



**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY  
FINAL OFFICIAL MINUTES  
Board of County Commissioners  
Committee of the Whole**

**Board of County Commissioners**

Stephen P. Clark Government Center  
111 NW 1<sup>st</sup> Street  
Miami, Florida 33128

Thursday, September 10, 2009  
As Advertised

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Board of County Commissioners

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**CLERKS SUMMARY AND OFFICIAL MINUTES  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS-COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 10, 2009**

The Board of County Commissioners met as a Committee of the Whole in the County Commission Chambers on the Second Floor of the Stephen P. Clark Government Center, 111 NW First Street, Miami, Florida at 1:00 p.m., September 10, 2009, there being present upon roll call: Chairman Moss, and Commissioners Bruno Barreiro, Barbara J. Jordan, Dorrin D. Rolle, Katy Sorenson, Rebeca Sosa and Javier Souto; (Commissioners Audrey Edmonson, Natacha Seijas, Carlos Gimenez and Jose “Pepe” Diaz were late); (Commissioners Joe Martinez and Sally Heyman were absent). The following staff members were present at today’s meeting: Mayor Carlos Alvarez, County Manager George Burgess, County Attorney Robert Cuevas, Assistant County Attorney James Kracht, Office of Strategic Business Management (OSBM) Director Jennifer Glazer-Moon; and Deputy Clerks Doris Dickens and Jill Thornton.

Chairman Moss opened the meeting in a moment of silence, followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Chairman Moss announced that today’s Committee of the Whole meeting was being convened to continue discussions relating to the FY2009-10 Proposed Budget. He noted additional meetings may be necessary in order to reach consensus before the 2nd Budget Hearing scheduled for Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Chairman Moss advised of today’s procedures and his intent to complete the discussions regarding commission members’ proposed budget cuts and other recommendations, and to develop some justifiable amounts for recommendations that the Administration and Commission Auditor did not agree upon. He opened the floor for opening statements from individual commissioners.

Commissioner Sorenson recommended the Board begin today’s discussions by looking at the \$17 million dollar difference between the Mayor’s proposed budget and the proposed budget with millage rates set by the Commission at the 1<sup>st</sup> Budget Hearing, and make a decision on whether the \$17 million should remain in Reserves. She suggested the Board could then proceed by considering each commissioner’s recommendations for reductions and buybacks and ensure the numbers were verified by the Administration and the Commission Auditor.

Commissioner Jordan recommended moving this process forward by narrowing down the priorities, having each Commissioner state their recommended cuts or buybacks and the Board vote them up or down. She noted staff was supposed to vet many of the Commissioners’ recommendations and advise the Board of their impact.

Commissioner Barreiro noted at the last meeting (09/08), he recommended some substantial cuts to address Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Culture and Elderly programs and other areas the commissioners wanted re-established. He said he felt the Board should determine the cuts that were needed. He recommended that culture and elderly services be restored as a priority, and that the Independent Review Panel (IRP) be restored to some level, if not completely. Commissioner Barreiro asked the County Administration to provide him with a

report within the next week reflecting the figures corresponding to the cuts he recommended for various county departments.

Chairman Moss noted he had hoped the County Administration and the Commission Auditor had reviewed and quantified the recommendations of the commissioner's so that the Board could consider implementing those savings. He reiterated comments stated by Commissioner Jordan that the Board needed to determine priorities and decide the funding sources using the Manager's proposed budget as a starting point. Chairman Moss explained that at the last meeting (09/08) he requested the Administration and the Commission Auditor review together the recommendations of the commissioners and assign a value to each recommendation in order to shorten this process. He noted the Board would then discuss those recommendations the Administration and the Auditor did not agree on.

Commissioner Seijas noted she was unable to attend the September 8th Committee of the Whole meeting because she was attending a meeting of the Early Learning Coalition, which succeeded in retaining \$156 million for the children. Regarding Reserves, she noted she understood that Wall Street ratings were needed to preserve the County's Reserves, and asked the County Manager if a 5% interest rate was sufficient to maintain Reserves.

County Manager George Burgess noted the preferred rate was somewhere between 5% and 7%. He said that 5% was certainly a good percentage rate; however, the County was currently below that rate.

Commissioner Seijas recommended the Board consider reducing every department supported by the Countywide and the Unincorporated Municipal Service Area (UMSA) General Fund by a fixed percentage or perhaps the proposed 5% as the most equitable way to restore Reserves. Referencing Appendix K of the Human Service Budget Project, page 620, Commissioner Seijas suggested the Board and/or the County Manager consider recapturing the \$8 million plus funds designated for the Community Service Intake/Treatment and Alternative Treatments for Street Crime, and redistribute those funds among the Elderly Care services.

Commissioner Sosa expressed appreciation to the County Mayor and the Administration for responding to her requests for informational reports. She noted she requested a budget presentation that combined the Commissioner's suggested recommendations, using the following scenarios: 70% restoration of cuts and 75% restoration of cuts with 100% elderly services restored. She acknowledged receiving the reports indicating the cost savings by use of salary scales and furlough options, and noted she would be prepared to make some decisions as soon as she was provided the budget presentations with the requested scenarios.

County Manager George Burgess noted staff worked through last evening on an array of requests made by the commissioners, and hoped to provide that information by this afternoon if not sooner. He noted he wanted to ensure the report presented was one that staff could defend.

Commissioner Edmonson noted she previously submitted her recommendations in writing and requested that staff look at the savings that could be achieved by reducing county department

advertisements during prime time on major television networks, particularly “311,” which she recently seen advertised several times during prime time on major networks. She said she was waiting for those figures for cost savings that could be realized by eliminating or reducing county department advertisements.

Commissioner Gimenez noted that he proposed additional recommendations, of which some would capture some of the additional capacity of libraries. He suggested that educational programs as the 4-H Club and after-school programs be transferred from the Parks and Recreation Department Budget to the Library District Budget; and that Libraries provide CBOs with grants for providing educational programs within the Library District. He pointed out that Library services would not need to be reduced as a result of the additional capacity. Commissioner Gimenez further noted that he was prepared today to consider a list of proposed reductions and restorations, which was to be provided to the Board for consideration, but he was advised by the Commission Auditor that he had not received the list yet. He suggested today’s meeting be postponed until tomorrow (09/11) for the list to be completed and vetted.

Commissioner Souto noted this process of balancing the budget was a difficult exercise and likened to sailing uncharted waters. He noted the County had never been confronted with the inability to raise taxes, and he did not see a happy future. He also noted that he had not heard or seen any of the Collective Bargaining Unions involved in this process and would like their input. He said he believed that unless the unions were active in this process and worked with the County to find solutions, the Board could face problems and might regret its actions in the future.

Commissioner Diaz noted this was a complex process for all parties involved that should not be taken lightly. He also noted the County was facing a worldwide crisis, and he believed the County would be left with two basic choices, either to negotiate with the Unions and the employees they represent to accept lower wages, or to cut jobs, services and/or programs. He stated that no one better than the Administration, the Department Directors and the employees knew which cuts should be made, and they should work with the Commission to ease this process. Commissioner Diaz noted his respect for the will of the voters who did not want taxes raised. He also noted the last thing he wanted to do was cut jobs, increase the unemployment, or reduce law enforcement, public safety or fire services, but the Commission had a fiscal responsibility to reduce \$44 million from the County’s budget. He also noted he supported the creation of a Budget and Policy Office that mirrored the State and Federal governments because he expected continued financial hardships in the future.

Commissioner Diaz further noted his respect for the unions, but expressed concern with an offensive phone call he received from a union member, and clarified to the union that he represented the entire community. Commissioner Diaz mentioned that many constituents, who paid the salaries of county employees through taxes, were now losing their jobs and homes. He suggested mirroring the actions of the employees of a business in District 12 who took a voluntary 20% pay cut just to keep their business doors opened. Commissioner Diaz advised that he could not be present at tomorrow’s (9/11) meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

Commissioner Sosa noted usually when the commissioners request information from the Administration, they receive it in writing. She expressed concern with the role of the Commission Auditor and expressed concern that the Commission Auditor's Office (CAO) was not performing to its fullest extent. Commissioner Sosa asked that the Commission Auditor prepare a written report identifying the recommendations of the Board members and the impact of restoring or cutting services using the various scenarios requested. She also asked that the Commission Auditor provide his expert opinion on the budget adjustments.

Chairman Moss explained his reason for requesting the Administration and the Commission Auditor to vet the numbers together was to have some continuity in this process and give the Board members confidence in the numbers. He reiterated the process was to have the Administration and Auditor agree on some figures and the Commission to discuss those numbers not agreed on.

Commissioner Gimenez concurred with Chairman Moss' comments. He noted the Board needed to consider recommendations that had real numbers attached and make policy decisions based on those amounts. He asked how long would it take for the Administration and the Auditor to agree on the figures.

Mayor Carlos Alvarez noted the Administration prepared a draft report using Commissioner Sosa's list detailing the recommendations made by the commissioners at the last meeting (09/08). He also noted he asked the County Manager to review the final draft and ensure the numbers were accurate in the report before submitting it.

Chairman Moss noted the Commission Auditor still needed to review that report and verify the numbers. He stated his desire was to have the Administration and the Commission Auditor review the recommendations together and agree on the figures in order to shorten the process, so that the Board could begin making some policy decisions on those issues. He noted he believed this had not occurred yet, and that the Auditor was not given the opportunity to respond to the Administration's report and make recommendations for building a budget.

Mayor Alvarez noted the Administration had prepared their report, but he did not know the status of the Commission Auditor's report, which was needed to vet the numbers.

Chairman Moss pointed out that at some point in time, the Administration and the Auditor needed to combine their reports.

Following further discussion, Commissioner Auditor Charles Anderson clarified he indicated to Commissioner Gimenez that his office had not officially received the Administration's report. He noted he began the vetting process by meeting with Ms. Jennifer Glazer-Moon, OSBM Director, and her staff, and together they reviewed each line-item; however, he needed to review the list of the commissioners' proposals prepared by the Administration in order to vet the numbers and determine the service impacts. He noted he could not complete this process until he had a dialogue with the Administration and OSBM staff.

Commissioner Seijas stated she was unable to be present at the last meeting and felt it was unfair that she did not receive any calls or reports from the CAO. She asked how long would it take for the CAO to provide this information.

Mr. Anderson responded that as soon as he received the Administration's report, he would review it and provide a report, hopefully, by tomorrow.

Commissioner Jordan noted this dialogue had become extremely difficult to listen to and she considered it an insult to the audience. She noted that finger pointing would not accomplish much in this process, and she reminded everyone of the process that took nearly a year to hire the CAO staff. She pointed out the information needed by the Commission Auditor to vet the items must come from the Budget Office. She suggested the Board move forward by considering the cuts and priorities instead of arguing the reports, and noted she was hopeful the Administration would provide their report so that the Commission Auditor could complete his work.

Commissioner Rolle expressed concern with the Commission Auditor being blamed for the hitch in this process at this late date. He noted he felt it was a waste of time for Board members to convene before the September 17<sup>th</sup> Budget Hearing unless the full Board was going to consider some proposals.

Chairman Moss explained his reason for calling meetings and requesting the Administration and the Commission Auditor to agree on some real numbers was to prevent a fiasco from happening at the September 17<sup>th</sup> Budget Hearing. He noted the Board needed to know the real (cost and savings) numbers relating to the proposed recommendations in order to have dialogue and make some policy decisions, which he had hoped would occur today.

Commissioner Sorenson suggested the Board proceed by considering those items listed in Volume I of the Budget Book, pages 47 through 62, which were values presented during the Budget Conference Committees and agreed on by the County Manager and the Commission Auditor. She proposed to cut \$878,000 in funds from the International Trade Consortium and redistribute it to the Elderly Meals, which she felt was a tangible proposal.

Commissioner Edmonson noted she felt that placing OSBM under the jurisdiction of the County Commission next year would resolve the issues between the Administration and the Commission Auditor. She also noted that she would support Commissioner Diaz proposal to create a Budget and Policy Office when the motion was made. She said she felt the Board lacked sufficient information to proceed today and should recess this meeting for OSBM and the Commission Auditor to agree on some real numbers.

Commissioner Diaz said he felt an argument had been made to establish a Budget and Policy Office based on today's sentiments. He voiced his respect for the Commission Auditor and his concern regarding the issues between the Auditor and the Administration. He noted that he was not blaming anyone, but jobs were on the line and he just wanted the numbers to be verified before he casts his votes.

Mayor Alvarez expressed concern with commissioners questioning the numbers provided by the Budget Director and OSBM staff, and their wanting to place the OSBM under the Commission's jurisdiction. He noted he was happy to proceed with discussing the numbers agreed on, as suggested by Commissioner Sorenson, and then meet with the Commission Auditor, but he felt it was unfair for the Board to attack the professionalism of the Administration and OSBM staff who worked very hard to complete this report late last night.

Commissioner Diaz clarified that his comments were not intended to be a personal attack against OSBM's staff, and that he had great respect for the Budget Director, but he had heard that the Commission Auditor had not received OSBM's report yet and he only wanted the numbers verified. He also clarified his proposal for a Budget and Policy Office would not take away from the County Administration's duties.

Chairman Moss noted he felt this discussion was no longer productive, and this meeting should be adjourned for the Administration and the Commission Auditor to vet the numbers together and come back with a joint report that would put the Commission in a better position to make some policy decisions.

Commissioner Gimenez concurred with the Chair's comments and felt it was important to follow the Chairs' lead, which would make this process more efficient. He noted this process needed to be completed regardless of how many meetings it took to get it done. Commissioner Gimenez pointed out that the County Manager needed to submit a Change Memorandum by the September 17<sup>th</sup> Budget Hearing.

Chairman Moss inquired whether the Board preferred to continue this meeting tomorrow (9/11) or call a Commission of the Whole meeting on Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Seijas advised that she could not be present at tomorrow's meeting.

Commissioner Diaz noted his preference was to the September 15<sup>th</sup> Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting on Tuesday and conduct a Committee of the Whole meeting on that day. He asked if the agenda for the September 15<sup>th</sup> BCC meeting contained any "must pass" items.

County Manager Burgess noted he believed the September 15<sup>th</sup> BCC meeting agenda contained two time-sensitive items: one pertaining to a line of credit for the Seaport Tunnel and the second was a financing item involving a recommendation to replace the bond insurer. He noted the Board needed to take action on the item regarding the Seaport Tunnel line of credit by the end of this month. Mr. Burgess also noted that the three impasse items pertaining to bargaining unions were included on Tuesday's (09/15) meeting agenda as well.

Commissioner Diaz suggested the Board consider only those five items on Tuesday (09/15), followed by a Committee of the Whole meeting, and the remaining September 15<sup>th</sup> BCC agenda items be carried over to the next BCC meeting.

Chairman Moss asked the Administration to conduct the BCC Agenda review and to meet with his office to discuss the “must pass” items. He noted, if needed, the Board would consider those items at the September 15th BCC Meeting and devote the remainder of the day to the Committee of the Whole meeting. He directed a question to the County Attorney regarding whether the Committee of the Whole Meeting could be scheduled as part of the Regular BCC meeting.

County Attorney Robert Cuevas advised that the Committee of the Whole could not be scheduled as part of a Regular BCC meeting, and its actions should be separate.

Commissioner Sosa reminded the Board of the Executive Meeting that was continued to Monday, September 14, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. In response to her inquiry about the Zoning meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 17, Chairman Moss advised that the meeting was canceled.

In response to Commissioner Seijas’ inquiry regarding whether the Board could defer action on the three impasse items to the next BCC meeting, County Attorney Cuevas noted those items could be deferred and set on whatever date the Commission desired to consider them.

Mayor Alvarez responded to Chairman Moss’ inquiry regarding whether the union impasse items would impact the September 17<sup>th</sup> Budget Hearing. He noted he believed the Commission would want to know the outcome of the impasse items before the Budget Hearing.

Chairman Moss asked the Administration to meet with his office to discuss the “must pass” items. He reiterated his request for the Administration and the Commission Auditor to get together and vet the recommendations and numbers and provide the Board with a joint report by the September 15<sup>th</sup> Committee of the Whole meeting.

In response to Mayor Alvarez request for clarification, Chairman Moss affirmed that the items to be discussed between the Commission Auditor and the Budget Director were the recommendations of each Commissioner. He noted tomorrow’s (09/11) Committee of the Whole meeting would be cancelled.

Commissioner Sorenson recommended her colleagues review those items with agreed numbers, listed on pages 62 through 74, Volume I of the Budget Book, and be prepared on Tuesday to cast straw votes for needed cuts or buybacks. She noted this work needed to be done, and no one should be excused from doing it.

Commissioner Gimenez pointed out that all the cuts listed in the Budget Book, Volume I, pages 62 through 74, were part of the Mayor’s proposed budget.

Commissioner Jordan noted she believed that Commissioner Sorenson asked the County Manager’s Office to make some recommendations on the additional \$17 million budget gap. She also noted the Board began discussing the list of priorities and agreed the elderly services should be restored. She noted the amount needed for elderly services, including the Meals on Wheels program, was approximately \$17 million. Additionally, Commissioner Jordan noted she would like to conduct a Sunshine meeting with Commissioners Sosa, Diaz, Seijas and any other

interested parties on Monday, September 14th to discuss the Head Start program, immediately following the Executive Meeting. She advised that she found another way to pay for this program without having to use county resources.

Responding to Commission Diaz' inquiry regarding whether the Board needed to make a motion to schedule a Committee of the Whole meeting on Tuesday (09/15), County Attorney Cuevas noted a motion was not necessary, but the Committee of the Whole meeting should be scheduled immediately following the BCC meeting, and the date and time of the meeting should be confirmed with the Clerk and properly advertised.

Chairman Moss cautioned the Board that the focus of the budget process and issues should not be on the Administration or the Commission Auditor, but on the Board's decisions to cut or restore services. He expressed appreciation to his colleagues, the Mayor and the Administration for being present at today's meeting.

There being no further business, the Committee of the Whole meeting was adjourned at 3:39 p.m.

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Dennis C. Moss, Chairman  
Board of County Commissioners