

## **MINUTES**

**CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS  
TUESDAY, September 5, 2023  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
10001 NW 87 AVENUE**

- 1. Call to Order:** Chairman Luciano Garcia called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
- 2. Roll Call:** Present were Councilman Elmo Urra, Councilman Jorge Gutierrez, Councilman Rolando Piña, Chairman Luciano Garcia, Mayor Yiozet De La Cruz, and Mr. Charles A. Citrin, City Attorney. Councilman Jorge Merida was absent.
- 3. Invocation:** Chairman Garcia gave the invocation.
- 4. Pledge of Allegiance:** Mayor De La Cruz led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 5. Deletions/Emergency Additions:** N/A
- 6. Review of Minutes: August 15, 2023** Chairman Garcia made a motion to approve the minutes of August 15, 2023. The motion was approved unanimously.
- 7. Public Comments:** None were offered.

## 8. Proposed Resolutions:

- A) RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, FLORIDA, APPROVING AN AGREEMENT FOR THE CITY'S HEALTH INSURANCE BETWEEN AVMED AND THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Citrin read the item into the record. Ms. Aida Martinez-Ruiz, Director of Personnel, came forward and read a memorandum for recommendation into the record. Attached to this item are the proposals that the City received from different insurance companies via Millennium Benefits. These include Humana (the City's current carrier), Avmed, Aetna, Cigna, United Healthcare through NHP, and Florida Blue. Attached is also a comparison between the city's current renewal rate with Humana, two plans from Avmed, and two plans from United through NHP. The current plan presented by Humana has an increase renewal rate of 29.8% over last year's premiums. The plans provided by Aetna and Florida Blue were high and not competitive. Cigna declined to make an offer. It is recommended based on a review of the proposals that the City change insurance companies and utilize the services of Avmed, plan "Achieve LH 674," at an overall increase of 4% with the increased gap included. In an effort to continue to assist employees with deductibles and co-payments, the City will need to increase supplemental insurance. Millennium Benefits recommends continuing to utilize the services of the City's current gap insurance, Globe Life (formerly known as Beazley) for this purpose. There was no rate change, but as an increase is necessary, the new gap insurance rate would be \$122 per employee.

There were no further comments or questions. The Chair made a motion to approve the resolution; seconded by Councilman Pina. The item was approved unanimously. **(4-0)**

- B) RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, FLORIDA, APPROVING AND RATIFYING THE AGREEMENT FOR THE CITY'S SUPPLEMENTAL HEALTH INSURANCE BETWEEN GLOBE LIFE BENEFITS AND THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Citrin read the item into the record. Ms. Martinez-Ruiz clarified that this is the same company that the City has used to provide supplemental insurance now operating under the name Globe Life. The gap covers the deductible in most cases.

There were no further comments or questions. The Chair made a motion to approve the resolution; seconded by Councilman Pina. The item was approved unanimously. **(4-0)**

- C) RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, FLORIDA, APPROVING AND ENTERING INTO AN AGREEMENT FOR DENTAL AND VISION INSURANCE BETWEEN HUMANA AND THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Citrin read the item into the record. Ms. Martinez-Ruiz came forward once again and read a memorandum for recommendation into the record. The City's insurance broker solicited proposals from several dental and vision insurance companies including the current provider (Humana), Solstice, Guardian, and United Healthcare through NHP. The results of the proposals are attached to this item. Rates, co-payments and lists of participating dentists were all carefully considered in the selection process. Humana's proposal has no increase with an unlimited calendar year maximum. It is recommended that the City remain with Humana, which provides excellent coverage for both dental and vision. Councilman Piña asked about employee costs; Ms. Martinez-Ruiz replied that employees pay for the coverage they choose, and that cost gets divided by 26 pay periods.

There were no further comments or questions. The Chair made a motion to approve the resolution; seconded by Councilman Piña. The item was approved unanimously. **(4-0)**

- D) RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, FLORIDA, APPROVING AND RATIFYING AN AGREEMENT FOR THE CITY'S LONG AND SHORT-TERM DISABILITY, ACCIDENTAL DEATH AND DISMEMBERMENT, AND LIFE INSURANCE BETWEEN METLIFE AND THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Citrin read the item into the record. Ms. Martinez-Ruiz came forward once again and read a memorandum for recommendation into the record. The City received proposals from three companies: Unum, Hartford and MetLife. The City's current carrier Hartford increased the premiums by 27%, Unum by 46%, and MetLife by 14%. The recommendation is to enter into an agreement with MetLife for the long and short-term disability, accidental death and dismemberment, and life insurance policy; this is paid for by the City.

There were no further comments or questions. The Chair made a motion to approve the resolution; seconded by Councilman Piña. The item was approved unanimously. **(4-0)**

**9. First Reading / Public Hearing for consideration of the following Budget Ordinances:**

- A) ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A MILLAGE RATE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 2023 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2024, AT 5.1613 MILLS, WHICH IS AN INCREASE OF 15.09% OVER THE ROLL BACK RATE SO AS TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY REVENUE TO MEET THE DETERMINED BUDGETARY NEEDS OF THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Citrin read the item into the record. Mayor De La Cruz spoke on the item and explained that the City is maintaining the same millage rate as the previous year; any increases in property taxes have to do with the County's appraisal of property values.

At this time, a resident of the City came forward and requested to speak to the Council; a public hearing was opened at 7:43 p.m. Ms. Julia Alicia Mendez came forward and stated her name and address for the record. Mayor De La Cruz translated her comments. Ms. Mendez implored the Council and explained that she is a widow, struggles to afford to pay her property taxes, and had previously almost lost her house this past year, and that her grandson lent her money to pay for the taxes. She asked the Council to fight for the elderly in the City; especially the elderly that only receive one check a month and can barely afford groceries. Mayor De La Cruz asked Ms. Mendez to contact his office to inquire into the available utilities (electric, water & sewer) and tax assistance programs.

There were no further comments or questions. The public hearing was closed at 7:46 p.m. The Chair made a motion to approve the ordinance upon first reading, seconded by Councilman Piña. The ordinance was approved unanimously by individualized voice vote. **(4-0)**

- B) ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE GENERAL FUND FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2023 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2024; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Citrin read the item into the record. A public hearing was opened at 7:47 p.m.; no one came forward. Public hearing closed at 7:47 p.m. The Chair made a motion to approve the ordinance upon first reading, seconded by Councilman Piña. The ordinance was approved unanimously by individualized voice vote. **(4-0)**

- C) ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE PUBLIC SAFETY IMPACT FUND FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2023 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2024; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Citrin read the item into the record. A public hearing was opened at 7:48 p.m.; no one came forward. Public hearing closed at 7:48 p.m. The Chair made a motion to approve the ordinance upon first reading, seconded by Councilman Piña. The ordinance was approved unanimously by individualized voice vote.

**(4-0)**

- D) ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE STORM WATER UTILITY FUND FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2023 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2024; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Citrin read the item into the record. A public hearing was opened at 7:48 p.m.; no one came forward. Public hearing closed at 7:48 p.m. The Chair made a motion to approve the ordinance upon first reading, seconded by Councilman Piña. The ordinance was approved unanimously by individualized voice vote.

**(4-0)**

- E) ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE STREETS AND ROADS FUND FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2023 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2024; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Citrin read the item into the record. A public hearing was opened at 7:49 p.m.; no one came forward. Public hearing closed at 7:49 p.m. The Chair made a motion to approve the ordinance upon first reading, seconded by Councilman Piña. The ordinance was approved unanimously by individualized voice vote.

**(4-0)**

- F) ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2023 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2024; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Citrin read the item into the record. A public hearing was opened at 7:49 p.m.; no one came forward. Public hearing closed at 7:49 p.m. The Chair made a motion to approve the ordinance upon first reading, seconded by Councilman Piña. The ordinance was approved unanimously by individualized voice vote.

- G) ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HIALEAH GARDENS, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE CITIZEN'S INDEPENDENT TRANSPORTATION TRUST FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2023, AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2024; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Citrin read the item into the record. A public hearing was opened at 7:50 p.m.; no one came forward. Public hearing closed at 7:50 p.m. The Chair made a motion to approve the ordinance upon first reading, seconded by Councilman Piña. The ordinance was approved unanimously by individualized voice vote.

**(4-0)**

Ms. Martinez-Ruiz came forward to clarify a verbal mistake made on the health insurance item (8A): there is an overall 4% *decrease* in the renewal/premium rate, not an increase.

**10. City Attorney's Report:** No comments.

**11. Mayor's Report – Miscellaneous:** No comments.

At this time, a resident of the City, Ms. Norelis Promeda de Cerra, came forward and stated her name and address for the record. She took time to explain to the Council the difficulties she has faced in not being able to afford her property taxes after buying a home in the City the previous year. She is in the country under political asylum and does not qualify for homestead exemption. Mayor De La Cruz advised Ms. Promeda de Cerra to contact his office and inquire into the available programs for water, electric and tax bill assistance. Chairman Garcia also advised Ms. that there are tax lawyers who specialize in representing property owners with the County's value adjustment board which may result in lowering her property tax.

**12. Council Members Concerns / Reports / Board Appointments**

Water & Sewer Board Appointment (J. Merida, E. Urra) - Pending

**13. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Maria L. Joffe, City Clerk

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, persons needing special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact the City Clerk's office no later than four days prior to the proceeding. For assistance, the City's telephone number is (305) 558-4114; if hearing impaired the telephone for the Florida Relay Service is (800) 955-8771 (TDD) or (800) 955-8770 (VOICE).

Pursuant to Section 286.0105 Florida Statutes, any person desiring to appeal any decision made by the Council with respect to any matter considered at this meeting will need a record of the proceedings, and it will be their responsibility to insure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

#### **SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

##### **CITY COUNCIL**

Tuesday, October 3, 2023, 7:30 P.M.

##### **PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD**

Monday, October 2, 2023, 7:30 P.M.

##### **TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Thursday, October 5, 2023, 11:00 A.M.

##### **WATER AND SEWER BOARD**

T.B.D.

##### **POLICE PENSION BOARD**

Wednesday, November 1, 2023, 5:30 P.M.