

CITY OF CORAL GABLES ADVISORY BOARD ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS
CORAL GABLES HUMAN RESOURCES & RISK MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

254 Minorca Avenue, Suite 214

Coral Gables, FL 33134

WEDNESDAY, August 6, 2025

- MEETING MINUTES -

MEMBERS	J 25	F 25	M 25	A 25	M 25	J 25	J 25	A 25	S 25	O 25	N 25	D 25	APPOINTED BY:
Jennifer Ward Sando	P	E	P	P	P	E	P	EA					Mayor Vince Lago
Justine Chichester	P	P	P	P	E	P	P	P					Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Wilfredo Jauregui	-	-	-	-	-	P	E	P					Commissioner Richard Lara
Bonnie Blaire	P	P	P	E	P	P	E	P					Commissioner Melissa Castro
Vanessa Bedoya	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P					Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Eddy Martinez	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	P					Ex-Officio Member Chamber of Commerce

P – Present

E – Excused Absence

A – Absent

(-) – No Appointment

(*) – No Meeting

STAFF:

Edward J. Hudak, Jr – City of Coral Gables Police Chief

Raquel Elejabarrieta – Human Resources & Risk Management

Eglys Hernandez – Human Resources & Risk Management

Catie Hastings – Community Recreation – D.E.I. Coordinator

Sarah Espino – Community Recreation – Administrative Operations Supervisor (Via Zoom)

Jordan Smith – Accessible Recreation Counselor

CITIZEN ADVISORS: None Present

PUBLIC GUEST: None

CALL TO ORDER:

Meeting was called to order at 10:03am

MEETING ABSENCE: Jennifer Ward Sando

MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:

June 4, 2025 (Quorum was not reached on July 2, 2025, meeting)

Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd: Wilfredo Jauregui – with a request for correction to his name –/ approved unanimously

SECRETARY'S REPORT: None

BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Text 911 – Police Chief Hudak

Chief Hudak addressed the board as it relates to Text 911. Chief Hudak provided information regarding how the program works and its availability. Chief Hudak advised testing completed had gone very well. Chief Hudak provided samples of how the system works. Chief Hudak stated the various ways going forth the city will be providing this information to the community, especially during the upcoming hurricane season.

Chief Hudak spoke briefly regarding the police mobile command center vehicle which has a landing pad for the drone program in place at the city. Chief Hudak advised the use of the drones is not utilized for patrolling, it is call specific calls.

Chief Hudak also spoke regarding the upcoming television show in collaboration with Andy Garcia and Crystal Academy. Chief Hudak advised as more information becomes available, it will be shared.

October – National Disability Employment Awareness Month – Director Elejabarrieta

Director Elejabarrieta stated regarding National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the word Employment is usually removed, and the city features Disability Acceptance Month, a resolution is done, and Adventure Day takes place. Director Elejabarrieta advised this year's Adventure Day will be taking place during the month of November. Director Elejabarrieta asked if there was anything else the board would like to incorporate for this month. Ms. Palacio-Pike asked if it would be possible to incorporate the pictures taken before of the young adults with disabilities and promote them during this month. Director Elejabarrieta stated she would be addressing this with Director Patin. The board agreed to further discuss this matter at the upcoming September 3, 2025, board meeting. Director Elejabarrieta advised the board to review and bring suggestions as to who should present and receive the proclamation issued during the October commission meeting.

Mr. Martinez discussed his Summer of Success program and stated that they are looking at doing monthly tours throughout the year.

School Community Relations Committee (SCRC) Compact – Ms. Mary Palacio-Pike

Ms. Palacio-Pike shared with the board that the School Community Relations Committee is currently working on setting up a compact agreement with MDC Public School and upon review, she noticed there was no mention regarding students with disabilities. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated she drafted a paragraph regarding students with disabilities which she hopes can be incorporated into the compact agreement. Ms. Palacio-Pike asked the board to review her proposed paragraph and to provide suggestions. Ms. Palacio-Pike stated their input is needed as soon as possible because SCRC would be discussing this at their next board meeting, which is the third Friday of the month.

Podcast: Director Elejabarrieta shared with the board her participation in a Podcast for an autism dad who has created a directory available to everyone which provides contact information for various services throughout Miami-Dade County. Director Elejabarrieta stated she will share the link with the board.

The board discussed the possibility of having meetings with similar boards throughout the county.

OLD BUSINESS:

Community Recreation – Ms. Catie Hastings

Ms. Hastings provided the following information:

- 1) Participants from her program completed 11 canvases for Art Liberte this week
- 2) All the My Squads upcoming events have been posted, and special activities are scheduled for October and November.
- 3) First ever Mud Day is scheduled for August 9, 2025, and currently there are over 30 families registered to participate.
- 4) Basketball Skills programing to commence September 8, 2025. Ms. Hastings advised this is a weekly 1hr program (parents/guardians/support people will be able to stay). The programing is for ages 7-14 and will be teaching fundamental skills for the sport, opposite the current Youth Center Season, designed to feed into the following season. Ms. Hastings advised this autumn the program will be doing basketball while the Youth Center does football and then in the spring, when Youth Center starts basketball, some or all the participants in this program, should be ready to play with the rec league. Ms. Hastings advised they will be doing fundamental skills for flag football while the Youth Center is doing basketball.
- 5) 1000 Hours Outside – Ms. Hastings stated this will be commencing September 13, 2025. Ms. Hastings stated this is a monthly program for Neurodiverse Families across the lifespan. Ms. Hastings stated it includes the whole ND umbrella, not just Autism. Ms. Hastings advised the activities are scheduled for different times of the day and offer a variety of themes and intensity levels. Ms. Hastings stated each activity is 2-5 hours in length and tickets are \$10.00 for the months without meals included and \$15.00 for the months with meals included. Ms. Hastings stated tickets are per family. Ms. Hastings advised there will be a celebration at the end of 1 year, but the celebratory activity will remain a surprise for the time being.
- 6) ASL Classes – Ms. Hastings advised ASL classes will commence September 9, 2025, for beginning and intermediate levels ages 16+.
- 7) eSports – Ms. Hasting stated eSports monthly program will be starting October 18, 2025, for all ages with or without disabilities. Ms. Hastings advised they are getting Nintendo

Switch 2s for this program. Ms. Espino advised that to be part of this, all participants must be present in person.

- 8) Gentle Trick-or-Treat – Ms. Hastings advised this will be taking place on October 25, 2025, however it has not yet been posted.
- 9) October My Squad – Ms. Hastings advised the adult participants of My Squad will be watching the Rocky Horror Picture Show.
- 10) Adventure Day 2025 - Ms. Hastings stated the date for Adventure Day is November 8, 2025, and it will once again take place at Salvador Park, however, at this time, they are not prepared to share more.
- 11) December My Squad – Ms. Hasted stated since the last Wednesday of the month happens to be New Year’s Eve this year, My Squad will be doing an extra special Squad event from 6:00pm to 1:00am and adult members will be welcomed to stay.

The board asked if there were any flyers regarding these events and Ms. Hastings advised after some research that creating flyers for all that is happening is a lot of work and public response to them is not all that great. Ms. Hastings advised she has a “landing page” where folks interested can go on there and see everything, which she will share with Director Elejabarrieta who can make it available to the board. Ms. Hastings shared other forms being utilized to prompt all events, such as posting onto various Mom’s group pages.

Ms. Blaire asked regarding documentation of all these events, such as photos which can be shared with others. Ms. Hastings advised there are plenty of pictures taken and documented. Ms. Chichester stated she has seen pictures of these events on the Communications & Recreation page via Instagram. Ms. Blaire said there are a lot of members of the community which do not utilize social media, if it would be possible to figure out another way to share information. Ms. Elejabarrieta stated Director Patin can be invited to attend the upcoming September or October board meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

NEXT MEETING:
September 3, 2025

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 11:09am

Motion by: Bonnie Blaire / 2nd: Vanessa Bedoya / Approved unanimously