

**FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION CONFERENCE MEETING  
MARCH 17, 2009**

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## **CITY COMMISSION CONFERENCE MEETING 4 P.M. MARCH 17, 2009**

Present: Mayor Seiler  
Commissioner Roberts, Vice Mayor Rodstrom and Commissioners  
DuBose and Rogers

Absent: None.

Also Present: City Manager – George Gretsas  
City Auditor - John Herbst  
City Clerk - Jonda K. Joseph  
City Attorney - Harry A. Stewart  
Sergeant At Arms – Patrick Hart

### **I-A – Emergency Medical Services Medical Protocols**

James Eddy, Chief of Fire Rescue, explained the department's structure, equipping of vehicles and staffing as it relates to emergency medical services. Staff has been using Broward County's protocols published in 2004 however those protocols are not specific to Fort Lauderdale. It has been difficult for medics to stay abreast using this document. He explained the benefits of having Fort Lauderdale protocols, web-based. This improvement will save lives. Dr. Nabil EISanadi, Medical Director, emphasized and elaborated upon clinical excellence, documentation, efficiency and optics. The job is translating new science into best practices almost real-time through an electronic tool. EMS Battalion Chief Timothy Heiser presented slides concerning this item and discussed some real life examples and the implementation schedule. A copy of the slides is attached to these minutes. The new system would allow paramedics access to information about a treatment they have been using with success that may differ from the paramedic book. With supporting research, such a change may be made after review. There is no way to add information to the paramedic book; the new approach is via a tough book computer.

In response to Mayor Seiler, the City Attorney discussed the topic of potential liability. He indicated because something comes forward yesterday, does not mean it can be implemented today. This does a good job of implementing in a timely manner.

In response to Vice Mayor Rodstrom, Chief Heiser indicated they looked at system across the country Wake County, Philadelphia, Los Angeles. Dr. EISanadi explained their goal is to practice at the cutting edge. Chief Heiser indicated the paramedics have been following a standard of care, but the goal is to be great.

In response to Commissioner Rogers, Chief Heiser indicated plan is to be entirely web-based, but have a backup document in every vehicle.

Chief Eddy believed this will be a model for the country.

### **City Manager Reports**

Commissioner Rogers requested an ongoing status tally of items discussed by the Commission, with perhaps a targeted completion date. There was consensus agreement.

The City Attorney explained that no formal action is taken at conference meetings and that according to city code, ordinances, resolutions, public hearings and motions must be heard after 6 p.m. If the Commission wished to change the meeting time, the ordinance could be changed.

### **City Commission Reports**

#### **Victoria Park Art and Jazz Festival**

Vice Mayor Rodstrom announced the upcoming Victoria Park Art and Jazz Festival this weekend.

Vice Mayor Rodstrom suggested it may be helpful for new commissioners to introduce themselves to each director and staff at their work sites.

#### **Budget: Expenditure Freezes**

Vice Mayor Rodstrom wanted to have a preliminary/initial budget workshop on March 31 so as to acquaint each other with their philosophies. She wanted to hold such a meeting before April, because agendas in April will be packed. Mayor Seiler indicated he had discussed an April timeline with the Manager. He wanted to aim for a workshop in April. Vice Mayor Rodstrom wanted a workshop for Commission discussion alone without staff input. Mayor Seiler wanted to first have a presentation from staff.

Commissioner Roberts wanted to consider freezing current fiscal year discretionary, non-operational and capital improvement project (CIP) expenditures, except for public safety. He wanted to be able to achieve savings this year in order to carry forward into next year. He was not sure whether that dovetails into an early workshop. He did not want to wait too long and not taking any action on the current budget.

Commissioner DuBose said he was thinking along the same lines as the Mayor, April. Everyone is familiar from conversations during the campaign.

Commissioner Rogers was concerned that philosophy without hard facts is just opinion.

Mayor Seiler explained that the new Commission members have not had the benefit of a budget cycle. He felt it would be best to have budget information. He agreed with the Vice Mayor however as to discussing their philosophy at the initial meeting.

There not being a consensus to a March meeting, Vice Mayor Rodstrom wanted a freeze until the meeting.

In response to Commissioner Rogers, Commissioner Roberts suggested a freeze on the \$15 million allocated to CIP. There will be stimulus funds forthcoming that could be applied to bridge repairs, for example. He wanted to get a good handle on the City's federal stimulus and grant writing proposals. He reiterated his desire for the City Manager to report on freezing expenditures that will not update departmental operations and when there may be another funding source. Mayor Seiler agreed with that idea and wanted information from the City Manager on April 7 along this line.

Commissioner Rogers commented if a project is in the queue but has not been started, it should not be started until the City knows where it stands.

The City Manager offered to report on April 7 on items that could be frozen. He commented that anything other than salaries and benefits could be termed discretionary. He thought CIP would be a good starting point. Also, there will be proposed purchases on every agenda and the Commission could elect not to approve them.

In response to Vice Mayor Rodstrom, the City Manager indicated staff could be prepared to address the CIP on April 7 and he would see and let the Commission know if the budget could be addressed on April 7. Vice Mayor Rodstrom wanted to know what is in the queue for the next 2 ½ weeks. Commissioner Rogers thought it would not be startups. Kirk Buffington, Director of Procurement Services, explained on any given agenda, the Commission is asked to award many term contracts for the purchase of commodities, goods and services which could be as much as \$1.5 million in chlorine, for example. These are ongoing expenditures. The City Manager suggested the CIP and explained while \$15 million was allocated there are some items that have not yet been touched.

Mayor Seiler felt there is consensus for the City Manager to be very careful about what is moved forward in the next two weeks. The City Manager indicated the question is defining discretionary. Commissioner Roberts wanted to stick with CIP and hiring new personnel unless the position is already promised to someone until the Commission has an opportunity to look at the specifics.

In terms of discretionary from his perspective, the City Auditor indicated there are capital purchases within the operating budget, fixed assets; professional service contracts; travel and training; hiring. He felt there should be a mechanism where the Manager can bring back critical exception items.

Commissioner Rogers noted his questions about the purchase of public safety radios on the evening agenda and explained this is why he did not want to have a philosophical discussion without knowing the real facts.

Vice Mayor Rodstrom felt the Commission has just had the philosophical discussion and appreciated it, provided the Commission is considering freezing certain things.

Mayor Seiler concluded the CIP list should be presented on April 7 along with a list of what the Auditor considers to be discretionary.

#### Broward County Property Appraiser

Vice Mayor Rodstrom asked about the Property Appraiser coming to the April conference to provide her estimated revenue loss for Fort Lauderdale. Commissioner Rogers wanted the information, but did not see the need for the Appraiser to attend. Mayor Seiler felt everything needs to go through the Manager.

#### Sistrunk Festival

Commissioner DuBose thanked everyone who supported him and everyone who voted and participated in the process. He also noted the Sistrunk Festival's success.

Las Olas Boulevard; Riverside Park

Commissioner Rogers reported on the status of Las Olas Boulevard redevelopment. He noted that Riverside Park will be holding a block party on April 4.

Federal Stimulus Package; Ongoing Status, Tally of Items

Mayor Seiler requested the federal stimulus package be added to the previously mentioned status list. He was concerned that the federal stimulus has gotten off course. He felt it is about job creation and infrastructure. Commissioner Rogers asked if the City should refuse it if it is not. Mayor Seiler felt at some point there needs to be discussion on that point as the Commission has an obligation to the taxpayers.

Campaign Finance Ordinance

Mayor Seiler wanted a campaign finance ordinance on reporting of these ECO's (Electioneering Communication Organization), CCE's (Committee of Continuous Existence) and 527's. He believed in full disclosure and almost instantaneous, that being within 72-90 hours of a donation, it is posted online and the donors are disclosed. The City Attorney elaborated upon current state law and federal litigation under which the Division of Elections has indicated they are under court order not to enforce the state statute. The temporary injunction says it only applies to issue candidacy. Mayor Seiler said there is three years to do this. The public deserves to know who is financing campaigns. A City ordinance would be better for the process.

Public Records

Mayor Seiler wanted to be a leading city in terms of public records and government in the sunshine. Perhaps the First Amendment Foundation could be consulted to determine if anything needs to be updated. The City Attorney elaborated upon the City's practice and the volume of requests. He agreed to provide a report on this.

Commissioner Rogers asked about the rate schedule. The City Attorney pointed out that legislation is being proposed to not charge for staff time used responding to public records' requests. If passed, it could cripple the City. He explained current practice. In further response to Commissioner Rogers, the City Attorney explained there are complaints because there is disagreement about how long it takes to respond. He mentioned the redacting process for which the City cannot charge, but requires time.

FYI Agenda Software

Vice Mayor Rodstrom pointed out the charter offices that have access to the FYI System and questioned why the Commission office does not have access. Tim Edkin, Director of Information Technology Services, provided an overview of the FYI System. It is a working document, not finalized. From a technical standpoint, it would simply be a matter of providing the Commission access to that system and associated training. Vice Mayor Rodstrom pointed out that everyone that works for the Commission has access and she wanted access also.

The City Manager explained the question is about providing access to an unfinished document in real time. The idea is to limit access until staff has had an opportunity to review it, ensure its accuracy, which is what is provided in the Thursday agenda packet.

In response to Mayor Seiler, the City Clerk explained that the FYI system is an electronic workflow system that allows all agenda materials to go onto the internet. The City Manager explained it is not released until he feels it is ready.

Vice Mayor Rodstrom indicated if the Commission had access, they would simply be looking at information to date. The City Manager indicated that in many cases it is not accurate or may not belong on the agenda.

Mayor Seiler suggested information be furnished to the Commission, explaining this system.

#### Economic Status Reports; Tourism Status Reports

Mayor Seiler requested reports on a fairly regular basis concerning what the City's economic arm is doing. He felt the City must be more proactive. He also wanted a regular report on tourism. He suggested coordinating with the tourist development board.

#### Downtown Fort Lauderdale Transportation Management Association; City representatives (WALK-ON)

Mayor Seiler noted that two members need to be appointed to the Downtown Fort Lauderdale Transportation Management Association. There was consensus approval for Commissioners Roberts and Rogers to serve.

#### Florida League of Cities, Board of Directors, Ten Most Populous Cities representative (WALK-ON)

Mayor Seiler noted that a member needs to be appointed to the Florida League of Cities, Board of Directors, Ten Most Populous Cities. He volunteered. There was consensus approval for Mayor Seiler to serve.

#### **III-B – Board and Committee Vacancies**

Mayor Seiler indicated these appointments could be considered on April 7.

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee – no appointments at this meeting

Audit Advisory Board – no appointments at this meeting

Aviation Advisory Board – no appointments at this meeting

Beach Redevelopment Board - no appointments at this meeting

Cemetery System Board of Trustees – no appointments at this meeting

Centennial Celebration Committee – no appointments at this meeting

Code Enforcement Board – no appointments at this meeting

Community Appearance Board – no appointments at this meeting

Community Services Board – no appointments at this meeting

Economic Development Advisory Board – no appointments at this meeting

Education Advisory Board – no appointments at this meeting

Fire-Rescue Facilities Bond Issue Blue Ribbon Committee – no appointments at this meeting

Insurance Advisory Board – no appointments at this meeting

Marine Advisory Board – no appointments at this meeting

Nuisance Abatement Board – no appointments at this meeting

Board of Trustees, Police and Firefighters Retirement System – no appointments at this meeting

Unsafe Structures and Housing Appeals Board – no appointments at this meeting

Utility Advisory Committee – no appointments at this meeting

**IV – City Commission Reports**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:32 p. m.