

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-8
May 30, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Michael Mena
Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-8 [3:56:12 p.m.]

Discussion regarding the possibility of scheduling a separate/special Sunshine Meeting or workshop to specifically vacancies in the Police Department (Sponsored by Commissioner Mena).

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: OK, Commissioner Mena, you want to discuss G-8, scheduling a separate special Sunshine Meeting?

Commissioner Mena: I'll be very brief. Since you already mentioned this at the outset and I know you asked for a special report to be given at the next Commission meeting on the vacancy issue, and I think that's great and we should absolutely do that, so it's at a regularly scheduled meeting and on camera, etc. I was just proposing to the rest of the group was to beyond that, to sort of sit down and have, again what I labeled as a workshop for lack of a better word, but the way we sit down with the budget and we spend several hours on the one issue, seems to me like this issue has been festering for a long time now, like we should be doing a lot to sit down and really understand, to your point Mayor, what is wrong with the process, if anything, what we can do to improve it, if there is something we can do. That was my suggestion to try to schedule a

separate dedicated time to this issue, because I think public safety needs to be our number one priority and we need to assist the Police Department with filling these vacancies as best we can.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I agree with you. This is an important issue, but because it is important I'd much rather, I suggest we discuss it here and not a separate meeting with seven people is going to come before us, I'd like to do it here.

Commissioner Lago: I agree with you on this issue.

Vice Mayor Keon: An item on the Commission agenda.

Commissioner Lago: We discussed this probably, I know you weren't on the Commission, but I think we've probably had at least two or three separate meetings where Frank Fernandez brought up the issues. They talked about how many people have attended the following workshops, the following open houses, all our police cars have stickers, that we are hiring, how we've actually reduced some of the requirements in regards to the age, is one; second has to do with the traffic infractions in reference to like minor infractions, so we've had a pretty robust discussion in regards to what's going on and I think there is an existing plan already in reference to how we are going to fill these vacant positions and the monies that we are spending to get those numbers. Actually, one of the main points was the fact that we raised starting salaries to, I think the second highest starting salary of police officers in Miami-Dade County. I'm for having this discussion again, but I think we've had it till we are blue in the face. I'm ready to have it again.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'd like to have a comprehensive full report on the process of what is being followed and the qualifications which I'm not for lowering, but to the process because something is happening.

Commissioner Lago: But, I think what we need to have it on the Commission floor – no Sunshine meeting...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I agree; precisely, precisely.

Commissioner Lago: Have it on the Commission floor, because then it would be televised not transcribed, televised, people can see it at home, so everyone can understand. What are we doing?- what's going on with the Commission?- what's going on with the City in regards to the open positions refer back to this date.

Commissioner Mena: And, maybe we can just be mindful of what else we are scheduling that day, so that we dedicate enough time to it.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And Mr. Mayor, if I can, just to let you know, the four officers are back, as you all know from military leave. One remaining officer comes back, I believe he comes stateside in June, he is in the special operations section; and then we have four blue books, which means it is at the final stage where they present to me for hiring four police officers and we have nine in what we call deep backgrounds. So, it's my hope that by the time you have your meeting as this presentation as a part of it, our report will be that we have a single digit vacancy in the police department, recognizing it's a moving target.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Wonderful, wonderful.

[End: 4:00:22 p.m.]