



City of Margate

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

Meeting Minutes Regular City Commission Meeting

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

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

Wednesday, July 2, 2025

6:30 PM

Commission Chambers and Zoom.us

Webinar ID: 845 7789 6510

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84577896510>

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Commissioner Tommy Ruzzano, Commissioner Anthony N. Caggiano, Commissioner Joanne Simone, Vice Mayor Antonio V. Arserio and Mayor Arlene R. Schwartz

MOMENT OF SILENCE

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

6) PUBLIC HEARING(S)

Item 6) A. ID 2025-171 was heard before Item 1) Presentation(s).

- A.** [ID 2025-171](#) PUBLIC HEARING AND RESOLUTION - RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF FIRE RESCUE SERVICES, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS IN THE CITY OF MARGATE, FLORIDA; REIMPOSING FIRE RESCUE ASSESSMENTS AGAINST ASSESSED PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE CITY OF MARGATE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2025; APPROVING THE RATE OF ASSESSMENT; APPROVING THE ASSESSMENT ROLL; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

PUBLIC HEARING TIME OF 6:30 P.M.

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

CITY MANAGER, CALE CURTIS, provided explanation on how the Fire Assessment rate was set. He advised that last June, the City Commission set the maximum rate so that it could be discussed this evening.

VICE MAYOR, ANTONIO V. ARSERIO, requested sight of the staff's presentation before making comment. He explained to the residents that it was not a new bill and that it did not mean they would raise it to the maximum.

CITY MANAGER CURTIS informed that there was no staff presentation and that their rate consultant was on Zoom who was available for questions. He informed that both the Fire Department's services along with every City service had increases in costs each year which had remained at the same rate for the eight years and he recommended incremental increases.

VICE MAYOR ARSERIO explained that since the last City Commission meeting, he received a lot of support for his suggestion for an incremental increase. He did not agree raising it to the maximum or to apply any significant increase and forewarned that the City paid for this one way or another as they subsidized it. He referenced forthcoming development and questioned whether the City was going to contribute to the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and if so, could Margate cut back on some of that revenue. He also forewarned the residents that the fees would eventually increase over time and suggested that the City should either leave it or raise it by a small amount and do a \$5 incremental increase which would eventually accumulate the revenue the City would require each year, as opposed to a big increase.

COMMISSIONER TOMMY RUZZANO thanked the residents for attending and said that when this Item was last discussed, he was the only City Commissioner who made a motion not to increase it and he did not receive a second but hoped that he would receive more support this evening. He explained that he did not agree with this tax and believed that the City had money in their budget. He also referenced future development and said that raising the tax was a bad signal to the residents.

CITY MANAGER CURTIS explained that the \$300 that the residents paid fell short of the full fire services amount of approximately \$3,000,000. He wanted the residents to be reassured that there was a level of confidence and that this City Commission was very fiscally responsible.

MAYOR, ARLENE R. SCHWARTZ, asked for an illustration to be provided and highlighted that there were negotiations with the Fire Department pertaining to their contractual hours. She referenced that the City would need to recruit for more staff and said that the shortfall had to come from somewhere.

Discussion ensued.

A motion to amend was made by Vice Mayor Arserio, seconded by Commissioner Simone, that this Resolution, should be kept at \$300.

COMMISSIONER ANTHONY N. CAGGIANO explained that the bill had not been raised in seven years and questioned that in general, what had not increased during that the period. He said that if they raised it to \$352, it would be a dollar per week to maintain the services the way they were. He said that he always heard that the City needed to give their first responders what they required which he believed was more money. He did not agree to lower the rate as the City was already subsidizing every penny under \$373. He

reiterated his recommendation of \$1 per week, with a \$5 increase every year thereafter which he believed was the right thing to do.

COMMISSIONER RUZZANO said that the City's revenue had increased every year in the last 12 years.

Discussion ensued.

The motion to amend carried as follows:

Yes: 4 - Commissioner Ruzzano, Commissioner Simone, Vice Mayor Arserio and Mayor Schwartz

No: 1 - Commissioner Caggiano

MAYOR SCHWARTZ, provided instructions on how to submit public comments for this Item.

DONNA L. FELLOWS, 6108 NW 9TH COURT, had mixed views on whether this rate should be increased and said that the first responders did a good job in Margate. She also discussed the Margate Rescue emergency service being transported to the hospital and referenced it was free in comparison to other cities.

TRACY VAN WINKLE, was not opposed to \$5 per year increase. She agreed with Ms. Fellows' comments pertaining to Margate Rescue emergency service.

STACY L. ANGIER, 1913 NW 79 TER, said she was a 50 year resident of Margate and discussed residents who were on fixed incomes who needed to budget. She advised the City to do the best with their budget.

MARGATE RESIDENT, discussed that his insurance had increased 200% in the last two years as well as rising general costs. He said that the City wasted money, it was overspending and referenced the Police vehicles as an example.

MARGATE RESIDENT, MINDY LEE, questioned why Margate was acquiring more property when they had not developed the ones that they had purchased in the last 20 years.

MARGATE RESIDENT, LAUREN BERACHA, forewarned the difficulties if this Item increased.

Discussion ensued including funds going to the CRA.

The original motion with amendment carried by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Ruzzano, Commissioner Caggiano, Commissioner Simone, Vice Mayor Arserio and Mayor Schwartz

1) PRESENTATION(S)

Item 1) A. ID 2025-168 was heard after Item 6) A. ID 2025-171 Public Hearing(s).

A. [ID 2025-168](#) LEGISLATIVE UPDATE BY STATE REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTINE HUNSCHOFSKY, DISTRICT 95

SENATOR TINA SCOTT POLSKY introduced herself.

DISTRICT 96 – FLORIDA STATE REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTINE HUNSCHOFSKY introduced herself.

SENATOR POLSKY advised that both her and Florida State Representative Hunchofsky were their Margate representatives and that they met 60 days per year in Tallahassee to pass all the State laws and pass the budget. She explained that they had just returned from an extended session in Tallahassee and advised that it took longer this year as they could not agree on a budget. She explained that they called it a steer budget with a cutback on approximately \$115,000,000,000. She believed that they were putting too much money away from services into reserve funds and Florida ranked low in comparison to other parts of the United States. She explained that two important projects which were intended for stormwater infrastructure and for wastewater rehabilitation for the City of Margate were vetoed by State Governor Ronald DeSantis. She advised that the State government did nothing on property insurance this year and she commended Florida State Representative Hunschofsky for working on a pilot program for condos pertaining to mitigation credits and grants which would help strengthen their home and was successful in doing that. She indicated that election laws change frequently and informed that you had to re-register every two years to vote by mail. She also provided updates on ballots and petitions and informed that the hunting and fishing sales tax holiday now includes no taxes on firearms or ammunition for three and a half months.

DISTRICT 96 – FLORIDA STATE REPRESENTATIVE HUNSCHOFSKY said that many people in the State did not serve in local government. She also discussed that there was a bill this year to sunset the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) and have it controlled at State level which would have removed the power from local authorities running the same and she commended City Manager Curtis. She expressed that it was very important that she communicated frequently with Margate and other local authorities due to the laws as it was really difficult to see all the different levels of government in Tallahassee. She advised that the Speaker appointed her to the Property Tax Select Committee and that the State wanted to put something on the ballot regarding property taxes. She highlighted that once per month, she and Senator Polsky hosted a Florida Licensing on Wheels (FLOW) event and advised that if the residents needed to get their driving licenses renewed, they should contact their offices where they could assist them in obtaining an appointment and reminded that the procedure would change next year when Broward County's Tax Collector's office would be taking care of driving licenses. She advised that if the public had any issues with any State agencies such as unemployment or Medicaid issues, they could make contact with their offices as they were there to help. She thanked the City for constantly working with her team and keeping them abreast of developments in order to serve the residents of Margate. She advised that from July 1st, the hurricane holiday sales tax, which had changed its name, had been removed from batteries and smoke detectors and that she was quite happy to provide an itemized list via email.

COMMISSIONER RUZZANO said they both did a great job and congratulated Florida State Representative Hunchofsky on her board appointment. He spoke of an ongoing

issue with his insurance company. He asked if the representatives could ask for a cap on insurance and referenced 3%.

DISTRICT 96 – FLORIDA STATE REPRESENTATIVE HUNSCHOFSKY explained that there have been amendments on insurance in past years but none of those passed.

Discussion ensued on insurance.

Meeting went into Recess.

Meeting Reconvened.

2) PUBLIC DISCUSSION

MAYOR SCHWARTZ, provided instructions on how to submit a Public Discussion.

PHILLIP J. CRANDALL read a statement seeking more support for Margate's softball.

MARGATE RESIDENT, AMBER M. ANDERSON, discussed softball.

STEVE STROUSE highlighted a meter project which took place in his community. He alleged that this caused leaks and informed that it resulted in costing the residents money and asked for a solution.

MAYOR SCHWARTZ questioned Mr. Strouse and advised him to discuss it with City Manager Curtis.

Discussion ensued.

MARGATE RESIDENT, DONNA L. FELLOWS, asked City Manager Curtis whether the fair had been paid as of today.

CITY MANAGER CURTIS said no.

Discussion ensued on the outstanding balance from the Fair's promoter.

INVERNESS RESIDENT, was present on behalf of longtime Margate resident, Mary A. Orfino, who sent the City an email pertaining to a parking fine. He discussed the parking issues in her neighborhood and asked for the fines to stop and for Ms. Orfino's ticket to be suspended. He handed paperwork to City Clerk Johnson.

TRACY VAN WINKLE, said that Ms. Orfino should pay the fine. She alleged that several of Margate's Police Officers had left in the last 60 months.

MARGATE RESIDENT, alleged that there was a lack of notice on the ticketing for parking and sought a better understanding of the same.

MS. MEE questioned whether the City Commission addressed public concerns. She asked for Ms. Van Winkle's comments to be addressed.

3) COMMISSION COMMENTS

COMMISSIONER RUZZANO, informed that he did try to address comments. He referenced the Coyotes and said that they were doing an incredible job. He explained that they were in a recovery phase as there was a travel program in their league which

they got burnt by. He suggested that they could do a Summer event and partner with the City with their one team and discuss it with Parks and Recreation or the City Manager. He said that he saw the parking issue this morning and said that they probably could do something with people who lived in the community where there was a playground and a parking lot to give them a pass where they could park overnight. He indicated that a parking problem could be fixed if there was a house with five vehicles and some of them were parked on grass and suggested that if there was a vacant playground across the street, they could possibly pay and maybe get a pass which would bring in a little revenue to the City.

MAYOR SCHWARTZ said that in her neighborhood, there were large electronic signs forewarning about forthcoming parking restrictions.

COMMISSIONER RUZZANO recommended that they should start enforcing a warning first as once it went into effect, the City Commission had already instructed the City Manager that they did not want cars all over the grass and property. He said that the Police Officers followed the money as surrounding cities were paying more and referenced that West Palm Beach was paying big money for firefighters. He encouraged everyone to come out for the 4th of July Extravaganza. He and City Manager Curtis recently met with representatives of the Broward County Public Schools (BCPS). He was informed that they were going to look at the enrollment as due to a decline, BCPS would consider school closures and to make revenue, they wanted to get into the affordable housing.

MAYOR SCHWARTZ highlighted BCPS's administrative issues at last month's Mayor's roundtable meeting in Coconut Creek.

Discussion ensued.

COMMISSIONER CAGGIANO, referenced the Resolution pertaining to a settlement offer with the contractor for Fire Station 58 which was discussed at the last City Commission meeting. He explained that after speaking extensively with lawyers, he wanted to bring it back for settlement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Caggiano, seconded by Mayor Schwartz, to reconsider bringing back the Resolution pertaining to the Construction Contract, Bid No. 2020-014.

MAYOR SCHWARTZ said that the amount was less than what they would have offered the Contractor and it did not pay to win in Court as the legal expenses would be double or triple that amount. She said that the right reason would be to take the Contractor to Court but it would be a terrible outcome for the taxpayer. She believed that they should cut their losses as it was not worth to win the battle and to lose the war.

CITY ATTORNEY, DAVID N. TOLCES, explained that this Item would need to be placed on the next Agenda and advised what the City Commission could currently discuss. He said that his law partner would be present at that meeting to answer any questions and said that the City could expend up to \$500,000.

COMMISSIONER RUZZANO was totally against bringing back this Resolution. He

stated that the Contractor went past the date of completion and that they owed the City money.

Discussion ensued.

The motion carried by the following vote:

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

No: 2 - Commissioner Ruzzano and Vice Mayor Arserio

CITY ATTORNEY TOLCES advised that this Resolution will be brought back on July 9th meeting Agenda.

COMMISSIONER CAGGIANO hoped that everybody had a safe and happy Summer.

COMMISSIONER, JOANNE SIMONE, asked the residents to please be mindful and considerate of their neighbors if they were setting off fireworks. She highlighted Florida's Tax-Free Back-to-School 2025. She looked forward to seeing the public at the 4th of July Extravaganza and wished them an enjoyable holiday.

VICE MAYOR ARSERIO, looked forward to the 4th of July Extravaganza. He confirmed that the Police vehicles were \$80,000 which were leased and that in many cases, the City made money selling them back for a profit. He spoke about the CRA funds which could only be used for certain reasons in a certain area and that the land acquisition purchases were within that realm which was a separate entity from the City. He referenced the sports program and said that he was always open to new ideas and any suggestions could be forwarded to Parks and Recreation. He said that he received an email pertaining to forming a league in multiple cities which he forwarded to the Parks and Recreation Director Jones for review. He advised that a non-partisan law, effective July 1st, was unanimously passed in Tallahassee prohibiting cities from banning turf. He did not vote to have stricter parking enforcements and at the last City Commission meeting, he said that he was the only City Commissioner to vote no and believed in progressive changes. He explained that one of his suggestions was to implement a voucher or permit program which would allow Margate residents to park as many recreational vehicles (RV), boats or campers on their property. He did not agree with residents allowing others outside of the City to use their facilities for parking. He hoped that Commissioner Ruzzano would vote no on the parking Item when it was presented to the City Commission due to the restrictions that it imposed.

COMMISSIONER RUZZANO responded to Vice Mayor Arserio but said that the issue here was that there were cars that had nowhere to park. He explained that the City was trying to improve on property value and parking on grass was one of the biggest decreases that Margate had.

VICE MAYOR ARSERIO said that he was a fan of Commissioner Ruzzano's suggestion but anticipated that banning parking on the grass would be a big problem down the road. He said that although it was not a good look for cars to be parked on the grass, he questioned what was the alternative.

Discussion ensued.

CITY MANAGER CURTIS informed that the ban on parking on the grass code change was put before Planning and Zoning last night and the board recommended approval and then it would be presented before the City Commission at the next meeting for consideration and further discussion.

Discussion ensued.

MAYOR SCHWARTZ said that she always talked about educating and not fining people as opposed to after the fact when they had been ticketed. She addressed the remark about purchasing property and advised that they had hired somebody to build a city center for Margate.

Discussion ensued on the downtown.

CITY MANAGER CURTIS said that the City's firework display would still continue; rain or shine.

4) CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

CITY MANAGER CURTIS looked forward to another successful 4th of July celebration.

CITY ATTORNEY TOLCES indicated that his practice was reviewing other bills as well as the legislation that Governor DeSantis signed and with respect to the synthetic turf, the Department of Environmental Protection had to adopt the rules first before any prohibition or regulations could go into effect. He confirmed that his team reviewed all of the legal changes that were made and would ensure that the City updated their codes. He advised that there was another bill that was signed by Governor DeSantis that impacted residential recovery facilities and required that cities must have certain procedures in place.

Discussion ensued.

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 2025-150](#) MOTION - APPROVAL OF CITY COMMISSION MINUTES: MAY 21, 2025 REGULAR CITY COMMISSION MEETING AND JUNE 4, 2025 REGULAR CITY COMMISSION MEETING

APPROVED

- B. [ID 2025-176](#) A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MARGATE, FLORIDA AWARING BID NO. 2025-009 - FURNISH AND INSTALL (6) HVAC SYSTEMS TO THINKING ON MY WORLD, INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$82,570.00, INCLUSIVE OF CONTINGENCIES; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

APPROVED

Approval of the Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Commissioner Simone, seconded by Commissioner Caggiano, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Absent: 1 - Vice Mayor Arserio

At approximately 8:36pm, Vice Mayor Arserio said that he stepped out of the meeting during the Consent Agenda and that he voted yes for those two Consent Agenda items.

7) RESOLUTION(S)

- A. [ID 2025-160](#) A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF MARGATE, FLORIDA, DESIGNATING A VOTING DELEGATE AND AN ALTERNATE FOR THE FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES' 99TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE BEING HELD IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA FROM AUGUST 14-16, 2025, PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

Discussion ensued.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Arserio, seconded by Commissioner Caggiano, to insert the name, Arlene R. Schwartz as the Delegate and Anthony N. Caggiano as the Alternative. This carried as follows:

Yes: 5 - Commissioner Ruzzano, Commissioner Caggiano, Commissioner Simone, Vice Mayor Arserio and Mayor Schwartz

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.

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.

Members of the public are invited to view this meeting through Zoom using Webinar ID: 845 7789 6510 or can listen via telephone by calling one of the following phone numbers: US: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 929 205 6099.

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