

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

February 6 – February 10, 2012

JACKSON HEALTH SYSTEM (JHS)

On Tuesday, Jackson Health Systems and SEIU Local 1991 agreed to a contract that calls for \$52 million in concessions each year for a three year term. The tentative agreement will go for a vote next week by the two bargaining units covering the nurses and other healthcare professionals.

The contract calls for union members to donate three percent of their pay toward their pension, just as workers in the state retirement fund are doing. SEIU members will continue to contribute five percent of their salary to fund their health insurance. Additionally, employees will give up \$1,000 a year that had been going to their health flex account and their vacation time will be reduced by five days per year.

It was reported that nurses will continue to work three 11.5 hour shifts one week, and four 11.5 hour shifts the other week in a two-week pay period, which results in some built-in overtime in the second week. However, under the new agreement, they will not get overtime on a daily basis, which means that if they work beyond the end of their shift on a three-day work week, they will be paid their regular hourly rate (reducing overtime costs).

MIAMI

On Thursday, the City of Miami Commission voted to spend \$45,000 to install baby diaper-changing stations in men's rooms within the city. The measure was met with animosity by the police union president who argued that the money was being misspent. Commissioner Frank Carollo who sponsored the item, resented the criticism and vowed to cover the cost with private donations and reimburse the city. Carollo also criticized the Fraternal Order of Police for remaining silent when former Police Chief Miguel Exposito was offered hundreds of thousands of dollars to leave and when the city was handing out severance payments to senior staffers.

Additionally, commissioners discussed different options to cut costs during elections. Changing the system would require a public referendum. Budget Director Daniel Alfonso offered three options: the status quo, which costs Miami approximately \$1.6 million each year; piggybacking on the county and state election, which would cost \$266,000; or piggybacking for the primary but holding its own runoff election, which would cost \$764,000. No decision was made but the city's attorney's office will draft several resolutions from which commissioners can choose in time for a referendum in

August. Changing city elections to even numbered years could give an extra year in office to three elected officials whose terms expire in 2013: Mayor Regalado, and Commissioners Carollo and Spence-Jones.

Also, a proposal to create an oversight committee for the nonprofit group that will be tasked with renovating the Miami Marine Stadium was deferred to the next commission meeting along with an ordinance that would pass management of the property over to the semi-independent Miami Sports & Exhibition Authority, which would allow the renovation of the commercial waterfront property to proceed without a public vote.

OPA-LOCKA

On Thursday, Miami-Dade prosecutors arrested Opa-Locka Mayor Myra Taylor's husband, son and sister for allegedly covering up more than \$6,000 in illegal campaign contributions to her November 2010 election. According to authorities, the money was funneled through the Taylor family's private school, Vankara, and New Beginnings, a company run from the family's church. The mayor was not arrested because prosecutors did not have sufficient evidence to link her to the crimes. The charges included making and accepting excessive campaign contributions, tampering with evidence and conspiring to violate election codes. According to the arrest warrant, Taylor's relatives created a fake "marketing program" for Vankara that would be used to justify the expenses. Additionally, a recorder chronicled meetings in which they planned the cover up.

PINECREST

Last week a special Pinecrest Village Council meeting was held to discuss plans for a proposed boat warehouse at Matheson Hammock Park. Residents from Pinecrest and neighboring Gables-by-the-Sea demonstrated their discontent and asked assistance to help stop the development proposed by Aquamarine Partnerships. Residents voiced concerns over potential noise, oil and traffic produced from large boats running in and out.

Pinecrest Mayor Cindy Lerner told residents that she would help in addressing their concerns.

The proposed plan includes a boat warehouse that is 3.4 million square feet, 60 feet high, 512 long and 150 deep. Marc Bouniconti, who is leading the investment group that is trying to build it, indicated that this is a response to the County's request to increase service and access to Biscayne Park from Matheson Hammock, which is very limited.

The project currently awaits approval from the city of Coral Gables as well as state and county environmental regulators.

FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT

In an effort to address municipal concerns over the planned FPL transmission line corridor, various cities met to seek strategies on how to best approach the issue.

On Friday, OIA attended a meeting held by several municipalities and stakeholders which included, City of Miami, Coral Gables, University of Miami, Pinecrest, and South Miami. A presentation was made by Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson, P.A., who specialize in utilities issues. The discussion covered site certification proceedings, rate increases and new ideas. A follow up meeting will be scheduled to discuss the next course of action.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Save the Date:

Aventura New Branch Library

What: Northeast Branch Library Ground Breaking Ceremony

When: February 29, 2012

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Where: 2930 Aventura Blvd.

The new building will be constructed on the site of the previous library which was destroyed by Hurricane Wilma in 2005 and later demolished. The new library will boast 26,000 square feet and include an exterior covered deck, vestibule, two courtyards, a 100 seat auditorium, two conference rooms, a coffee shop and separate reading rooms for adults, young adults and children.

Miami-Dade League of Cities

What: Miami Dade League of Cities 58th Annual Gala

When: Saturday, February 18, 2012

Where: Jungle Island, 1111 Parrot Jungle Trail

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

February 13 - February 17, 2012

JACKSON HEALTH SYSTEM (JHS)

Late Thursday, members of the three bargaining units of SEIU Local 1991 approved the tentative agreements with Jackson Health System. The announcement did not say what the exact vote totals were for the nurses, healthcare professionals and physician units.

Union members agreed to take no automatic raises for the next three years, pay three percent of salary toward pensions and take fewer vacation days. They also agreed to forego some overtime and give up \$1,000 in flex spending.

As a result of the approved agreements Jackson Health System estimates its savings will amount to an approximate \$150 million over the next three years.

CORAL GABLES

At a Coral Gables commission meeting on Tuesday, Mayor Jim Cason, along with the city manager and commissioners, indicated that they received hundreds of emails regarding the controversial plan to build a five-story warehouse at Matheson Hammock Park's marina. Nevertheless, City Attorney Craig Leen told the commission that while they can acknowledge receipt of the emails, they could not legally address them. The reason is that part of the zoning approval process for the \$18 million structure is "quasi-judicial", meaning that they may only make their decision based on the information provided at a public hearing. Leen advised the commission not to discuss their opinions on the proposal unless they recuse themselves from a vote.

OPA-LOCKA

Last week, Opa-locka commissioners voted to fire City Clerk Deborah Irby, who has been serving in her capacity for 18 years. Commissioners postponed proposals to also fire the city manager and attorney.

As stipulated by her contract, Irby is entitled to receive more than \$200,000 in severance pay. Irby's proposed dismissal was made "without cause", which commissioners approved in a 3-2 vote. Mayor Myra Taylor and Commissioners Timothy Holmes and Rose Tydus approved the termination, while Vice Mayor Dorothy Johnson and Commissioner Gail Miller dissented. The commission named Assistant City Clerk Joanna Flores, as interim city clerk. The search for a new city clerk will commence after the next commission meeting.

Commissioners will address the proposed firing of City Manager Bryan Finnie and Attorney Joseph Geller at the next scheduled City Commission meeting on February 22, 2012.

KEY BISCAVNE:

A triathlete and avid cyclist struck on the Rickenbacker Causeway by a hit-and-run driver died of his injuries on Thursday.

Aaron Cohen, 36, a father of two, died at Jackson Memorial Hospital after undergoing emergency brain surgery. Another cyclist, Enda Walsh, 48, also sustained a leg injury and was released from the hospital.

The hit-and-run driver, Michele Traverso, 25, of Key Biscayne turned himself in on Thursday morning. According to police, Traverso fled the scene of the 5:45 A.M. Wednesday collision of the bridge.

Members of Miami's cycling community plan to honor Cohen with a rally on Saturday. Cyclists will gather at 8:30 A.M. at the Bayfront Park Fountain on Biscayne Blvd and Flagler Street in downtown Miami and ride as a group to Key Biscayne via Brickell Avenue.

FLORIDA POWER & LIGHT (FPL)

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will meet with Florida Power & Light next week over apparent safety violations involving a circulation system at an emergency operations building at the Turkey Point Plant.

Per the NRC, workers on two occasions in 2010 and 2011 disabled part of a ventilation system in the technical support center (a building where workers would go to direct recovery operations in the wake of a nuclear accident / disaster). The system is supposed to be closed, protecting workers from potentially contaminated air. Furthermore, the NRC indicated that FPL also failed to notify regulators about the issue. FPL said that they will contest the preliminary finding.

The public meeting is scheduled to be held at 1:00 PM. Tuesday, at the NRC's Atlanta regional office.

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

FIU has spent the last 18 months seeking property to accommodate an expected 10,000 new enrollees over the next five years. Now the university has set its sight on the adjacent 86 acres occupied by Miami- Dade County Parks (Dade County Youth Fair and Expo). As part of the expansion, FIU is planning on building classrooms, research facilities and laboratories.

As Miami-Dade County and FIU work to find a solution of mutual benefit, one possibility for the Dade County Youth Fair includes relocating to 350 acres on the edge of 8th street and the Florida Everglades. The subject land is currently owned by the South Florida Water Management District and was designated for wetland conservation (a project which was discontinued). The plan calls for a land swap with SFWM and through legislative action, FIU would be allowed to take over the land, and then lease it to become the fair's new home.

One concern cited by environmentalists is the impact that the massive park could have on Miami-Dade's water supply.

ELECTION NEWS:

The City of South Miami held its municipal elections on February 14, 2012 and the results are as follows:

*Winner is be marked by (W)

Mayor : Julio Robaina 43% / Philip K. Stoddard 57% (W)

Commissioner Group II: Josh Liebman 53% (W) / Sally B. Phillips 47%

Commissioner Group III: Gabriel Edmond 15% / Armando Oliveros, Jr. 37% / Bob Welsh 48% (W)

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Miami-Dade League of Cities

What: Miami Dade League of Cities 58th Annual Gala

When: Saturday, February 18, 2012

Where: Jungle Island, 1111 Parrot Jungle Trail

At this year's installation Gala, outgoing President, Honorable Juan Carlos Bermudez, City of Doral will make way for incoming President, Honorable Luis Gonzalez, Councilman, City of Hialeah.

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

February 27 – March 2, 2012

JACKSON HEALTH SYSTEM (JHS)

On Tuesday, Jackson Health System's President and CEO Carlos Migoya announced that more 1,000 people would lose their jobs by the end of April. According to Migoya, the purpose of implementing the measure is to make the hospital more efficient and "right-sizing" the organization. In total, 920 layoffs are coming and 195 positions have been eliminated, equaling 1,115 jobs or 10 percent of Jackson's staff. Jackson officials indicated that the cuts would save JHS approximately \$69 million. During the announcement, Migoya emphasized that the cuts would not affect the hospital's level of service. JHS is going to offer 300-350 part-time positions with benefits. Some workers who will be laid off will have a first opportunity at those positions.

After receiving the news, SEIU union president Martha Baker indicated her outrage over the layoffs. Additionally, Baker disagreed with Migoya's assessment that services will not be affected. Baker said that patient care cannot be maintained with such drastic cuts to frontline caregivers.

MIAMI

City of Miami Commissioner Michelle Spence Jones is planning to sue State Attorney Katherine Fernandez-Rundle for "prosecutorial and investigatory misconduct". In a letter sent to the state attorney this month, Spence-Jones's attorneys allege that Fernandez-Rundle and her employees defamed her "before, during and after the baseless criminal prosecutions" through statements to the press.

A lawsuit has not yet been filed. By law, a plaintiff must notice a state agency six months before suing. Spence-Jones has hired the New York law firm Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady, which also represents former North Carolina lacrosse players who are suing a now-disbarred district attorney in an infamous failed rape case.

OPA-LOCKA

At a public meeting held on February 22, commissioners considered 21 allegations brought in a resolution by Commissioner Timothy Holmes against City Manager Bryan

Finnie. Items ranged from unsatisfactory job performance to use of profanity in the office. Among the issues listed, Finnie failed to use \$ 2 million meant for improvements to City Hall, and terminated the building director without cause. Finnie responded to the 21 charges and commissioners Rose Tydus, Gail Miller and Vice Mayor Dorothy Johnson voted to keep Finnie while the mayor and Holmes voted for his termination. Finnie isn't the only senior city official who has been targeted by the commission. On February 8, commissioners voted 3-2 to fire city clerk Deborah Irby. Now the city is in court over the amount of her severance pay. Additionally, commissioners have also been discussing firing Attorney Joseph Geller but have postponed action on the proposal.

PINECREST

Village of Pincrest Mayor Cindy Lerner put forth the following FPL Transmission Line update:

US 1 Transmission Line Update

The Village has been fighting for the past two years to keep the proposed FPL transmission lines from being located along US 1, that is, unless FPL agrees to underground them and incur the costs as part of their upgrades and infrastructure improvements. There are currently no transmission lines running along US 1 and we do not want to allow it under any circumstances, as it would cause irreparable damage to the future economic viability of the corridor. The City of Coral Gables is a partner in this litigation and we are also in a coalition with the cities of South Miami and Miami. This administrative proceeding will not be decided until sometime in the spring of 2013. In the meantime, we continue the fight on other fronts as well. FPL has not only been collecting additional fees from customers through Early Cost Recovery, a law they wrote and convinced the Legislature to pass back in 2006-2007, from which they have already collected \$300 million additional charges which we the customers pay. But last month they also filed an application for a rate increase with the Public Service Commission which they were so brazen to say that they want their investors to see a higher return on their investment - higher than the 10.5% they now realize. Imagine the gall, for a public utility to ask for even higher rates from its customers, when they already get this Early Cost Recovery subsidy at OUR expense. So the Village and many other local governments plan to fight the proposal on behalf of our constituents.

So What is this Early Cost Recovery?

It is an additional surcharge all FPL ratepayers are being charged. You will not see it listed on your electric bill, but I assure you we are all being charged through our monthly bills. The Public Service Commission, annually, must reauthorize the utilities to be able to add the charge. I would like to share with you some of the concerns that led me to propose one of the first resolutions in South Florida passed to urge the repeal of the Early Cost Recovery statute. I drafted this resolution after spending the past year

learning about the reasons for the passage of the law in 2006, understanding the circumstances facing Florida then and looking at the Florida of today. The facts have changed so dramatically that I believe we have an obligation to advocate on behalf of our constituents, and our cities as a consumer protection. The economy has changed dramatically since 2006 when the two new nuclear power plants were first proposed. Back then, the real estate bubble continued to expand, growth projections in Florida were high, 1,000 people a day moving to Florida, and the proposed cost of two new nuclear power plants was \$8 billion. The projected time line for building the two new plants was 2012-13, actually it was to begin being built this year. Now, six years later, we have drastically changed economic, demographic and energy conditions. The real estate bubble burst, the economy took a nose dive, construction stopped and is still significantly off, and we now have a much more aggressive energy efficiency profile and efforts to conserve energy and use renewable forms of energy. The most striking change however, is the projected cost of the new plants which is up to \$22 billion, 3 times more expensive than when originally proposed, and the timeline has now been pushed back to 2020 or beyond, if ever. The CEO of FPL is on record as having said last year that he does not believe they will ever build these plants. So the utilities have basically been given a long term subsidy, separate from the proposed new rate increase they are seeking. Regardless of whether one is supportive of nuclear plants or not, the cost benefit analysis has to give one pause. We have an obligation to be responsible stewards of our expenditures as a municipality and I for one do not believe we should be paying the additional utility costs for another ten years, especially when they have not been issued a license by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and when the need for them is not questionable. Finally, the utilities have now indicated that 90% of the Early Cost Recovery funds (\$300 million collected so far by FPL) are now used to upgrade existing nuclear plants, which is NOT the reason given for the fee in the first place. It was to build a revenue stream and base for the extraordinary capital costs they would have to incur and recognizing the risks were so high they would never get financing from private investors on Wall Street. Instead, the ratepayers of South Florida are the chumps being used to basically line the pockets of the private utility investors. Stay tuned for more, we have only just begun to fight!

WEST MIAMI

The Qualifying period for the April 10th, 2012 West Miami Municipal Elections officially ended Monday, February 27th. The following candidates have qualified for Mayor and City Commission:

Mayor:

Eduardo H. Muhina – Unopposed

Commissioner:

Candida “Candy” Blanca

Alexhander “Alex” Soto

Luciano L. Suarez (Incumbent)
Partick Whiteside

MIAMI-DADE LEAGUE OF CITIES (MDCLC)

On Saturday, February 18th, the MDCLC held its 58th Annual Gala at Jungle Island. As part of its installation ceremony, the MDCLC recognized the accomplishments of outgoing President, Honorable Juan Carlos Bermudez, City of Doral and welcomed its new President, Honorable Luis Gonzalez, Councilman, City of Hialeah.

KEY BISCAVNE

On the heels of the tragic hit and run death of a triathlete riding his bike on the Rickenbacker, Miami-Dade Commissioner Xavier Suarez organized a bike-safety summit, which took place on Wednesday. The objective is to find permanent solutions to improved safety for both cyclist and pedestrians on the Rickenbacker and other urban streets.

The conference was very well attended and included representatives from Miami-Dade's Commission offices as well as officials from the cities of Miami, Miami Beach, Coral Gables (Commissioner Cabrera) and Key Biscayne (Mayor Caplan). Commissioner Suarez plans to issue a detailed "action plan" by the end of April that would permanently increase police enforcement, more cycling and pedestrian friendly street designs and identify funding for those improvements across his district, which includes the causeway, downtown Miami and Coconut Grove, which experience heavy cycling traffic.