



## **City of Miami Springs, Florida**

City Council Meeting

Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 11, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

City Hall, Council Chambers, 201 Westward Drive, Miami Springs, Florida

In-Person/Virtual Council Meeting

1. **Call to Order/Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order by the Mayor at 7:10 p.m.

Present were the following:

Mayor Maria Puente Mitchell (attended via Zoom until arrival at 8:00 p.m.)

Vice Mayor Jorge Santin

Councilwoman Jacky Bravo

Councilman Walter Fajet, Ph.D.

Councilman Victor Vazquez. Ph.D.

City Manager JC Jimenez

Assistant City Manager Tammy Romero

City Clerk Erika Gonzalez-Santamaria

City Attorney Haydee Sera

City Attorney Roger Pou

Police Chief Armando Guzman

Public Works Director Lazaro Garaboa

Assistant Public Works Director Lizette Fuentes

2. **Invocation:** Offered by Councilman Walter Fajet  
**Pledge of Allegiance:** The audience led in the pledge.
3. **Agenda / Order of Business:** None at this time.
4. **Awards & Presentations:**

A) Swearing-in Ceremony of Police Officer Steven Torres by Police Chief Guzman

**The Vice Mayor recognized Chief Guzman and welcomed him to the podium. Chief Guzman proceeded to swear-in new police officer Steven Torres. Officer Torres thanked the Chief, City Administration and the City Council for the opportunity and the support.**

B) Presentation/Proclamation by Silvia Vanni, Co-Founder of Mystic Force Foundation, non-profit charity raising awareness for Childhood Cancer Research Month

**The Vice Mayor invited Ms. Vanni and members of the Mystic Force Foundation to the front. Vice Mayor read the proclamation and thanked the members of the Foundation for their ongoing dedication to awareness and their support for Childhood Cancer**

**Awareness Month. Ms. Vanni thanked the Vice Mayor and City Council for their support.**

C) Presentation by Timothy Watson, Public Affairs Specialist with the U.S. Small Business Administration, on the Economic Injury Disaster Loan for businesses and nonprofits that have difficulty meeting financial obligations as a direct result of a disaster

**Mr. Watson was not available to attend the meeting.**

D) Yard of the Month Award for September 2023 – 1200 Westward Drive – Maxima Beckman

**The Vice Mayor recognized Ms. Beckman for her Yard of the Month Award for September. Ms. Beckman was not present to receive their award. City Clerk Erika Gonzalez stated that the award will be delivered to Ms. Beckman.**

**5. Open Forum: The following members of the public addressed the City Council: Nihal Perera, 217 Duval Drive; and Eduardo Lanazares, 389 LaVilla Drive.**

**6. Approval of Council Minutes:**

- A) August 21, 2023 – Budget Workshop
- B) August 28, 2023 – Regular Meeting

**Councilman Vazquez moved to approve the minutes of August 21, 2023 Budget Workshop, August 28, 2023 Regular Meeting. Councilwoman Bravo seconded the motion, which carried 5-0 on roll call vote. The vote was as follows: Vice Mayor Santin, Councilwoman Bravo, Councilman Fajet, Councilman Vazquez and Mayor Mitchell voting Yes.**

**7. Reports from Boards & Commissions: None.**

**8. Public Hearings:**

A) **Resolution** – A Resolution Of The Mayor And The City Council Of The City Of Miami Springs, Florida, Adopting The Proposed Millage Rate For Fiscal Year 2023-2024 In The Amount Of 6.9100 Mills, Which Is 10.79% Higher Than The Roll-Back Rate Of 6.2370 Mills, To Balance The General Fund For Fiscal Year 2023-2024; And Providing For An Effective Date

**City Attorney Haydee Sera read the Resolution by title; announcing the millage rate and percentage over the rolled back rate. The Mayor opened the public hearing. The following members of the public addressed the City Council: Michael Gavila, 227 South Royal Poinciana Boulevard; Nihal Perera, 217 Duval Drive. The Mayor closed the public hearing.**

**After discussion, Councilwoman Bravo moved to approve the millage rate at 6.9900, which is 12.07% higher than the roll back rate. Councilman Vazquez seconded the**

**motion, which carried 3-2 on roll call vote. The vote was as follows: Vice Mayor Santin, Councilwoman Bravo, Councilman Vazquez voting Yes; Councilman Fajet and Mayor Mitchell voting No.**

**B) Resolution – A Resolution Of The Mayor And City Council Of The City Of Miami Springs, Florida, Adopting A Tentative Budget For The Fiscal Year Commencing October 1, 2023, And Ending September 30, 2024; Confirming Date Of Second Public Hearing; And Providing For An Effective Date**

**City Attorney Haydee Sera read the Resolution by title. The Mayor opened the public hearing, there were no speakers at this time.**

**Councilman Fajet moved to approve the Resolution as read. Vice Mayor Santin seconded the motion, which carried 4-1 on roll call vote. The vote was as follows: Vice Mayor Santin, Councilwoman Bravo, Councilman Fajet and Mayor Mitchell voting Yes; Councilman Vazquez voting No.**

**9. Consent Agenda: (Funded and/or Budgeted): None at this time.**

**10. Old Business: None.**

**11. New Business:**

**A) Ordinance – First Reading – An Ordinance Of The City Of Miami Springs, Florida, Amending Section 150-070.1, “Miami Springs Gateway Overlay District” Within Article VII, “Business District” Of Chapter 150, “Zoning Code,” Of The City’s Code Of Ordinances To Amend The List Of Uses Permitted On First Floor Levels Along Road Rights-Of-Way; Providing For Conflicts; Providing For Severability; Providing For Codification; And Providing For An Effective Date**

**City Attorney Haydee Sera read the Ordinance by title.**

**Councilman Vazquez moved to approve Ordinance on first reading as read. Councilman Fajet seconded the motion, which carried 4-1 on roll call vote. The vote was as follows: Vice Mayor Santin, Councilman Fajet, Councilman Vazquez and Mayor Mitchell voting Yes; Councilwoman Bravo voting No.**

**12. Other Business:**

**A) Request by Councilman Fajet to discuss the FDOT Iron Triangle Project**

**Councilman Fajet requested this item for further discussion. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) was supposed to get back to the City on a current update in order to understand where the project is at this point in time. Mayor Mitchell explained the project a bit more, where an overpass would feed into LeJune Road, which would adversely affect the City. She agrees that the City should request FDOT to come to a meeting and update the City Council and residents.**

B) Request by Councilman Fajet to discuss the Abraham Tract

Councilman Fajet wanted to discuss the Abraham Tract, approximately twenty-six acres, that the City owns. He recognizes that the area is underutilized and is sitting in an area that is soon to be massively developed, with the Beckham Group. He feels that as a City, managing that area responsibly in order to maximize the outcome of any future developments. City Planner, Silvia Vargas of CGA, addressed the City Council and stated that this area is a part of their proposed special projects scope in the upcoming budget. She stated that she will keep the City Council updated on the area as the project progresses.

13. Reports & Recommendations:

A) City Attorney

City Attorney Haydee Sera stated that it was great to be back. She thanked City Attorney Roger Pou for stepping in and doing a wonderful job while she was on maternity leave. The City Attorney welcomed the new City Manager, JC Jimenez to the team and said she is looking forward to working with him.

B) City Manager

City Manager JC Jimenez stated that the City was notified today by Miami-Dade County that they will begin asphalt resurfacing on East Drive heading west to South Royal Poinciana Blvd. to the Circle, then North Royal Poinciana Blvd. through all the way to the FEC train tracks. He stated that he met with the owners of the Town Center, they informed him that asphalt will be going in on Canal Street to open shortly thereafter. Hopefully, they will receive their TCO in order to start occupancy. The City Manager reassured the City Council that the issues in budget process is normal and we will get through it together.

C) City Council

Vice Mayor Santin thanked City Attorney Roger Pou for all his work. He stated that despite the slight contention tonight on setting the millage rate, he knows it is a difficult decision, but wants to do his best to represent the City.

Councilwoman Bravo congratulated the newly sworn in Police Officer Steven Torres. She further welcomed new City Manager JC Jimenez to the team and stated she feels we have a powerhouse now with the new Finance Director and City Manager. Councilwoman Bravo welcomed Haydee Sera back from maternity leave, and thanked Roger Pou for his dedication and hard work. She stated that she is thankful for her colleagues on always coming together and making the best decisions for the community.

Councilman Fajet stated that we were elected to do what is right and what is the best for the City. He stated that he is very happy working with his counterparts, and make a good team and do what is best for the City. Councilman Fajet thanked the

**constituents for their continued backing and support.**

**Councilman Vazquez stated he appreciates Councilman Fajet's words. He explained the War Memorial Renovation project for the new City Manager. He explained the American Legion has been advocating for State funding and has secured \$150,000 appropriation for the project. He provided a timeline of groundbreaking ceremony for November 2023 for Veteran's Day and completion by May 2024 for Memorial Day. He thanked the Senator Avila and the City for their continued support.**

**Mayor Mitchell stated that today is September 11<sup>th</sup> and gave her condolences to the family and friends that lost a loved one in the tragedy. She further welcomed the new City Manager, JC Jimenez to the City; she looks forward to working with him. She thanked Assistant City Manager Tammy Romero for stepping up to the plate and providing outstanding work. She reminded the City Staff and Council that requests for State appropriations is approaching quickly and the City needs to determine what the City will be requesting this year. The Mayor inquired if the Town Center is applying the pueblo-mission style accents to the building.**

#### **14. Adjourn**

**There being no further business to be discussed the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.**

*Respectfully submitted:*

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*Erika Gonzalez-Santamaria, MMC  
City Clerk*

*Adopted by the City Council on  
This 25th day of September, 2023.*

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*Maria Puente Mitchell, Mayor*

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