

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-5
August 27, 2024
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 Manager, Amos Rojas, Jr.

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Assistant City Manager, Joe Gomez

Finance Director, Diana Gomez

Assistant Finance Director, Paula Rodriguez

Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

Jackson Holmes

Agenda Item F-5 [12:41 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission promoting fiscal resilience and directing the City Manager to include in the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, certain revisions from the Budget Estimate, including allocating certain funding toward the assessment, drawings, and plans for structural repairs at City Hall.

(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Anderson)

Mayor Lago: Moving on to Item F-5. Thank you everyone for being here and voicing your opinions.

(Applause.)

City Attorney Suárez: F-5 is a resolution of the City Commission promoting fiscal resilience and directing the City Manager to include in the proposed budget for Fiscal Year '24/'25 certain revisions from the budget estimate including allocating certain funding toward the assessment, drawings, and plans for structural repairs at City Hall.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, Mayor...

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And Commissioners, I brought this resolution with following it in mind. After July 1st, we had some additional revenues that were recognized in our City budget and those funds by and large were put into adding new positions in our City over and above the new positions that were already in the budget and discussed and thoroughly analyzed in our prior budget as well as the current budget. I also shared with you a copy of a structural engineering report that came out on July 31st. I didn't get to see it until after the first week of -- or sometime in the first week of August. And the thought process here is, number one, we should not be adding permanent costs in our budget on positions that are additional positions that we can, as we have, maintained our services as they are. I carefully went through and discussed with each one of our various departments where there were needs. I looked at the truck logs as well for our garbage employees, being mindful of the fact of the exposure to heat and the periods of times that we've used temporary employees to relieve some of that stress on employees. For instance, you have truck logs where you start in the morning at 7 and they're done by, you know, 11, 12, 1 o'clock. And temporary employees relieve some of those folks out there, the sanitation workers that are running. But I did include, you know, critical positions that were over and above the July 1st -- you know, prior to the July 1st estimate, estimates such as an individual to be the truck driver that where we do have a shortage in service available there. We have some critical needs to take care of on critical -- on City Hall. The structural engineering report outlined some of those critical needs. Our historic buildings have been needing these repairs for a long time. Monies were not in the budget to allow for many of the repairs that were needed to do the extensive repairs that this Commission has been able to do, thankfully due to the sale of some TDRs. We were able to allocate money to the museum. We were able to allocate significant monies to Actor's Playhouse, to the water tower, to the Gondola building, and all these types of structures and put some additional money into City Hall, but that's not sufficient to take care of the type of structural work that we need to do on this building. The most recent report indicates that the second floor concrete beams and slabs and

spaces are experiencing spalling. We're going to need shoring poles in there for the next year. This is the immediate action that must be taken by our Commission in order to preserve our gem of our City, our City Hall, the historic building that, you know, George Merrick had brought for us and needs attention, you know, because concrete the way it was mixed back in 1920s is not the way concrete is mixed now. You had batches in the water that was used, et cetera. We need to take care of this grand dame of ours. The degree -- it states in here, due to the degree of deterioration in two spans of the perimeter beam, which supports the radial beams, provide that we need the temporary shoring to the exterior ends of two radial beams indicated in the attached sketch, which are ironically right above this -- this room.

Commissioner Fernandez: Actually under us.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Under...

Commissioner Fernandez: They're under (INAUDIBLE) right now.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Under this room. Okay, so we could go down to the first floor. So, I'm glad you -- you went through the report. There are sacrifices that will need to be made elsewhere in our budget in order to be able to afford to hire the right architect and this is not to the lowest bidder, this is more like what we did with the Fink Studio. It has to be somebody that is specialized in dealing with historic buildings and the restoration work and the engineering drawings that need to be done. And this proposal is to take the \$835,787 that will be saved by not adding additional, you know, hiring on our budget other than the additional positions that we have already done and put it back into City Hall. So, to avoid some of the statements that I've heard before that we're cutting, we're not cutting. No existing position of employees will be cut. We're indeed adding positions. So, in Section 2 of the resolution, it indicates that we're adding the full-time Police CIC Monitor and adding the part-time position. And I've had a discussion with the Police Chief regarding that. Sitting in front of a monitor for eight hours is a -- is not something that most people can do with the attention span necessary. So, the compromise is being made to have a part-timer in there along with a full-time position for the CIC Monitor position. And the second item is on code enforcement. The funding shall remain for an additional position being added, additional headcount being added to our budget for a new Code Enforcement Field Supervisor because we only have one right now and we have the nights and weekends to cover. That was the critical need that we needed. Let's see how we do for this coming year with that additional added position and we can make future decisions going forward. The sign shop, I know it's really nice to have an additional employee there. We've managed with what we've had before. The building here is more important. Adding full-time employees or part-time employees is more than just the cost of the employee. We're not going to be able to use those employees to shore up this building. We have to do that with the proper engineering and architectural work. We're, you know, leaving the position -- adding a position in for Solid Waste Worker Operator 2. That's the person that drives the garbage trucks. That's a managerial type position as well. So, those Solid Waste workers that drive those trucks typically are working their holidays, they're typically working vacation time,

and that's why I felt that that was more of a critical need. The temporary workers can fill in because it's less of a skilled area where you have to have the particular CDL license, I think, that's required to drive the garbage trucks and that's where we need to put the money on a position. And on parking enforcement, you know, we've been working with the part-time positions. I've talked to staff about what advertising has been done to fill those part-time positions because I know that when I was going to college, a job like this would have been fantastic because I could still maintain my studies. It's a part-time position and I can roll it on through. I think we can survive with what we have and do a better job of recruitment, just like we needed to do in other areas in our City. And no changes are being made for the 15 new full-time positions or other positions in the draft budget. Those will remain. There's other sacrifices that will be made as well, including instead of putting \$300,000 in downtown holiday decorations, you know, it would be \$100,000. The BID used to pay for this. And this proposal basically reaches out to the businesses and say, basically, put some skin in the game. If you want to have -- you know, draw more people to your street, the City is investing \$100,000. If you want something more enhanced, please contribute to it and be part of the discussion on what type of decorations would you like to see. Would you like to see more color? Would you like to see some snowflakes? What is it that you would like to see that would attract people to your business and make our City look grand? The sacrifices on holiday decorations also go, let's continue with the same, you know, decorations in the holiday park. I know that we can make those work for another year. We can repair them and utilize them instead of spending additional money on that. As much as I'd like to see a laser show that would not pollute the environment and make noise for folks, we can hold on off on that for at least another year on that \$65,000. And the folks in the community that would like to contribute some money towards that can do that as well if they would like to sponsor, for instance, a laser show. And it goes on for, you know, the janitorial service. Yes, we're going to increase it, but not quite as much. Let's see how we do with, you know, \$50,000 as opposed to \$94,000. So, the Menorah event would not be enhanced. We would continue to do a Menorah event, but we'd also can, you know, have sponsorships that can have that occur. So, I ask that you all support this. Let's take the condition of this building seriously. Let's have our Historic Resource Department research and get back to us on recommendations on the best architect and the best engineer to preserve this building just like they did with the Fink building. It turned out fabulous. Does staff have anything to add to this?

City Manager Rojas: Vice Mayor, although we would prefer a full funding of all the requests we had, these cuts and these additions are going to continue to help us at least maintain, if not in some areas improve, services to the community. So, I think it was a well thought out process of knowing which positions we should keep versus the ones that we could right now afford to not fill. So, as you said, these are, you know, headcount -- will be added to our headcount. But again, if it was up to me, I'd ask for everything, but I do appreciate the fact that at least some of the critical positions that we needed are there.

Vice Mayor Anderson: No, I appreciate your input on that, and moving forward, I'd like to see us do the right thing on by way of this building. And you know, if I had a checkbook that was

unlimited I absolutely would have concur with you about adding the positions but it's not an unlimited checkbook.

Commissioner Castro: There is -- I have to agree with you that there is a critical need for City Hall. One hundred percent agree. However -- well, first, thank you for drafting up this resolution. I know it probably took a lot of your time and I really appreciate it, but from my town hall and all the research that I did do, I understand how these positions are critical to the departments. Even after I saw this resolution, I did meet with some department heads and they were very -- there were very big concerns. So, as far as City Hall, I would love to find a resolution to where we could take this money out from or probably talk to Finance. Diana or Paula, there has to be another solution. This seems to me it's like an emergency-based condition. And I'm sorry, but I won't be able to support this after all the conversations I've had with staff.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, may I ask you a question?

Commissioner Castro: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Anderson: If the additional eight to nine hundred thousand dollars did not show up in the budget on July 1st, what would have you done to add those positions?

Commissioner Castro: I believe that Paula had answered that question in my town hall and the way that we work the budget is not -- these are positions that we need, but we work backwards. Correct me if I'm wrong.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So I'm going to -- I was there and the presentation dealt with a 2 percent cut and a 3 percent cut. This is far below that. This is not even a 1 percent cut and this is not a cut at all. This is applying additional monies into capital projects, a one-time expenditure, not an expenditure that's going to be repetitive year after year after year after year. So, the most critical needs were taken care of first. In order to be able to take the next step on this building, the first step must be that you have the engineering and architectural plans. When that comes back to us, we will have a price tag. And then we can take a vote on where that money comes from, whether we have to draw a bond, whether we can do the next step. We can't even begin that discussion and there's no point in taking a bond when you don't even have shovel-ready drawings ready to go. We'd have to go through a bid process. You know, this is -- this is a journey that we have to take together. The employees, the employees that work in this building, the employees that want to work here in the future and have the safety and security of knowing that this City will have the budgetary capacity to retain them as employees in the future. So, that if we go through -- and I think that the millage rate reduction was an eye-opener, that if you go through a 1 percent reduction, how many employees will be impacted? If you go through a 2 percent reduction, how many employees would be impacted? If you go through a 3 percent reduction, so you know, markets fluctuate. So, we have to be mindful that we stress test this budget all the time and instead of putting money into recurring expenditures, we have the ability to give our employees peace of

mind knowing that our budget will be able to handle it in the future and they're not going to be seeing pink slips instead of paychecks. So, taking care of this building is a critical need. You know, we've drug it out as far as we possibly can. It's time to take care of it and not wait for a more critical problem where we're going to end up spending a lot more money because we wanted to spend more money on putting so many head -- increasing the headcount higher than it's ever have been in this City in the historic past beyond what the capacity of the budget can withstand. So, I'm in favor of doing one-time expenditures on critical needs. This is a critical need and now is the time for us to take action.

Commissioner Castro: I'm personally not -- not able to compromise on some critical positions here, especially when it comes to Code Enforcement and when it comes to Solid Waste. Yesterday, an ambulance came to pick up one of the Solid Waste workers. That to me is unacceptable. And there's stories that pile on of things because we're understaffed or because people are not showing up for work or whatever the case is. I can manage maybe, you know, 150, I saw like \$200,000 worth, but most of the positions, they're really needed and I'm really unable to compromise on those.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, so I did do a deep, deep dive on Solid Waste and we do have temporary workers that come in during the summer to provide relief. Perhaps a little bit of management needs to be done better on how to work the workers, okay, and merely because a worker had to be taken away in an ambulance because they had an accident or something is not going to be remedied by adding more bodies. It's a management issue. The management issue here was we needed somebody additional as a CD -- with a CDL license. Unfortunately, none of the current sanitation workers have the aspiration of getting that CDL license. So, therefore, we need to bring in somebody new from outside that wants to take that job on. Some people are not cut out for management. Let's add that position and move forward. The temporary workers solve the problem of the heat exhaustion. They come in fresh. They don't have repetitive days after days being out in the heat. If you look at the routines for the sanitation workers, they're two days on, one day off, two days on, one day off, so that there's a time for the body to recover from the heat. It's the day after day that counts, and that's why the temporary workers are important, especially during the hot, hot months, to provide that relief.

Commissioner Castro: So, yeah, so for the summer, there's three temporary workers and year-round there's six in total that we had approved. Speaking to who manages that Department of Solid Waste, temporary workers really wouldn't -- she wouldn't be able to work with those. I tried to put this subject in to see if maybe -- I really, really wanted to compromise with you. I wanted to be able to work something out here, but I really, really see it hard to do. I really, I feel very, very, very strong about this. This is going to jeopardize the quality of life of Coral Gables. People live here in Coral Gables because of the services, because how we maintain our streets, how we maintain the little blocks, what are they called? The -- how we maintain them white. I know that's one of the things that we were going to reduce. The monument paintings, street monument paintings. And then also the maintenance inside the bathrooms, the janitorial. There was

complaints about that. It's a lot of little things that at the end of the day make a big difference. So, I really want to work with you, but I feel very strong that this is not the right move.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, so you continue to say reductions when they're not reductions. Positions are being added with this proposal. We are not reducing services. We're increasing janitorial. We're increasing sanitation workers. Let's do this for this next year and not make the mistake of what's happened in the past in ignoring what needs to be done with City Hall.

Commissioner Castro: I want -- I want to do something for City Hall. That's something I really want to work on. This is something that's imperative and we need to do something about it no matter how we do it. It has to be done but I don't think it should jeopardize the quality of services and the new positions that we're going to be adding because they're needed.

Commissioner Fernandez: All right, if I may. I think we're mixing two issues that should not be related. I agree with you, there are positions that are not necessary. Am I ready to say which ones they are today? No, I think that's what the budget hearing is for. But that's why I placed the Item F-6 on the agenda which was specific to City Hall. I am flabbergasted at the fact that this City and its Administration in 2011 knew that there were issues with City Hall and it was kicked down the road. In 2022, Manager Peter Iglesias was given a report saying that there was critical work that needed to be done here. It was kicked down the road. July of last year, it was presented to the manager again. And guess what? I don't know about the rest of you. I know I was never informed that there were structural issues to City Hall. The current manager thought the rest of us had been informed about the issues that we had at City Hall. None of us were informed. I know -- were the rest of you informed?

Vice Mayor Anderson: I knew that they were doing testing, which is reflected in this report regarding the materials in the walls. That was ongoing. Down in the conference room on the first floor, you will see that there is a board there covering up one of those holes. The results had not been in yet. We did testing throughout -- more testing was done throughout, and this report that you're seeing in front of you today reflects some of those results regarding the quality of the cement, what's happened with it over a period of time. You know, and just like every other historic building where the City has been trying to put money into the capital improvements of that, it's been, you know, it's a never-ending arm wrestling match on the budget in a way of capital improvements to put the money where it needs to go. I know there's a lot of wants and needs in the City from pickleball on forward but City Hall needs to come first.

Commissioner Fernandez: Again, back to my point, I don't disagree with the fact that City Hall has to come first. But we are now having to fix the issues that prior Commissions did not address, that the former City Manager neglected for years. And City Hall is in a position that in a couple of years if we were just to leave it, we'd have another Gondola building, which collapsed under a prior Commission and under City Manager Peter Iglesias' watch. As a structural engineer -- we have two columns, according to this report, one under -- between the Manager and the Clerk and

one between Commissioner Menendez and myself that need to be structurally reinforced because there's falling downstairs in the Deputy City Manager's office and in the Manager's Assistant's office. I'm going to make a motion once we're done with this to cease use of this room until that is addressed and move all meetings in this chamber to the CMR until that is addressed because what we're doing, and according to this report, it can continue to be used, but with caution. We're filling this room up with residents, staff members, and we're putting people at potential risk because of the condition that we have allowed prior Commissions, prior City administrations have allowed this building to get into. So, yes, this is a major priority. \$857,000, I'm not even sure that that's going to fix the problem. From what I was told, we're in the process of going out to bid for some of this work, so we're in the process. There was a list of items that needed to be addressed immediately, and correct me if I'm wrong, Mr. Assistant City Manager, 30 percent of those have actually gotten done in the last two years?

Assistant City Manager Gomez: That's correct. Good afternoon. Joe Gomez, Assistant City Manager. About 30 percent of the items that are part of the recertification of the building have currently been -- been completed. And to answer the other question, the RFQ for the full assessment, which will include the assessment as well as the design and the cost estimates for the entire rehabilitation of the building, that's due on September the 6th.

Commissioner Fernandez: And do we have an idea, a ballpark, what the cost may be?

Assistant City Manager Gomez: At this point, it's going to be in the millions, in the double millions.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, we're going to have to find that money sooner rather than later. Once that RFQ comes back, how quickly do we believe we'd be able to start on that work?

Assistant City Manager Gomez: It has to go through, obviously, the process of selecting the consulting team. That's a standard, I believe it's 30 to 60 days. Once the consultant is selected and hired, the first phase of that work will be a full assessment of what needs to be done. And that will take into account already some of the structural work that's being done on the third floor.

Commissioner Fernandez: Alright.

City Manager Rojas: We also have to take into account that we may need historical or someone...

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Absolutely.

City Manager Rojas: A preservationist to be part of that team. So, but I believe in our budget, in our five-year capital improvement budget, we had previous available balance -- and Paula, correct me if I'm wrong -- \$5 million for the complex. So, there is some funds to get the program and

start doing the critical repairs after the assessment. And as the Vice Mayor said, once we know the scope and all that is if we have to go out for bond, then we do that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Right, I mean, if the engineering drawings are going to be a critical piece of this that we need to move forward on, repairs have been done in the past. And again, this report indicates that there were repairs made in the past, but now it's time to do it the right way. And that's what I'm saying. We didn't have enough money to do the water tower. We didn't have enough money to do the Gondola building. We didn't have enough money to do the museum in the past or certain things that were needed at the museum. My first year in office, I focused on let's seal the building. Let's get the roof taken care of because that's -- the water intrusion is a critical need. So, it's -- I was starting from the top down. The testing was being done on this building. I was aware of that and now it's time for us to put the monies where they should be so that we don't avoid ballooning the budget on repetitive expenditures as opposed to putting it into one-time expenditures. Let's not make the mistake that the County has when spending additional monies.

Mayor Lago: If I may, one second. Madam Finance Director, would you be so kind to come up here? I know it's tough off the top of your head, but could you give me a little guidance in regards to the money that we had allocated for City Hall was how much would you say, roughly?

Finance Director Gomez: So, we had -- years ago, we had an amount -- and I don't have that amount in front of me.

Mayor Lago: I know.

Finance Director Gomez: Allocated to City Hall Complex. And so that was funds were set -- were used for 427 building...

Mayor Lago: May I help you?

Finance Director Gomez: Which was part of the 427...

Mayor Lago: I'm going to go there.

Finance Director Gomez: Part -- yeah.

Mayor Lago: I'm going to go there. What I'm asking is how much was that?

Finance Director Gomez: I can come back to you with that info. I do not have it.

Mayor Lago: Okay. I was here.

Finance Director Gomez: Um-hmm.

Mayor Lago: We had multiple issues in this building.

Finance Director Gomez: Um-hmm.

Mayor Lago: Trying to address the issues with the windows for some time now, okay. The issue was the exterior envelope of this building. The roof -- the roof was leaking, as you can tell when you look up the stairwell, and you can see, for example, in the hallway of my office, all the plaster that's broken and continues to be broken, which has not been touched. How much did the roof cost? Do you remember?

Finance Director Gomez: I'm sorry, I do not have those numbers.

Mayor Lago: It's okay, it's fine.

Finance Director Gomez: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: It's not a problem.

Commissioner Fernandez: I think it was \$600,000.

Mayor Lago: My point is -- give me one second. I just want to put this on the record, okay. So, we spent on the roof. The reason why the money was relocated, all of us, including the previous City Manager, wanted to do City Hall, continue to want to do City Hall. The issue was that to do City Hall, you eventually had to move people out of this building. You had to open your BOA, Board of Architects, you had to open your Planning and Zoning, you had to open your permitting counter, and the money was invested in the building next door. Correct?

Finance Director Gomez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: I just want to make sure we're correct on this. Because it's so easy to *tira la tierra*, so easy to throw dirt on somebody who's no longer here. But the money was not taken, it was invested in our permitting building next door.

Finance Director Gomez: And we never had enough funds to fix this building.

Mayor Lago: Yeah, I'm getting to that right now.

Finance Director Gomez: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: If I may, I apologize. I want to be very clear. There was never enough money, period, to fix this. So, moving on. We have a great building, people enjoy it, our BOA meets there, permitting, our staff has reasonable offices to now conduct business with and address the issues of the community. I think it turned out incredibly well. Now we move our focus to this building. What do we have right now in the budget for this building?

Finance Director Gomez: I'm going to ask Paula to come up. She has those numbers.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Paula.

Assistant Finance Director Rodriguez: So, for next fiscal year, we've included a million dollars to go into City Hall.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Assistant Finance Director Rodriguez: Just over a million dollars. The primary amount, which is a million dollars, \$40,000 goes into the tower, which also needs funding and so the million dollars is going towards the windows to supplement the \$2.5 million that was put towards the windows last fiscal year.

Mayor Lago: So, you have -- you have the envelope, the envelope will be taken care of, which is critical, correct?

Finance Director Gomez: The windows.

Mayor Lago: Yeah, we have -- we did the roof, we do the windows, now we don't have any more water intrusion, God willing, correct? That's the hope, right? Okay, perfect. Now, another question for you. How much did we fund for Phillips Park and are we done funding Phillips Park?

Assistant Finance Director Rodriguez: So, in this fiscal year, we're funding approximately \$4.5 million. I don't have that number in front of me, but about \$4.5 million for Phillips Park this year.

Mayor Lago: The reason why I bring up Phillips Park is because we all agreed to fund Phillips Park and get it done. This is the last payment, correct, to fund it, or we still have another payment to it?

Finance Director Gomez: The one now coming in for October 1st is for the next year's budget, yes. For the fiscal '25 budget.

Mayor Lago: It doesn't matter if it was Phillips Park or it was another, if it was another park. This is, it's my understanding, is the largest ticket in the budget, correct, in regards to capital, this year and last year. So for two years running, Phillips Park has been the largest one, correct?

Finance Director Gomez: So, last year it was -- last year it was not -- I think it was -- we reduced the amount going to Phillips Park last year in order to be able to fund the windows. So, we ended up splitting the cost.

Commissioner Fernandez: The water tower. We moved it to the water tower.

Mayor Lago: How much --? I just want to -- I'd like to know how much it was in two years.

Vice Mayor Anderson: It was...

Assistant Finance Director Rodriguez: The money that was taken from Phillips Park last year was split between the water tower and the windows.

Unidentified Speaker: Yes.

Assistant Finance Director Rodriguez: It was divvied up into a couple of places. But the correct number for this year, just so that I'm correct, is just under 4.8, 4.787.

Mayor Lago: So, let's make it \$5 million. So, I think and I remember that Phillips Park was going to be a total of \$9 million, correct, or so?

Assistant Finance Director Rodriguez: So, that'll bring the total funding to Phillips Park to \$9.4 million.

Mayor Lago: Okay, \$9.5 million. We don't need any more money for Phillips Park, correct? We're done.

Assistant Finance Director Rodriguez: If the budget is adopted as it is this year, that -- Phillips Park will be fully -- fully funded.

Mayor Lago: Well, what I would recommend is making this a priority. You have at a minimum one year to design, to do testing, to do any additional work that needs to be done here, to shore up the building, to design this, do all engineering work, architecture, to bring in a restorer. You know, there's one -- there's a great one here in the City of Coral Gables, an architect who's done a lot of historic preservation, to bring in the professionals and get everything done. Potentially, it's going to take about a year. It's going to take about a year for you to be able to do all this work. And you're going to have to permit this work, okay? It's probably going to take three or four months to permit it. So, you're not even going to be ready to start this work potentially, unless you have emergency work like shoring and those kind of things that can be done. The real, you know, the real guts of the building are not going to be ready for a year and a half, potentially, to even start work. So, what I recommend to my colleagues on the Commission is treat -- treat the City -- treat

City Hall like we treated Phillips Park, as the priority for the next two years. And just bifurcate the cost. If it's \$12 million, go six and six. And that will be -- we're already used to it in the sense of we've been pushing \$5 million in change and this year almost five -- almost four and a half, five million dollars. We've been pushing that amount every single year for Phillips Park for the last two years. Do the same thing for -- for -- for City Hall. I'm pretty sure, having a little bit of an experience in construction is that this project is going to take a minimum of two years to do, to fix because of the historic nature of this building. So, you can -- I know we don't like to start projects until we have all the money budgeted, but I think that we can seriously attack it in a way that we start the work, maybe we do a two-phase project, maybe we do the third floor, then we do the next floor, then we do the next floor, so we can start doing the project and getting it done. I don't see any other way. They've talked about debt; they've talked about bonds. I don't want to do debt; I don't want to do bonds. I will vote no on that. I'll vote in favor of the project, but I'm going to vote no for debt. It just doesn't make sense and I don't want to leave any more debt on this project. We didn't do it for Phillips Park. We didn't do it -- I think we can be fiscally conservative and we can take this money, allocate it to design, allocate it to whatever the work needs to be done to make sure the building is shored up. This building is safe. Trust me. I looked at -- I looked at the -- the report. This is not an issue. Again, it's not an issue. What happened here was very simple, was that the project was -- the priorities were moved and now we don't have an issue where we have any employees on the third floor. Now we have a blank slate where we can commence the work and start doing it and take bites at it over the next three years. I think that's the best way to attack it, again, if that's the will of the Commission. It's a reasonable approach and, you know, we can get this done.

Commissioner Menendez: My turn to speak. The structural integrity of City Hall, if concern was raised 2011, that's more than a decade ago, it should have been our priority. How many times has the Commission, the folks that are here, the folks that were here before, the Administration, the Manager's Office before, how many times did we go to Tallahassee and say this is our priority, the structural integrity of City Hall? I don't recall we ever did that. How many times did we go to Washington, D.C., to ask for some funding for the structural integrity of City Hall? I don't recall we ever did that. What we have done, for example, is talk about a mobility hub that's going to cost arguably 63, 60-something million dollars. I think we went to Washington for that. There are grants, there are all types of appropriations that we put other things ahead of safety, other things ahead of our structural integrity. Why? Because we were never informed as elected officials that the structural integrity of City Hall was a concern. And I understand the need for the windows. I understand the needs why we go for funding for different things, so Gondola building, Venetian Pool. Structural integrity means to me safety. South Florida now is coming to the realization that there are buildings in South Florida, and I don't want to say which buildings, that have had tragic results. I'm not saying that's going to happen here, but it's an eye-opener. We were not informed, we were not told that City Hall, our beloved City Hall, the cornerstone of our city, has had structural integrity issues. And we've had folks here in the past that were engineers. As engineers who are experts in structural integrity, they should have been the first ones to tell us this has to go to the top of the list. Another issue that, you know, with regards to this item is -- and I understand,

we have to do something. And I'm open to, you know, bond, whatever it takes to get this result, because there are folks who work here every day, and I want to make sure everyone's safe, including the residents that come in here for whatever needs they have or they come to speak to the -- before the City Commission. Sanitation Department was discussed a little while ago and I'm not going to put -- I'm not going to point the finger at the Sanitation Department management and workers and say that management could have done a better job or there are folks in Sanitation Department that don't have the -- what was the word? -- the ambition to move up. Those folks, as we all know, work very hard and in very difficult conditions. So, this is an issue -- this is a problem that goes way beyond our staff, way beyond our departments. This is something that goes to the top, and unfortunately, the top has not addressed it, has not made it the priority number one for more than a decade. We need to take action, and I think everything should be considered, and it's a life safety issue, and it's a serious issue.

Mayor Lago: Can I ask -- may I ask you a question? Douglas Wood is a respected engineer in this town.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: I'm trying to understand where does it say that we have to evacuate the building?

Assistant City Manager Gomez: No.

Mayor Lago: I'm just asking you. I'm just asking you.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: I have not seen that written in...

Mayor Lago: I don't want any hyperbole. I'm just saying that's a very -- that's a strong statement. That's a strong statement. I'm just asking if that -- because I've worked with Douglas Wood before. They're one of the most respected engineers in town.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: I agree.

Mayor Lago: National -- nationally recognized.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: I've done a lot of spalling repair. I've done a lot of structural repair on buildings. I just -- I don't -- I don't see that here. I don't see the review. Is there issues in the building? Of course, every building -- and you can say this probably with your expertise.

Commissioner Fernandez: I never said...

Mayor Lago: Every -- every single building in South Florida is going through spalling issues now. Every single building is. There's, you know, there's issues with recertifications, there's issues with (INAUDIBLE). I -- what we should try to do is just figure out a way to move forward and address the issues and start the process. You know, we have the building almost empty. It's a great opportunity, but I reviewed this document, and I don't see it saying that there's issues here where we have to now move to another building to hold meetings and that people are -- people are potentially in danger in this building. There are issues. There are issues. There's spalling issues. There's exposed rebar. But again, I think we have to be just careful when you -- when you say that Douglas Wood is saying that this building potentially needs to be -- needs to be evacuated or we need to host meetings in another -- we're sending the wrong message.

Vice Mayor Anderson: May I...?

Mayor Lago: That's my opinion, with all due respect.

Commissioner Fernandez: But that's not what I said. What I said was -- and there's a quote. "It is our opinion that the building can continue to be temporarily occupied while repairs are being accomplished, provided City staff and/or the City's contractor exercise due caution and provided the following issues are addressed as follows within one month of the date of this letter." The letter was dated 2023.

Mayor Lago: May I answer you?

Commissioner Fernandez: July of 2023. So, when you when you say, oh, you know, we're -- we're making something out of nothing, that was exactly what was said to the folks in Surfside. I lost 14 friends in that building.

Mayor Lago: That's not what I said.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, it is -- it is -- you know what? I mean...

Mayor Lago: Again...

Commissioner Fernandez: It is frustrating when people go out and say there's no issue. And people come in here expecting safety and this building has been neglected for 13 years while you've been sitting here for 12, but your priority was not this building. It was building up a reserve, funding the -- the unfunded liability because that was your priority while this building fell apart, while the Gondola building fell apart, while the -- the water tower fell apart because that wasn't your priority. So, don't come here after 14 of my friends lost their lives because of people like this neglecting structural issues in a building and tell me there's no issue. I'm going to make a motion to move all future meetings from this room to the CRM until this building is fixed.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, Commissioner, if I may.

Mayor Lago: If I may respond, please. Okay, first off, the idea that you're comparing this to Surfside is disingenuous and disrespectful to the people who lost their lives there. I also have friends and family who lost their lives there. So, I know that you want -- this is the second time in the meeting today you raise your voice and you do all the theatrics in an effort to make a statement so you can have a clip for later. What I'm trying to do is provide -- provide an answer to budget accordingly to move forward. If you want to say that I dealt with the unfunded liability, yes, I wanted to make sure that our employees were addressed and that they -- that they did not have -- we did not go in a situation where when I walked in here, our -- our pension fund was the second worst funded pension in the state of Florida. I had to deal with that, so did all the other elected officials. We had to take all hands on deck and put a lot of money into that. We're 51 percent funded. Yes, did I want to put money into our reserves? 110 percent. I wanted to make sure that we were financially sound. But we also did amazing things for historic preservation. And I don't think I need to tell you my résumé. My résumé speaks for itself. But let's keep it about the issue at hand here today. And the issue is simple. I gave you an opportunity and a path moving forward. And that is we don't -- we no longer have issues with employees here. They're now in the new building. Now we have an opportunity here to address these issues. Douglas Wood is a consummate professional. I've dealt with the individual on multiple occasions. We can budget like we're budgeting with Phillips Park over the next two years. You cannot produce the documents necessary to attack this issue in three months, in six months, in seven months. You still have to permit this issue. So, moving forward, moving forward, I'd like to see the plans and the permitting addressed this year as expeditiously as possible and then we budget in the same way we budgeted for Phillips Park to get the project started. We break it down into two phases, six million and six million, seven million and seven million, whatever the final budget is. I hope that construction costs will start falling over the next year. Hopefully, hopefully, even if it impacts my industry at the end of the day, because I think it's important to be able to do more with the money that we have. So, I reiterate what I'm offering. I'm not talking about Surfside. I'm not talking about the past manager. I'm not talking about any of that. This building, as per Douglas Wood, who is one of the most respected engineers in town, says it's safe. But we've got to take action. You can't just let it happen for the next 10 years, 15 years. It needs to take action. And if you'd like, ask the Manager to have Douglas Wood provide a letter stating do we need to vacate the building. And if he says you need to vacate the building, I will be the first one to say we need to vacate the building. I would -- Mr. Manager, please provide the Commission a letter from Douglas Wood stating whether we need to vacate the building immediately. And what is the protocol that they recommend so that we address the issues so that the public safety is never in jeopardy. I would like for that.

City Manager Rojas: Understood.

Commissioner Fernandez: We'll take a vote on that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So...

Commissioner Fernandez: The Mayor does not direct what happens in this City. But we did have a report from Douglas Wood...

Mayor Lago: No, wait, wait, wait.

Commissioner Fernandez: January 11th, 2011...

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, but I'm not done yet.

Commissioner Fernandez: From Douglas Wood.

Mayor Lago: You just said I can't do something.

Commissioner Fernandez: Well...

Mayor Lago: Madam City Attorney, am I -- could I -- could I ask the Manager to please provide me with a document and provide me with guidance in regards to an issue that I cannot go out and speak -- I cannot go out and speak to a sub-consultant regarding an issue? Can I, yes or no?

City Attorney Suárez: You can make that request to the Manager.

Mayor Lago: Okay, perfect. Thank you very much. So, Mr. Manager, my request...

City Attorney Suárez: It's a request.

Mayor Lago: Stands and I ask you that.

Commissioner Fernandez: Now it's a request. It was a directive before.

Mayor Lago: It's a directive. I ask you to please address this issue and get us a letter in regards to -- in regards to the matter. It's simple. It's not personal, don't make it personal. It's an issue to address and move forward in a way that we get this done as quickly as possible to see if we really need to get this going.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I...

City Manager Rojas: I think what happens -- what will happen -- and I understand what you're asking, Mayor. I think what's going to happen, the first thing we need to do is really have Douglas Wood and experts come in and do a -- an assessment and -- of this particular part of the building,

the second floor and the first floor, and then I'm sure he can come up with a recommendation. But we will reach out to him and we'll be -- do you have the answer already? Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Yes, sir.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: We received the updated letter from Doug Wood and it's very brief, so if you allow me, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Of course, please.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: In November of 2022, we prepared a structural recertification report for the above reference building located at 405 Biltmore Way. A copy of that report is attached. At that time, we determined that numerous items need to be accomplished before this building could be structurally recertified conformally with the minimum inspection procedure guidelines as issued by Miami-Dade County Board of Rules and Appeals. Based on our observations in August and September of 2022 and based on limited subsequent observations, it is our opinion that the building can continue to be temporarily occupied while repairs are being accomplished, provided City staff and/or the City's contractor exercise due caution and provided the following issues are addressed as follows within one month of the date of this letter.

Mayor Lago: Mr. ACM, if I may, thank you.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Yes, sir.

Mayor Lago: I've read that letter, okay.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Yes, sir.

Mayor Lago: That's perfectly fine, but my question to you -- my statement -- it's not even a question, is let's move forward. Because at the end of the day, we cannot -- we cannot address -- we cannot address -- you cannot come in here into this building and correct this issue without plans, without engineering plans. You've got to start doing engineering plans. That's the first thing you need to do. It's going to take nine months, six months to get those plans done, plus an assessment.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: And then, the assessment takes time, then the plans, then the historic review, then you've got to go to permitting. You know this better than anybody.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: You've dealt with this. It takes time. Miami Beach is overrun with historic buildings. It takes time to do this. Probably more historic buildings than the City of Coral Gables, if you look at it. So, my point -- right?

Assistant City Manager Gomez: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: My point is that -- my point is that I don't have a problem. If he says the building is structurally unsound, we get everybody out of here.

City Manager Rojas: But there's other -- there's other issues other than structural safety of the building for the employees, and that's going to be the noise that the work is going to entail, the dust that's going to be produced. There's a lot of other health issues and that we would look at it as a whole package...

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Absolutely.

City Manager Rojas: Once we start doing the assessments and the work as to whether, in my opinion and the opinion of my staff, is it feasible for the employees to be put into that environment?

Mayor Lago: Mr. Manager, in response to your statement, if it's deemed appropriate that all the employees move out during the construction of the third floor, the second floor, the first floor, whatever they're doing, any type of construction, I have no issues with that. No issues whatsoever. Even if it's required during the windows installation, they need to be moved out, move them out at the end of the day.

Commissioner Menendez: I have a question for the ACM, then I have a request to the City Manager. And what you just read...

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Yes, sir.

Commissioner Menendez: It said temporarily occupied. What do they mean by temporarily occupied?

Assistant City Manager Gomez: As long as the proper repairs are continued to be made, the shoring, for example, and all that, and provided that nothing as we go through the assessment, as they go through the assessment and they determine that there's nothing that would be of life safety that would require us to move out. So, I think that's just cautionary wording temporarily, obviously, because this is -- there's a lot of hidden here that we're not at that point yet when the assessment starts to be completed that we'll be able to see further what the repairs need to be.

Commissioner Menendez: This could be a Pandora's box. Once we open it, we don't know what's inside.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Absolutely.

Commissioner Menendez: And I'm going to make a request to the City Manager because I see, you know, what I'm understanding is the cost could be significant and we have other needs in the City as well. I asked the City Manager if he could have his team for when we come back in September do research and present us options, funding options, outside of our budget, dealing with bond issue, not only for City Hall, but other buildings that are in our asset group that may need structural support. If we're going to do this for City Hall, we might as well tackle all our historic properties at one time. And I'm not saying that that's the path we're going to go, but if we're going to put it all on the table, let's have your team bring us options, funding options in September, please.

Mayor Lago: And by the way...

City Manager Rojas: Commissioner...

Mayor Lago: If I may, Mr. Clerk, will you please send to the Manager and to his team and to all my colleagues the list of the 2020-2023 Tallahassee requests where we did put down \$950,000 for City Hall. There was some money there. We did attempt to get some other money for City Hall, but it was not -- it was not approved as a result that they did not want to approve our historic building for some reason.

Commissioner Castro: Because it's City Hall.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So...

Mayor Lago: I know, they didn't want...

Commissioner Castro: That's the reason.

Mayor Lago: They didn't want to approve it, but we did go to Tallahassee, we did make a request outside of the windows and all that other stuff, and they said no.

Commissioner Castro: There's other resources, granting available from the historic.

Mayor Lago: No doubt, I agree.

Commissioner Castro: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: You should chase every dollar.

Commissioner Castro: But Tallahassee's never going to fund City Hall, it's just not going to happen, whether it's...

Mayor Lago: But I'm responding -- Commissioner, I'm responding to Commissioner Fernandez's response that we went to -- we went -- that we were chasing other priorities when we were chasing every priority, every way we can get some money to address the issue. Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, City Manager, I do have a request too so that we can properly analyze, you know, the steps because first step is to get the architectural drawings and the engineering drawings. Right now we don't have any figures, or estimated figures and this is a very special process for a historic building. This is not building a regular building; this is a restoration. This was done with the Fink Studio, the Historic Preservation Board, which I did share this report with, that is the -- the one from July 30th, the most recent report. I didn't go back in time. I dealt with the one with the current recommendations and the current status of the building and the interventions that were recommended by Douglas Wood, but we do need to know what it's going to cost. How much money should we be spending this year on architectural drawings and engineering so that we can be able to take the next step as far as the building repairs itself. And I'm -- and I'm certain that once we start moving forward on the building repairs, we absolutely will need to be out of here because the noise and the dust and...

Mayor Lago: Of course.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Everything will be horrific. And hopefully we can dovetail all this together. So, we're doing the windows and we're doing the -- what I call the bones of the building that need to be reinforced. I don't see anything in the most recent report and, (INAUDIBLE), correct me if I'm missing something here, that says that we need to immediately evacuate the building due to any life safety issue.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: That is correct, Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, but we can't kick the can down the road is the message. Let's start addressing this now.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Anderson: There are temporary repairs suggested while we get the architectural drawings done and while we get the engineering drawings done so they can do further exploratory in the building to better estimate how much it's going to take to shore up this building properly and restore it. So, I'd ask you to get that to us so that we have it for the next meeting. And...

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor, may I ask -- because it's 1:30, 1:40 almost.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You're right.

Mayor Lago: I know we have a time certain at 4:30 and we have certain -- other items here. I just want to be cognizant of everybody's time.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: Do you want to keep going on the conversation? Do you want to go have lunch? Do you want to try to get a vote now? Do you want to try to get a vote now or what do you want to do?

Vice Mayor Anderson: Well, my stomach is voting right now for food but...

Mayor Lago: Do you want to --? What would you like to do? It's your item.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

Mayor Lago: I'm ready to vote if you like. I mean, I think we've gotten a lot of the answers.

Commissioner Menendez: I ask, if you don't mind, for your consideration, since you're the sponsor. Since I asked the Manager and his team to provide us in September all the funding options that are out there, if -- unless the Manager's Office believes that we have to vote on your item now, but if it can wait till we get the full fund -- all the funding options, I would -- you know, I ask that you consider maybe deferring it until then.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay. Even if we didn't have the issue here with the critical need on this building, I would be asking us to be judicious and fiscally responsible on the headcount increase because there's been a huge headcount increase. Let's take a step at a time approach.

Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You know, we don't -- you know, let's deal with the critical needs. So, I'm prepared to vote on this now based upon those needs and give staff time to readjust the budget before our next meeting, rather than landing them, you know, with a surprise on what the number is going to be. I tried to be very judicious. Okay, and leeway back and forth. And yes, I did speak to all the directors and I had that type of talk with them.

Commissioner Menendez: Then I have a quick question for the Administration, for the City Attorney, for Diana and your team. If we were to vote, this passes and come September we find a perhaps another funding path to go forward, is this something that at that point we can readjust?

City Attorney Suárez: From a legal perspective, yes. I don't know if staff -- and the practical reality, I think yes, it sounds like. Right? Yeah.

Commissioner Menendez: Okay. I just want to throw it out there, that if there are -- there is an alternative path going forward that makes sense and doesn't impact, you know, different departments, then at that point I would want to reconsider. But I respect your -- your...

Vice Mayor Anderson: We can always -- we can always amend the budget. You know, let's say we have this huge grant that comes in that's going to take care of City Hall. We can -- we can take that up when the time comes.

Commissioner Fernandez: I guess I had a follow-up question regarding the statement that you read from Doug Wood. That was given to us two years ago and it said we had a month to complete the items on that list. Were the items on that list completed or is that the 30 percent that's been completed?

Assistant City Manager Gomez: I believe that's the 30 percent.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, we were given a month to complete the items on a list two years ago and we've completed about 30 percent of the items on that list.

Public Works Director Diaz: If I may, I think the 30 percent is an average number of the overall items that are required for the recertification of overall the building, which, you know, unfortunately, we are not going to be able to do until the entire building is redone. That by the way includes the windows. That is actually part of the recertification of the building that needs to be done.

Mayor Lago: It's a little bit more complex than that.

Commissioner Fernandez: From the list -- from the list that was given as it needs to be completed within the next month.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right. So, we have probably done I would say about 90 percent of them, but the big thing that's pending will be the shoring. And there's a few other things that need to be done as well. But you know, it was divided into things that require more immediate attention, and then obviously, there's the larger recertification of the entire building that is necessary for...

Mayor Lago: So, when you do the average, is the 30 percent based on money?

Public Works Director Diaz: I believe that the 30 percent is roughly about general for the recertification of the building itself.

Mayor Lago: But was it based on money? Because if it was -- if the big item that we left out was the windows, then it obviously makes sense.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right. There are certain things that, like a window for example, you know, and...

Mayor Lago: Let me make it easy for you.

Public Works Director Diaz: Sure.

Mayor Lago: Let's say it was 10 items...

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Mayor Lago: That needed to be done and you did three. That means that you finished 30 percent, correct? Or was it a million dollars and the windows are 700,000 and you were only able to do \$300,000 worth, that means you finished 30 percent.

Public Works Director Diaz: I couldn't give you that breakdown right now, but I could -- I could look into it further.

Mayor Lago: If you could, through the Manager...

Public Works Director Diaz: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: If you could do that just so we can have an idea.

Public Works Director Diaz: Sure.

Mayor Lago: Because at the end of the day...

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Mayor Lago: If the building is unsafe and the building needs to be addressed and there needs to be some pole shores put in here and needs to be -- and you can't use the elevator and there's, you know, issues with delamination and rebar, then we need to address it. Again, but there's -- we would have never been able to address it outside of going to go rent a building somewhere to put all the employees that are now working in 427. So, I'm ready to make a -- find a solution here. I don't know if we can find the money in the budget to start the engineering and architecture and all that work that's required in the beginning. It's going to be seven figures, if not more, in a building of this magnitude. Probably more than that when you add up all the consultants that are going to be used to bring this building back to its splendor. So, I don't know how we're going to get the

money. If you wait till the next budget cycle, that's a year from now, so we continue *lo mismo*. We got to find a way to cut somewhere. So, Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: That's -- that's why I...

Mayor Lago: You don't want to cut positions, you got to cut a job. You got to cut something.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yeah, and these were just added positions that weren't in the budget before that I looked at the critical needs for or not. So, to move this forward, let's just make a motion. I'll make a motion.

Commissioner Fernandez: We have a standing motion right now.

Commissioner Menendez: And I seconded.

City Clerk Urquia: We do, but I don't have a seconder.

Commissioner Menendez: I did.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay.

City Attorney Suárez: Okay, we hadn't heard it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I didn't hear a second so...

Mayor Lago: We will hear public comment, I promise. Clerk, can we have some public comment?

Commissioner Fernandez: I will -- I will amend my motion to move meetings from this chamber to the CRM until such time as that list that was given to us that needed to be completed within a month is completed, so that 10 percent that's left.

Vice Mayor Anderson: The windows?

Commissioner Fernandez: No, it has nothing to do with the windows. It's the shoring of this -- of the -- of the beams in this chamber.

Vice Mayor Anderson: That -- how long does it take to shore the beams?

Public Works Director Diaz: It's not the shoring. The -- it needs to be designed, it needs to be permitted and then it needs to be implemented.

City Manager Rojas: So, how many months? What's that, two months? Three months?

Public Works Director Diaz: Two months, roughly.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, and is that shoring, in the opinion of the engineer, Douglas Wood, necessary in order to occupy this building for the next two months?

Public Works Director Diaz: The -- the -- on his letter, he said that the building is okay for continuous occupation. The way -- since, obviously, this building is going to -- these letters are done like on a six-month increment, so obviously, it's going to take more than six months to do the entirety of everything to do those buildings. So, we get a letter that takes over six months, then over the next six months at some point you will have to come back, do an assessment, some additional things may come up that maybe need to be addressed then, and if everything is okay, then you will get another six-month extension and so on. That's generally the process until the entire building is completed.

Commissioner Fernandez: And Mr. Director, this was two years ago.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

Commissioner Fernandez: Two years ago, we were told this needed to be done.

Public Works Director Diaz: Correct.

Commissioner Fernandez: And we're still missing things. So, unless we get it done and prioritize it, it's not going to get done. And I think unless we say we're going to cease use of this chamber and continue to tax this chamber because every time you add weight, you're putting pressure on the beams that they're saying need to be shored up.

Public Works Director Diaz: I'm (INAUDIBLE)...

Commissioner Fernandez: And we already had issues in the DCM's office and in Lena's office so we're adding pressure to this -- to this chamber without having finished the work that was supposed to be finished by August of 2022. It's August of 2024.

Mayor Lago: Mr. ACM...

Commissioner Fernandez: I stand by -- by my motion.

Mayor Lago: Mr. ACM, may I ask you for a favor through the Manager? Do you have a relationship with someone at Douglas Wood?

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Do I have a relation with somebody (INAUDIBLE)?

Mayor Lago: Relationship.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Relationship with?

Mayor Lago: Like you can call somebody, hi, how are you, following up on a friendship.

Assistant City Manager Gomez: I mean, I know many people in the industry, sir. I would have to look at...

Mayor Lago: Why don't -- why don't you speak with the Manager, speak with your team. We have a meeting that's probably not going to end until 5:30, 6 o'clock tonight. Why don't you give a call to Douglas Wood and get their recommendation, their professional recommendation, and see what they recommend in regards to the request of the Commission. And then we can go off our -- our structural engineer, licensed structural engineer, and make the decisions that are appropriate moving forward. That's what I would do. You have a -- you probably catch somebody there now and say, look, this is -- you can explain to them the conversation, have them put it in writing in an email and say, look, we're going to move forward in this direction. What do you recommend?

Public Works Director Diaz: It may be helpful if this Commission passes a vote authorizing bid waivers for any work related to this temporary work.

Mayor Lago: I don't have a problem with that either.

Public Works Director Diaz: That way it's faster for us to move the process.

Mayor Lago: I don't have a problem with that either, but I would like to hear from a structural engineer who is our consultant. That's it. I don't have a problem. Is that okay?

Commissioner Castro: So, are you...?

Mayor Lago: Through the Manager?

Commissioner Castro: So, are you asking him to kind of defer...?

Mayor Lago: I'm not asking for anything.

Commissioner Castro: To defer this motion until we get that letter?

Mayor Lago: No, what I'm asking for the gentleman is to speak with the Manager and do everything through the Manager and have a conversation with his team and call Douglas Wood

right now in the break and say -- over the next few hours, see if you can get -- get -- build some consensus in regards to whether we need to evacuate this building for the next few weeks until we can finalize whatever...

Public Works Director Diaz: We already have a letter saying that...

Mayor Lago: We don't, I know we don't.

Public Works Director Diaz: Okay.

Mayor Lago: But Commissioner Fernandez keeps -- keeps insisting on that it's two years old, it's two years old, it's two years old and that's fine. I respect that; it's fine. So, I want to get an understanding whether he will send us an updated letter. That happens to be in the industry...

Public Works Director Diaz: No, we got that letter yesterday.

Mayor Lago: Okay, and what does it say?

Public Works Director Diaz: That's the one I just read.

(MULTIPLE PARTIES SPEAKING IN UNISON)

Mayor Lago: Okay, but it's again, but he keeps saying that letter was from two years ago.

Unidentified Speaker: Right.

Mayor Lago: So, we have a new letter?

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes.

Mayor Lago: We have a new letter. Perfect. Okay, so then we have time to do this. But if you want to get more reassurance, say, hi, I just received your letter. One of the Commissioners, the entire Commission has concerns over this fact. Can you just provide me with a little guidance so that I can go into that (INAUDIBLE)...

Assistant City Manager Gomez: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: And just go into the Commission meeting and make people feel comfortable in the fact that...

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Yes, sir.

Mayor Lago: This building is not going to collapse, okay?

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Yes, sir.

Mayor Lago: I think that after, with his knowledge of the building, I think it's something that is appropriate. It happens in our industry every day where you can go and you ask for a secondary opinion from that same engineer or architect on record and they're able to provide it to you. Okay?

Assistant City Manager Gomez: Will do.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And could you also...

Mayor Lago: Through the Manager, please.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Share a copy of that letter...

Mayor Lago: Oh, absolutely.

Vice Mayor Anderson: With the entire Commission before we make a decision?

Mayor Lago: And then what we can do is we'll all address this issue right at the end of the meeting. Okay?

Commissioner Castro: (INAUDIBLE) the same.

Commissioner Fernandez: But that -- you need to request that I would draw my motion to do that, but you're saying you don't -- you don't need to request anything. So, you're just magnanimously making the decision.

Mayor Lago: I never said that.

Commissioner Fernandez: You did. You just told her that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: It was...

Commissioner Castro: That's what I was just suggesting.

Commissioner Fernandez: She asked you if you were asking...

Commissioner Castro: I was just suggesting.

Commissioner Fernandez: Me to defer my motion and you said no, I'm telling staff to do this.

Mayor Lago: I'm not -- I'm not...

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes, yes.

Mayor Lago: If I may, let me finish. Let me finish. I'm not -- you can continue with your motion. I'm just giving you an idea. If you want to take my idea of how to handle it so you can get an answer and get a clear answer and not -- not do this by -- if you want to continue with your motion, it's perfectly fine. I'm not asking you to do anything. You can continue. If you'd like to do this, you can take my idea and you can roll with it. If you want to continue with your motion, then continue with your motion. It's okay with me. It's not a no skin off my back. I'm just trying to help you. I'm trying to help the City. That's it.

Commissioner Fernandez: You're trying -- well, I mean, arguably, that's stopped many years ago. I stand by my motion. I'd like a vote.

City Clerk Urquia: Prior to taking a vote, Mr. Mayor, I have members of the public requesting to speak.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Clerk Urquia: First speaker, Ms. Maria Cruz.

City Attorney Suárez: Mr. Mayor, while she comes up, can I just add one detail that's important? We do have our first budget meeting scheduled for September 12th. The address for this -- the location of the meeting has been included on the trim notice. So, I think we should really take that into consideration. I think that that meeting should be held here. We could, you know, if we absolutely had to move the meeting for some other reason, we would do everything we could in terms of notifying and putting signage, but just keep that in mind.

City Clerk Urquia: Not just the trim bill notice but also the special taxing districts for...

City Attorney Suárez: Special assessments.

City Clerk Urquia: That were all no -- the special assessments...

City Attorney Suárez: Correct.

City Clerk Urquia: That were all noticed as well.

City Attorney Suárez: Right, so those are both scheduled for September 12th.

Commissioner Fernandez: We should send Peter Iglesias the bill because it was his neglect that put us in this situation.

Commissioner Castro: Couldn't we just put (INAUDIBLE).

(MULTIPLE PARTIES SPEAKING IN UNISON)

Commissioner Fernandez: Again, we had a city manager who never informed the Commission of the condition of this building and has put us in this situation today. A structural engineer.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Listen...

City Attorney Suárez: I'm not arguing about the policy. I'm just saying we need to decide what we're going to do with the budget hearing.

Commissioner Fernandez: But what you're saying is we've already sent out the notice so we should potentially put people at risk.

City Attorney Suárez: No, I'm not saying that. And let's be clear. I am not saying that.

Commissioner Fernandez: You just said we should have it here.

City Attorney Suárez: I -- I said that we need to -- so, okay, I am not taking any position. I am not an engineer. I do not know if this building is safe. I do not take any position on that. I hope that is clear. I'm saying we have a budget hearing that was scheduled for September 12th. The notices, the advertisements, the trim notices have gone out with this location. So, we would have to, if we decide, if we do decide to move the meetings effective tomorrow, whatever, then we would need to make sure that we take all appropriate steps to put the information out there and make sure the public is aware that the meeting location has changed.

Commissioner Castro: And we could also put a sign in front of the door in the entrance saying, look, the meeting is held next door or whatever the case is.

City Attorney Suárez: Yes, of course we would do that, yeah. And we will look into whether we can re-notice or send out other kind of information.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I was aware that there were issues with the building and that's why last year when I wasn't making any advancements with you all on trying to get funding in for the windows on City Hall that I made a separate resolution just like I made a separate resolution here in order for us to have a honest discussion about the need to put money in this building. And I understand there's a very strong desire by three of you to move forward on Phillips Park, and I respect that. However, we cannot kick the can down the road, and I pushed forward to get the

funding into this building for the windows, okay. And thankfully, you listened, okay. I was aware that the building was being tested, and the concrete content was being tested so that we could ascertain what was needed to move forward. We received that report on July 30th of this year. I learned about it the week after. I brought it to the Historic Preservation Board because absolutely they need to be engaged and involved in the structural repairs of this building, and we need to move forward with the type of architect that is needed and the type of engineer that's needed for a building of this nature. So, I'd prefer not to, you know, inflame a situation beyond what the report says because the report did not say you need to evacuate the building, okay. So, you can go ahead with your motion. It's already a few minutes of two. We were supposed to start another session a while ago. Let's move forward.

Commissioner Castro: I have a quick question.

Commissioner Fernandez: But nobody has actually tried to inflame the situation. The report that I got dated 2022, the City Manager at the time was informed that work needed to be done within a month. Ten percent of that work still hasn't been completed two years later.

Vice Mayor Anderson: 90 percent of it has been done and there has been no recommendation to evacuate the building.

Commissioner Fernandez: The recommendation at the time was that it could be used for one month. That's 30 days.

Maria Cruz: Temporarily.

Commissioner Fernandez: It has been used for 730 days.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Right, and 90 percent...

Commissioner Fernandez: And...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Of that work has been done, correct?

Commissioner Fernandez: And -- but it said 100 percent of that work had to be completed within a month. That was what the letter stated.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So...

Commissioner Fernandez: And they stated it again in July of 2023.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I've had...

Commissioner Fernandez: And they're stating it again now.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And I've had...

Commissioner Fernandez: So...

Vice Mayor Anderson: And I've had meetings with the Manager about -- prior manager and this manager about the progress on the windows. You know, we're waiting for engineering drawings. The Manager is as frustrated as I am that that hasn't moved forward faster. We're going to have to monitor whoever in our City is responsible for sending the engineering drawings into the company that's going to fabricate the first window to make sure it moves forward. And we've got to continue to move it forward.

Commissioner Castro: I have a last question. I'm sorry, Maria. In an emergency situation, what is the protocol or the policy when there is an emergency situation such as this or a hurricane, where do we get that money out from when there is no funding?

City Attorney Suárez: She's asking funding for when there's an emergency that needs to be addressed. Where do you get the funding?

Finance Director Gomez: So, when there is an emergency such as a hurricane, we have fund balance. We use the cash in our fund balance and then we get reimbursement from FEMA or the State or whoever is reimbursing for the project. There's always a portion of the project that is the City's responsibility, so we fund it through the budgeting process, through the -- any year-end surpluses, we cover that at the -- you know, before we make available in the next budget funds. So, we have cash available. That is what the fund balance is there for emergency purposes.

Commissioner Castro: Okay, so this wouldn't qualify obviously as a hurricane. So, FEMA wouldn't cover this?

Finance Director Gomez: Correct.

Commissioner Castro: So, what would be the other option?

Finance Director Gomez: In terms of how to fund the -- this -- the whole of City Hall?

Commissioner Castro: And I hate to say this...

Finance Director Gomez: Sure.

Commissioner Castro: And it's not true, but I'm just putting like worst case scenario.

Finance Director Gomez: Sure.

Commissioner Castro: The building's falling apart.

Finance Director Gomez: So, you're saying how would we...

Commissioner Castro: How (INAUDIBLE)?

Finance Director Gomez: If we had to immediately fund the reconstruction or the repairs to City Hall, I would recommend issuing a bond and taking out the funds in the bond using the money that has been set aside for the capital, the priority capital plan program in future years, that \$5.5 million that we started setting aside since 2023 and use that as a repayment method for the bonds so that we can repay the bonds fairly quickly so that we don't have debt for long term, unnecessary debt for long term.

City Manager Rojas: And -- I'm sorry.

Finance Director Gomez: Sure.

City Manager Rojas: And if we're going to take a bond out, let's say for this building, can we take a larger amount of bond as long as we have the money to pay for...

Finance Director Gomez: Sure. So...

City Manager Rojas: The bond to do some of the other historical buildings that are in the priority list?

Finance Director Gomez: Sure, at the end of the day you just have to have the repayment, yes.

City Manager Rojas: (INAUDIBLE), water tower, those things that -- when we started working on the budget for this '25 -- '24/'25, one of the priorities that I spoke to staff about was the historical buildings, that I saw that there were some structural issues, some issues that needed -- like the Gondola building was pretty much non-existent. And what I suggested to our staff is focus as much of our resources as we can to historical buildings. That's number one. This is iconic buildings that we have that says this is Gables. So, if we move on and we look at other facilities like Venetian Pool and the tower, we may look at -- my suggestion would be to look at a bond that would cover those repairs and use the money that we have set aside now for, for example, for City Hall at \$5 million to pay down the bond. Is that something that would be practical?

Finance Director Gomez: Sure. We can -- yes, we can do that. We can take out a bond for whatever -- we can take out a bond for whatever dollar number we feel that we need to take out as long as we have the ability to repay it at the end of the day. So, how would we repay it right now?

We don't have additional revenues per se. Well, again, in 2023, we established this priority capital plan program that was sitting aside about \$5 million. This coming budget now on October 1st, that last payment, that payment is going towards Philips Park to finish that. In the year after, there is no other -- the only other assigned project is City Hall. The intention was that for the next several years we would be funding City Hall so we would have the cash in order to pay -- pay for the repairs of this building. However, if there is an immediate need for that and to do the work, yes, we could leverage a bond and have that cash in order to do the project and then we have the recurring revenue to make the payments in order to be able to pay the bond.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you, Diana, for your answer. And I think it's very clear that there are other options to be able to fund this and we don't have to jeopardize the quality of life of our residents.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, it's a few minutes to 2.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'm going to move to take a break.

Mayor Lago: Look, there's a motion...

Vice Mayor Anderson: I understand.

Mayor Lago: There's a...

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'm making a motion to take a break. Number one, I cannot proceed any further without eating lunch.

Commissioner Menendez: I understand.

Mayor Lago: So, there's a...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

Mayor Lago: Motion on the table. We have to -- we have to have...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, we can take a break. Make a motion to take a break. Let's get some lunch. Let's get our (INAUDIBLE) session done. I cannot proceed further.

Mayor Lago: If I -- if I may, if I may. We have a motion and I want to finish with public input, so we at least finish that and then we'll go to have lunch, okay? Would you like to --? What would you like to do with your motion?

Commissioner Fernandez: I will -- I will -- let's take public input and then we'll take a recess and come back.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I can't proceed.

Commissioner Castro: She can't -- let's -- she has to have (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Fernandez: Just let her speak.

Commissioner Castro: Oh, yeah.

Commissioner Fernandez: She's been standing here. He had already called her up.

Commissioner Menendez: Vice Mayor.

Ms. Cruz: I'm getting tired.

Commissioner Castro: Excuse yourself. It's public comment.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: So...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Sorry, I can't stay.

Commissioner Menendez: No. Yeah.

Ms. Cruz: Okay.

Mayor Lago: Let's go ahead.

Ms. Cruz: (INAUDIBLE) have quorum (INAUDIBLE) okay.

Mayor Lago: If we could -- if we could just...

Ms. Cruz: That's alright.

Mayor Lago: Move forward.

Ms. Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. Let me tell you, the more you sit here, the more you say wow.

City Clerk Urquia: Excuse me, ma'am.

Ms. Cruz: We could be...

City Clerk Urquia: Ma'am, can you raise the microphone, please?

Ms. Cruz: We can move to an insane asylum and look better. Okay, number one, I object to some of the comments, because you know what? Yes, I did know people that died in Surfside. Yes, the board was told there was no urgency, and that's why they didn't fix it. And wow, we should have known better. Okay, but the big point here, we say we trust the staff. We want the staff to know that we trust them. We told the staff, the department heads, the directors, come back with a lean budget. So, they cut as much as they could cut, but they had needs. But now we're going to say, no, you know what? They didn't know what they were talking about. So, we're going to cut the cuts that they already cut because you know what? Sanitation, we can survive. Code Enforcement, ah, the City will look like a dump. Who cares? No, no. You know what? We're talking about big money. The money that is suggested to be cut so we can do something is pennies. We won't do anything by cutting that, and we will damage the services, okay? I think it's very interesting. We're going to cut Christmas decorations. You know who wants those? The residents. We're going to cut things that the residents want, but we have to spend \$20,000, make sure the world knows that we're a world-class city and we have art. You know, that's very important. Okay, the sign shop. Has anybody looked at the signs around the City? If we go to Liberty City, they look better. Okay, but that's okay. You know, who cares about the signs? Okay, the windows. We had a structural engineer in charge of this City. You know what? If somebody comes to my house and assesses my house and tells me that the foundations have a problem, do I say, oh, you know what, I forgot I need windows. Let's fix the windows first and then let's worry about the foundation. That is ridiculous. Let me tell you, if I knew how to do it, I will go after his license. Because you know what? He should have known what goes first and what goes second. Actually, the windows, you know what? We survived a while without fixing them. We could have said, okay, you know what? We really need to fix this before we move on to windows, and he didn't say that, okay? Some people have suggested to me that since Peter Iglesias did not like the idea of designating things historic, this could have been considered demolition by neglect. You know what? If we let it go really bad, maybe we won't have to fix it after all, okay? Two years ago, two years ago, we knew that we needed to fix. He was a structural engineer. Suramy was an engineer, too. Hello, where were they? Okay. Exactly a year ago, Maria Cruz stood here and Maria Cruz said -- I'm going to skip some of this stuff. And I just remembered we did have the money for City Hall. We could have fixed it. We could have done it at that time, at the price of the time. But lo and behold, we came up with a very creative move, and we made City Hall, it says City Hall Complex. And guess what? We fixed the 427 building. It was very urgent, very urgent. We needed to do that and forget City Hall. I wonder, it says here, you know what? Listening to the conversation today, a year ago, I wonder if we're ever going to go to Phillips Park. It's so funny that Phillips Park was mentioned today because you know what? Prices will go up, expenses will

be more than we expect, and you know what? Kirk Menendez, you're not playing ball the way they want you to play ball. So, parks are your interest. So, what's the rush with Phillips Park? Who cares about Phillips Park? Let's do what we want to do. And maybe something else will come up in the horizon that is an emergency. And you know what? Phillips Park is not an emergency anymore. So, unless in 2025 -- see, I can see a future -- we have elections again, and we elect people that really say what they mean and mean what they say, we're going to be here again talking about Phillips Park, because you know what? This Administration is very good at playing games. And we could have fixed -- we could have had City Hall fixed years ago, but we chose, the Administration chose that 427 was more important. And some of you were sitting here. And we were able to do 427, and we were able to buy a whole bunch of stuff for 427 instead of fixing City Hall. Enough is enough. Stop moving money around. Use the money for what's meant to be. And I'm sorry, Mr. Menendez, it says it here. I know you like to be very congenial and very nice. But guess what? They're not being nice to you. Because you know what? You're not playing ball with the same rules they do. And write this down. Listen to this. I write down the date and the time, September 2023. And you will see that eventually Maria Cruz will be right again because that's how we play the game. I'm sorry, this is serious business. People are watching. We're listening. You know what? I have the minutes when we did the budget that we had the money for City Hall, not the City Hall Complex, not 427, the City Hall, but that was not important. It was better to let City Hall get damaged than to fix it at the right time. I'm sorry, I don't believe, I don't trust. And Mr. Menendez, you're paying the price for not playing the -- playing by the same book. History repeats itself, doesn't it? Minutes are good. Keep playing games. Let's wait. Someday we'll be sorry, but guess what? It'll be too late.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Jackson Holmes.

Jackson Holmes: So, I don't know if, it's better to laugh than to cry, right? So, I'm going to see if I can make a joke. I was praising you at the beginning of the meeting because that's the only reason I'm here. I don't want to get my head bashed in in the former government. But I need to see if I can evoke sympathy in whoever thinks that we can do a tax bond. So, I don't like to divulge my personal finances, but it's the only way to be -- to explain my position. Mayor, if we do a tax bond, I hate to say this, but our friend, Mayor Lago, is right about the impact of taxes on businesses. So, God, I can start crying here. But anyway, so first of all, I don't have hurricane insurance to cover my building. Now, I do have hurricane insurance and it's basically worthless. Because why? If a hurricane hits us, I can't rebuild. My hurricane insurance will not pay and I'll be done. You know, I'll be -- I'll have to go into bankruptcy. So, nobody cares about that. They care about whether City Hall could collapse. But what about my building? What about all these other buildings with people on the brink without adequate hurricane insurance? Now, here's the second thing, and I really don't like to, you know, disclose my personal finances, but I -- it's applicable. So, I renewed my lease two years ago, right, or for two years, about six months ago. And so in the lease, the tenant gets what they call pass-throughs. They have to pay for the taxes and insurance.

A good professional lease says that those are flow-through expenses and the tenant has to cover. So, my tenant, knowing that I couldn't find someone else in the short time because that's a half a million dollar expensive new build out and all this stuff. He says, we're not going to pay your taxes. And I said, well, you have to. And he says, no, we don't. You want us to renew? Stop telling us to pay your taxes. And so I said, well, that's really nice of you to back me into a corner. I'm talking to my tenant, but I had to -- he said, take it or leave it. And he's paying half of the tax. I don't want to be inaccurate. But -- so half of the taxes then are falling upon me. Now you're thinking about raising a tax bond, please stop this, this is a deal breaker. We'll have a ghost town on Miracle Mile. We'll have people who don't have taxpayer money to back them up. We need -- please, if -- I got a better idea. Let's sue the former city manager for not addressing this problem. He is guilty of malfeasance.

Mayor Lago: Rip, if I may, Mr. Holmes, sit down with the Manager so he can explain to you a little bit about who pays for the bond.

Mr. Holmes: I'm sorry, I can't hear you.

Mayor Lago: If you don't -- if you would do me the pleasure, if you sit down with the Manager so he can explain to you or the Finance Director through the Manager who pays for the bond, the City will be paying for the bond if that even happens. It's not the taxpayer at the end of the day, okay?

Commissioner Menendez: It's a different...

Mayor Lago: So, I want to be -- I want to play fair here.

Commissioner Menendez: A different kind of bond.

Mayor Lago: I want to play fair here. I don't want to -- I don't want there to be a...

Mr. Holmes: No, I'm glad you're speaking up.

Mayor Lago: I don't want you -- I don't want you to be misled, okay.

Mr. Holmes: This is news to me.

Mayor Lago: Can you do me a favor? Can you do me a favor? Can we move on so that I can go --? We have a meeting now.

Mr. Holmes: Well, I'll have you explain it. I'll make an appointment with you.

Mayor Lago: Whatever you like. You can come and see me on Fridays. We're open, Open Door Fridays. Come and see and spend time with me.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker, Robert Ruano.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Ruano, good afternoon.

Robert Ruano: Good afternoon. Can you hear me?

Mayor Lago: Yes, sir.

Mr. Ruano: Good afternoon. Hi, I just wanted to mention something about this issue. City Hall is a very important piece of Coral Gables, and I commend the Finance Director and the City Manager for recommending a bond. I think a bond for City Hall and for other historic buildings is a great idea. I would support it as a resident. Oh, I forgot, 1544 Mercy Avenue. Then I would say, and Commissioner Fernandez brought it up, which I think should be brought up, is that we were just thinking about a bond of \$40 million for a mobility hub that doesn't connect anywhere, that doesn't really do anything and we don't really need. So, now we have a real need. This is an urgent need. So, I think we should do it. And to Mr. -- Commissioner Fernandez, thank you for that. I think you have a genuine concern for the safety of residents and people there. And I appreciate that. And I dealt with a similar issue on a historic building. I will tell you that -- that instead of the politicians deciding if somebody should leave the building, talk to your engineer, your building official. Let the people that are responsible for your safety, that building's safety, come up on the dais and tell you exactly. And if they say it's safe until you can go ahead, then, you know, and get it fixed, then it's safe. And then finally, I will tell you, every year in June, there is a -- a grant that you can apply through to the State which you have applied before but this is a great opportunity to apply over half -- half a million dollars at least to protect this building. Thank you very much. Have a great day.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you.

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

Mayor Lago: Alright. So, we have a motion a second.

Commissioner Fernandez: We decided to take a recess and then come back.

Mayor Lago: Alright, that's what we'll do. Okay. Perfect. We'll be back, I guess, when we finish.

(At this time, the City Commission meeting went into recess.)

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Let's start off with H-1, the City Manager items. We can push through these.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, I apologize. Before we moved on, when we went on break, we had a motion on the floor. I just wanted to see how we proceed with that motion.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, I spoke -- I spoke with staff during the break. The current letter that we have on the table gives us a month. So, they're going to be reviewing the items that have been ticked off this list and what is pending and I've asked them to bring that back to us at the next Commission meeting, September 10th. So, I'm withdrawing my motion pending hearing that on September 10th.

City Clerk Urquia: Thank you, sir.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And we can either proceed with a vote on this now so the City Manager has direction or we can defer this item also to September 10th.

Mayor Lago: It's up to you. Whatever you like. You're the sponsor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Manager, which one would you prefer? I'm putting you on the spot.

City Manager Rojas: I'll take the directions. We'll move forward and get the information.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Pardon?

City Manager Rojas: I said -- your question to me is...

Vice Mayor Anderson: You want us to vote on this now so you have direction or...?

City Manager Rojas: No, we can defer to...

Commissioner Fernandez: Your mic.

City Manager Rojas: We can defer it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Alright, then we'll defer.

City Attorney Suárez: So, that was F-5.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: That's F-5 and we've done the discussion, F-6.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yeah, we deferred F-6.