

**SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING**  
**BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING**  
**CITY OF MARGATE, FLORIDA**

Thursday, September 4, 1997  
7:30 p.m.

**City Commission Present**

Mayor Mitch Anton  
Vice Mayor Arthur J. Bross  
Commissioner Arlene Schwartz  
Commissioner Frank Talerico  
Commissioner Joseph Varsallone

**Also Present**

City Manager Leonard B. Golub  
City Attorney Eugene M. Steinfeld  
City Clerk Debra Dore

First Budget Public Hearing.

All attendees were greeted at the first public hearing concerning the City of Margate's budget. The public was encouraged to ask questions but if the questions were duplicated through Agenda items, then the question will be deferred until that particular subject matter is discussed during the meeting.

Further explanation was provided and that the public were allowed to speak for a approximately of 2 minutes and the discussion would continue for no longer than 10 minutes.

A second public hearing would take place in the near future.

**PROPERTY TAXES**

John V., who resides at 6830 US 34<sup>th</sup> Street in Margate asked why his property tax had practically tripled for the following year and that he was concerned about the significant increase.

The Commission said that they could not comment about the same unless they had had sight of the letter.

They said it was difficult to explain this increase and the Commission explained that it could be due to other factors such as to cover the increase in fees for the school board, the hospital district, the store board management, etc.

The Commission asked when John V. bought his property and he said that he bought it almost 2 years ago.

The Commission also asked what kind of bill did John V. receive last year and whether the preliminary tax bill was apportioned. They also asked whether the bill contained the full valuation of the property.

After reviewing the letter, the Commission explained that they were waiting for a year to receive the full evaluation of the property. They said this is why the first bill was for \$1,211 which was only a percentage and the current year increased to \$5,200 as they received the full evaluation.

It was suggested that John V. also show his bill to the City Manager Golub.

City Manager Golub asked whether John V. lived over by Coral Bay, part of the CBD and whether he was familiar with that. John V. said that he lived near the Carolinas to the West of Sample Road.

They asked what month he moved into his house last year.

John V. said that he moved in April 1996.

Explanation was provided that in November 1996, he only received part of the bill whereas this year, John V. received the full bill.

John V. said that he filed for Homestead in 1997/98.

It resulted that John V. was not properly assessed.

The Commission suggested that John V. could call the Tax Assessors office the following day for them to explain this procedure in more detail. The Commission also provided John V. with the office telephone number.

The Commission also informed John V. that the City of Margate did not undertake the value of the property and this was processed by the property appraiser in Broward County.

## **SECOND PART OF AGENDA**

Frank V. asked that when they get to the second part of the Agenda, was the public able to speak on that matter.

The Commission explained that at the public hearing, anyone could speak on budget items.

## **STATEMENTS**

A member of the public (no name or address provided) thought the budget was a disgrace. He explained that they had a bond to assess their roads and other spending and they asked the residents for a \$5 million bond and since that has happened, the budget has not reflected anything in terms of infrastructure repair. He said that the heads of departments were commanding high salaries. He said that the City Manager was responsible for this.

He also went on to explain that the City Manager spent \$500K from his third year at the CRA and that there is nothing to show for it. He believes that eventually, it will freeze the property value and 9% of the business community and the City has no plan of where they are going to get new revenue from after they do this.

The Commission explained there were three unions that management has to deal with.

These three provisions all have new contracts; one of which has been rectified and the other two currently undergoing negotiations. Until the contract issue has been resolved, it is difficult to indicate at this stage what the salaries would be.

Further, the salaries are set by the schedule and union negotiations in accordance with their contracts. It was suggested that those who have concerns with how the budget is spent, they should contact other cities within Broward to see how much they command. The Commission also said that if they did not pay a decent salary, then people would move to other towns to work.

In 1991, they reviewed their process and that the City of Margate will become the training ground for other cities. The Commission said that they have to be competitive to get people to work here.

It was suggested that when you compare the cost of living in this city to a neighboring city to the North and to the West, it is approximately \$225 cheaper to live in this city. The other cities may charge additional assessments which the City of Margate would not normally charge for.

The Commission also said that if you compare the value of a house in Margate to that in Coral Springs, the cost of living is exactly the same.

The Commission disputes that they have overpaid and suggests that they refer to the survey.

One of the Commission members explained that he appreciated the concerns about how the budget is spent and gave an explanation on what should be retained. He also said that he had recommendations and justifications for each of them.

**1) Under \$60,000 in the budget for road improvements.**

He agrees that the sidewalks in the city are in need of repair. He said that there would not be enough money in the budget to work on this within the next 10 – 20 years but suggested that they at least get the work started.

The original bond recommendation, which was defeated due to the fact that there were five items with a mandate of over \$10 million. The public felt that the other four items were more essential and would not cost as much money. People were more attuned to the money being spent on the Police and fire departments as well as recreation.

They felt that the estimated cost of getting the roads repaired of \$4.5 million was a lot of money to spend.

It was also suggested that in the March or local elections, they could put out a ballot on this.

He did not want to spend \$160K as potentially, there could be a bond issue for the following year and we would have to pay those costs. He agrees that it is needed but believes this resource should be spent elsewhere on another project.

He said that he was concerned about slips and falls from sidewalks which were not repaired but said that any accidents would be covered by insurance to the value of \$25K. There have been 15 slip and falls in the last five years with seven cases currently opened. The damages paid for the five cases were \$42K in total.

- 2) A lease for a new car would be around \$25K which is \$6K per year and savings maybe \$19K. Although this is in contingency, this amount would not affect the budget.
- 3) In the last five to six years, there has been a request for new cars for some City Managers. Further, we have only provided the Police with half of the cars they have requested. 30 cars were requested but his recommendation would be for 25.
- 4) Questioning the amount of new officers to be recruited.
- 5) Recruitment.

He believes that some of the jobs titles should be redundant as some of these jobs could be completed by the department head. He explained that it would take too long for him to go into each job title and job description but as an example, he cannot justify hiring a Deputy Senior Manager.

Currently, there is a temporary floater spending her time between HR and the Finance Department. He would like to hire the floater on a permanent basis for her to work in HR but also recruit a temp floater to work in other departments. A float typist would cost around \$13.5K.

To sum up, he said for these four areas that he would recommend an estimate of around \$297K.

#### **FEEDBACK AND QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The Commission asked whether there were any questions from the floor concerning the proposed budgets.

A member of the public (no name or address provided) asked what percentage of the work would be completed and it was suggested 10%. Due to changes in the law, it is detrimental for the handicap ramps to be completed. A member of the public (no name or address provided) asked that the handicapped ramps should have been completed by January 1995 and questioned why this was not carried out.

Concerns were expressed as to why the sidewalks were still outstanding as the condition, especially those by a tree root had worsened.

There were further concerns that the Police Department would have to change 50 cars at least every three years and thereafter, change them every five years. The Commission agreed that they were not going to change the police cars every year.

The Commission said that they could not continue to retain cars in excess of 100K mileage as the financial upkeep to maintain them were proving costly.

### **SIDEWALKS**

Someone asked why the sidewalks were being grinded rather than repaired but the Commission said that this was a faster process. However, those paving slabs which had been uplifted by a tree have been repaired.

A member of the Commission gave further explanation as to the procedure of repairing the sidewalk as a number of concerns and queries were raised on this matter. The contractors would cut or kill the tree roots by the property line and replace the slabs.

A member of the public (no name or address provided) wanted to know what the process was with the concrete slabs and suggested that the damaged ones should, in fact, be replaced as opposed to repaired as the problem would only reoccur.

They also did not agree with the claims process in terms of the slips and trips with a faulty paving slab. He said that paying out excess damages in this respect was not the best way of dealing with this problem and that the resources could be spent elsewhere.

A member of the public (no name or address provided) explained that one of his neighbors was repairing his own sidewalk due to the city's lackluster approach in this respect.

Another question was asked whether we currently have enough budget to finance a further crew/contractor to carry out the repairs of the sidewalks and cars.

**MOTION:** Happy to move on.

### **CARS**

Someone raised the question that it is not cost effective to spend around \$3K on repairing and refurbishing a car and wanted further explanation as to the breakdown on these costs. The Commission explained that the average cost of refurbishing a vehicle would be \$300 - \$400.

The Commission said that they are reviewing their policy in this respect as there are a few cars which are not used.

A question was raised as to how much 40 cars would generate at an auction and the Commission said that they have up to 18 cars including trucks available for auction.

A member of the public (no name or address provided) asked in respect of the other vehicles and the Commission informed them that they are currently in service.

A member of the public (no name or address provided) stated that upon reviewing the current list, there are only around 6 cars in bad condition.

A member of the Commission suggested that it is vital that they have a pool car so police officers do not have to use their own vehicles.

One person suggested to try and get rid of the cars which are not in operation as they are an eyesore. By selling these cars, this could generate further income which is greatly needed for the budget.

### **OVERTIME**

A member of the public (no name or address provided) asked why last year, they commissioned 2,700 hours through to June in overtime. He explained that overtime should only be granted in case of emergencies or matters which cannot be resolved during the day. He suggested that overtime should be streamlined.

### **TAX INCREASE**

One of the Commission members spoke about a recent newspaper article concerning the increase in taxes in the City of Margate. He said that the press over elaborated on the story and that there is no merit to it.

A member of the public (no name or address provided) disagreed with one of the Commission members and explained that those persons she had spoken to were complaining that they did not want another tax increase.

A member of the public (no name or address provided) disagreed with one of the Commissioners and he believed that there are areas which could be cut in reference to supplies and additional staff.

### **FLOATER**

A member of the public (no name or address provided) concurred with a suggestion about recruiting a floater but questioned why they could not retain the current services of the floater rather than also recruiting an additional secretary/clerk.

The Commission explained that the floater was only experienced in one of these areas but did not have the right qualifications to work in some of the other departments.

### **JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND RECRUITMENT**

A member of the public (no name or address provided) wanted clarification on some of the job titles and departments within the Police Department. One of the Commissioners explained the processes of those in question including the need for a Research Analysis.

A member of the public (no name or address provided) wanted to know why some positions could not be filled. It was explained that it was mainly due to poor standards and also as they were not able to pass the mandatory background check but did not believe that it was due to the salary which was on offer. Also, it was a high demanding position which could be a stress factor to some candidates.

They also had 110 candidates to fill 15 positions which is not a good average. He also said that they had changed the interview process over the years including changing the text/exam procedure for one of the positions as this proved too difficult for the potential candidates.

Further, those members of staff that the City recruited did not pass the probation period.

A question was raised why they required 12 part-time positions and what would they be required to do. It was suggested that this would provide more flexibility to those persons who may have other responsibilities (ie, childcare) and could not take on a full time role.

One of the Commissioners suggested that if they gave up recruiting for two or possibly three members of staff in the Building Division, this would save \$37.5K from the budget. He also suggested that he would like the manager to reduce staff costs by a further \$18K.

One member of the Commission expressed his concern about the salary structure and what would the position be for next year if the salary for the current year is below what it should be. It could be that they will have to ask for a bigger increase to attract the right candidates for the required positions. It was suggested that they should, in fact, start planning now for next year's budget.

One of the Commissioners believed that they could generate at least \$18K and possibly more. It was also suggested that they could possibly generate a further the \$18K by selling some of the cars which are not in use.

#### **DEPUTY CITY MANAGER (DCM)**

It was suggested that some of the City Manager's duties could either be to distribute some of his duties to his Administrative Assistant, hire a further assistant or create a new clerical/secretary position which would be a far more cost effective way as opposed to hiring a new DCM. The Commission would have to agree on whether it is feasible to hire a DCM before January/February 1.

One of the Commissions disagreed with the notation of redistributing some of the City Manager's duties as they tried this with another position to reduce costs and it proved unsuccessful. The Commission explained that some of his co-workers workloads are already at full capacity and it is impossible for them to take on additional duties.

Discussions took place as to whether a DCM was commissioned last year but this position was not budgeted for.

#### **LAW ENFORCEMENT TRUST FUNDS MONEY**

A member of the public (no name or address provided) wanted to know what they did with this money. It was explained by the Commission that this money could only be used for items which are not already classified as a budgeted item and examples were provided. For example, monies from this fund could not be put towards buying a new police vehicle as there is already a separate budget for this purpose.

#### **CHILDCARE**

Barry Miller from Family Central (in North Lauderdale) explained that about 100 of the children are from the City of Margate and wanted to thank everyone for their support for their assistance in providing a satisfactory service.

## **FIREMEN**

A member of the public (no name or address provided) wanted further clarification on staffing levels on the Fire Department. One of the Commissioner said that there are seven vacant positions and are currently unfilled.

## **BUDGET WORKSHOP**

One of the Commissioners explained that for years, drastic funds were cut from the yearly budget and it was decided to set up a Budget Workshop. It would enable the outcome of the suggested budget cuts to be monitored and processed through this a better functional system.

There was concern that the money from the contingency would not be enough to cover some of the expenditure outlined above. One of the Commissioners indicated that those figures were based on the pay plan the City drew up at the executive session.

**MOTION:** Make changes to the budget to \$36K. Removal of the surveillance van of \$15K and unmarked vehicles for a total of \$16K. Two public work laborers at \$30K but \$7.5K in overheads (it is up to the Public Works to agree to this). \$80K+ \$7.5K in overheads. \$18K to be removed from contingency during replacements of Police cars that they decide to sell.

**SECOND PART OF MOTION:** We hire the DCM as of March 1. Second person agreed.

**AMENDMENT:** Mayor Anton requested not to provide funds for a DCM position. To find two positions, one to elevate the current position of the Administrative Assistant and hire an additional clerk/typist in that department as well as hiring a further clerk/typist which they previously diminished from their budget. That would take at least \$13K off the budget. Would agree to increase the Administrative Assistant's salary to incorporate the additional duties.

**SECOND AMENDMENT:** The sum of \$31K is from 5 months of not funding a position.

Vice Mayor Bross agreed with the DCM position effective March 1, 1998.

One of the Commissioners said that they do not require any further typing assistance as Jan does an excellent job of screening calls, calendar management and being able to answer some queries. They require someone who can make departmental decisions which he believes that the Administrative Assistant would not be able to do as she does not have the leadership expertise.

Another Commissioner agreed and said that the job description would not be appropriate for the Administrative Assistant to take on. She further stated that most departments and organizations have middle management. She therefore expressed that recruiting a DCM would be detrimental to the department.

Further discussions took place on the appointment of recruiting a DCM as there were disagreements from both sides if there are any merits in doing so.



Another concern was that if appropriate was not provided for further recruitment, the workforce will be put under pressure to perform additional duties and therefore, this could have an impact on morale and could potentially increase the turnover of staff.

It was suggested that the funding element be deferred until March.

Another Commissioner suggested that the residents of Margate would prefer to seek improvements in the Fire Department rather than recruit DCM and further administrative staff.

**AMENDMENT:** To exchange the funding for the Fire Department (further recruitment) vs. the road crew.

It was suggested that the Fire Department do not need further personnel at this moment as it will just create a surplus in the fund balance and it is not necessary.

For recruitment purposes within the Fire Department, the paperwork, the practical part together with the background checks could potentially take an additional 60 – 90 days for the hiring process. It is impossible for the Fire Station to be completed by April 1 and July 1998 would be a more realistic completion date.

It was suggested that it could take at least 8 or 9 months for the Fire Station to be constructed.

**AMENDMENT:** Concerns on the length of time for the Fire Station to be constructed could cause liability issues. Further, a serious accident could wipe out the \$160K put aside for constructing the Fire Station.

**AMENDMENT:** We hire the sidewalk crew at Public Works and the seven additional firemen as of February 1, 1988. Second agreement to this.

It was suggested that they could trade in one of the Police cars and put this expenditure to either public funds or to the Fire Department.

The budget could be balanced if they reduced contingency by \$18K. The rest of the breakdown would be:

\$23.3K from the Crime Scene Technician;

\$24.2K for the Crime analyst;

\$12K will be included to cover the overhead of those two positions;

\$15K for the surveillance vehicle;

\$15K for unmarked vehicle;

\$ DCM position with a difference of March 1 hiring date.

A savings of \$37.5K

A question was raised of whether a vote needed to be casted on the Amendments:

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioner Schwartz AYE, Commissioner Varsallone AYE, Commissioner Talerico AYE, Vice Mayor Bross AYE and Mayor Anton NO.

Comments were sought from the public concerning the budget.

A member of the public (no name or address provided) said that she wants the City of Margate to be the best it can be. However, every year the taxes, insurance and school board increase. She expressed that she would rather pay the increase in taxes to have the services outlined above and is unhappy that each year, some services have been cut or decreased due to a lack of funding.

A member of the Commission agreed with her comments but explained that many of the residents would complain if there was a significant increase in taxes.

A member of the public (no name or address provided) said that they should seek further input from the general public before making a further decision.

He further stated that CRA money is at \$160K and does not understand why some of these funds could be cut from that budget.

He was also concerned about the longevity of staffs' salaries and further increases in the wage structure which could be decreased. He said that they should seek further funds from the EMS.

He then questioned a contract which was signed in 1985. It included renting office space at \$2K which he believes is greatly undervalued. The legal defense fund should also be reviewed.

The Commission further explained that the County is getting more litigious and therefore, there is a requirement for additional funds for our legal defense.

Another question was raised concerning the breakdown of the \$160K for the CRA.

Clarification was provided in this respect and the main reason is that the average assessment value for the City of Margate is 25<sup>th</sup> floors for single family homes in the County of Broward. For example, a house in North Lauderdale is worth \$100 more and a house in Margate would be worth \$50. Those cities have higher valuation than the City of Margate. Margate is the 25<sup>th</sup> lowest assessed average value in the County and there are two further cities lower within Broward County.

Further discussion was made again as to what other neighboring cities paid in taxes. For example, the outgoing taxes in Coral Springs is \$22.52 more than Margate. Coral Springs in comparison is \$106.17 if you include all the additional services such as water rates. Subsequently, there is sufficient justification as to why Margate should increase their taxes as they are marginally lower in comparison to other cities. Further, one of the Commissioners stated that some communities do not have a complete Fire Department, they have volunteers and therefore, the positive aspect of our services, in particular, the Fire Department is that they have immediate response times, all fire crew are equally qualified in reference of degree of knowledge and perform a good job. He stated that he could ensure Margate is an outstanding service provider.

Public hearing is now closed.

**NEXT MEETING:** September 16, 1997

**RESOLUTION:** RESOLUTION 8402 OF THE CITY OF MARGATE, FLORIDA, APPROVING PROPOSED MILLAGE RATE FOR THE CITY OF MARGATE FISCAL YEAR 1997/1998 IN THE AMOUNT OF 6.7552 MILLS PER \$1,000 OF ASSESSED VALUATION.

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioner Schwartz AYE, Commissioner Varsallone AYE, Commissioner Talerico AYE, Vice Mayor Bross AYE and Mayor Anton AYE.

**RESOLUTION:** RESOLUTION 8403 OF THE CITY OF MARGATE ADOPTING A TENTATIVE BUDGET AS AMENDED FOR THE 1997/1998 FISCAL YEAR, AND AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATION TO OPERATE ON SAID TENTATIVE BUDGET AS AMENDED PURSUANT TO FLORIDA STATUTE UNTIL ADOPTION OF FINAL BUDGET FOR SAID FISCAL YEAR.

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioner Schwartz AYE, Commissioner Varsallone AYE, Commissioner Talerico AYE, and Vice Mayor Bross AYE, Mayor Anton NO.

**RESOLUTION:** RESOLUTION 8404 OF THE CITY OF MARGATE, FLORIDA, ANNOUNCING THE PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE OF MILLAGE RATE EXCEEDING ROLL-BACK RATE BY 2.88%.

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioner Schwartz AYE, Commissioner Varsallone AYE, Commissioner Talerico AYE, Vice Mayor Bross AYE and Mayor Anton AYE.

**ORDINANCE FIRST READING:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MARGATE, FLORIDA, ADOPTING AN OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF MARGATE, FLORIDA, FOR THE PERIOD BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 1997 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 1998; PROVIDING FOR EXPENDITURES FROM THE GENERAL FUND, SPECIAL ACTIVITIES FUND, DEBT SERVICE FUND, CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND, AND ENTERPRISE FUNDS; PROVIDING FOR A MILLAGE RATE; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioner Schwartz AYE, Commissioner Varsallone AYE, Commissioner Talerico AYE, and Vice Mayor Bross AYE, Mayor Anton NO.

**ORDINANCE FIRST READING:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MARGATE, FLORIDA, AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 93-21 ESTABLISHING THE MONTHLY FEE TO BE PAID FOR THE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT UTILITY FEE TO BE INCREASED FROM \$1.75 TO \$1.79; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioner Schwartz AYE, Commissioner Varsallone NO, Commissioner Talerico AYE, and Vice Mayor Bross AYE, Mayor Anton AYE.

**ORDINANCE FIRST READING:** AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE CODE OF THE CITY OF MARGATE, FLORIDA, CHAPTER 24, WATER AND SEWERS, UTILITY DEPARTMENT, SECTION 24-71. RATES ESTABLISHED, PROVIDING FOR INCREASE IN WATER RATES FROM \$1.14 TO \$1.40 PER THOUSAND GALLONS; PROVIDING FOR INCREASE IN WATER SERVICE AVAILABILITY CHARGES (SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL TO \$5.60; MULTIPLE-METERED RESIDENTIAL TO \$4.06; COMMERCIAL, BASED ON SIZE OF

METER: 5/8" TO BE \$6.25; ¾" AND 1" TO BE \$21.50; 1 ¼" AND 1 ½" TO BE \$30.50; 1 ¾" AND 2" TO BE \$72.50; 3" TO BE \$180.00; 4" TO BE \$275.00; 6" TO BE \$365.00); PROVIDING FOR INCREASE IN THE WASTEWATER SERVICE AVAILABILITY CHARGES (SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL TO \$12.97; MULTIPLE-METERED RESIDENTIAL TO \$10.52; COMMERCIAL TO BE \$19.38); PROVIDING FOR REPEAL; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioner Schwartz AYE, Commissioner Varsallone NO, Commissioner Talerico AYE, and Vice Mayor Bross AYE, Mayor Anton AYE.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Transcribed by Salene E. Edwards via cassette

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Joseph J. Kavanagh, City Clerk

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Date