

**MINUTES OF THE
NORTHWEST COUNCIL OF ELECTED OFFICIALS MEETING**

Tuesday, January 14, 2025
12:00 Noon – 1:00 PM

La Bamba Mexican Spanish Restaurant II
5452 W Sample Road
Margate, FL 33063
(954) 978-6377

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Schwartz, City of Margate, called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. She acknowledged the Margate officials and then asked for self-introductions which were made around the room.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Sandra L. Welch	Coconut Creek
Vice Mayor Jackie M. Railey	Coconut Creek
Commissioner John A. Brodie	Coconut Creek
Mayor Scott J. Brook	Coral Springs
Vice Mayor Nancy Metayer Bowen	Coral Springs
Commissioner Joseph McHugh	Coral Springs
Mayor Veronica Edwards Phillips	Lauderdale Lakes
Commissioner Tycie Causwell	Lauderdale Lakes
Commissioner Sharon Thomas	Lauderdale Lakes
Vice Mayor Sarai "Ray" Martin	Lauderhill
Commissioner Melissa P. Dunn	Lauderhill
Mayor Arlene R. Schwartz	Margate
Vice Mayor Antonio V. Arserio	Margate
Commissioner Anthony N. Caggiano	Margate
Commissioner Tommy Ruzzano	Margate
Commissioner Joanne Simone	Margate
Vice Mayor Dee Lewis-Ricketts	North Lauderdale
Mayor Richard Walker	Parkland
Commissioner Cindy Murphy-Salomone	Parkland
Commissioner Neil Kanterman	Parkland
Deputy Mayor Neil Kerch	Sunrise
Commissioner Latoya S. Clarke	Sunrise
Commissioner Krystal Patterson	Tamarac
Commissioner Kicia Daniel	Tamarac

ALSO PRESENT:

Cale Curtis, City Manager	Margate
Larry Vignola, Assistant City Manager	Margate
Michael Palma, Police Chief	Margate
Al Banatte, Major	Margate
Roberto Lorenzo, Fire Chief	Margate
Daniel Rodriguez, Division Chief	Margate
Jennifer M. Johnson, City Clerk	Margate
Ayesha Robinson, Assistant City Clerk	Margate
Isamar Viveros, Clerk Coordinator	Margate
Patrick Garmon, IT Director	Margate
Theresa Brier	District Director
Attilio Abarca-Bodden	District Director Staff
Hazelle Rogers, County Commissioner	Broward County
Marty Cassini, Intergovernmental Affairs	Broward County
Patrice Paldino, Housing Options, Solutions and Support Division	Broward County
Mimi Louizi, County Commission Staff	Broward County
Dwight Hinkson, County Commission Staff	Broward County
John Jan, Homeless Helpline	Broward County

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the meeting minutes of December 9, 2024, meeting hosted by the City of Coral Springs.

Mayor Brook, City of Coral Springs, moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Thomas, City of Lauderdale Lakes. Mayor Schwartz, City of Margate, called for an amendment to the minutes. She stated the City of Margate does not have a Veteran's Pantry. At the last meeting, she stated the City of Margate does not charge Ad Valorem Taxes to totally disabled Veterans. She asked for the minutes to be corrected.

2. OLD BUSINESS

A. Veteran's Recognition

Mayor Brook, City of Coral Springs, spoke about the importance of recognizing our veterans. He announced he is having a "Coffee with the Mayor" event on January 22, 2025 at Coral Springs City Hall. Mayor Brook invited everyone to attend.

3. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussions with Police Chief Michael Palma, Fire Chief Roberto Lorenzo, and IT Director Patrick Garmon regarding local government challenges

Police Chief Palma and Major Banatte, City of Margate, spoke about the challenges they face in the police department with artificial intelligence (AI). Major Banatte explained how easy it is for criminals to capture voice recordings and begin the AI deception process. He remarked about how facial recognition has assisted them with some investigations.

Fire Chief Lorenzo, City of Margate, spoke about emergency vehicles and the importance of keeping them serviced. He also spoke about the importance of having one back up vehicle for each in the emergency fleet. Keeping a one-to-one ratio is critical. Chief Lorenzo stated the City of Margate is working on a five-year plan to achieve this. He remarked about the recent return of a rescue vehicle that was deployed for COVID assistance three years ago. Vice Mayor Lewis-Ricketts, City of North Lauderdale, thanked Chief Lorenzo and the City of Margate for recently lending them a rescue vehicle for an incident in her city.

IT Director Patrick Garmon, City of Margate, spoke about cyber security and the everyday risks of infiltration. He highly recommended staff training. This will allow employees to identify potential phishing risks. Mayor Schwartz, City of Margate, spoke about the training sessions held in Margate and how beneficial they were. Vice Mayor Arserio, City of Margate, thanked Mr. Garmon for implementing the email warning "This Message Is From An External Sender." Commissioner Dunn, City of Lauderdale, inquired if training should be provided to all employees or just the IT Department. Mr. Garmon responded training should be provided to all employees and elected officials so they can identify potential risks.

B. Conversation with the Broward County Commissioner Hazelle Rogers surrounding homelessness.

Broward County Commissioner Hazelle Rogers thanked Mayor Schwartz for the opportunity to speak today. She spoke about the homeless crisis in Broward County. She remarked she has staff to assist with the issue but needs the help of the elected officials in each municipality. Commissioner Rogers said she is striving for a collaboration to advance legislation.

County Commissioner Rogers introduced Marty Cassini, Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs for Broward County. Mr. Cassini spoke about his role with the county. He stated the county has grant writers that offer grant writing sessions to assist municipalities. Mr. Cassini remarked the 2025 Legislative Session has begun. They are in the process of receiving presentations from deficient agencies. Opportunities for appropriations for projects are open for large

scale projects like transportation and healthcare. The deadline is mid-February. He stated unfortunately things have been quiet on the housing/homeless topic. There have been discussions about condominiums and the inspection process, rights and responsibilities. Mr. Cassini briefly spoke about affordable housing and how there will be additional legislation relating to limiting affordable housing in certain areas. Commissioner Dunn, City of Lauderhill inquired about the county's top three lobbying efforts. Mr. Cassini responded they will be advocating for affordable housing, preemption and economic development.

Patrice Paldino, Esq., Director of Housing Options, Solutions and Supports Division (HOSS-D) spoke about HB 1365 and how it protects municipalities from being sued due to homeless issues. It only provides injunctive relief. She stated the homelessness crisis cannot be solved by the county alone. Ms. Paldino asked for assistance from all municipalities to form a collaboration and share ideas and approach HB 1365 from a humanitarian perspective. She explained how her division does not act as law enforcement. When they receive information regarding a situation with a homeless person, they send out their Street Team to assess the situation and provide resources to assist them. Ms. Paldino spoke about the implementation of Q-Alert. Q-Alert allows callers to report homeless situations. Based on the information received, it will be determined if the situation is within county lines or in a municipal jurisdiction. She remarked her team needs to know where to route calls for municipalities. Ms. Paldino encouraged municipalities to be a part of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). This system acts as a registration database. You can see information about a homeless person and what type of services they have received. A question was asked – what if they do not want services. Ms. Paldino responded we cannot force them to accept our services. She stated a lot of times it takes continued engagement to build trust. Ms. Paldino explained the connection between HOSS-D and the County Task Force. HOSS-D is a division of the county. It receives general funds and HUD dollars to manage the continuum of care. The Task Force provides street outreach when an alert is received through Q-Alert or HMIS. She remarked that Q-Alert received 63 homelessness complaints since October 1st. Four were for the county and 59 were routed to municipalities. Vice Mayor Arserio, City of Margate, stated the homeless issue is a county and state problem. Ms. Paldino spoke about the shelters they work with and how they are at maximum capacity. She also spoke about a pilot program that is using a recently purchased Days Inn on Broward Blvd. to be used as a housing unit. The rent will be \$750 per month and rooms will be equipped with two double beds, a microwave and refrigerator. The program will also be supplying air fryers to residents along with Publix gift cards. The pilot program will be through June 30, 2025. Eligible residents will be able to move in on July 1, 2025. Interested parties should contact the HOSS-D office. A question was asked if there was a time limit for residents to live there. Ms. Paldino responded there is not.

County Commissioner Rogers thanked her staff for their hard work and support.

Mayor Schwartz, City of Margate, introduced Alex the owner of La Bamba's son.

Commissioner Caggiano, City of Margate, announced the Broward League of Cities is holding ethics training on January 31, 2025 in Plantation.

Theresa Brier, Office of Jared Moskowitz, announced the swearing-in ceremony for Jared Moskowitz, Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick will be held on January 27, 2025 at the Broward County Governmental Center. She invited everyone to attend.

Mayor Schwartz thanked everyone for attending today's meeting.

4. SCHEDULE OF NEXT MEETING

The February 10, 2025 Northwest Council of Elected Officials meeting will be hosted by the City of Parkland.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:22 p.m.



Ayesha Robinson, MMC
Assistant City Clerk