're not touching your salaries. We're not even moving in that direction. It's only the Mayor and the Vice Mayor. And it's a simple resolution for us to move forward and not accept it. Do not allow this to get taxed. It'll make the money less effective and we could use this money for something that's deemed appropriate by the Commission. I have no issues with that. It can be a joint effort to take that money and put it to some good without getting it double taxed. At the end of the day, if you give me the money in income and it gets taxed and I give it to charity, you will be giving me a benefit, by the way, against my taxes. So, you're still -- you're going to be giving me another benefit even if you force me to take the money. So, why not just leave it here? I don't take a tax benefit. It doesn't get double taxed and we move on from there. And we show that we're a mature commission, not bickering over something that is childish, in my opinion.

City Clerk Urquia: Do I call the roll, Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Lago: Does anybody else have anything else? All right, go ahead, call the roll.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: No.

Commissioner Castro: Yes.

Mayor Lago: No.

(Vote: 3-2)

Commissioner Menendez: And I apologize, Mayor. Madam City Attorney, Mr. City Clerk, I have a motion to make. I hereby make a motion to censure Mayor Lago for having made several disparaging and personal public comments attacking his colleagues and their families through the media and other outlets. That's my motion.

Commissioner Fernandez: I second.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We don't have a procedure for this, no.

Commissioner Castro: Yes.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: No.

(Vote: 3-2)

Mayor Lago: All right, so moving on. Excuse me one second. We will take a 30-minute break, and then we'll come back and address the City Commission items. Madam City Attorney, will you do me a favor? Will you work on, with my colleagues, to figure out a way to address our request through some sort of mechanism where that money can be used for the intended good and not just squandered away in taxes, in my opinion?

City Attorney Suárez: Yes, we can look into that, sir.

Mayor Lago: I don't -- it can come back at the next Commission. It's perfectly fine. Thank you. All right, we'll be back in 30 minutes.