



**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY**  
**FINAL OFFICIAL**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Board of County Commissioners**

*Stephen P. Clark Government Center*  
*111 N.W. 1st Street*  
*Miami, FL 33128*

Thursday, August 23, 2007  
9:00 AM, Commission Chambers

Harvey Ruvlin, Clerk  
Board of County Commissioners

Kay Sullivan, Director  
Clerk of the Board Division

Zorana Gainer, Commission Reporter  
305-375-3570



**Members Present:** Carlos A. Gimenez; Barbara J. Jordan; Dennis C. Moss; Natacha Seijas; Rebeca Sosa; Javier D. Souto

**Members Absent:** Bruno Barreiro; Jose "Pepe" Diaz; Sally A. Heyman; Dorrin Rolle; Katy Sorenson

**Members Late:** Audrey M. Edmonson; Joe A. Martinez

**Members Excused:** None.

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**Members Absent County Business:** None.

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**1**      **MINUTES PREPARED BY:**

**Report:** *Zorana Gainer, Commission Reporter*  
305-375-3570

**1A**      **MOMENT OF SILENCE**

**1B**      **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**1C**      **ROLL CALL**

**Report:** *The following staff members were present:*

*~County Manager George Burgess*

*~Acting County Attorney Abigail Price-Williams*

*~Assistant County Attorney Jess McCarty*

*~Jennifer Glazer-Moon, Budget Director, Office of Strategic Business management*

*~Deputy Clerks Kay Sullivan and Zorana Gainer*

**1D**      **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

1D1

072425 Discussion Item

BUDGET PROCESS

*Presented*

**Report:** Chairman Barreiro started by presenting the parliamentary procedures of today's meeting. He noted he and Commissioner Moss had to attend a Value Adjustment Board (VAB) Meeting at 9:30 a.m., and explained that it was his intent to open the meeting to facilitate some initial discussion and exchange of ideas and to return following the VAB meeting, which he anticipated would last only 30 minutes. Chairman Barreiro called for input from commissioners on how to proceed.

Commissioner Seijas suggested that Vice Chairwoman Jordan preside over the meeting and defer the discussion on major issues, pending Chairman Barreiro's return.

Chairman Barreiro noted he would proceed as recommended by Commissioner Seijas. He relinquished the Chair to Vice Chairwoman Jordan and left the Chamber.

Vice Chairwoman Jordan noted that State Legislature placed mandates on the communities in order to lower the tax rate. She stated that this decision came late in the year, which precipitated the release of the budget later than usual. She noted that the Board decided to forego the month of August 2007 as a recess schedule in order to hold budget hearings and workshops throughout the month. Vice Chairwoman Jordan stated that it became apparent that the Board needed to come together as a Committee of the Whole to discuss the County Commission's approach and response to the proposed budget issued by the Mayor Carlos Alvarez and County Manager George Burgess. She noted that many commissioners had attended Committee budget workshops and had penned memorandums to their respective Committees and to the County Commission Chairman outlining budget recommendations.

Recognizing that each of the 13 individual commissioners may have different priorities, the priorities of the community as a whole had to be addressed and the needs of the residents were given priority above everything else, the Vice Chairwoman noted. She stated that the purpose of this meeting was to engage in free discussion regarding the proposed budget and recommendations. She commended Chairman Barreiro for his foresight in calling this meeting. Vice Chairwoman Jordan questioned Assistant County Attorney regarding the parliamentary procedures and whether a formal process was required.

Assistant County Attorney Abigail Price Williams advised that the Committee could proceed by discussing the issues before them; that a formal process was not required.

Vice Chairwoman Jordan asked County Manager George Burgess to summarize the thought process involved in the proposed budget.

County Manager Burgess noted that the special Legislative Session did not conclude until mid June, which delayed the County's schedule to submit a proposed budget. He stated that submitting the proposed budget in July instead of June deducted time from the regularly scheduled budget workshops for the Board to address it. Mr. Burgess noted that the intention was to submit a proposed budget based on previously held discussions and the realities of the tax relief requirements. He stated that the millage rate reductions were more extreme than any local government ever witnessed. Mr. Burgess noted that meetings were held with each Commissioner individually. He stated that department budget adjustments and the elimination of programs/services were necessary; even though attempts were made to allow for flexibility within the proposed budget. Mr. Burgess noted that the Board had a difficult task before

them, but felt that everyone could reach a consensus.

In response to Commissioner Sosa's inquiry regarding the amount of funds in the special rainy day contingency line item, Mr. Burgess noted that Service Reserve were added and equated to \$11 million (\$4 million in unincorporated Dade and \$7 million County wide). He stated that they were diligent in building the Emergency Contingency Reserve which equated approximately \$60 million at the end of this year.

Commissioner Sosa question whether any additional emergency-type funds were allocated to services in an attempt to protect the County.

Mr. Burgess noted that the Countywide General Fund included: a contingency reserve, a designated reserve (providing separation cost coverage), a reserve for energy cost fluctuations, and a tax equalization reserve. He stated that the service and contingency reserves within the Fire Rescue District would be used to allow services to be rolled out gradually over the next five years; while alternative revenue sources for long-run Fire Rescue service were entertained.

Responding to Commissioner Sosa's question regarding whether any regulation was in existence that required a certain percentage amount in each reserve, Mr. Burgess explained that state law focused on limitations of how much was within a reserve fund as opposed to how little.

Mr. Burgess noted that the minimums of reserve funds were developed during the onset of building the Emergency Contingency Reserve. He stated that their objective was to have reserves within 5 to 7% range.

Commissioner Sosa asked County Manager Burgess to verify the percentage of the budget represented the following reserves in total: Emergency Reserve Funds, General Reserve Fund, Contingency Reserve Funds and Service Reserve Funds.

Commissioner Sosa stated it was important to have healthy reserves, but to be cautious of excessive savings that could eliminate services needed by the community. She suggested that the exceeded amount from the best practices objective be reviewed. Commissioner Sosa also suggested that the services reserve be used in case there was an additional need due to the cuts in services.

Commissioner Martinez noted that each commissioner submitted their budget proposals; each listing conflicting priorities and recommendations. He suggested that those proposals be forwarded to the Administration for review so they could determine which priorities could be added to the proposed budget.

Chairman Barreiro retained the chair.

Chairman Barreiro expressed appreciation to Board Members who had attended workshops that were scheduled during the August 2007 recess period. He asked that Committee Chairpersons forward their written budget recommendations to the Commission Auditor and to the Clerk of the Boards office. Chairman Barreiro noted that the State-enforced cuts and the reform in County Government presented great challenges to the County. He expressed confidence that the Board could adopt a fiscally responsible balanced budget that provided adequate services.

Chairman Barreiro noted that the Board should consider and deliberate whether or not the proposed millage rate should be lowered; and whether or not executive offices should be further consolidated.

With regards to issues pertaining to the conflicting Commission Budget proposal, Vice Chairwoman Jordan recommended that the County Manager review the Convention Development Tax (CDT) as an alternative funding source in an attempt to allow usage of the General Fund in other areas.

Vice Chairwoman Jordan expressed concern regarding the Administrations proposal that small departments and two major departments be consolidated. She noted she was not in support of consolidating the Department of Human Services and Community Action Agency. Vice Chairwoman Jordan suggested the Community Based Organization (COB's) funding level be restored that that of FY 06-07. She stated she did not want to disturb the services to the needy and less fortunate.

Commissioner Moss noted the importance of maintaining the integrity of the health and public safety system. He stated that he was against the proposal that the Chief Information Officer's (CIO) Department be moved out of the County Manager's Office. Commissioner Moss noted that the Commission Auditor's Office needed to be strengthened. He stated that Parks were a major concern and a meeting was held at Metro Zoo to discuss their advertising budget.

Commissioner Gimenez noted that he drafted a resolution directing the Commission Auditor to develop next year's budget.

Discussion ensued among the Board regarding scheduling a meeting to consolidate, prioritize and submit budgetary items.

Commissioner Edmonson requested that the proposal to merge the Community Action Agency (CAA) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) be reconsidered, that funding be restored to the Mom and Pop program, and that Metro Miami Action Plan (MMAP) remained an independent trust with all funding sources restored.

Commissioner Edmonson noted that the Economic Development & Human Services Committee (EDHS) collectively came to a consensus on the following recommendations for the budget proposal:

~That the CAA remained a separate department and funded at its current level;

~that the MMAP program remained an independent entity with its current level of funding, and all other funding sources currently governed be maintained as well;

~that no Head start slots be transferred to delegate agencies;

~that the Greater Miami Service Corps be maintained at its current funding level;

~that the Mom & Pop Grant Program be maintained at its current funding level;

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*~that CBO's maintained their current level of funding to avoid interruption of services;*

*~Department of Human Services (DHS) be maintained at its current level of funding rather;*

*~that General Funds in the amount of \$687,000 allocated to the Miami-Dade Housing agency be placed in abeyance until the final outcome of the possible USHUD takeover;*

*~that the Office of Strategic Business Management explained all County Reserves;*

*~that the County Manager conduct a comprehensive review of all county departments as well as the Administration to determine the feasibility of reasonable mergers and reconsolidation as well as potential savings from a reduction in top level administration.*

*Discussion ensued among the Board regarding Miami-Dade County employee's Health Insurance.*

*In response to Commissioner Moss' inquiry regarding County employee's health insurance yielding \$50 million in savings, Mr. Burgess noted that the item passed the savings to the employees. He stated that the savings equated to \$58 billion due to premium reductions which led to funds being transferred into the Health Insurance Trust Fund. County Manager Burgess noted that approximately \$32 million of avoided costs and operations were achieved because of the awarded health insurance.*

*Commissioner Moss asked whether or not the Health Insurance Trust Fund could be redirected.*

*First Assistant County Attorney Abigail Price-Williams noted that those funds were available to be redirected.*

*Commissioner Moss questioned the current union worker contract which stipulated cost of living annual (COLA) raises, merit raises and longevity raises.*

*Ms. Price-Williams noted that the aforementioned items were a part of the collective bargaining agreements and were regulated by the agreements.*

*Commissioner Seijas concurred with Commissioner Moss' comments regarding County employee's receiving COLA, merit raises and longevity pay. She stated that she supported the reduction of County employee health insurance cost. Commissioner Seijas suggested that these issues be bifurcated, and that individuals currently not under contract should not receive a merit increase.*

*With regard to issues pertaining to employee's health insurance, Commissioner Gimenez expressed concern that some employees received the discounts while others did not.*

*Commissioner Gimenez noted that a special meeting should be held in order to gain a clear sense of direction. He noted that the Board set priorities, policies and the budget.*

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*Vice Chairwoman Jordan recognized Senator Frederica Wilson and Florida Representative Ronald Brise.*

*Senator Wilson expressed appreciation to Board Members that had contacted her regarding Head Start and the Legislative Delegation Office. She suggested that the Legislative Delegation Office funding be decreased. Senator Wilson noted that she was opposed to the proposal to privatize the Head Start program.*

*Representative Brise noted that the Board and the Legislative Delegation Office needed to collaborate harmoniously to secure a good environment for the citizens of Miami-Dade County.*

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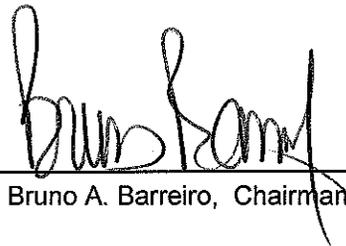
072426 Discussion Item

TRANSFER OF FUNDS FOR BUDGETARY PROCESS

*Presented*

1E

**ADJOURNMENT**



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Bruno A. Barreiro, Chairman

ATTEST: HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK



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Kay Sullivan, Deputy Clerk

By: Kay Sullivan, Deputy Clerk