



CITY OF COCONUT CREEK SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MINUTES

**Government Center
4800 W. Copans Road
Coconut Creek, Florida**

**Date: September 14, 2023
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Meeting No. 2023-0914SP
First Budget Public Hearing**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Joshua Rydell called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

PRESENT UPON ROLL CALL:

Mayor Joshua Rydell
Vice Mayor Sandra L. Welch
Commissioner Jacqueline Railey
Commissioner John A. Brodie
Commissioner Jeffrey R. Wasserman
City Manager Karen M. Brooks
City Attorney Terrill C. Pyburn
City Clerk Joseph J. Kavanagh

Mayor Rydell asked all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Rydell noted that the meeting was being conducted live with a quorum physically present, and City Attorney Terrill C. Pyburn explained the procedures for public participation and comment for the meeting.

- 1. ORD 2023-019** AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE CITY'S OPERATING PROPERTY TAX RATE AT 6.4463 MILLS FOR THE 2024 FISCAL YEAR. (FIRST READING) (FIRST PUBLIC HEARING)

City Attorney Pyburn read the Ordinance title into the record.

MOTION: Wasserman/Railey – To approve Ordinance No. 2023-019 on first reading.

Finance Director Peta-Gay Lake presented the proposed operating millage rate and budget. She explained that the proposed millage rate of 6.4463 mills represented a 10.38 percent increase over the rollback rate of 5.8399 and no increase over the current millage rate. She stated adopting the millage rate was necessary to maintain service levels and noted the rate was included on the proposed property tax document mailed to residents.

Continuing, Finance Director Lake provided a brief overview of the City's 2024 Fiscal Year Budget. She stated despite the challenges of high inflation, competing priorities, and the associated impacts it had on financial operations, staff was presenting a balanced budget, which included a four percent (4%) wage and salary range increase for staff and an increase in the City's contribution to the high-deductible healthcare plan. She stated the budget focused on addressing the community's needs, priorities, and desires in alignment with the Strategic Plan, taking into consideration the City's ability to sustain the costs with an uncertain economic future.

She stated the City’s residents deserve and insist on quality municipal services, provided in a productive and efficient manner, while deriving the greatest value for dollars spent. She noted staff believed the proposed budget accomplished those goals.

Mayor Rydell opened the public hearing. City Clerk Joseph Kavanagh stated there were no advanced public comments received for the item.

Tanisha Beckford-Phillips, 4921 NW 48 Avenue, Coconut Creek, stated her family had moved to Coconut Creek one (1) year ago, and their tax assessment had doubled this year. Mayor Rydell directed Ms. Beckford-Phillips to a staff member to assist in reviewing and explaining her TRIM notice. City Manager Brooks noted that new homebuyers often find that the previous homeowner had lived in the home for many years and had the benefit of the Save Our Homes tax incentive.

There were no further questions or comments from the public, and Mayor Rydell closed the public hearing.

Vice Mayor Welch stated that she had previously expressed an interest in a reduction of the millage rate, but in meeting with staff, had realized the impact it would have on operations and felt it was no longer appropriate to pursue.

Upon roll call, the Ordinance passed on first reading by a 5-0 vote.

- 2. **ORD 2023-020** AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024 OPERATING AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET AS THE CITY’S OFFICIAL BUDGET. THIS ORDINANCE WILL APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR OPERATING CITY DEPARTMENTS AND CAPITAL PROJECTS FROM OCTOBER 1, 2023, TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2024. (FIRST READING)(FIRST PUBLIC HEARING)

City Attorney Pyburn read the Ordinance title into the record.

MOTION: Wasserman/Brodie – To approve Ordinance No. 2023-020 on first reading.

Mayor Rydell opened the public hearing. City Clerk Kavanagh stated there were no advanced public comments received for the item, and no one had signed in to speak. Mayor Rydell closed the public hearing.

Upon roll call, the Ordinance passed on first reading by a 5-0 vote.

- 3. **RES 2023-139** A RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE FUNDING AND PROVISION OF FIRE RESCUE PROTECTION SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND PROGRAMS IN THE CITY OF COCONUT CREEK, FLORIDA; ESTABLISHING THE RATE OF ASSESSMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024; IMPOSING FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES ASSESSMENT AGAINST ASSESSED PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE CITY; AND APPROVING THE ASSESSMENT ROLL. (PUBLIC HEARING)

Mayor Rydell read the Resolution title into the record.

MOTION: Brodie/Railey – To approve Resolution No. 2023-139.

Finance Director Lake explained the resolution set the Fire Rescue Assessment for Fiscal Year 2024, which was intended to fund approximately ninety-eight percent (98%) of the cost of fire rescue services. She stated the rate to be imposed would be \$283.14 for single family residences and \$254.83 for multi-family residences per year, representing a ten percent (10%) increase over 2023 due to increased costs.

Mayor Rydell opened the public hearing. City Clerk Kavanagh stated there were no advanced public comments received for the item, and no one had signed in to speak. Mayor Rydell closed the public hearing.

Upon roll call, the Resolution passed by a 5-0 vote.

4. **RES 2023-140** A RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL OF SOLID WASTE IN THE CITY OF COCONUT CREEK; ESTABLISHING THE RATE OF ASSESSMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024; RE-IMPOSING SOLID WASTE SERVICES ASSESSMENT AGAINST ASSESSED PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE CITY; AND APPROVING THE ASSESSMENT ROLL. (PUBLIC HEARING)

Mayor Rydell read the Resolution title into the record.

MOTION: Wasserman/Brodie – To approve Resolution No. 2023-140.

Finance Director Lake explained the resolution set the Solid Waste Disposal Fee for Fiscal Year 2024. She stated at the time of the initial Budget Workshop, the rate to be imposed was set at \$380.40 for single family residences, with the understanding that a further increase may be necessary pending confirmation from the solid waste hauler, Republic Services. She advised that this rate was utilized in the TRIM Notices, noting the rate represented a fifteen percent (15%) increase from the current rate.

Finance Director Lake advised that since that time, a proposed rate of \$421.44 for single family residences had been received from Republic Services, as well as substantial rate increases for multi-family residences and commercial properties for hauling to the south facility. She stated that, per State law, the City could not exceed the rate printed on the TRIM Notice, so staff would need to negotiate with Republic Services to direct bill the increase of \$41.04 for single family residences. She noted that alternatively, if the Commission desired, they may continue to use the north disposal facility, which would result in a lower rate of \$342.89 per year for single family residences, representing a four percent (4%) increase from the current rate.

Vice Mayor Welch stated that at the Budget Workshop, the consensus had been to continue to take solid waste to the south facility, rather than having the City's waste be landfilled. She noted they had known it would be a higher rate, but believed it was environmentally the better alternative.

City Manager Brooks stated Coconut Creek's garbage was currently going to the north facility and being landfilled. She pointed out that if the trash were to be sent to the south facility, once the incinerator reached capacity, anything remaining would go to the north facility. Vice Mayor Welch noted the change to the north facility had been made without the City's knowledge and would not have been to their choosing.

Mayor Rydell stated he was not okay with residents receiving a bill from both the City and

Republic Services for their trash pickup. He acknowledged the intent to be more environmentally conscious and agreed that the City needed to lead by example, but asserted the change would have to be addressed in another way, such as through a future millage rate. He noted the residents had never received a bill from Republic in the time he had been in the City.

Commissioner Wasserman commented that it did not make sense to hope the trash would be incinerated and then have it sent north anyway, considering the rate increase and the bill. He asked what the increase would be if operations remained as-is. Finance Director Lake stated it would be approximately \$13.

City Manager Brooks highlighted the fact that the City found itself in this situation due to circumstances beyond its control, noting it was a result of the ongoing larger issue of solid waste disposal in Broward County. She acknowledged that sending waste to the landfill was against the City's philosophy.

Commissioner Brodie stated with the state of the economy, he was not amenable to the increase. He suggested they look at options for next year.

Commissioner Railey agreed. She noted a lot of residents had voiced their opinion that they would rather see the trash in the landfill rather than burning, so there were pros and cons to both options. She stated she would select going to the north facility.

Mayor Rydell stated he thought Vice Mayor Welch was right, except this was a unique situation. He noted an increase to the millage rate would allow the City to absorb the cost rather than have Republic Services direct bill customers, but that could not be done in this Fiscal Year due to the timing of TRIM notices.

City Manager Brooks noted that increasing the millage rate was one way to budget the change, or the Commission could increase the Solid Waste Disposal Fee in the future.

Mayor Rydell asked whether the Solid Waste Disposal Fee was also capped for this year. Finance Director Lake confirmed this was correct. Mayor Rydell stated the City could have been in the position to do the right thing, but the final information from Republic Services did not come in time for the statutory notice requirements.

Mayor Rydell opened the public hearing. City Clerk Kavanagh stated there were no advanced public comments received for the item.

Bob Hely, Marketing Manager, Win-Waste Innovation, provided additional detail regarding the north and south facilities. He stated if the waste was directed to the south facility, he could guarantee that it would be waste-to-energy. He asserted the only waste his site shipped to the landfill was waste that was directed to the transfer stations. He noted the disposal fee was the same for both locations, the difference was in the hauler.

Mayor Rydell asked whether the waste-to-energy facility had operated at capacity in the last year. Mr. Hely confirmed it had. Mayor Rydell asked what happens with waste being sent to the waste-to-energy facility once they reached capacity. Mr. Hely stated it would not be accepted and would be redirected to the transfer station rather than driving to the facility.

Vice Mayor Welch stated that her biggest takeaway from a tour of Win-Waste Innovation was

the minimal amount of residue left over to scatter on the landfill, as opposed to all of the loads of garbage being put on the landfill. She asserted it was like comparing a dollhouse and a skyscraper.

There were no further questions or comments from the public, and Mayor Rydell closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Wasserman asked Mr. Hely for additional clarification on whether there was a possibility that Coconut Creek’s waste could be waste-to-energy, and Mr. Hely stated, barring unforeseen catastrophes, on a regular basis it could be guaranteed. Commissioner Wasserman asked how many days in the last year the facility had reached capacity, and Mr. Hely stated that it reached capacity daily.

Mayor Rydell stated he believed the Commission should commit to budget differently to address this issue next fiscal year, but right now he did not see any way. He noted there may be a contract issue to look at.

Commissioner Railey stated if they hauled garbage to the south facility, the Township community would be paying an additional \$334,000, and the Wynmoor community would be paying close to \$200,000. She asserted that was a lot of money to put on the residents in addition to what was happening with insurance and the cost of living.

Public Works Director Harry Mautte confirmed this was a situation the City did not receive much advance notice and discussed the terms of the Solid Waste Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with Broward County briefly. He noted that extensive wait times at the Win-Waste Innovation site resulted in higher transportation costs. Discussion ensued regarding contractual rates with Republic Services.

AMENDMENT: Railey/Brodie – To amend the Resolution to reduce the Solid Waste Services Assessment rate from \$380.40 per year for single family residences to \$342.89 per year for single family residences.

Upon roll call, the Amendment passed by a 5-0 vote.

Finance Director Lake explained the Resolution set the Solid Waste Disposal Fee for Fiscal Year 2024. She stated the rate to be imposed would be \$342.89 per year for single family residences, which represented a four percent (4%) increase over the current rate, and included hauling and disposal of municipal solid waste, cleaning and sanitizing of carts twice per year, the household hazardous waste program, the recycling drop off center, and the reuse center.

Upon roll call, the Resolution, as amended, passed by a 5-0 vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Joseph J. Kavanagh, MMC
City Clerk

Date