



## CITY OF COCONUT CREEK CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MINUTES

Government Center  
4800 W. Copans Road  
Coconut Creek, Florida

Date: September 26, 2023  
Time: 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting No. 2023-0926WS

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### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rydell called the meeting to order at 6:03 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 noted that the meeting was being conducted live with a quorum physically present and was being streamed online. He asked all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the Pledge, Mayor Rydell outlined the process to be followed for the workshop, and turned the floor over to City Manager Karen Brooks for her presentation.

### ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF CITY MANAGER

City Manager Brooks thanked the Commission for their support over the past year. She stated the City was beautiful and thriving, remained financially solid and living within its means, services provided on a day-to-day basis were aligned with the City's vision and mission and were top quality. She commented these achievements could not happen without the support and leadership of the Commission. She noted she had provided the City Commission with several documents, including the following:

- Evaluation Form;
- Status of Strategic Initiatives for Fiscal Year 2023;
- Completed Top Priorities for Fiscal Year 2023;
- Community Outreach Summary by Department;
- Capital Improvement Program Summary;
- Citywide Training/Professional Development; and
- Proposed Strategic Initiatives for Fiscal Year 2024.

City Manager Brooks reviewed highlights from the year, including challenging Florida's Turnpike expansion, solid waste issues, and MainStreet development. She stated the two (2) areas she was most proud of from the past year were the amount of money the City was able to secure for the benefit of its residents, and the transfer of dispatch services from the County to Coral Springs. She acknowledged and thanked the executive team, noting they were second to none. City Manager Brooks thanked the Commissioners for their input and feedback during one-on-one sessions and stated there were areas that could be improved, including communication. She discussed efforts over the past year to improve communication and recognized there was more improvement to be made.

Mayor Rydell echoed the comments regarding communication and stated the City needed to have a better

system for advising the Commission of layered information. He discussed examples, including advanced awareness of community meetings and articles from multiple news sources. He acknowledged there was a large volume of information, and there needed to be a way to prioritize what constituents were concerned with and keep the Commission informed. Mayor Rydell highlighted the importance of succession planning over the past year, noting there was now a Deputy Police Chief, and asked what that looked like in the City Manager's office. City Manager Brooks responded that staff was working on succession planning and had been discussing it for some time. She noted some departments had a prioritized need to prepare for succession, and a consultant has been hired to aid that process. She explained the City Manager position was on the list, but as the hiring of the City Manager was up to the Commission, she would seek direction on how to address that succession planning for her position. She noted the value of hiring from within and acknowledged that there was a highly-capable Deputy City Manager in place. Mayor Rydell requested that office hours with the City Manager be held on the evenings when Ambassador Meetings were held, noting he had robust conversations with residents during Commission office hours.

Vice Mayor Welch stated she and City Manager Brooks had met, and went over a laundry list of strengths, as well as some opportunities for improvement. She asserted the list of accomplishments and initiatives was significant. She highlighted the dispatch transition as one (1) of the proudest days she had as a commissioner, next to the Fire Department and Police Department accreditation. She stated that though the Commission may give direction, it's the person at the helm managing things that make all of it happen. Vice Mayor Welch commented on the importance of communication not only with the Commission, but with the community, and stated she and City Manager Brooks had spent a great deal of time discussing the issue. She noted residents want to participate and volunteer, so more opportunities should be publicized.

Commissioner Railey shared that over the last year, it had been an honor to be affiliated with Coconut Creek and with City Manager Brooks as a leader. She acknowledged there was always room for improvement on communication, and while it was a challenge to figure out how to get the information to the Commission, that should be a focus. She stated she had also thought about succession planning, and if that meant promoting from within, there needed to be a backup to that person's position. She commented on the importance of cross-training, and stated staff should be proud of that effort, as well as the harmonious environment among employees and departments. Commissioner Railey commented on the website and stated that staff needed to focus on making it more user-friendly. She asked that Department Heads interact more with the residents at community events. She thanked City Manager Brooks for implementing the direction the Commission had given her last year, including taking the objectives and running with them while keeping Vision 2030 in mind.

Commissioner Brodie commented that, in his opinion, nothing had changed since last year's review. He stated he questioned whether he had the knowledge to understand the City Manager job so he spoke to elected officials and City Managers in other cities to educate himself on the position. Commissioner Brodie commented he had learned there were nuts and bolts in the City that no matter who was plugged into the position, it would get done and get done well, and then there were things that go beyond that. He asserted there were courtesies that go along with being in a leadership position, and a humbleness that he did not believe was there with the City Manager. He stated this goes beyond communication and into human connection. He stated he had tried to look at it from other angles, but felt his original assessment was dead on. Commissioner Brodie stated there were too many things he could not overlook as a leader and a manager that continued to go on without any real resolution. He noted a recent incident with a senior staff member and commented that these issues fall on the manager. He asserted an evaluation of people and positions needed to take place over the next year. He commented that improvements could be made, and opportunities for change had been given. He stated there had to be an openness to communicate as adults and be nonbiased in conversations.

Commissioner Wasserman advised he had only been on the Commission for six (6) months so he found it hard to give an in-depth evaluation. He commented that goals, such as staying out of the news for negative things, managing the finances, recruiting, retaining and promoting staff, and making sure people go home safe and happy, were being met, and the City was in incredible shape under City Manager

Brooks' leadership. Commissioner Wasserman noted communication was something that needed to be worked on, along with chain of command, explaining he thought it was okay for employees to come to the Commission, allowing the elected officials to be an asset.

Vice Mayor Welch added that when she first joined the Commission, the discussion of succession planning was a priority of the previous City Manager, and she was glad to see it being addressed. She agreed it would not be City Manager Brooks' role to say who her successor would be, and asserted it was powerful that she had deputies in place across the departments. Mayor Rydell summarized, in regard to succession planning, there was direction to further the discussion and highlight the options to the Commission.

Mayor Rydell reviewed the requirements of the City Manager's contract briefly and asked her to outline the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) considerations. City Manager Brooks stated the Commission had approved a COLA effective October 1 of four percent (4%) across the board, which she would also be subject to. She noted the four percent (4%) was also collectively bargained for the Police Department contracts, but it would not be effective for the Fire Department due to pending negotiations.

Discussion ensued regarding a potential pay-for-performance increase and lump sum bonus.

Consensus was to give City Manager Brooks an average rating and not provide a pay-for-performance increase, but a five percent (5%) lump sum bonus.

City Manager Brooks expressed her appreciation and stated she looked forward to the next year and hoped she could meet expectations.

## **ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF CITY ATTORNEY**

City Attorney Terrill C. Pyburn thanked the Commission and staff and discussed the efforts of the City Attorney's office over the past year. She noted she had provided the City Commission with an annual report, covering July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, which included a summary of the following items:

- Cases/Claims;
- Agreements/Contracts;
- Legal/Ethics Opinions;
- Ordinances/Resolutions;
- Public Records Requests;
- Training/Seminars;
- General Matters; and
- Highlights.

City Attorney Pyburn summarized the highlights briefly. She reviewed the role of her department and noted it was difficult to set goals and objectives, as they typically operate in a more advisory and reactive manner with regularly-changing priorities. She stated City Manager Brooks had already identified the challenges expected in the coming year, including Florida's Turnpike expansion, solid waste issues, MainStreet development, and a new Fire Rescue Union.

Mayor Rydell pointed to the chart of City Attorney salaries provided for comparison, and noted while those cities contracting with firms pay billable hours rather than having in-house legal counsel, there was also hundreds of thousands of dollars in outside legal fees. He commented on the significant savings in outside legal work under City Attorney Pyburn and asked the cost of outside legal fees for the past year. City Attorney Pyburn stated it was approximately \$66,000. Mayor Rydell requested that office hours with the City Attorney be held on the evenings when Ambassador Meetings were held. He stated his only criticism was that sometimes simpler explanations were better. He advised that City Attorney Pyburn had an impeccable reputation in the County and a stellar team.

Vice Mayor Welch agreed with Mayor Rydell's comments. She stated City Attorney Pyburn had surrounded herself with extreme talent and fostered relationships to know and be known outside of the City, commenting this was an excellent testament to the leadership provided. She expressed appreciation for the resource of having a City Attorney in-house. Vice Mayor Welch recognized City Attorney Pyburn for finding the time to give residents dedicated answers and making herself available and noted she had taken previous feedback to work on work/life balance.

Commissioner Railey commended City Attorney Pyburn for managing a heavy workload. She asserted her research was impeccable and her staff was professional and knowledgeable.

Commissioner Brodie commended City Attorney Pyburn on her thoroughness and expressed appreciation for her work ethic.

Commissioner Wasserman recognized the number of contracts written in the last year, and stated the work of the City Attorney was outstanding. He stated it was an honor to be around her, and he knew she had the City's best interest at heart.

Mayor Rydell asked that City Attorney Pyburn explain the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) cap in her contract, as well as the COLA based on her effective date. City Attorney Pyburn thanked the Commission for their feedback and stated she could not do it without the support of the Commission. She highlighted the accomplishments of her staff briefly and recognized their hard work. She explained the IRS cap in her contract and stated the anniversary date of her contract was July 7 so any increase would not be after the COLA.

Discussion ensued regarding a potential pay-for-performance increase and lump sum bonus.

Consensus was to give City Attorney Pyburn an above average rating and award her a three percent (3%) performance increase and three percent (3%) lump sum bonus.

City Attorney Pyburn thanked the Commission for their continued support.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

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Joseph J. Kavanagh, MMC  
City Clerk

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Date