

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item F-8**  
**January 13, 2026**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Vince Lago**  
**Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson**  
**Commissioner Melissa Castro**  
**Commissioner Ariel Fernandez**  
**Commissioner Richard D. Lara**

**City Staff**

**City Attorney, Cristina Suárez**  
**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**  
**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**  
**Deputy City Attorney, Stephanie Throckmorton**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Maria Cruz**  
**Jackson Rip Holmes**

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Agenda Item F-8 [Start: 5:32 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission amending Resolution No. 2025-88 to change the date of the Special Election and calling for a Special Election on the proposed ballot question and City Charter Amendment to be held on April 21, 2026; providing for submission to the electors for approval or disapproval of a ballot question asking whether the City Charter should be amended to authorize a contract with Miami-Dade County or a private entity to provide Inspector General Services with certain powers (including the power to subpoena witnesses), provided that such appointment, term, functions, and powers shall be further established by ordinance; providing for requisite ballot language; providing for procedures for balloting; providing for mail ballot; providing for notice; providing for inclusion in the City Charter; providing for related matters; and providing for an effective date. (Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

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Mayor Lago: Moving on to F-8.

City Attorney Christina Suarez: F-8 is a Resolution of the City Commission amending Resolution No. 2025-88 to change the date of the Special Election, calling for a Special Election on the proposed ballot question and city charter amendment to be held on April 21, 2026, providing for submission to the electors for approval or disapproval of a ballot question asking whether the City Charter should be amended to authorize a contract with Miami-Dade County or a private entity to provide Inspector General services with certain powers, including the power to subpoena witnesses, provided that such appointment, term, functions, and power shall be further established by ordinance, providing for requisite ballot language, providing for procedures for balloting, providing for mail ballot, providing for notice, providing for inclusion in the City Charter, providing for related matters, and providing for an effective date.

Mayor Lago: Madam City Attorney.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Good evening. There have been a few changes to this question that were made by our office in consultation with outside counsel to make sure that we were making the required 15- and 75-word letters and making sure that the title accurately reflected the question as proposed and amended by the Vice Mayor during the last discussion. So, the title has been changed to be clear that it is authorizing a contracted Inspector General as needed. It is similar to the recommendation of the Charter Review Committee, though not identical, but it does add the as needed language. That was something that the Charter Review Committee also mentioned. There has also been a small change in the question itself to just move a few words around to make sure we complied with the 75, but nothing substantive in the question itself. Again, the primary reason this is back is to move it from the November 3, 2026, General Election to the April 21, 2026, Special Mail Ballot Election and providing those procedures for a Special Mail Ballot.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. May I have a motion?

Vice Mayor Anderson: I move it.

Commissioner Lara: I'll second.

Mayor Lago: We have a motion and a second. Any public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Clerk Urquia: Mrs. Maria Cruz.

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Mrs. Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I'm glad that the words as needed were added, but I'm here to, once again, not agree to the mail ballot because not everyone, every voter, every resident of Coral Gables would like to vote by mail only.

City Clerk Urquia: Jackson Holmes.

Mr. Holmes: I may have signed up for this one by mistake, but since I'm here, yes, we need, I'd be in favor of a full-time Inspector General. We need to raise, this is just my opinion, of course, of the ethics in Coral Gables. It's my understanding, I probably shouldn't say this, but earlier objections to rushing into an Inspector General, I spoke with the Inspector General on Miami Beach, Joe Santorino, and what he told me is that the Inspector General has to have, I guess by Charter, independence. You can't just hire an Inspector General and not give him codified independence, which I'm guessing is why Commissioner Castro objected earlier. I don't know if that's correct or not, but anyways, I'm for it. Let's do it full-time.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: All right. Commissioner Castro.

Commissioner Castro: Yeah. Given that number one, to clear the record, the first time I voted for this, I thought it was a little overpriced. I didn't think that it was in the best fiscal, fiscally responsible for the city, and I thought that we should refer this back to the Charter Review Committee, and they should ultimately make this decision. Now, reconsidering it and seeing how this Commission has moved forward, I definitely think that we do need an Inspector General, so my vote will most probably be yes.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Fernandez.

Commissioner Fernandez: Ready to vote.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Lara.

Commissioner Lara: Ready to vote.

Mayor Lago: Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Ready to vote.

Mayor Lago: Before we vote on this issue, I'm very proud to have been the sponsor of this since the beginning. Commissioner Castro and Ariel Fernandez both voted against it. They said it was too rich, too expensive. You cannot put a price on stamping out corruption. Zero price on that. But

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you can put a price on raising your salary by 101 percent. So, I'm very happy that they came around to the IG. There's a different season now, obviously, and at the end of the day, it makes sense politically. But I've been, my vote has not changed on this. This is exactly what the city needs, and I think it's important to have an outside IG. I did go and speak with the county and request to see how we could do it and use them on a consultant basis. They were more than amicable to do it. I spoke to elected officials, and at the end of the day, we have found a solution. So, I'm happy that my colleagues came around, and we're moving forward for this. This is for the benefit of transparency, and it's in the best interest of the city of Coral Gables. Mr. Clerk, call the roll.

Commissioner Castro: Yes.

Commissioner Fernandez: Voting consistently with my prior vote to listen to the Charter Review Committee. I'm voting in favor of this. Yes.

Commissioner Lara: I just want to say that, for the love of me, I'll never fully comprehend how, at one time, from this dais, a Commissioner was decrying that the City of Coral Gables was adrift in a cesspool of corruption, and that he was going to lead this beloved city out of the muck. But when given an opportunity to vote for an Inspector General, the majority said no. And at the same time, there was never any identifiable corruption offered or followed up on. And it may have even been the bases offered, specious as it was, offered for why the City Manager, Amos Rojas, was hired, given his stellar law enforcement career predating his eight-year retirement before he came to work at the city as the City Manager with on-the-job training. But I'm glad that we've all come around. I do believe that we can benefit from the services as needed of an Inspector General, so yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'm glad we're finally getting to this day. This is, I think, the most efficient way to have an Inspector General, that we have the trust and the safeguards in place so the public can understand that if there's a need for an Inspector General to look at an issue, just like we can call for an IA investigation, we can refer things out and not have, you know, somebody as an additional individual in our city who would not be as unbiased as somebody that's independent. So, my vote is yes.

Mayor Lago: So just to make sure we put on the record, because it was brought up and I think it's, Commissioner Lara is a lot nicer than I am. The reason why you got a salary increase of 101 percent, and the reason why the Manager, Peter Iglesias, was fired on the dais was because it was basically a quid-pro-quo. Commissioner Menendez wanted a salary raise and Commissioner Fernandez wanted the Manager out. So that was a trade that occurred in the back room in an effort. They denied wanting to have an Inspector General. I brought it to the Commission as a sponsor. They said no, said it was too expensive. I proceeded to go and meet with the county, meet with County Commissioners. They said we'll help you. Your city's in a moment of need. They're screaming from the mountaintops; it's a cesspool of corruption. So, there's a cesspool of corruption,

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but they're denying Inspector General. I think that speaks volumes. But thank God this will go before the residents, and the residents will make the decision. Mr. Clerk, please call the roll.

City Clerk Urquia: We just did, Mr. Mayor. Your vote.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Clerk Urquia: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Fernandez: Point of personal privilege. I continue to hear.

City Attorney Christina Suarez: So, Mayor, a point of personal privilege is like a request like for a break or something to that effect. I don't think it's an appropriate way to interrupt without having the floor.

Commissioner Fernandez: That's not the information I have from the League of Cities, but okay, that's fine. I'll address it at the end.

Commissioner Castro: Can I write to him? I don't know if I can talk.

Mayor Lago: So, I'm in the middle of going through the agenda.

Commissioner Castro: All right.

Mayor Lago: Let's go through the agenda. Moving on to F9. Thank you, Madam City Attorney.