

Dr. Antonio Jorge Social and Economic Development Council

Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, August 22, 2025

Time: 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Location: Miami-Dade County Stephen P. Clark Government Center, 18th Floor, Conference Room 18-3

1. Call to Order and Welcome

The meeting was called to order at **1:15 p.m.** by **Chairman Dr. Raul Moncarz**, who welcomed members and introduced the agenda. Quorum was established.

2. Roll Call and Attendance

Members present:

- Dr. Raul Moncarz, Chairman
- Dr. Bernadette West, Vice Chairwoman
- Beatriz Baldan
- Santiago Leon
- Marcos Kerbel

Director present:

- Dr. Rose Martin
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3. Approval of July 18, 2025 Minutes

- Motion to approve: **Beatriz Baldan**
 - Second: **Marcos Kerbel**
 - Vote: Motion passed unanimously
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4. Special Guest Presentation

- It was reported that **President Madeline Pumariega** (Miami Dade College) was unable to attend due to a **funeral mass for a close colleague**. She conveyed her regrets to the Council.
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5. Zero Waste and County Waste Management

- Discussion raised by Ms. Baldan highlighted concerns about County contracts for a Zero Waste Master Plan while also pursuing an incinerator project.
 - Members noted confusion about whether commissioners had been aware of the contract, and questioned transparency in the process.
 - Airports and seaports were identified as potential sites for stronger sustainability policies, modeled after examples from other U.S. airports.
 - Difficulty engaging with Solid Waste staff was noted as a recurring issue.
 - **Action Items:**
 - Circulate Ms. Baldan's paper digitally and consider publication on the Council's Reports page.
 - Establish a Council file to track Zero Waste initiatives.
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6. County Revenue and Budget Deficit

- Members questioned why Miami-Dade's revenue estimates are based on April 2024 population figures, undercounting by 73,000 people. This likely reduces revenue-sharing allocations from the state.
 - Concern was expressed that Miami-Dade is losing significant funds compared to smaller counties.
 - The original deficit of \$402 million remains only partially addressed despite \$65.8 million identified from reserves, unspent funds, and adjustments.
 - Members recommended consulting with the Commission Auditor for clarification on revenue assumptions.
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7. Healthcare Costs and Medicaid Expansion

- Discussion focused on why Miami-Dade has the highest per capita health costs.
- Contributing factors included fee-for-service billing, uninsured residents relying on emergency rooms, and Florida's decision not to expand Medicaid.
- Members noted that recent County health plan savings (AvMed to Aetna) estimated at \$50 million did not resolve structural inefficiencies.
- **Recommendation:** The Council supports including **Medicaid expansion** in the County's legislative priorities, and encourages exploring per-capita payment models to replace fee-for-service billing.

8. Immigration Data and Policy Challenges

- Members discussed barriers faced by immigrants seeking legal residency, with wait times of 15 years or more.
- Concerns were raised about the cost of legal representation and changing federal laws that make pathways more restrictive.
- Members emphasized that excluding undocumented immigrants from census counts harms federal reimbursements and County resources.
- **Action Items:**
 - Dr. Martin to request immigration data from the Commission Auditor's Office.
 - Explore collaboration with FIU Metropolitan Center and advocacy groups (e.g., Mexican-American Council).
 - Santiago Leon and another member will research documentation on legal system barriers for immigrants.

9. Outreach to Haitian Community and Commissioner Bastien

- Members recommended engaging **Commissioner Marleine Bastien (District 2)** and Haitian leaders.
- Dr. Martin shared a model from the Commission for Women, where presenting reports directly to BCC committees led to actionable results such as a Black Maternal Health Fair.
- Members agreed that a similar strategy could benefit the Council in advancing immigrant and equity issues.

10. Trust Fund Ordinance

- Members reaffirmed the need for a trust fund to support scholarships and events.
- **Action:** Dr. Martin will request sponsorship from **Vice Chairman Commissioner McGhee**.

11. Bylaws Draft

- **Motion:** To direct Dr. Martin to draft preliminary bylaws (reflecting no term limits and a quorum of five) for review and approval at the next meeting.
 - Motion: **Marcos Kerbel**
 - Second: **Santiago Leon**
 - Vote: Motion passed unanimously

12. Policy Recommendation Ordinance Clarification

- Dr. Martin shared guidance from the County Attorney's Office:
 - Boards may send recommendations directly to the Mayor.
 - Implementation of recommendations requires BCC approval.
- This confirmed the Council's current practice.

13. Website and Reports

- The Council's webpage now includes a **Reports section**.
- Member bios cannot be posted due to uniformity requirements, though member names and the Chair's bio may be listed.

14. Proclamation for Dr. Jaime Suchlicki

- Dr. Martin announced that **August 31, 2025 will be proclaimed Dr. Jaime Suchlicki Day** in Miami-Dade County.
- A preliminary invitation was shared; final invitations will be circulated when available.

15. Federal Reserve Report

- Members noted the importance of reviewing the Federal Reserve Bank report and providing commentary relevant to Miami-Dade.
- Discussion emphasized the need to connect budget issues with strategies that grow the local economy, including tourism impacts.

16. General Discussion and Future Topics

- Members agreed data remains central to Council work, especially around immigration and undercounting.
 - Tourism industry impacts were raised, with local reports of 20–30% revenue declines over summer 2025.
 - Future topics identified: continuation of **Zero Waste discussion** and deeper review of **tourism economics**.
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18. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn: **Marcos Kerbel**
- Second: **Santiago Leon**
- Vote: Motion passed unanimously
- Meeting adjourned at **3:00 p.m.**

Next Meeting: Friday, September 19, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Rose Martin

Director, Dr. Antonio Jorge Social and Economic Development Council