IMFR
Agenda Item No. 2B Substitute

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Chairman Joe A. Martinez and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: July 10, 2012

FROM: R. A. Cuevas, Jr. County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution directing the Mayor to create a web page directly accessible from the County's homepage that will enable citizens to report fraud

This item differs from the original version in that the initial version of the resolution stated that it was "requesting and directing" the Mayor to create a web page relating to fraud reporting. The amended version simply states that the resolution is "directing" the Mayor to do the same. This change is to simply clarify the resolution's directive.

The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Lynda Bell.

R. A. Cuevas, Jr.
County Attorney

RAC/cp

MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

TO: Honorable Chairman Joe A. Martinez
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: September 4, 2012

FROM: R. A. Cuevas, Jr.
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Agenda Item No.

Please note any items checked.

_____ **"3-Day Rule" for committees applicable if raised**

_____ **6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing**

_____ **4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing**

_____ **Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget**

_____ **Budget required**

_____ **Statement of fiscal impact required**

_____ **Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Manager's report for public hearing**

_____ **No committee review**

_____ **Applicable legislation requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3's ____, 3/5's ____, unanimous_____) to approve**

_____ **Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required**

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No.
9-4-12

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE MAYOR OR MAYOR'S DESIGNEE TO CREATE A WEB PAGE DIRECTLY ACCESSIBLE FROM THE COUNTY'S HOMEPAGE THAT WILL ENABLE CITIZENS TO REPORT FRAUD

WHEREAS, fraud has a pernicious effect on our community that deprives local governments of valuable revenue sources, increases the tax burden on law-abiding citizens, and promotes a general lack of trust not only in our government officials but also in our neighbors; and

WHEREAS, even a cursory examination of Miami-Dade County's website reveals a vast number of web pages that each deal with different types of fraud including, but not limited to, mortgage fraud, deed fraud, HUD fraud, contractor fraud, homestead exemption fraud, Medicare fraud, consumer fraud, and government fraud; and

WHEREAS, these web pages are not linked to one another, they often have different reporting methods, and they are frequently operated by wholly different County departments; and

WHEREAS, any concerned citizen seeking to perform a public service and report fraud must presently navigate a digital labyrinth that does not easily direct citizens to the proper site; and

WHEREAS, the present framework can lead to confusion, frustration, and, worse yet, can permit fraud to ultimately go unreported; and

WHEREAS, due in part to the current recession, rising unemployment, and the decline in the real estate market, there appears to have been an increase in occurrences of fraud throughout Miami-Dade County; and

WHEREAS, the County already devotes significant resources to combating fraud; and

WHEREAS, the investigation and enforcement of laws concerning fraud can lead to the recovery of tax revenue and other monies due and owing to the County, municipalities and the School Board; and

WHEREAS, the Property Appraiser, for example, has done an admirable job of investigating and penalizing tax exemption fraud in general, has increased his investigations in this area, and, in the last three years, has returned to the tax roll over $1.3 billion in taxable property, and has, in 2011, filed a record $7.9 million in tax liens so that, as of May 22, 2012, there are over $14.5 million in tax liens recorded with the Clerk of the Courts; and

WHEREAS, funds recovered through the investigation of all forms of fraud can be used to finance a variety of County-wide services; and

WHEREAS, losses in revenue due to the economic slow-down and recession have already forced the County to reduce services, lower support to deserving community groups, lay off employees, and cut salaries and benefits; and

WHEREAS, if nothing is done, these losses in revenues will cause even further cuts and reductions, creating more hardships, and perhaps even threatening the funding for essential social services to children and the elderly and even for police and fire protection; and

WHEREAS, in such difficult economic times, the County should not have to address revenue losses by raising the millage rate or increasing taxes, which places the burden on the

hard-working, law-abiding people of South Florida who cannot afford to pay more taxes while still caring for their own families and trying to grow the economy; and

WHEREAS, it is therefore more important than ever to ensure that all forms of fraud are fully investigated; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive approach to addressing fraud in Miami-Dade County will require the assistance of concerned citizens as well as dedicated County employees; and

WHEREAS, Miami-Dade citizens cannot become fully involved in this process unless the County makes it easier for them to report fraud; and

WHEREAS, there should be a single web page, directly accessible from the County's homepage (http://www.miamidade.gov), that serves as a one-stop clearinghouse for all fraud reporting; and

WHEREAS, this site should enable concerned citizens to either report fraud directly from the newly created site or easily direct citizens to the proper department or agency,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that the Mayor or mayor's designee is [[~~requested and~~]][1] directed to create a web page directly accessible from the County's homepage that will enable citizens to report fraud. This web page should include a feature where any citizen who uses the site to report fraud will receive an electronic reply that includes a case number for ease of reference and to facilitate any necessary follow-up. This web page shall also include an option for citizens to report fraud anonymously.

[1]The differences between the substitute and the original item are indicated as follows: Words stricken through and/or [[double bracketed]] shall be deleted, words underscored and/or >>double arrowed<< are added.

The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Commissioner Lynda Bell. It was offered by Commissioner , who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Joe A. Martinez, Chairman
Audrey M. Edmonson, Vice Chairwoman

Bruno A. Barreiro	Lynda Bell
Esteban L. Bovo, Jr.	Jose "Pepe" Diaz
Sally A. Heyman	Barbara J. Jordan
Jean Monestime	Dennis C. Moss
Rebeca Sosa	Sen. Javier D. Souto
Xavier L. Suarez	

The Chairperson thereupon declared the resolution duly passed and adopted this 4th day September, 2012. This resolution shall become effective ten (10) days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK

By:_____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency. MBV

Michael B. Valdes

6