

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES**  
**-MEMORANDUM-**

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS  
OF THE CITY COMMISSION

**DATE:** APRIL 29, 2008

**FROM:** DAVID L. BROWN  
CITY MANAGER

**SUBJECT:**  
COSTS OF SPECIAL EVENTS

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The following is the breakdown by function of the yearly costs incurred for special events in the City of Coral Gables, as requested by the City Commission at the April 9th City Commission meeting.

**FARMERS MARKET**

Public Service	\$18,628.99	
Police	3,000.00	
Development	2,500.00	
Public Works	<u>4,073.49</u> (in-house)	\$ 555.00 (contractor)
TOTAL	\$28,757.48	

**EGGSTREME EGG HUNT**

Parks & Recreation	\$23,650.00
Police	4,200.00
Public Works	<u>1,864.42</u>
TOTAL	\$29,714.42

**GALLERY NIGHTS**

Police	\$ 5,880.00
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**POLICE MEMORIAL**

Public Works	\$ 2,455.97
Public Service	<u>477.80</u>
TOTAL	\$ 2,933.77

**HALLOWEEN**

Public Works	\$ 3,566.68
Parks & Recreation	<u>6,610.00</u>
TOTAL	\$10,176.68

### **CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY**

Police	\$ 7,000.00
Public Service	2,229.36
Fire	<u>1,080.00</u>

TOTAL \$10,309.36

### **HOLIDAY PARK**

Public Works	\$37,545.83
Parks & Recreation	64,000.00
Public Service	<u>2,229.36</u>
TOTAL	\$103,775.19

### **BOARDS AND COMMITTEES RECEPTION**

Development	\$ 8,000.00
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### **JUNIOR ORANGE BOWL PARADE**

Police	\$21,000.00	
Public Works	13,841.81 (in-house)	\$9,650.00 (contractor)
Fire	3,780.00	
Public Service	<u>6,073.64</u>	
TOTAL	\$54,345.45	

### **VENETIAN POOL EVENTS**

4 Pool Parties	\$ 380.00
Paws in the Pool	500.00
Valentine's Dinner	5,500.00
Movie on the Beach	<u>1,800.00</u>
TOTAL	\$8,180.00

### **YOUTH CENTER EVENTS**

End of Summer Bash	\$ 3,700.00	
Daddy Daughter		
Dance	5,960.00	
Breakfast with Santa	3,615.00	
Senior Art Show	5,000.00	
Senior Annual		
Banquet	<u>9,000.00</u>	
TOTAL	\$27,275.00	(Sponsorships have been attained for the full cost of this event two of the last three years)

**GRAND TOTAL \$289,347.35**

Currently, “A Gables Fourth” is budgeted to have an expense of \$63,500 for the fireworks, staging, activities and equipment rentals. Additional funds in the amount of \$35,191 are also budgeted for barricades, portable restrooms, set-up staffing, police staffing and fire detail. The total *previous cost* for “A Gables Fourth” is \$98,691, a significant amount for a one-day event.

As you are aware, last year’s “A Gables Fourth” did not take place due to the ongoing \$3.5 million renovation and construction at the Biltmore Golf Course. The renovations were a great improvement to the course, and it has been universally praised for the continued top-notch condition and maintenance of the playing areas. The course renovations have added many more maintenance concerns to the rigors of hosting the event. The greens and tee boxes have been resurfaced and must be sectioned off to prevent patrons from setting up chairs and picnic areas on them. The sand bunkers now use a protective liner under the surface to help its maintenance. These bunkers must also be sectioned off to prevent patrons from using the area as large sand play pits, as evidenced in past events. The wear and tear of 25,000 people visiting the golf course at one time will also require extensive course maintenance after the event to bring the course back up to standards. Past experiences dictate that the sectioned-off areas require the presence of police officers for enforcement. This additional staffing and cost of grass repair will burden the City with an extra cost of \$55,000 bringing the *current cost* of “A Gables Fourth” to \$153,691.

The City of Coral Gables, as other cities throughout the State of Florida face difficult budget decisions to prioritize programs and retain vital services, will be better served with the cancellation of the Fourth of July fireworks at the Biltmore Hotel. However, to continue the City’s tradition of celebrating this national holiday, a smaller scale day event is recommended, at a fraction of the original event’s cost, possibly at Fred B. Harnett/Ponce Circle Park. This event will not include fireworks but it will have plenty of family oriented activities such as music, games, food and beverages. The Biltmore Hotel is the only location in the City of Coral Gables large enough to shoot fireworks at present height. The University of Miami Intramural Field is a secondary location, but the fireworks display would be reduced to no larger than a three-inch shell. This is a private property and would require University approval and presents additional parking and liability concerns.

The cancellation of the Fourth of July fireworks is a decision driven by the reality that the City of Coral Gables, like many other municipalities, is facing tough economic challenges due to voter-approved property tax reform. As wonderful as this special event is, this government has to prioritize the use of tax dollars and must analyze the cost of non-essential services in order to fulfill and deliver vital municipal services. With financially prudent decisions, the City of Coral Gables must put the everyday needs of an entire community of 43,000 residents above the pleasure of 25,000 people, mostly non-residents, who come once a year to Coral Gables to view the free fireworks.