



City of Margate

5790 Margate Boulevard
Margate, FL 33063
954-972-6454
www.margatefl.com

Meeting Minutes Regular City Commission Meeting

Mayor Tommy Ruzzano
Vice Mayor Arlene R. Schwartz
Commissioners:
Antonio V. Arserio, Anthony N. Caggiano, Joanne Simone

City Manager Cale Curtis
City Attorney Weiss Serota Helfman Cole & Bierman
City Clerk Jennifer M. Johnson

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

7:00 PM

Commission Chambers and Zoom.us

Webinar ID: 883 6078 8488

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88360788488>

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

- Present:** 3 - Commissioner Anthony N. Caggiano, Commissioner Joanne Simone and Mayor Tommy Ruzzano
- Not Present:** 1 - Commissioner Antonio V. Arserio
- Absent:** 1 - Vice Mayor Arlene R. Schwartz

COMMISSIONER ANTONIO V. ARSERIO arrived at 7:52pm.

MOMENT OF SILENCE - INVOCATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- A. [ID 2024-303](#) LAUREN GRACE ROBINSON, 1ST GRADE, PHYL'S ACADEMY

1) PRESENTATION(S)

- A. [ID 2024-202](#) MARGATE 50 YEAR RESIDENCY AWARD

MAYOR TOMMY RUZZANO explained that there was no Margate 50 Year Residency but he was recognizing Marion Marini who would be 100 years old on Friday.

Discussion ensued.

ATHLETES OF THE MONTH

- B. [ID 2024-201](#) BASEBALL: ANGELO MANZI, 7 YEARS OLD (City of Margate Baseball, River Bandits)

PROCLAMATION(S)

- D. [ID 2024-316](#) NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH - SEPTEMBER 15 - OCTOBER 15, 2024 (presented to Fire Chief Roberto Lorenzo)

This Item was heard before Item 1) C. ID 2024-280.

FIRE CHIEF ROBERTO LORENZO spoke on this Item.

MAYOR RUZZANO stated that Commissioner Joanne Simone was awarded a Gold Certificate of Excellence.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION FOR YEARS OF SERVICE

- C. [ID 2024-280](#) STEPHEN M. SIMMONS, POLICE OFFICER - POLICE DEPARTMENT - 20 YEARS

2) PUBLIC DISCUSSION

MAYOR RUZZANO explained the protocol for submitting comments to Public Discussion.

DONNA L. FELLOWS said that there was a disgraced City Commissioner. She referenced property taxes.

COMMISSIONER JOANNE SIMONE interjected Ms. Fellows' discussion and was concerned about personal attacks on City Commissioners.

CITY ATTORNEY, DAVID N. TOLCES, read the Code of Conduct for City Commission meetings.

MAYOR RUZZANO said that he would not stop people speaking their minds.

ELSA J. SANCHEZ congratulated and thanked Commissioner Simone and said that she was always there for the residents. She thanked the Margate Police Department and singled out Police Sergeant Schwartz and Police Detectives, Shapiro and Irelan, pertaining to an issue at Paradise Gardens III. She thanked Fire Chief Lorenzo and Fire Marshal Scholl pertaining to his excellent cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training.

COKESBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MARGATE, PASTOR, REV. LUCAS BONATES, introduced his Administrative Assistant, Danielle Welsh Morales. He explained that he wanted to bring back a pumpkin patch to his church and sought support and ideas from the City to make this a big community event.

MAYOR RUZZANO indicated that literature was provided to the City Commission before the meeting had started which contained a detailed list of what the Cokesbury United Methodist Church of Margate was looking to do.

COKESBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MARGATE, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, DANIELLE WELSH MORALES, repeated the information provided by Rev. Bonates to bring back the Cokesbury Pumpkin Patch to Margate and encouraged the public to attend. She requested signage to be erected on the main City streets and sought sponsorship from the City in terms of advertising on their social media or City

page. She said that they wanted to give back to the community.

Discussion ensued.

JULIE JONES questioned whether charity contributions go to a 501(c)(3) or was it made payable to a resident. She said that she was receiving enormous things sent to her telephone pertaining to the election and said that the Mayor's office needed to be respected.

LAUREN BERACHA discussed receiving feedback for a lack of respect for people's property from the City Commission placing election signs.

MR. KRALJIC read a statement expressing his concerns on the messaging from the City Commission which was discussed two meetings ago pertaining to parking on sidewalks.

3) COMMISSION COMMENTS

COMMISSIONER, ANTHONY N. CAGGIANO, discussed hurricane preparedness.

COMMISSIONER SIMONE forewarned of a potential storm for this weekend. She thanked the senior management of Department of Environmental and Engineering Services (DEES) and Waste Water team for assisting in the Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Disposal event. She advised the public to be safe and well hydrated.

MAYOR RUZZANO was in favor of members of the public speaking their piece. He explained that the Mayor's role was not a ceremonial position. He expressed that staff did a great job on the budget which went smoothly. He highlighted that the City's taxes would not be raised but they could find increases pertaining to the Broward County (BC) School board and South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). He thanked the Chief of Police Palma for some pins.

MAYOR RUZZANO advised that the Trunk or Treat event would be moved to the Margate Sports Complex on October 26th. He congratulated Commissioner Simone on her accolade.

CITY ATTORNEY TOLCES said that he would be attending the International Municipal Lawyers Association annual conference in Orlando where he hoped to speak on the affordable housing crisis in Florida.

4) CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

CITY MANAGER CALE CURTIS thanked all the Department Directors and their staff for their time and effort in assisting with the budget process and said that they have done an excellent job of clearly communicating the goals and objectives of the same which had made a vast improvement. He highlighted tomorrow's swearing-in ceremony scheduled for the newly appointed, Chief of Police Palma.

5) CONSENT AGENDA

Items listed under Consent Agenda are viewed to be routine and the recommendation will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. If discussion is desired by the Commission, the item(s) will be removed from the Consent Agenda and will be considered separately.

- A. [ID 2024-288](#) MOTION - APPROVAL OF CITY COMMISSION MINUTES: AUGUST 21, 2024 REGULAR CITY COMMISSION MEETING @ 6:30PM, AUGUST 21, 2024 REGULAR CITY COMMISSION MEETING @ 7PM AND SEPTEMBER 9, 2024 CITY COMMISSION BUDGET HEARING

APPROVED

A motion was made by Commissioner Simone, seconded by Commissioner Caggiano, that this Minutes be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Commissioner Caggiano, Commissioner Simone and Mayor Ruzzano

Not Present: 1 - Commissioner Arserio

Absent: 1 - Vice Mayor Schwartz

6) RESOLUTION(S)

- A. [ID 2024-299](#) A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MARGATE, FLORIDA, AWARDDING CONTRACT ENTITLED "WATER MAINS IMPROVEMENTS PHASE 2B - US 441 & ROYAL PALM BLVD INTERSECTION" TO PABON ENGINEERING, INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$650,000.00; PROVIDING FOR A PUBLIC PURPOSE; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

A motion was made by Commissioner Simone, seconded by Commissioner Caggiano, that this Resolution, should be approved.

Yes: 3 - Commissioner Caggiano, Commissioner Simone and Mayor Ruzzano

Not Present: 1 - Commissioner Arserio

Absent: 1 - Vice Mayor Schwartz

- B. [ID 2024-306](#) AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE MARGATE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY ("MCRA") PROVIDING FOR THE ANNUAL COMPENSATION RATE FOR THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CITY ON BEHALF OF THE MCRA PURSUANT TO THE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE MCRA AND THE CITY OF MARGATE, FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-25

A motion was made by Commissioner Simone, seconded by Commissioner Caggiano, that this Resolution, should be approved.

Yes: 3 - Commissioner Caggiano, Commissioner Simone and Mayor Ruzzano

Not Present: 1 - Commissioner Arserio

Absent: 1 - Vice Mayor Schwartz

- C. [ID 2024-309](#) RESOLUTION - APPROVING EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS AND SALARIES FOR EMPLOYEES APPOINTED BY THE CITY COMMISSION; PROVIDING

FOR AMENDMENT AND EXECUTION OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS;
PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE.

A motion was made by Commissioner Caggiano, seconded by Mayor Ruzzano, that this Resolution, should be discussed.

MAYOR RUZZANO said that they should all receive the increases but believed that the Fire Chief's salary should be bumped up to \$200,000 and questioned the salary of the City Clerk's position in Coconut Creek.

CITY CLERK, JENNIFER M. JOHNSON, informed that Coconut Creek's City Clerk's salary was \$175,302.

Discussion ensued.

A motion to amend was made by Mayor Ruzzano, to move the Fire Chief to \$200,000 which would be a 3% increase and the City Clerk go to \$176,000.

COMMISSIONER, ANTONIO V. ARSERIO, joined the City Commission meeting via Zoom at 7:48pm. He said that he was not expecting a round up on the salary numbers and asked if this could be effective after the Cost of Living Adjustment (CoLA).

COMMISSIONER CAGGIANO concurred with Commissioner Arserio request.

Discussion ensued.

CITY ATTORNEY TOLCES advised that whatever increase they proposed, in theory, could go into effect after October 1st as it would be captured within any increase.

Discussion ensued on the COLA increase.

Commissioner Arserio entered the City Chambers at 7:52pm and Commissioner Caggiano temporarily left the City Chambers.

Discussion ensued.

A motion to amend was made by Commissioner Caggiano, seconded by Mayor Ruzzano, to provide for adjustments and benefits as provided in the Exhibit to the Resolution with the provision to move the Fire Chief to \$200,000 and the City Clerk to \$176,000, with no Cost of Living Adjustment (CoLA) on October 1st, 2024 for Fire Chief and City Clerk.

COMMISSIONER SIMONE explained that at the last City Commission meeting when they appointed the new Chief of Police, the idea was thrown out by one City

Commissioner for the Fire Chief to put in for a new contract and that all the people that the City Commission hired should also put in for new contracts and raises and that it was not vetted. She believed that it was not a standard operating procedure and that it was not discussed at the Budget Workshop or Meetings and referenced political posturing and said that giving 10% increases to employees without any evaluations was wrong. She also said that those employees were hired and fired at the will of the City Commission and believed that they should have annual contracts and that they should be reviewed annually before making any raises. She also explained that had this Item been discussed at their Budget Meeting, then she would probably have voted for it but not how it was currently presented, especially without information. She emphasized that both City Clerk Johnson and Fire Chief Lorenzo were both doing a fantastic job. She also indicated that when the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) disbanded, the Assistant City Manager and the City Manager would be applying for a CRA stipend. She apologized that she could not vote for this Item. She was aware that the City was looking into doing a comparative salary on all the employees to ensure that Margate was competitive with neighboring cities. She advised that this Item should be brought up next year when they had the salaries available for staff members.

COMMISSIONER ARSERIO explained that the City had top talent and that they wanted to ensure that they retained employees, whether it was receiving bonuses or parental leave. He said that if they did not remain competitive with other cities, they were going to see employees leave and that he was all about paying equal to what cities of a similar size were paying. He said that although the CRA would sunset, the responsibilities would still be there and that they would be in the midst of a downtown development. He thought that if they did not keep that stipend, those staff members would probably leave where it could be difficult to find replacements at that current salary and also referenced the new Chief of Police's salary. He indicated that currently, the salaries suited those positions, that Margate was one of the few full serviced cities and the responsibilities that they have were much greater than many other City Managers and Department heads.

COMMISSIONER CAGGIANO referenced that there was no respect for not putting this Item into the budget where it could have been discussed. He concurred with Commissioner Simone's comments and that they received no information that this Item was going to be placed prior to today and that they should have received this in advance.

Discussion ensued.

CITY MANAGER CURTIS expressed that this discussion was very uncomfortable for everybody including the Directors that were present. He said that the staff put this together which was appropriate to come before the City Commission. He indicated that the only way that an amendment could be made was for that mechanism to be utilized at a City Commission meeting.

Discussion ensued.

JULI VAN DER MEULEN commented on the conduct displayed and that they were embarrassing the people who were receiving the raise. She advised that Human Resources needed to be present to support the City Commission.

MS. FELLOWS commented on the pending salaries, COLA increases and severance packages.

Discussion ensued.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Commissioner Caggiano, Commissioner Arserio and Mayor Ruzzano

No: 1 - Commissioner Simone

Absent: 1 - Vice Mayor Schwartz

7) ORDINANCE(S) - SECOND READING

- A.** [ID 2024-301](#) ORDINANCE - AMENDING CHAPTER 33 - POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT; OFFENSES AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS, ARTICLE 1- OFFENSES, MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS, ADDING NEW SECTION 33-34 PUBLIC CAMPING OR SLEEPING PROHIBITED; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

CITY ATTORNEY TOLCES provided a detailed background on this Ordinance and explained that it was a continuation from the last City Commission meeting so that they could review the proposed BC Ordinance. He said that in this revised version of the Ordinance, they included the process for a resident to file a complaint with the City which was stipulated on page 6 starting on line 13.

MAYOR RUZZANO advised that it was not something to hurt the homeless people but it was to cover the City. He expressed that they should be courteous if they see someone going through rough times.

A motion was made by Commission Caggiano, seconded by Commissioner Arserio, that this Ordinance, Second Reading, should be approved.

MARGI PATTIN sought information on the City's plan for their homeless issue and was awaiting an update from the City Manager's office.

MAYOR RUZZANO indicated that there was not an answer for the homeless system and that they should assess what other cities were doing but that it would not be possible to house them all but he would welcome suggestions.

MS. PATTIN said that they have nine homeless families in their program at the hotel, two disabled seniors and one veteran, a couple of which, they have housed for four – six months. She said that the Mayor of Plantation was considering putting a housing facility in a church parking lot. She said that there were a lot of options where she already highlighted that Tamarac had purchased beds and that the City of Pompano had a designated homeless outreach specialist that was hired by their city. She referenced pay raises and suggested that they could utilize some of that money into hiring an external homeless outreach specialist for the City.

MAYOR RUZZANO said that they would definitely look into it.

Discussion ensued.

MS. FELLOWS suggested that some of the City staff needed to visit the people at the hotel and recommended an outreach program in Margate. She explained that she had met a blind gentleman whose house was condemned and that he was relocated to that hotel with the assistance of Ms. Pattin.

JULIE JONES credited Ms. Beracha for introducing her to feeding the homeless and said that they needed to do something to help them.

LAUREN BERACHA expressed her sadness on seeing people homeless on the streets and at some centers and highlighted those that had been outpriced from their homes due to high insurance, rent and medical costs.

NICOLE COLLINS questioned what would happen to the people living in Laurels and anticipated that they would be made homeless. She expressed that she would dedicate a month's worth of volunteering to work out a solution for this problem.

COMMISSIONER ARSERIO explained that the Ordinance derived from Florida State Governor DeSantis and believed it was a political motive without offering a solution. He informed that it was both a State and County issue and that BC should find a way to work it out. He advised that the City was not going to arrest anyone and that Broward Sheriff Office (BSO) Tony said that he would do likewise. He would love to help but suggested that cities and BC officials would have to come together and brainstorm as if Margate did not comply, they could face litigation. He forewarned that whilst he wanted to help the homeless, he did not want to encourage others from other cities congregating on Margate.

The motion carried as follows:

Yes: 4 - Commissioner Caggiano, Commissioner Simone, Commissioner Arserio and Mayor Ruzzano

Absent: 1 - Vice Mayor Schwartz

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:33pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Transcribed by Salene E. Edwards

Jennifer M. Johnson, City Clerk

Date: _____

PLEASE NOTE:

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Commission with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, the person will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Anyone desiring a verbatim transcript shall have the responsibility, at his/her own expense, to arrange for the transcript.

[Unified Land Development Code – Section 40.300(C)] Any representation made before any City Board, any Administrative Board, or the City Commission in the application for a variance, special exception, conditional use or request for any other permit shall be deemed a condition of the granting of the permit. Should any representation be false or should said representation not be continued as represented, same shall be deemed a violation of the permit and a violation of this section.

Any person with a disability requiring auxiliary aids and services for this meeting may call the City Clerk's office at (954) 972-6454 with their request at least two business days prior to the meeting date.

One or more members of the City of Margate Boards may be in attendance and may participate at the meeting.

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- A copy of the Agenda for this Meeting is posted on www.MargateFL.com and on the main bulletin board outside City Hall located at 5790 Margate Blvd, Margate, FL 33063.

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