



# City of Margate

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

## Meeting Minutes City Commission Workshop

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

**City Manager Samuel A. May**  
**Interim City Attorney Weiss, Serota, Helfman, Cole & Bierman,**  
**P.L.**  
**City Clerk Joseph J. Kavanagh**

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**Monday, May 13, 2019**

**6:30 PM**

**Commission Chambers**

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### CALL TO ORDER

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

In Attendance:

City Manager Samuel A. May  
Interim City Attorney Susan L. Trevarthen  
City Clerk Joseph J. Kavanagh

### 1) DISCUSSION

#### A. [ID 2019-238](#) CITY ATTORNEY CANDIDATES.

MAYOR ANTHONY N. CAGGIANO explained the order of this evening's meeting. He requested a shortlist from the Commission to assess who had the most votes so that they could arrange interviews.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR LAURIE MEYER advised that they had nine applicants and read the names and the number of votes that each applicant had received:

3 votes - Sheffel  
2 votes - Huntington-Bowling  
2 votes - Smith  
2 votes - Suarez-Rivas  
2 votes - Ansbro  
1 vote - Fuino

MAYOR CAGGIANO advised that he wanted to narrow the list down and set up interviews with the top five candidates.

Discussion ensued.

MAYOR CAGGIANO read through the Commission's preference of attorney candidates:

Vice Mayor Ruzzano  
Ansbro, Sheffel and Suarez-Rivas

Commissioner Simone  
Fuino, Huntington-Bowling, Michelson and Suarez-Rivas

Commissioner Arserio  
Ansbro, Borman, Sheffel, Smith and Thornton

Commissioner Schwartz  
Ansbro, Huntington-Bowling, Lannon (withdrew), Michelson, LoConte, Sheffel and Rivas.

Mayor Caggiano  
Huntington-Bowling, LoConte, Sheffel and Smith.

Discussion ensued on the listing preference.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR MEYER confirmed the re-tally as:

4 votes - Sheffel  
3 votes - Ansbro, Huntington Bowling and Suarez-Rivas.  
2 votes - Smith, LoConte and Michelson

MAYOR CAGGIANO said that they should eliminate two of the three candidates that received two votes.

VICE MAYOR TOMMY RUZZANO said that he wanted to add Janette M. Smith.

MAYOR CAGGIANO said that he will add her in.

Discussion ensued on choosing the top five candidates.

COMMISSIONER JOANNE SIMONE questioned the reason why some of the Commission did not go for the two votes of Stuart R. Michelson and whether they thought that as they were a firm, they could not work in-house.

COMMISSIONER ANTONIO V. ARSERIO suggested that to make the process less complex, that each Commissioner should select five candidates from the list and whichever had the most, they should interview.

Discussion ensued on the selection process.

MAYOR CAGGIANO asked the Commission if they were happy to interview the top five candidates.

CONSENSUS was given to interview the top five candidates of Sheffel, Ansbro, Huntington-Bowling, Suarez-Rivas and Smith and to eliminate LoConte and Michelson.

MAYOR CAGGIANO recommended that they should interview the candidates on a one-to-one basis and a group interview could be set up thereafter at the HR Director's request. He said that if four out of the five Commissioners liked one candidate, it was unnecessary to conduct a group interview.

INTERIM CITY ATTORNEY SUSAN L. TREVARTHEN advised that the Commission was not able to vote outside of a meeting but they would need to do it at a meeting.

Discussion ensued.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR MEYER asked the Commission for guidance on parameters, including the price range.

COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ explained that she had already gone through contract negotiations.

Discussion ensued including using the previous interview questions provided by S. Renée Narloch & Associates, salary negotiations, the probation period and the length of contracts.

MAYOR CAGGIANO recommended that every year, the contract had to be renewed and requested the appropriate language to use.

COMMISSIONER ARSERIO indicated that the City Attorney may ask for more money if the contract was renewable on a yearly basis.

COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ advised that each year, all staff received a Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase. She said that she would review the contract.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR MEYER suggested that the contracts could be incorporated in the interview stage.

COMMISSIONER ARSERIO discussed background checks.

HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR MEYER discussed background checks and said that it was a personal issue. She also said that there was only so much they could do prior to making a conditional offer of employment.

Discussion ensued on background checks pertaining to previous candidates.

MAYOR CAGGIANO discussed background checks and recommended that the candidates discuss this at the one-to-one interviews.

COMMISSIONER SIMONE requested letters of professional references prior to interviews.

**B. [ID 2019-256](#)**

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER CANDIDATES.**

COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ explained that she experienced problems accessing the Assistant City Manager applications.

MAYOR CAGGIANO questioned if any of the other Commissioners did not have an opportunity to look through the 20+ applications. He said if that was the case, they would schedule another Workshop to discuss the Assistant City Manager applications.

Discussion ensued.

COMMISSIONER SIMONE perused the applications and found that none of the candidates had the credentials or background to hold this position. She believed that it was not advertised properly and it only gave seven days' notice. She advised that they needed to advertise the position in the appropriate way of professional applications such as the Florida League of Cities and International City/County Management Association (ICMA). She wanted to disregard the current applications and publish the job properly to

attract the best applicants.

COMMISSIONER ARSERIO said that he interviewed several people and believed that Mr. Larry Vignola was the most qualified for the position. He said he wanted to get the position filled and referenced the length of time to fill the City of Attorney's position. He said that the City Manager was leaving and that the Interim City Manager could be left alone for several months if the position was not filled.

Discussion ensued.

COMMISSIONER SIMONE said that she did not like the way the process was done and believed it was being orchestrated. She indicated that Mr. Vignola was not qualified or had the right experience and that she was also concerned that he was also committed to Coral Springs.

Discussion ensued.

VICE MAYOR RUZZANO explained that he looked at it from a different angle where he would not necessarily be impressed by their qualifications but wanted to know what they were about and their experience. He said that since his time as a Commissioner, the best hire he made was for City Manager May. He said that Coral Springs was a very well-run City and that he had known Mr. Vignola for a while. He indicated that he would like to see Cale Curtis as the City Manager and somebody come under him who would be good at operations and believed that Mr. Vignola would be prime for that spot.

COMMISSIONER SIMONE advised that Mr. Vignola would not be able to attend all of Margate's Commission meetings due to a conflict with Coral Springs' respective Commission meetings. She indicated that they would have two inexperienced personnel learning on the job being Cale Curtis and Mr. Vignola which she believed would not benefit the City.

Discussion ensued on applicant Mr. Vignola.

COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ explained that as she had not had the opportunity to review all of the applications, it was unfair to comment on qualifications.

MAYOR CAGGIANO said that he understood everyone's concerns but his main issue was for the Interim City Manager to have someone who he could depend on. He questioned that if the consensus was for them to look for new applicants, what assistance would they be providing to the Interim City Manager to perform his duties to the best of his ability.

Discussion ensued on applicant Mr. Vignola.

COMMISSIONER ARSERIO asked the Commission if they had a CONSENSUS to move forward with the Assistant City Manager's position. He said that he was ready to move forward.

COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ said that they underestimated the Interim City Manager if they believed he could not stand on his own two feet with the support of Nancy Popick and the Department heads. She said that she would not give somebody the City Manager's position until they had passed their probationary period.

Discussion ensued.

COMMISSIONER ARSERIO questioned the salary and discussed experience. He indicated that a national search for this position could cost approximately \$20,000 and the salary demands could be between \$240,000 - \$250,000. He said that no one would come in and take six months' probation and a salary of \$200,000.

Discussion ensued including a national search.

MAYOR CAGGIANO suggested a middle ground if they looked at Mr. Vignola with the understanding that in six months to a year, they were not thrilled, they would look for somebody else.

COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ recommended that they should give her by Friday to look at the applications and schedule another meeting.

Discussion ensued including a potential split in the voting process for appointing an Assistant City Manager and the possibility of scheduling another Workshop.

MAYOR CAGGIANO asked if there was enough time to put a Workshop on the Agenda for Friday, May 17th 2019.

INTERIM CITY ATTORNEY TREVARTEN explained that it was advisable to go with 48 hours to publish a Workshop.

COMMISSIONER ARSERIO said that as the candidate was an elected official, they had to follow the strict hiring process. He suggested putting this Item on the next Agenda at the City Commission meeting.

Discussion ensued including the next legally available meeting.

INTERIM CITY ATTORNEY TREVARTEN said that the City Clerk suggested that they could make this a time certain so that it would be 48 hours from this moment later on in the evening.

Discussion ensued.

VICE MAYOR RUZZANO indicated that the Item was already on the next City Commission Agenda.

COMMISSIONER SIMONE repeated her dismay if the appointment of Mr. Vignola was made and said that it was not the way they should be doing things in Margate for their residents. She also spoke about the lack of transparency.

VICE MAYOR RUZZANO spoke on transparency.

COMMISSIONER ARSERIO said that both he and the Vice Mayor were very transparent and as a Commissioner, they have the right to hire, fire and suspend this position.

Discussion ensued.

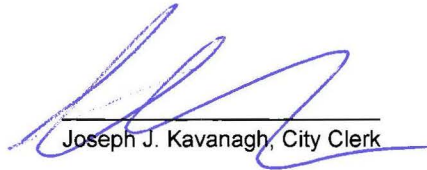
MAYOR CAGGIANO confirmed that this item was already on the next City Commission Agenda where it could be discussed publicly.

## ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:49pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Transcribed by Salene E. Edwards



Joseph J. Kavanagh, City Clerk

Date: 7/11/19

**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.

[Appendix A – Zoning – Section 3.3] 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 advisory boards may be in attendance and may participate at the meeting.