

CITY OF CORAL GABLES

-MEMORANDUM-

TO: CATHY SWANSON RIVENBARK **DATE:** JANUARY 9, 2009
ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

FROM: M.R. HIGGINS FALCON **SUBJECT:** 2009 ELECTION
PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGER PUBLIC EDUCATION

This Office has been asked to develop a public education strategy for the purpose educating the Coral Gables public on the proposed Charter amendments included in the General Biennial Election on April 14, 2009, along with estimated costs. Four separate Charter amendments are being considered related to Term Limits, Trial Board, Mayor's length of term, and Public Works Purchase Limits. Although each of the proposed Charter Amendments is unrelated, a similar public information strategy will be pursued, requiring a combined maximum expenditure of \$40,000.

Elements of the public information strategy will include:

-Special Municipal Referendum Election Guide focusing on the Proposed Charter Amendments: a bilingual (English and Spanish) voter's election guide on the Charter Amendments to be mailed to all 17,000 households in the City of Coral Gables by March 30, 2009. Additional copies will be made available at other City facilities and points of contact. Estimated cost:

Printing: \$9,000
First-class mailing: \$21,000
Design: \$300
Translation: \$300

-Proposed Charter information half-page ads in *Herald Neighbors*, for Thursday and Sunday issues of April 2, 5, 9 & 12. Estimated cost: \$5,000.

-Miscellaneous expenses for public education. Estimated cost: \$1,900

In addition to the above efforts, this Office recommends securing a strategic marketing consultant to review all educational materials prior to releasing to the public. Estimated cost: \$2,500.

The following activities will be also be part of the public education campaign related to the proposed Charter Amendments, but do not incur additional costs, only staff's time and labor:

-Press releases and op-ed on the proposed Charter Amendments included in the Special Municipal Referendum to be distributed to print, radio and television with general information on the proposed amendments.

-Announcements on the City's electronic newsletter *E-news* for the following issues: January 21, February 18, March 4 & 18, and April 1.

-Homepage announcement on www.coralgables.com by March 1, 2009. This Office is also considering possible creation of a Charter Amendment Election Forum on the homepage, similar to Green Forum, posting citizens comments about the election.

-Television coverage of Special Municipal Referendum on CGTV to begin airing in March through April 14, 2009.

-Live coverage of Elections Day results on April 14.

Please note that if the City Commission instructs staff to develop an advocacy program as part of the information campaign, an additional \$5,000 per proposed Charter Amendment should be budgeted. This additional cost would cover increased print and advertising costs in addition to added consultant hours.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance. Thank you.

/mr