

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-9
July 1, 2025
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Melissa Castro

Commissioner Ariel Fernandez (Absent)

Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

Agenda Item H-9 [3:16 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission accepting the recommendation to waive the competitive bid process of the Procurement Code and contract with Gavarrete, Inc. for the construction of temporary offices for the Mayor and Commissioners at the Minorca Garage located at 254 Minorca Ave., in an estimated amount of \$636,481 or not to exceed the available budget, pursuant to Section 2-691 of the Procurement Code, titled “Special Procurements/Bid Waiver.”

Mayor Lago: H-9.

City Attorney Suarez: H-9 is A Resolution of the City Commission accepting the recommendation to waive the competitive bid process of the Procurement Code and contract with Gavarrete, Inc. for the construction of temporary offices for the Mayor and Commissioners at the Minorca Garage located at 254 Minorca Ave., in an estimated amount of \$636,481 or not to exceed the available budget, pursuant to Section 2-691 of the Procurement Code, titled “Special Procurements/Bid Waiver.”

City Commission Meeting

[Date]

1

July 1, 2025

*Agenda Item H-9 – Resolution accepting the recommendation to waive the competitive bid process
Of the Procurement Code and contract with Gavarrete Inc. for the construction of temporary offices*

Mayor Lago: Mr. Director.

Public Works Director Diaz: This is part of the overall plan for the renovation of City Hall, where eventually the Mayor and the Commissioners offices will be moved to the Minorca Garage for the duration of the renovation. Even though this is asking to bypass the Procurement Code, we actually asked for bids through an informal quicker process and Gavarrete was by far the cheapest. So, we ask your permission to proceed with the recommendation to waive the competitive bid process and award the contract to Gavarrete, otherwise the process will take significantly longer, but I just want to make sure that we actually went ahead and asked for bids from different vendors, so it's not like we didn't go into this blindly.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, we did receive three bids. This is the lowest bidder we have worked with them before. This is part of the process of restoring City Hall is moving the City Commission to the Minorca Garage and then of course, at that time we will, as I mentioned before, because the Tax Collector has the area just to the west of this area, we will be moving into a building on Ponce and then that way we can leave the building some time in January. Do any exploratory demo, anything we need and hopefully wrap up construction documents and start construction with our CMR in June of next year.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Clerk, do we have any public comment.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: Mrs. Maria Cruz.

Mrs. Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I'm sorry that I did not bring my binder with all the minutes because I seem to remember that when the Commissioners were moved, when most of the people that were in this building were moved out of here, the Commissioners had offices in the Police and Fire Building and then they were brought back here because there was no reason not to be here, and now we are going to spend over half a million dollars to fix offices that they have there, but now they are not going to be there, they are going to be at the garage. You know what, I have enough to look for in the minutes, because we change. We didn't have to be out of here, now we have to be out of here. Very confusing. I'll ask on the next one because I have a question on the next one too. Interesting.

City Commission Meeting

Mayor Lago: Alright. So to clarify again, in an effort to confuse the public as much as possible, this is an other example, you see it here clearly in front of you – conflate, confuse, and make sure that you just terrorize people here, while you sit in the back and laugh and laugh and laugh and speak under your breath. So, the point is that you are only embarrassing yourself just so you understand that. My office and the Vice Mayor have never left here, we’ve been here. There was no need to move to the other building. Let me tell you where the officers were because I went there a few times to visit. The offices were located where we have our giant TVs when there is a natural disaster. They took offices and they had people sitting in cubicles in front of the EOC.

City Manager Iglesias: EOC.

Mayor Lago: EOC basically, it’s a giant room probably twice the size of this room and people were just sitting there. For example, the DCM had his office there, you had a corner office, the old manager had an office there, Lina and certain members of the Manager’s team had their offices there. What Maria Cruz is trying to do again is saying again, trying to confuse. There was no money spent here on offices, they just sat in cubicles and existing offices. What is going to be done right now and I’m going to have the DCM come up or the Manager, depending on how the Manager would like to handle it to explain to you where these offices are, where they are located, so you can understand the money that’s being spent. Okay. Mr. Manager, please explain.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, Mr. Mayor. This is part of the original plan.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: Part of the original plan which was to move to the bottom of the Minorca Parking Garage.

Mayor Lago: Stop there one second, may I. Okay. That is a brand-new parking garage. The current state of that space is called a gray shell, correct.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes Mayor.

Mayor Lago: What is a gray shell?

City Manager Iglesias: There are no interiors and there is no floor.

Mayor Lago: So, it’s never been built out. So, what you’re doing is, over the – how long is the extent of the renovation of this building?

City Manager Iglesias: It could be a year and a half, two years.

Mayor Lago: Two years. Okay. So, we’re going to renovate those offices and when we’re done with those offices, those offices will be used for other city business, or maybe we would lease it

City Commission Meeting

out, or like what we did with the Tax Collector, Dariel Fernandez, where now they are offering licensing and a litany of other opportunities. Maybe we do like, for example, the Passport Office, who knows, maybe there is so much business or move other employees there. But again, in an effort to confuse, mislead, and act like there's a ton of money being wasted. This was always the plan. Nobody moved into offices over there. They were literally in the EOC sitting down at tables, that's where they were. Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: Thank you, Mayor. We also – the community meeting rooms were also designed with communications to be a Commission space because we knew that when we had to leave City Hall, that we knew it played a function. So the original plan was to use the bottom of the Minorca Garage and then the community meeting rooms, the CMR rooms was designed as a Commission space so we could run Commission meetings at that time, because we knew that we had to leave this building for a year, year and a half, hopefully maybe two years, and so part of the planning was always to use the bottom of the Minorca Garage for our purposes. Now we build something for the City Clerk that we were going to modify for ourselves, but it really in an interior design that works extremely well for the Tax Collector, so why not rent it to the Tax Collector for the next 15 years, when we can go ahead and lease space a block away for a couple of years and then when we finish City Hall all come back to City Hall. So, the plan did change because we weren't expecting the Tax Collector, but actually it was not unexpected because that space was excellent for that, the tenant improvements are already done for that. So, this was the plan. We were in the EOC, Emergency Operations Center, and we moved back to leave the Fire Chief with the entire EOC which we are now, as a matter of fact, running assimilation there in a week, hurricane assimilation.

Mayor Lago: Remember again, I have to put on the record, the building is not falling, it never was. That was just a statement to mislead and to create more chaos before an election. That was the only reason why it was done. I'm sorry to be so honest with you, but at the end of the day, that's what was happening as a result of an election that occurred here. So moving forward, we continue to address issues, like renovating this building, because like Commissioner Fernandez said, who is not here with us today, this is under my watch, under this Commission's watch and we will address it, through the leadership and assistance of all the employees, the amazing employees that we have, because I have faith and confidence in all of you. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes sir.

Mayor Lago: We're done with this item. We can take a vote.

City Clerk Urquia: I do not have a motion on this item, Mr. Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll move it.

City Commission Meeting

Commissioner Lara: Second.

Commissioner Lara: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes