

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Virtual Meeting
Agenda Item I-9
July 14, 2020
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli

Vice Mayor Vince Lago

Commissioner Pat Keon

Commissioner Michael Mena

Commissioner Jorge Fors

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

Police Chief Edward J. Hudak

Fire Chief, Marcos de la Rosa

Police Major, Cordell Atterley

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item: I-9

Update on Coronavirus/COVID-19 for the City

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, the next item is I-9, an update on Coronavirus.

City Manager Iglesias: Mr. Mayor, our Emergency Manager, Fire Chief de la Rosa will be making the presentation on this item.

Fire Chief de la Rosa: Good afternoon Mr. Mayor and ladies and gentlemen of the Commission. If you can, I have a prepared PowerPoint. Will you please load that up for me now? So, good afternoon, we can go to the next slide. As you know, we I have had several briefings with the Commission since May 4th when the County and City commenced their reopening phases. The City has continued to participate in weekly municipal meetings, bi-weekly area hospital meetings, the City business community through meeting with the Chamber or the BID. We have monitored

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available data; we have continued to provide our Public Education Campaign and as you know our Firefighters and paramedics have continued to respond to any COVID or flu-type major emergency amongst all other calls that we have received. Next slide. As of the week of June 10th, Miami-Dade began to experience an upswing in positive cases. This is from their daily report that is posted through the Mayor's Office on the website. We now have a fourteen-day average of a 25 percent, almost a 26 percent positivity rate. If you look at the line in the bottom, the orange line, that is a 10 percent, that is the goal where we want to be. So as of now, as you see, we are well above where the objective of 10 percent positivity is for our community. Next slide. The increase in positivity rates has had a significant increase in the admitted patients at the hospitals. Our area hospitals in our cities are not immune to this. So, in our meetings we are aware of where they are at and what their bed capability is. Fortunately, up to now, it has not had the same effect with COVID related deaths, we hope that to stay the same. So, that is a silver lining up to this point. Next slide. We are also monitoring the cases in the City of Coral Gables. We looked at what is our rate of positive cases with regards to our population size and what percentage rate of that it is. Currently, as of yesterday's data we were at 1.06 percent. If you notice, we took a sampling of cities from the City of Miami which is the largest city in our Country, down to our neighboring West Miami which would be one of the smallest cities. On like-sized cities as ours, currently, if you look at Doral, they are 2.71 percent, the Beach is at 2.08, Key Biscayne is at 1.23, Miami Lakes is at a 1.07 percent. Next slide. We continue with our homebound testing as usual. Testing is scheduled based on demand, so if you notice there for a while, we were doing it approximately once a week. We have had an increase in demand in calls, so we are now currently doing it twice a week. To date, we have tested 127 residents at their home, and this we have scheduled for 14 tests to be done at home. We are going to go to the next slide. To speak a little more on community testing, the next slide please. As you do recall, we did leave the infrastructure for our City's test site in place. The last time that the City participated in community testing, we tested 1,183 residents, two of which were positive. That is just a review of the data we experienced about a 30-40 percent no show. It takes about 15 of the personnel to... between Police and Fire and auxiliary Parks personnel to run, not only the current call center that we are running, but also a test site, and the final full costing for that 30-day operation was \$120,000.00. In addition to that, we've listed all of the tests sites which are in our community. Can you go to the next slide please? This map indicates all of the areas surrounding our City within a five-mile radius in which one can obtain a PCR or swab test currently. The next slide is a similar slide in which we identify within a five-mile radius anyone who... anywhere you can obtain an antibody test. These sites are listed in a chart form on our website under COVID-19 Testing. As of today, we worked with IT to put in an (inaudible) type link that a resident can put in their address and it will bring up within ten miles what the closest site is for both PCR and antibody testing. Next slide. We were directed by Commission to seek alternatives where our residents may pay for a COVID-19 PCR swab test if we elected to reopen our City's site. In discussion with the lab, they can provide that service for a fee. The cost per test would be \$95.00. This is to include any administrative costs and recover some of the labor costs that would be associated with operating the site whether it be the paramedics, or the police officers needed on site. Out of those 15, that I previously identified that

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we would need to run a site and a call center, we continue to reduce and reassign personnel so that cost remains about the same, which is about four to six posts that we would need to incur over time on. Our residents would be able to schedule through an online portal that our IT Department helped us to establish and they were able to text, excuse me, pay for the tests online as well. That payment would have to be non-refundable because of the fact that the way the system is set-up to... if you do not show up or you cancelled your test, the ability to refund you would not be very feasible. Available testing dates are per week, will be based on lab staff availability and also on demand for that week. So, as the demand goes up, and his availability goes up, then we may add additional days. In our conversation with the lab, they would be able to commence testing on a site a week from today, given that the site that is up now runs correctly and that he has, he maintains the availability he has currently. So... Next slide please. In summary, as we continue to participate in all regional collaborative meetings towards COVID response, we continue to provide public protection actions for both our workforce and our residents. The call center is staffed equipped to assist residents with any inquiries. We remain operational with our home bound testing and we continue to evaluate whatever needs our community may have. This picture that you see here, is a small card or flyer that we've just developed with Economic Development and we spoke to all the Publix' and we are going to start to have them give these out to their patrons as they checkout. It has the information on COVID. It has what older adults can be doing, what they should be doing because of their risk. It also contains our number and our hotline in the event some folks have some questions, and it also has the Adult Activity number so that they could either register for some of the classes and activities that are currently online for our elderly. So, Commission and Mayor that is our briefing. We can under your direction choose whatever option you want to direct us on towards our community testing or any other inquiries that you may have.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Chief. Mr. City Manager, do you have any comments?

Police Chief Hudak: We have one other update from Police, I don't know if you want that now from Major Atterley.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, go ahead.

Police Chief Hudak: Major Adderley is in charge of the overall mask enforcement as well as the curfew violations of patrols. So, Major Adderley, would you report to the Commission all we have seen so far?

Major Atterley: Yes, sir. Good Afternoon City Officials. So, I want to assure you that the Police Department is committed to preserving the health and welfare of our community. I am going to go into three parts, that we are currently doing as far as the masks. First of all, it was a directive that was sent out by Chief Hudak that has three parts, and this is the way officers enforce violations for not wearing the mask in public. First, they have the option of giving a verbal warning, they also have a citation that can be given. They also have the ability to arrest using a promise to appear. The officer has an option, a discretion in the field to perform those activities. Besides that, we also have a "Maskup" Campaign which we are using, utilizing the Neighborhood Team Policing Unit along with our bicycle patrol unit in our Downtown areas, in our neighborhoods

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spread that word, an educational word. As far as our activity, I will give you some numbers towards the end. But the officers engaged are supervisors, especially during their lunch hours in our Downtown area to give that educational campaign. So far, as far as the numbers, as far as the results, part three. So far, we have had 16 verbal warnings issued, we've had one citation and no arrests so far. You know, some people may say, well why you have given one citation, why not give them citations only. We are dealing with, you know obviously we are dealing with something new in our community, but we are also dealing with some conditions when we approach our public. There are some exceptions to the rule, for not wearing a mask, that includes people with chronic pre-existing conditions disabilities, and several other issues that exempts them from wearing a mask. But, like I have said, our officers are out there engaged, making sure that we are giving this "Mask Up" Campaign, having the options of the verbal warnings, to citations and the arrests. So, in a nutshell, our Police Department is committed to making sure that we are out there and being proactive. As far as engagement, one last thing, we have had about 28 incidents of being dispatched, to various calls from residents, we encourage that from the residents to give us information on people not wearing masks. We have had about 25 different incidents of officers being out there in the field engaging in no mask violations. So, at this time, any questions, concerns that I may address?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Police Chief Hudak: Mayor and Commissioners, just the last thing that I will talk about quickly, is that I did suspend the use of off-duty officers at restaurants. We saw some of the requests coming from some of our restaurants, they wanted to hire our officers to enforce the masking and social distancing. I don't believe that is our responsibility in the Police Department except in an enforcement capacity. So, I have not allowed the officers to work at Hillstones, Copper 29, and some of the other places because specifically, they are trying to, in my opinion, get us to enforce what they are responsible for doing. In fact, if they do not, then the County Orders apply to shutting down the establishment as well. That's our enforcement piece so far and we have been getting emails and calls about it, but we continue to be proactive in our patrol efforts.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Chief.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, I believe that Chief de la Rosa and Chief Hudak have addressed all the issues. We look for some...it's not an easy item for discussion, do we start testing or do we, or is our testing sites around the City, is that an issue?

Commissioner Keon: Do you have a recommendation?

City Manager Iglesias: Our recommendation is...

Commissioner Keon: As the Police Chief, Fire Chief, what is your recommendation?

City Manger Iglesias: The City Manager recommendation, Peter. I believe Commissioner Keon asked for the Emergency Management recommendation, is that correct?

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, well any of you. The spokesman for this. Anyone of you. Your recommendation.

City Manager Iglesias: Our recommendation, our view is that there is quite a bit of testing that is available privately, and so, we feel there is a lot of testing out there that can meet that demand. If that demand is not met in the future, then we can start with our testing program. We suggest a testing program based on \$95.00 amount so... and recoup some of the expenses involved in our inhouse testing. Chief de la Rosa, do you have any further comments on this?

Fire Chief de la Rosa: I am just going to add that what we gauge as far as testing is based on the availability or the amount of residents that are getting tested. If you look at our numbers when they are reported, based on the zip code that they reside or the City they reside, and you look at the fact that we have approximately 476 folks currently testing positive. There is access to testing and our residents are able to obtain a test whether it be through a private laboratory. We have added physicians in the City who provide that service. Now, its really up to you from the gauge that you are getting from the community to ask to, whether you want to enhance that availability and provide an added service to our residents. As we stated in our listings that we have on our website, every time we learn of a new test provider we went ahead, and we refreshed the website. When we had some issues with some of the numbers to access some of the test sites that we have, we have addressed that as well, and we continue to add to that list as well. As I mentioned, we just learned of an added test site locator today, to our website. So...

Commissioner Keon: So, if I put that, yeah. Now, if someone goes to a... anyone of these sites, its covered by insurance its covered by Medicare?

Fire Chief de la Rosa: I can't, I can't speak to that ma'am as to...

Vice Mayor Lago: No, it's not. No, it's not.

Fire Chief de la Rosa:...what insurance is covered and what is not.

Commissioner Keon: No, it's not.

Vice Mayor Lago: Most of these sites if not all are requiring that you pay cash, check or credit card, because I actually used two of these cites, and every time I have gone, they have charged me cash, they don't accept my healthcare provider or any healthcare provider.

Commissioner Keon: Does that...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I have, I have.

Vice Mayor Lago: I am not talking about Baptist; I am talking about doctors' offices. I have used Baptist, the first time I got tested...

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Commissioner Keon: Yeah, right.

Vice Mayor Lago: ... when I came in contact with the Mayor of Miami at the beginning of this whole COVID saga, and they did charge, then they did charge, but they charged me a co-pay...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I am aware that many of the testing sites do accept insurance, and Chief correct me if I am wrong, but we have a resting site on Douglas and Alhambra Circle, don't we, Baptist?

Vice Mayor Lago: That's the one that I went to.

Chief de la Rosa: The Baptist Urgent Cares are COVID test sites as are MD Now, and some of the private physicians that we have listed on our websites.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Fire Chief de la Rosa: In addition to, you have the one on the Beach and the County facilities are available as well.

Commissioner Mena: So, I brought this up at the last meeting, and asked you guys to report back on the options, so I appreciate you doing that. I respectfully, I really don't see why we wouldn't do it. To me, it's a service we provide our residents, we are passing the costs to, if we are going to pass the cost on to residents, I really don't see what the downside is. I think you are going to see an uptake in people testing still as schools begin to reopen and families continue to be in situations where, you know somebody tested positive on their job, at their kids' school may want to get tested for peace of mind, whatever it is. I understand the statement out there that there is enough testing to meet the demand, but I think we do a lot of things as a City and our service to our residents and offer convenience and if our residents are comfortable coming to our site, which was an ideal location. Everybody I have heard from said that they had a very positive experience coordinating it and going through and felt very comfortable. So, I think that charging them in advance to alleviate the concern about cancellations that we had and passing the cost along to the residents. I think they will be willing to absorb that cost and I think that the cost that's proposed is better than most places and is reasonable, and we are not making money off of it, we are just covering our overhead. So, I would be in favor of providing that service again, because again I do think you are going to have people of all ages looking to get tested as, you know again, assuming school start and as people go to work, you are going to have more and more concerns about whether or not somebody has been infected and having entire families wanting to get tested.

Fire Chief de la Rosa: As we have discussed, you know, we left the testing infrastructure in place based on your request and direction of this Commission, we did explore that possibility. So, if that's the wish of this Commission, we are certainly up and ready to provide that service to our residents, and again, that's assuming that nothing has changed since we have been on this call, we could probably start sometime next week.

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Vice Mayor Lago: Chief, if I may add to Commissioner Mena's comments. I agree with him wholeheartedly. I had a... I had the opportunity to reach out to the Key Biscayne Community Foundation which is running... actually use the same company that we did, and I thought it was interesting that when they were doing their testing they didn't have any minimums per day which is something that I was under the impression was a requirement when they did the testing here in the City of Coral Gables. Are you aware, maybe I missed it in your presentation why that wasn't a requirement for the City of Coral Gables and Key Biscayne somehow, somehow was avoided having a minimum per day? You know, and I also agree... Can you answer that question, or do you have any background in regard to that?

Fire Chief de la Rosa: So, with the prepaid now...

Vice Mayor Lago: I am talking about before, before.

Fire Chief de la Rosa: I am not familiar with the specifics that Key Biscayne had. When I spoke to them, they were the first to identify they had that at a minimum when they started with Lab Source and then afterwards if they had the no shows, then they just dealt with it. So, if they had a previous agreement that had, that did not have that stipulation, I wasn't aware of it. When I spoke to them that was the stipulation, they gave me and that's the same stipulation that Lab Source gave us when we approached them to basically mirror what Key Biscayne was doing.

Vice Mayor Lago: Well, that's what I was told, just as you know by the Community Foundation which is what handled the testing because the City want to handle it.

Fire Chief de la Rosa: Okay.

Vice Mayor Lago: On another note, you mentioned the issue of a \$20.00 administrative fee, is that to address our issues with our Fire, Police... Fire overtime, is that what we are doing there?

Fire Chief de la Rosa: Correct.

Vice Mayor Lago: Okay, obviously...

Fire Chief de la Rosa: We are keeping our overhead costs...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Fire Chief de la Rosa:...as low as possible. For instance, since currently our most of our Parks programs are temporarily closed, we work closely with them and we are using their staff to maximize this need. So, we are going to attempt to maintain our costs as low as possible, but the reality is, is that number that we factored in, is probably where we are going to be at with regards to labor cost.

Vice Mayor Lago: You know, like Commissioner Mena mentioned, I am 100 percent in favor of resuming testing. You have seen the numbers they are drastically spiking as a result of non-compliance, especially the issue of not wearing masks. For some reason, we are having a major issue in this community of following a simple task of just wearing your mask. But one of the

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things that I want to make sure, and I want my colleagues, if they haven't read it already, we need to start preparing ourselves. The County... the County has, and I know we have already voted on this in regards to the CARES Act, but the numbers are pretty staggering, we are talking about \$900,000,000.00 for the County where the cities could potentially receive about \$135,000,000.00 and those monies need to be allocated and spent by December 31st of this year, and obviously those monies have to be spent for PPEs, have to be spent for testing, have to be spent for a litany of issues that are related to, obviously this COVID pandemic. So, I think that, you know we really need to focus when we receive that money from the County so that we are prepared to allocate those funds before December 31st. We are one of the largest cities in Miami-Dade County, so we are going to get a pretty significant amount of money, and I would like to make sure that legal looks into every single aspect of what the money can be used for to ensure that we, you know, spread it around as much as possible and find the appropriate use for it. So, in regard to the testing, I am in favor. I don't know if those of you...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let me interrupt you for a second there. How do we structure it?

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes, sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. City Manager or Chief, how do we structure the testing?

City Manager Iglesias: Sir, we will structure...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have 40 percent no shows you know, how do we structure it, how do you suggest we structure it?

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, we will structure it similar to what we did last time, except that we would take payment upfront. Payment would be nonrefundable, and we would negotiate what the minimum requirement of what that lab is. They did have three people there last time, and so we would negotiate it in that way as soon as we have enough people, then we would activate the site and provide testing... if we have 200 people we would probably have two activations, and we would have an activation every, at least probably every 100, 80 to 100 potential patients for COVID.

Commissioner Fors, Jr.: Mr. Mayor, I have a couple questions, very quickly. First of all, I want to say that I am 100 percent of the testing myself. I think that's a service like everybody just said, that our residents expect. I mentioned to you once, Mr. City Manager, but I will mention here again in front of everybody. I understand not making the fees to be cost refundable, especially considering the number of no shows we have in the past. Let's make sure we make that 100 percent conspicuous in more than one phase of the booking process so that we all can have moral standing to say listen, you were warned three different times in large font, potentially red ink.

Vice Mayor Lago: I agree, that's awesome.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Good.

City Manager Iglesias: We will make it abundantly clear Commissioner, abundantly clear.

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Commissioner Fors, Jr.: Okay, secondly, and this is really for Chief de la Rosa. I'm not sure you have you mentioned, if you did, I missed it? What was the turnaround time for test results that we were seeing in the first round of testing that we did, and can we expect more or less the same here, and more importantly how does that compare to the turnaround time of like Marlins Park for instance? Because if its better to me it is even more compelling to provide that service to our residents.

Chief de la Rosa: So, if you compare it to the last time that we were doing testing, the volume was not the same for what we have now. I could tell you that back then it was 36 to 48 hours, sometimes it was sooner. A lot of that has to do with if our testing date is on a Friday for instance or right before a holiday, then obviously it is understandable that our turnaround time is more. From what I understand, their turnaround time is within that three to four-day range. However, I could tell you that most labs, have a five to seven-day range, based on their volume. I would, my estimation would be that they are either right around that turnaround time or less. They are a high performing lab, but I could not give you a specific number or attest to that number now because, you know I don't know what their volume is right now. Every lab has had a significant increase in testing demand, so all I could tell you is how it was the last time.

Commissioner Fors, Jr.: Okay. 36 to 48 hours.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Chief. Any other comments?

Commissioner Keon: Now you, will they take... When you book an appointment then you take a credit card? Is that what it is?

Fire Chief de la Rosa: When you book your appointment, you are going to be able to enter your payment on the website itself.

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Fire Chief de la Rosa: They actually suggested that method because that increases their ability to handle a greater volume of tests per day. So, they say if they have to process payment on site, then that significantly reduces the amount of patients that they can process, and it creates a back-up for the line of cars. So...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah right, doing it onsite does not help us with the no show rate, so...

City Manager Iglesias: No, it doesn't.

Commissioner Keon: ... it is done... you do it online when the appointment is made.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: It needs to be made abundantly clear to people that they are paying for this test so...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, thank you very much. Do we have any further comments?

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Commissioner Keon: I make a motion.

Vice Mayor Lago: Commissioner Mena.

Commissioner Mena: Yes, I will make a motion to reopen the testing site as... the residents as proposed in the presentation.

Vice Mayor Lago: I will second it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please.

City Clerk Urquia: Commissioner Mena.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Fors, Jr.: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.