



CITY OF HOMESTEAD CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 2025, @ 6:00 PM

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

100 CIVIC COURT, HOMESTEAD, FL 33030

WWW.HOMESTEADFL.GOV

1. CALL TO ORDER/INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Losner at 6:05 p.m.

(a) The Invocation was led by Councilman Thomas Davis.

(b) The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Roth and the Homestead Police Explorers.

2. ROLL CALL

Mayor and Council present: Mayor Steven D. Losner, Vice Mayor Sean L. Fletcher, Councilwoman Erica G. Ávila, Councilwoman Jenifer N. Bailey, Councilman Thomas Davis, and Councilman Larry Roth. Councilman Clemente Canabal was absent.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jonathan Osborn, residing at 1524 NW 5th Avenue, Florida City, FL, expressed concern about ICE and immigrants.

Cardell Hayes, residing at 3910 NE 13th Drive, Homestead, FL, stated that it was Black Business Month and they would be hosting a celebration and expo. He added that they were delighted to be in partnership with the CRA and that their goal was to always support minority businesses. He announced that they would be holding the event on August 8th at Miami-Dade College.

There were no further public comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Comments section of the agenda.

4. ADDITIONS, DELETIONS, DEFERRALS

City Manager Zerry Ihekwaba stated that, in view of the conversation they were having with folks related to Homestead Regional Park, the administration wished to withdraw CAR #4575, Bond Referendum Resolution, GO Bonds for Park & Roadway Improvements, and they hoped to revisit the item during a Special Call at the August 5th COW Meeting.

Additionally, they wished to add CAR #4680, a Resolution to amend funding for strategic plan consultant travel expenses. He added that, based on the existing contract that was established in December 2024, they needed an additional \$5,000.00 to cover travel expenses.

Mayor Losner asked for a motion to approve the withdrawal of CAR #4575.

A motion to approve the withdrawal of CAR #4575, Bond Referendum Resolution, GO Bonds for Park & Roadway Improvements, was made by Councilman Roth and seconded by Councilman Davis.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilman Roth	- Yes
Councilman Davis	- Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

- (a) CAR #4680 – RESOLUTION AMENDING FUNDING FOR STRATEGIC PLAN CONSULTANT TRAVEL EXPENSES (ADDENDUM 1)
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE AGREEMENT WITH BERRY, DUNN, MCNEIL & PARKER, LLC ("BERRYDUNN") FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A CITYWIDE STRATEGIC PLAN; AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO AND EXECUTE THIS FIRST AMENDMENT WITH BERRYDUNN; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mayor Losner asked for a motion to add CAR #4680 to the agenda.

A motion to add CAR #4680, Resolution Amending Funding for Strategic Plan Consultant Travel Expenses, was made by Councilman Roth and seconded by Vice Mayor Fletcher.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Ávila	-	Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	-	Yes
Councilman Davis	-	Yes
Councilman Roth	-	Yes
Councilman Canabal	-	Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	-	Yes
Mayor Losner	-	Yes

Motion carried.

Mayor Losner asked for a motion to approve the request contained in CAR #4680.

A motion to approve the request contained in CAR #4680, Resolution Amending Funding for Strategic Plan Consultant Travel Expenses, was made by Vice Mayor Fletcher and seconded by Councilman Davis.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Roll call:

Councilman Roth	-	Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	-	Yes
Councilman Davis	-	Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	-	Yes
Councilman Canabal	-	Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	-	Yes
Mayor Losner	-	Yes

Motion carried.

Mayor Losner stated that, if there were no objections, he would like to jump forward to Tab 25 as they had a city attorney standing by online who had been the lead attorney for that matter.

There were no objections; therefore, Council proceeded to Tab 25.

5. PRESENTATION

(a) CAR 4675 – FRS PRESENTATION (TAB 1)

Human Resources Director Babette Friedman reported that during the last budget process, Council requested that the administration explore additional pension plans for employees, and after evaluating several options, the Florida Retirement System (FRS) seems to be the most feasible option. Human Resources has initiated conversations with FRS to discuss the transitional period and the implications of moving over. They have also collaborated with the City attorneys' office to conduct four informational workshops for general employees comparing FRS to the current 401(a) plan. They also worked with the finance and budget team and completed a cost analysis of the impact for the potential transition to FRS if there is full participation by all 250 employees.

Director Friedman explained that the FRS was established in 1970 and currently has 646,000 active members. It is comprised of various state and local government entities, including school boards, cities, counties, and other public entities. There are two retirement benefit programs offered – the pension plan, and the investment plan. Once the City joins the FRS, the decision is irrevocable. Membership will be mandatory for all new full-time and part-time employees in positions that are not temporary. The mandatory employee contribution will be 3%, and the normal retirement for anyone who started the plan after 2011 is 8 years of service and 65 years old, or 33 years of service.

Director Friedman compared the current 401(a) versus the FRS pension: Currently, employee contributions under the 401(a) are discretionary. The employee can pick the percentage or dollar amount they want to contribute, but under the FRS, it will be a mandatory 3%. Additionally, the current City contribution is 8%, but under the FRS, they release their percentages yearly in July, and for the current year, the percentage is 14.03% for general employees, and 33.24% for senior management. The earnings on the 401(a) are based on contributions and the gains and losses based on the market. The FRS calculates general salary, overtime, any annual leave taken, and payouts up to 500 hours. The 401(a) does not calculate average earnings, but the FRS uses the highest 8 years as the salary calculation. The 401(a) has a 5-year vesting period, and the FRS has an 8-year vesting period for anyone who started after 2011.

As for the financial impact, Director Friedman stated that the worst-case scenario, if all 250 employees that are eligible transition to the FRS, could potentially be an annual cost of \$1.7 million, and for the general fund, that equals to about \$838,000.00. She noted that sworn officers were excluded due to collective bargaining agreements and employees enrolled in the general pension plan are not eligible.

Director Friedman continued, saying that they did employee focus groups and 150 employees participated in four FRS workshops. A total of 128 employees completed a follow-up survey in which they were asked if they would be interested in transferring to the FRS, and 93% indicated they would be interested. As for the benefits of transitioning to the FRS, they include cost predictability for the City because, while City contributions are required, the State provides oversight and manages the independent retirement plan. It is also very helpful in recruiting professionals since offering FRS makes the City more attractive to highly qualified

professionals, especially those with prior service who are already vested in the system. Additionally, the FRS provides improved retention since employees are likely to stay long-term due to the vesting pension benefits and the stability of the FRS. The plan also allows for portability within the public sector.

Director Friedman concluded by saying that the administration was looking for guidance from Council to determine if this was something they would like to move forward with.

Mayor Losner asked if there were any questions or comments from Council.

Vice Mayor Fletcher commented that he understood the benefits, but they needed to consider the annual contribution and decide if they want to take the risk in order to ensure that they are attracting the best talent and that the taxpayers are getting the right long-term investment for their money.

Mayor Losner asked if the administrative costs were included in the \$838,000.00.

Director Friedman responded that they were not.

City Manager Ihekwaba stated that if they were directed to proceed, the administration would come back to Council with an Ordinance for approval.

Mayor Losner asked if the hope was to have this in place for the upcoming fiscal year, and City Manager Ihekwaba responded that they would like to be able to transition by October 1st.

Mayor Losner asked for a motion to direct management to proceed.

A motion to direct management to proceed was made by Councilman Davis and seconded by Councilwoman Ávila.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Roll call:

Councilman Roth	-	Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	-	Yes
Councilman Davis	-	Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	-	Yes
Councilman Canabal	-	Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	-	Yes
Mayor Losner	-	Yes

Motion carried.

6. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- i. (a) JUNE 10, 2025, SPECIAL CALL MINUTES (TAB 2a)
- (b) JUNE 18, 2025, COUNCIL PRESENTATION CEREMONY MINUTES (TAB 2b)
- (c) JUNE 18, 2025, COUNCIL MINUTES (TAB 2c)
- (d) CAR #4608 – CITY OF HOMESTEAD SURPLUS PROPERTY (TAB 3)
- (e) CAR #4632 – POWER PLANT WATER SOFTENER SYSTEM ITQ #160999VT – 675 N. FLAGLER AVENUE (TAB 4)
- (f) CAR #4633 – JAMES ARCHER SMITH PARK FITNESS EQUIPMENT (300 NW 12TH ST) (TAB 5)
- (g) CAR #4638 – MAYOR ROSCOE WARREN MUNICIPAL PARK (1400 E. PALM DR.) NEW PICNIC SHELTER (TAB 6)
- (h) CAR #4639 – AUDUBON PARK PLAYGROUND (1441 S. AUDUBON DR.) (TAB 7)
- (i) CAR #4648 – PURCHASE THREE (3) FORD F-250 TRUCKS (TAB 8)
- (j) CAR #4649 – HOMESTEAD STREETS URBAN FORESTRY LANDSCAPE DESIGN SERVICES (TAB 9)

Mayor Losner asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Councilman Roth and seconded by Councilwoman Bailey.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilman Roth	- Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	- Yes
Councilman Davis	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

7. **PUBLIC HEARINGS – ORDINANCES, LAND USE ITEMS, ETC.**

- (a) **QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARINGS** – PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT THE FOLLOWING ITEM ON THE AGENDA IS QUASI-JUDICIAL IN NATURE. IF YOU WISH TO COMMENT UPON THIS ITEM, PLEASE INDICATE THE ITEM NUMBER YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADDRESS WHEN THE ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING THE QUASI-JUDICIAL ITEM IS MADE. AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PERSONS TO SPEAK ON THE ITEM WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE AFTER THE APPLICANT AND STAFF HAVE MADE THEIR PRESENTATIONS ON THE ITEM.

SWEARING IN. ALL TESTIMONY, INCLUDING PUBLIC TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE, WILL BE MADE UNDER OATH OR AFFIRMATION. ADDITIONALLY, EACH PERSON WHO GIVES TESTIMONY MAY BE SUBJECT TO CROSS-EXAMINATION. IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO BE EITHER CROSS-EXAMINED OR SWORN, YOUR

TESTIMONY WILL BE GIVEN ITS DUE WEIGHT. THE GENERAL PUBLIC WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO CROSS-EXAMINE WITNESSES, BUT THE PUBLIC MAY REQUEST THE COUNCIL TO ASK QUESTIONS OF STAFF OR WITNESSES ON THEIR BEHALF. THE FULL AGENDA PACKET ON EACH ITEM IS HEREBY ENTERED INTO THE RECORD. PERSONS REPRESENTING ORGANIZATIONS MUST PRESENT EVIDENCE OF THEIR AUTHORITY TO SPEAK FOR THE ORGANIZATION. FURTHER DETAILS OF THE QUASI-JUDICIAL PROCEDURES MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE CLERK. (IN ACCORDANCE WITH CODE SECTION 2-590, ANY LOBBYISTS MUST REGISTER BEFORE ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL ON THE FOLLOWING QUASI-JUDICIAL ITEM). AT THIS TIME, COUNCILMEMBERS MUST DISCLOSE ANY EX-PARTE COMMUNICATIONS CONCERNING TAB 10 ON THE QUASI-JUDICIAL AGENDA.

There were ex-parte communications on Tab 10 by the following councilmembers:

Mayor Losner
Councilman Roth
Councilwoman Bailey
Councilwoman Ávila
Councilman Davis

AT THIS TIME, THE CLERK WILL SWEAR IN ANY PERSON(S) WHO WISHES TO TESTIFY ON THE QUASI-JUDICIAL ITEM.

City Clerk Elizabeth Sewell swore in person(s) who wished to testify on the Quasi-Judicial item.

- i. CAR #4657 – PH2024-53 SITE PLAN AMENDMENT FOR JFM DEVELOPMENT CORP. (PALM COVE RESERVE SUBDIVISION) (TAB 10)
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED SITE PLAN, AS REQUESTED BY MILLROSE PROPERTIES FLORIDA, LLC, FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION TOTALLING TWO-HUNDRED NINETY-SIX (296) RESIDENTIAL TOWNHOME DWELLING UNITS LOCATED ON AN APPROXIMATELY 59.08 ACRE PARCEL OF LAND, GENERALLY LOCATED AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE INTERSECTION OF EAST PALM DRIVE (SW 344TH STREET) AND SE 12TH AVENUE (TENNESSEE ROAD), AS LEGALLY DESCRIBED IN EXHIBIT "A;" AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney James White read the above Resolution title for CAR #4657 into the public record.

Representing the applicant, Hugo Arza, with an address of 701 Brickell Avenue, Miami, FL, presented renderings of the proposed townhomes. He explained that Lennar was proposing to change the roof line from a flat roof to a pitched roof, a choice more consistent with neighboring communities and typical South Florida architecture. He noted that they will still have balconies in the rear of the property and abundant windows. He stated that they had staff's recommendation of approval for the project, with conditions, which they accept. He

urged Council to allow them to continue moving forward with the project.

Mayor Losner asked Development Services Director Debora Storch if she had anything to add to Mr. Arza's presentation and whether she would like to touch on the conditions that were part of the approval recommendation.

Director Storch commented that the conditions were basic conditions about engineering and things that need to be provided that do not even need to be conditions because the plans will not be approved if those conditions are not met.

Councilwoman Ávila asked Mr. Garza where the American flag would be located.

Mr. Arza responded that it would be located in the amenity pool area.

Councilwoman Bailey stated that she did not have an issue with the proposed roof design, but she missed the varied facade finishes featured in the previous elevations which helped differentiate where one unit ended and the next one began.

Mr. Arza noted that there were vertical breaks in the design, but he was happy to pass along any suggestions.

Councilwoman Bailey asked if the units would have impact windows and doors.

Mr. Arza replied that if that was one of the conditions on the original site plan, they were not changing it.

Vice Mayor Fletcher commented that he was tired of the same brown earth tones.

Mr. Arza responded that they were proposing a palette of colors.

Director Storch mentioned that when they were approved for the previous project, the condition was that the townhomes would have impact windows.

Mr. Arza stated that they were carrying the conditions forward and they would honor it.

Attorney White stated that he would like to read into the record some conditions that needed to be carried over from the original site plan as follows:

- All townhome dwelling units constructed within the approved residential subdivision shall include hurricane impact windows.
- The applicant shall install a flagpole at two roundabout dedicated areas located along the main spine road at a maximum height and size pursuant to City code.
- The applicant shall coordinate with Miami-Dade County's RER-DERM agency to determine viability of constructing a pedestrian walking pathway which shall be

located along the eastern boundary of the main spine road running adjacent and the full length of the 20.90 acre existing wetland preserve area. The applicant shall provide staff with the written evidence from Miami-Dade County's DERM agency indicating their preferred result prior to obtaining a building permit.

Mayor Losner clarified that these conditions were not new, but an affirmation that these conditions were carrying forward to the site plan.

Mayor Losner asked for a motion to approve with the conditions listed above.

A motion to approve CAR #4657, PH2024-53, Site Plan Amendment for JFM Development Corp. (Palm Cove Reserve Subdivision), with the conditions stated above was made by Councilwoman Bailey and seconded by Vice Mayor Fletcher.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Ávila	- Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilman Roth	- Yes
Councilman Davis	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

8. LEGISLATIVE MATTERS

I. FIRST READINGS

1. CAR #4418 – FORECLOSURE AND VACANT PROPERTY ORDINANCE REPEAL AND REPLACE (TAB 11)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTIONS 19-110, 19-113, 19-114, 19-115, 19-116, AND 19-118 OF THE CITY CODE TO REVISE THE REGISTRATION FEES, REVISING THE MAINTENANCE AND SECURITY REQUIREMENTS, CLARIFYING THE CITY'S IMMUNITY FOR INSPECTIONS, AND ADDING A SCHEDULE OF CIVIL PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Ordinance title for CAR #4418 into the public

record.

Mayor Losner asked if there were any objections to waiving the staff report and there were none.

Mayor Losner asked for a motion to approve Tab 11.

A motion to approve CAR #4418, Foreclosure and Vacant Property Ordinance Repeal and Replace, was made by Vice Mayor Fletcher and seconded by Councilman Davis.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	- Yes
Councilman Roth	- Yes
Councilman Davis	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

2. CAR #4674 – AMENDING PARKS & ROADWAY TRUST FUND TO INCLUDE WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS (TAB 12)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTION 2-553, "USE OF TRUST FUNDS" OF DIVISION 6, "PARKS AND ROADWAY TRUST FUND" OF ARTICLE IX, "FINANCE" OF CHAPTER 2, "ADMINISTRATION" OF THE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES TO ADD WATER AND SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AS A USE OF TRUST FUND MONIES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Ordinance title for CAR #4674 into the public record.

Mayor Losner asked if there were any objections to waiving the staff report and there were none.

Mayor Losner asked if there were any questions or comments from Council and there were

none.

Mayor Losner asked for a motion to approve Tab 12.

A motion to approve CAR #4674, Amending Parks & Roadway Trust Fund to Include Water and Sewer Infrastructure Improvements, was made by Councilman Davis and seconded by Vice Mayor Fletcher.

Councilman Roth asked how they could prevent someone from using all the funds on one project?

Mayor Losner responded that it would require self-restraint from whoever is on the Council at the time.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Roll call:

Councilman Roth	- Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	- Yes
Councilman Davis	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

ii. SECOND READINGS

1. CAR #4590 – SHOPPING CART CONTROL PLAN (TAB 13)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, AMENDING SECTION 17-26 OF THE CITY CODE ENTITLED "SHOPPING CART CONTROL PLAN" BY ADDING DEFINITIONS, PROVIDING FOR METHODS OF COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT AGAINST VIOLATIONS, EXEMPTIONS, AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO REMOVE, STORE AND DISPOSE OF SHOPPING CARTS, AND REQUIRING SHOPPING CARTS TO DISPLAY OWNERSHIP INFORMATION; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CODE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Ordinance title for CAR #4590 into the public record.

Vice Mayor Fletcher left the meeting at 7:01 p.m.

Mayor Losner asked if there were any objections to waiving the staff report and there were none.

Mayor Losner asked for a motion to approve Tab 13.

A motion to approve CAR #4590, Shopping Cart Control Plan, was made by Councilwoman Ávila and seconded by Councilman Davis.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Mayor Losner asked if there were any questions or comments from Council and there were none.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Ávila	- Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilman Davis	- Yes
Councilman Roth	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Absent
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

2. CAR #4641 – ORDINANCE RENAMING CITY DEPARTMENTS AND ESTABLISHING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND DIRECTOR (TAB 14)

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD CODE OF ORDINANCES BY AMENDING SECTION 2-321, "CITY DEPARTMENTS CREATED," OF DIVISION 1, "GENERALLY," OF ARTICLE V, "DEPARTMENTS," OF CHAPTER 2, "ADMINISTRATION," TO RENAME CERTAIN DEPARTMENTS WITHIN THE CITY; FURTHER AMENDING ARTICLE V, "DEPARTMENTS," OF CHAPTER 2, ADMINISTRATION, BY CREATING DIVISION 3, "PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT," TO INCLUDE PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT AND THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Ordinance title for CAR #4641 into the public record.

Mayor Losner asked if there were any objections to waiving the staff report and there were none.

Mayor Losner asked for a motion to approve Tab 14.

A motion to approve CAR #4641, Ordinance Renaming City Departments and Establishing the Department of Public Works and Director, was made by Councilwoman Ávila and seconded by Councilman Davis.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Bailey	-	Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	-	Yes
Councilman Davis	-	Yes
Councilman Roth	-	Yes
Councilman Canabal	-	Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	-	Absent
Mayor Losner	-	Yes

Motion carried.

9. **RESOLUTIONS**

- i. CAR #4653 – HEALTH, DENTAL, AND VISION INSURANCE RENEWAL FY2025-2026 (TAB 15)
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING A GROUP HEALTH INSURANCE CONTRACT WITH CIGNA, AS INSURER; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Resolution title for CAR #4653 into the public record.

Vice Mayor Fletcher returned to the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Mayor Losner asked for a motion to approve Tab 15.

A motion to approve CAR #4653, Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance Renewal FY2025-2026, was made by Councilwoman Ávila and seconded by Councilwoman Bailey.

Human Resources Director Babette Friedman reported that they received three competitive bids from United Healthcare, the current provider, Cigna, and Aetna. United Healthcare provided a savings of negative 2.3%, Cigna offered a negative 5.2%, and Aetna offered a negative 4.4%. They asked for some enhancements, which included decreasing the deductible from \$750 to \$350 on the core plan, and for the family coverage plan, reducing the deductible from \$1,500 to \$700 for out-of-pocket maxes, decreasing the rates for employee only from \$5,000 to \$4,000, and for family coverage from \$10,000 to \$8,000. For prescription coverage, tier 3, which is for specialty drugs, is being reduced from \$75 to \$50. With those changes, United Healthcare provided an increase of .8%, Cigna provided a negative 4.1%, and Aetna provided a flat rate. Other enhancements with the plan include a wellness fund. As for the dental and vision plans, they are making no changes.

As part of the proposals, a discretionary fund is included, which they plan to use to establish an on-site clinic for employees and their covered dependents. The clinic will be staffed by a third-party healthcare provider and will provide comprehensive care at the workplace. She shared a recent example of an on-site dermatology service, which drew participation from 34 employees. Remarkably, one case of melanoma was identified, so these initiatives are very important.

Director Friedman wrapped up by recommending a switch to Cigna Healthcare for the 2025–2026 medical, dental, and vision insurance plans. The decision was based on projected savings of approximately \$378,000 and Cigna’s offer of the highest discretionary fund, totaling \$500,000.

Councilwoman Bailey commented that the wellness fund was an amazing idea. She asked that staff consider other services, such as mammography, etc.

Mayor Losner stated that this was another big piece in moving forward to become more stable and predictable with their future expenses.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Roll call:

Councilman Davis	-	Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	-	Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	-	Yes
Councilman Roth	-	Yes
Councilman Canabal	-	Absent

Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

- ii. CAR #4665 – MCCI LASERFICHE PLATFORM UPGRADE SERVICES (TAB 16)
- A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, APPROVING SERVICE ORDER 36435 FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES TO UPGRADE THE LASERFICHE PLATFORM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$47,992.50 AND SERVICE WORK ORDER 36434 FOR LICENSE UPGRADES IN THE AMOUNT OF \$29,504.33 PURSUANT TO MASTER SERVICES AGREEMENT 28825, AS AMENDED, WITH MCCI, LLC; PROVIDING FOR AN AGGREGATE EXPENSE OF \$84,701.26; AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE SERVICE WORK ORDERS THEREWITH; UTILIZING PRICING FROM OMNIA-NCPA 01-162; EXEMPTING THE PURCHASE FROM COMPETITIVE BIDDING PURSUANT TO SECTION 2-411.1(a)(5) OF THE CITY CODE; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Resolution title for CAR #4665 into the public record.

Mayor Losner asked if there were any objections to waiving the staff report and there were none.

Mayor Losner asked if there were any questions or comments from Council and there were none.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

A motion to approve CAR #4665, MCCI Laserfiche Platform Upgrade Services, was made by Councilwoman Ávila and seconded by Councilwoman Bailey.

Roll call:

Councilman Roth	- Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	- Yes
Councilman Davis	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

At this time, Mayor Losner suggested moving ahead to Tab 27, provided there were no objections, to accommodate the individuals who had requested the discussion so they were not delayed any longer.

There were no objections; therefore, Council proceeded to Tab 27.

- iii. CAR #4667 – SETTLEMENT OF ALL CLAIMS MADE BY MARCELLO MARINO (TAB 17)
**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA,
APPROVING THE SETTLEMENT OF ALL CLAIMS MADE BY MARCELO MARINO;
PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Resolution title for CAR #4667 into the public record.

A motion to approve CAR #4667, Settlement of all Claims made by Marcello Marino, was made by Councilman Roth and seconded by Vice Mayor Fletcher.

Roll call:

Councilman Davis	- Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilman Roth	- Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

- iv. CAR #4669 – SETTLEMENT OF ALL CLAIMS MADE BY VERONICA SALCIDO AND MARY GRANIELA (TAB 18)
**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA,
APPROVING THE SETTLEMENT OF ALL CLAIMS MADE BY VERONICA SALCIDO AND
MARY GRANIELA; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN
EFFECTIVE DATE.**

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Resolution title for CAR #4669 into the public record.

A motion to approve CAR #4669, Settlement of all Claims made by Veronica Salcido and Mary Graniela, was made by Councilwoman Bailey and seconded by Councilwoman Ávila.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Ávila	-	Yes
Councilman Davis	-	Yes
Councilman Roth	-	Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	-	Yes
Councilman Canabal	-	Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	-	Yes
Mayor Losner	-	Yes

Motion carried.

- v. CAR #4670 – SETTLEMENT OF ALL CLAIMS MADE BY ALTONIA L. ASBERRY AND ANTWONNICA L. HOLMES
(TAB 19)
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE SETTLEMENT OF ALL CLAIMS MADE BY ALTONIA L. ASBERRY & ANTWONNICA L. HOLMES; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Resolution title for CAR #4670 into the public record.

A motion to approve CAR #4670, Settlement of all Claims made by Altonia L. Asberry and Antwonica L. Holmes, was made by Councilman Roth and seconded by Councilwoman Bailey.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Bailey	-	Yes
Councilman Roth	-	Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	-	Yes
Councilman Davis	-	Yes
Councilman Canabal	-	Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	-	Yes
Mayor Losner	-	Yes

Motion carried.

- vi. CAR #4668 – SETTLEMENT OF ALL CLAIMS MADE BY FRALON WARREN (TAB 20)
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE SETTLEMENT OF ALL CLAIMS MADE BY FRALON WARREN; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Resolution title for CAR #4668 into the public record.

A motion to approve CAR #4668, Settlement of all Claims made by Fralon Warren, was made by Vice Mayor Fletcher and seconded by Councilman Roth.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Ávila	-	Yes
Councilman Davis	-	Yes
Councilman Roth	-	Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	-	Yes
Councilman Canabal	-	Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	-	Yes
Mayor Losner	-	Yes

Motion carried.

- vii. CAR #4671 – FDOT TURF AND LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE JOINT PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT RENEWAL (TAB 21)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ACCEPT AND EXECUTE THE FIRST RENEWAL OF THE TURF AND LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE JOINT PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT WITH THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT); PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Resolution title for CAR #4671 into the public record.

A motion to approve CAR #4671, FDOT Turf and Landscape Maintenance Joint Participation Agreement Renewal, was made by Councilwoman Bailey and seconded by Vice Mayor Fletcher.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Bailey	-	Yes
Councilman Roth	-	Yes
Councilman Davis	-	Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	-	Yes
Councilman Canabal	-	Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	-	Yes
Mayor Losner	-	Yes

Motion carried.

- viii. CAR #4637 – ADOPTION OF PROPOSED OPERATING MILLAGE RATE AND DEBT MILLAGE RATE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 (TAB 22)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, ESTABLISHING A PROPOSED OPERATING MILLAGE RATE OF AD VALOREM TAXATION; ESTABLISHING A PROPOSED MILLAGE RATE FOR DEBT SERVICE ON THE GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2025, AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2026; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Resolution title for CAR #4637 into the public record.

Finance Director Carlos Perez reported that, this year, the values for the City are \$6.3 billion, which represents an increase of over 13% from the prior year. Staff recommends leaving the operating millage rate the same as the current rate, which is 5.9604%, and those rates would generate \$36 million in property tax revenues citywide. That would be approximately \$32 million for the general fund and \$3.8 million for the CRA, which translates to an increase from the prior year in property tax revenues of \$3.7 million for the general fund and just over \$600,000 for the CRA. As far as the debt service, which is what generates the property taxes to pay the existing general obligation funds, since the debt service remains constant, whenever property values go up, that millage rate goes down, so there is a recommendation to reduce it down to .2445 mills. He added that, every year, Council challenges staff to try to reduce the millage rate by 1 or 2%, and they have been successful in doing that in the past, but he wanted to put into context that, currently, the average assessed property value in the City of Homestead is \$171,000, so giving a 1% reduction in the millage rate only gives relief to a taxpayer of about \$10, but conversely, it is a loss of revenues to the City of \$381,000.

Mayor Losner stated that that was a very important perspective for the public to keep in mind since we are all sensitive to taxes and tax rates.

Mayor Losner asked if there were any questions or comments from Council and there were none.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

A motion to approve CAR #4637, Adoption of Proposed Operating Millage Rate and Debt Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2026, was made by Councilwoman Ávila and seconded by Councilman Davis.

Roll call:

Councilman Roth	-	Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	-	Yes
Councilman Davis	-	Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	-	Yes

Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

- ix. CAR #4575 – BOND REFERENDUM RESOLUTION – GO BONDS FOR PARK & ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS (TAB 23)
- A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, CALLING FOR A REFERENDUM REGARDING THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS BY THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$185,200,000 FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINANCING THE COSTS OF CONSTRUCTION OF PARK AND ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS; PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF SAID REFERENDUM; PROVIDING FOR THE ADOPTION OF REPRESENTATIONS; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

- x. CAR #4546 – AGREEMENT FOR FORECLOSURE AND VACANT PROPERTY (TAB 24)
- A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, APPROVING A PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD AND HERA PROPERTY REGISTRY, LLC FOR THE PROVISION OF FORECLOSURE PROPERTY REGISTRATION SERVICES IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHAPTER 19, ARTICLE VII, OF THE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Assistant City Manager Kemarr Brown reported that staff was looking to engage Hera Properties for a term of three years, and this would be a zero-dollar fiscal impact to the City; however, it does proffer a revenue share opportunity with Hera. Essentially, Hera provides a platform where the Code Compliance Department will be able to engage and monitor foreclosed and vacant properties throughout the City. In the event of a foreclosure, property owners and/or banks will be required to register on the platform. For residential properties, they are looking at a registration fee of \$200, and for commercial properties, they are looking at a registration fee of \$300. For the first year of the agreement, Hera will retain \$75 for both residential and commercial properties, and in years two and three, the administrative fee that they will retain will be \$100.

Mayor Losner asked if the property at 444 NW 21st Street would be a good example of something that would fall under this umbrella.

Code Compliance Director Jose Perez clarified that this was for foreclosed properties only.

Mayor Losner asked how these properties would come onto the City's radar.

Director Perez responded that the CEO, Mr. Johnson, from Hera Property Management was present and could elaborate on how the program works.

CJ Johnson, CEO of Hera Property Registry, with an address of 1917 South Harbor City Boulevard, Melbourne, FL, explained that they have different data sources, and they constantly scrape data every night to determine every filing that happens within the City of Homestead, which immediately gets uploaded into their system. They have over 30,000 bank contacts, servicers, property preservation companies, and local contacts that get immediately notified through their system that a foreclosure property has been filed and whether there are any violations, and they are informed that they need to comply with the code and register the property.

Mayor Losner asked how far back they would go to notify the lenders.

Mr. Johnson responded that they would go as far back as the ordinance allows.

Mayor Losner asked if there were any questions or comments from Council.

Councilman Davis stated that he understood the foreclosed upon properties, but what about the properties that are abandoned?

Mr. Johnson replied that it depends on the ordinance and the code. They work with over 200 cities throughout the country, and each one has a varying ordinance, so the first thing they do is work with staff on the ordinance to make sure it complies with national standards, and if it falls within the ordinance, they have various AI tools that make determinations and provide feedback to staff to help determine if the property is actually vacant so that the issues can be resolved, not only through the property address, but through the owner information as well.

City Manager Ihekwaba stated that the administration would be coming back with a different ordinance in the next couple of months that addresses abandoned properties with squatters and perhaps utilize Hera to track those as well.

Vice Mayor Fletcher shared that there is a house in his neighborhood that is in probate and has been vacant for approximately four or five years. He asked if there was anything they could do in those cases.

City Manager Ihekwaba responded that perhaps when they define the squatter's ordinance, they could create a section that addresses different types of abandoned properties.

Councilwoman Ávila asked if Hera would collect violation and penalty fees.

Mr. Johnson responded that they collect registration fees and, in many instances, there are late fees and civil penalties, which are calculated through their system, and they remit that portion to the City according to the contract.

A motion to approve CAR #4546, Agreement for Foreclosure and Vacant Property, was made by Councilwoman Ávila and seconded by Councilman Roth.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Ávila	- Yes
Councilman Roth	- Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilman Davis	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

At this time, Council returned to Tab 17.

- xi. CAR #4664 – AUTHORIZATION OF COMMERCIAL SALE AGREEMENT WITH FLANIGAN’S ENTERPRISES, INC. (TAB 25)

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE COMMERCIAL CONTRACT AND ADDENDUM BETWEEN THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD AND FLANIGAN'S ENTERPRISES, INC. FOR THE SALE OF APPROXIMATELY 2.429 ACRES OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTY; AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE ANY NECESSARY DOCUMENTS TO COMPLETE THE TRANSACTION; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Resolution title for CAR #4664 into the public record.

City Manager Zerry Ihekwaba reported that in February 2025, the City issued a Notice of Disposal of Property in the CRA. On March 4th, Flanigan’s Enterprises submitted a proposal for the acquisition of approximately 2.4 acres of the old City Hall Library site at a per acre price of \$974,771.00, or a total price of \$2,332,627.00. The per acre price was consistent with the most recent appraisal that was completed at the time for 17+ acres overall for the former City Hall property. The proposal includes approximately 8,500 square feet of restaurant space, 3,200 square feet of retail space, and approximately 120 parking spaces. On April 16th, the City Council adopted Resolution R2025-04-40 and directed staff to negotiate a sales contract. Pursuant to that direction, the attached Resolution approves the final commercial contract,

as well as an addendum, with Flanigan's for the sale of the library site for a total price of \$2,332,627.00. The agreement sets forth the terms and conditions for closing, including submission deadlines, escrow deposits, and obligations regarding due diligence, title and access. The contract also requires Flanigan's to develop the site as a full-service restaurant and retail liquor store subject to certain post-closing obligations related to platting and development.

Mayor Losner asked if there was anyone present on behalf of Flanigan's.

Representing Flanigan's, Jose Fuentes, with Becker & Poliakoff, 2525 Ponce de Leon Blvd., Coral Gables, FL, stated that they appreciated the hard work and collaboration from the City. He thanked staff for their efforts.

Vice Mayor Fletcher commented that he had heard there may have been some discussions about the demolition costs possibly increasing, which could extend the timeline, and he was wondering, pending approval from the Mayor and Council, if they may be willing to apply a credit toward the cost of the demolition. He mentioned that he believed the current cost was around \$100,000.00 and suggested a possible 50% credit.

Mayor Losner stated that they could prepare an additional addendum to include a \$50,000.00 credit to the buyer, which would be reflected in the closing statement.

A motion to prepare an additional addendum to include a \$50,000.00 credit to the buyer, which would be reflected in the closing statement, was made by Vice Mayor Fletcher and seconded by Councilman Roth.

City Attorney Pearl stated that he would incorporate the credit as an amendment to the existing addendum, eliminating the need to present another addendum to Council for approval. He requested confirmation from Council, which Mayor Losner confirmed.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Fuentes expressed his appreciation to Council.

Councilman Roth asked Mr. Fuentes whether the demolition needed to wait until the permitting process was complete. Perhaps they could conduct the demolition in advance and simultaneously providing the City with a \$50,000 credit, as the demolition would ultimately be required once all approvals were obtained.

Mr. Fuentes responded that, while the exact timeline is yet to be determined, this agreement will initiate the process and set things in motion.

Mayor Losner stated that, given the City's procurement restrictions and the time that it takes to bid it out, they would probably be ahead of the City even with the land use and other issues. He added that it was his understanding that where the City is able to do so, permits will be issued based on a hold harmless agreement from Flanigan's to expedite the process.

City Attorney Pearl mentioned that there was an amendment reflecting that if Flanigan's were to fail to develop the property, the City could buy it back at the purchase price.

Roll call:

Councilman Roth	- Yes
Councilman Davis	- Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	- Yes
Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

At this time, Council returned to Tab 1.

- xii. CAR #4663 – BLAKEY PARK PLAYGROUND (600 SW 14 AVE) (TAB 26)
A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE PROCUREMENT AND INSTALLATION OF NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT WITH SHADE LOCATED AT BLAKEY PARK UTILIZING THE CITY OF CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA'S CONTRACT AWARD VIA OMNIA PARTNERS CONTRACT 201700135 FOR PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES PROVIDED BY KOMPAN, INC. IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$579,888.56; AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE THE AGREEMENT AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS THEREWITH; PURSUANT TO CITY CODE SECTION 2-411.1(A)(5), "EXEMPTIONS FROM COMPETITIVE BIDDING;" PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Attorney Matthew Pearl read the above Resolution title for CAR #4663 into the public record.

Councilwoman Bailey commented that the design was phenomenal and she loved all the mixes. She added that the upkeep was much better and her only ask was that they make sure they have enough staff to make any necessary repairs.

City Attorney Pearl requested an authorization for a 10% contingency on this procurement as a portion had been funded through grant funds that may require some additional expenditures.

A motion to approve CAR #4663, Blakey Park Playground, and authorizing a 10% contingency on this procurement, was made by Councilwoman Bailey and seconded by Councilwoman Ávila.

Mayor Losner opened the Public Hearing.

There were no comments; therefore, Mayor Losner closed the Public Hearing.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilman Roth	- Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	- Yes
Councilman Davis	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

10. DISCUSSION

- (a) CAR #4612 – CODE COMPLIANCE LIEN MITIGATION REQUEST FOR PROPERTY OWNER – 1105-7 SW 2ND STREET (TAB 27)

City Manager Ihekwaba reported that there had been a number of code violations and citations with liens on the subject property prior to the acquisition by the current owner, and subsequently, since the acquisition, additional citations and liens have been placed on the property. The property has been administratively looked into and granted a 25% reduction. The property owner decided to appear before the special magistrate on March 27th, and this resulted in an additional reduction of the lien up to the maximum allowed by code, which is 85%. The property owner expressed interest in addressing the Council that evening to see if there was a possibility of an additional reduction.

Samuel Mekras, of 7750 SW 78th Court in Miami, FL, appeared before the Council alongside Jacob Zhang, who resides at 13351 SW 36th Court in Davie, FL. Mr. Mekras explained that Mr. Zhang's wife purchased the property without realizing the full extent of its code violations. Although she was informed of some issues prior to the purchase and believed they would be easy to resolve, she was unaware that the property had four separate violations under a single code case dating back to 2014. Since 2015, fines had accrued at a rate of \$50 per day for each violation, resulting in a total of \$683,000—far exceeding the property's estimated value of \$400,000.

Over the course of two years, they worked to bring the property into compliance. One major obstacle was the lack of a business tax receipt, which they could not obtain due to the existing

violations. They were forced to pull multiple permits, invest thousands of dollars in a new roof, and legalize prior unpermitted work done by the previous owner. Despite these efforts and a mortgage on the property, even with a reduced fine, they found themselves unable to sell the property and cover the penalties. They hoped the Council might consider a further reduction, which they would be willing to pay if it were within their financial means.

Mr. Mekras noted that the original violations were relatively minor: a broken window, shoes left on top of a wall-mounted A/C unit, peeling paint, which had been addressed without a permit, requiring an after-the-fact permit, and accumulated garbage in both the front and rear of the property. It took nearly three years to resolve all the issues. The property is now fully compliant and currently serves as housing for low-income individuals.

Mayor Losner asked when the property had been acquired, and Mr. Mekras responded that it was acquired in 2022.

Mayor Losner asked about the amount the fines had been reduced through the City's normal process.

Mr. Mekras replied that they had been reduced from \$746,000 to \$115,000.

Code Compliance Director Jose Perez clarified that the original reduction amount was approximately \$568,779.75. Then, it was further reduced by \$114,204.75. These amounts were reduced from the total lien amount of \$758,186.

Mayor Losner asked if there were any violations that were still pending and had not been addressed.

Director Perez explained that, currently, there were violations on the property that were not accruing any fines.

Mr. Mekras asked what the violations were.

Director Perez responded that there was a commercial trailer stored on the property, several potholes on the parking lot/driveway entrance, and the property needs to be pressure washed, and some other miscellaneous aesthetics at the property.

Mr. Mekras stated that there are three duplex properties in a u-shape that share a parking lot, and the trailer belongs to a tenant in the neighboring property.

Councilwoman Ávila noted that it was important that seasoned real estate investors take extra care to monitor and manage their tenants' property conditions. She added that it should not take three years to resolve the type of violations that were discussed. When a property is purchased, title companies disclose open violations, even if there are no fines being accrued, and the purchaser is expected to resolve them. Most investors will purchase a property with

existing violations, probably at a reduced price, with the understanding that they will remedy the issues, but when years pass without them being resolved, whose responsibility is it? She mentioned that it was also important that the process allows a property owner who decides to sell the opportunity to try to fix the property's issues and pay the fines if they are able to do so. In the current scenario, the value of the property would not even be sufficient enough to be able to make the City whole. Perhaps there is something they should be looking at, such as a percentage of the value, or a cap on how much the City is able to fine, up to a certain amount; however, she cannot support any reduction that the district representative would not also be supportive of. You cannot be an absentee property owner making money off residents and not enforcing the code.

Director Perez noted that there is a procedure in place, and when the previous owner was in the process of selling, they could have gone through the mitigation process and remedied the violations before selling the property.

Councilman Roth stated that, many years ago, he was in a similar situation, and when he received the final ruling from the magistrate, he paid the fines because he accepted the fact that it was his responsibility. He commented that their property appears to be on the easternmost part, and they technically have no driveways assigned to them, essentially landlocking them. Additionally, the folio shows that the owners of the two front properties are responsible for the driveways, so he is not sure they are citing the right property owner for the potholes in the driveway.

Director Perez commented that, since they all share the common area, it is a shared responsibility amongst the three property owners.

Councilman Roth asked how it was considered a common area when it was owned by three separate owners. He added that he understands the philosophy in a condominium association or a townhouse association, but he would not consider it a common area.

Director Perez stated that staff could review the matter so they could provide further clarification.

Mr. Mekras commented that they were willing to pressure wash the property, but the trailer that was in the common area belonged to the other tenants.

Councilwoman Ávila stated that she agreed with Councilman Roth, and unless there is a covenant that is running with the land that is tying the three property owners together in sharing the expenses and any penalties, violations, and fines that arise, she does not know how they can legally pin one property owner that does not even have the parking lot on their folio with that violation, so it should definitely be looked into.

Mayor Losner mentioned that it seemed like they were going to need to look at the ownership history to see how this came to be with no on-site parking, for how long, and when, but there

was no inference that the fines that were sought to be further reduced do not belong to this property. He added that during his years on the Council, he could only recall considering this kind of request maybe once or twice and the facts did not warrant any further reduction. He noted that the City had been very generous on the recent overhaul of the code and in providing opportunities for residents to address violations, but there was an admission on the record that they knew of the violations and closed on the property anyway. He stated that he was not inclined to go forward, adding that the City had too much cleanup to do, and if they set the precedent of relieving them of significant monetary fines for items that went on for years, the City would have no basis to hold anyone else's feet to the fire.

Mayor Losner asked for a motion to deny the request.

Councilman Davis stated that he agreed with his colleagues' comments, particularly when they think about the quality of life for the individuals living there. He commented that they deserve a stable place to live and that he understands that while this may not be a high-income area, the City does better than that for other residents.

A motion to deny CAR #4612, Code Compliance Lien Mitigation Request for Property Owner – 1105-7 SW 2nd Street, was made by Councilwoman Ávila and seconded by Mayor Losner.

Roll call:

Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	- Yes
Councilman Roth	- Yes
Councilman Davis	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

At this time, Council proceeded to Tab 24.

11. BUSINESS FROM THE CITY MANAGER

City Manager Ihekwaba expressed his appreciation to staff, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Roth for their participation at the annual hurricane preparedness drive on July 12th. He gave a shout-out to Gretchell Cano for an excellent job coordinating the drive. He stated that the collaborators from Farm Share and GM were so happy with the way it turned out that they instantly offered the City a repeat next year at no cost.

He reported that, on June 25th, they hosted the inaugural Conversations with the Community at the Dickinson Community Center, and an issue of great concern came up regarding the pedestrian gate openings at Pioneer Village, so they are hosting a subsequent follow-up

conversation with the residents which will be held on Friday, August 1st, at 5:15 p.m. at the CRA building.

Additionally, he reported that the county tax collector reached out to the administration with an offer to open a tax collector's office in Homestead, which will encompass a drivers' license renewal center. Preliminary information is that they are looking at using one of the vacant offices at Homestead Station.

Also, on July 18th, they will be hosting a mobile DMV event at the Community Center from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

He also announced that the Army Corps of Engineers reached out to staff and informed them that they were working on some type of flood mitigation measures related to storm surges and they would be coming to Homestead on July 23rd to hold a community meeting at the Dickinson Community Center. He stated that staff would post the information online and that there would be a subsequent webinar for those who were not able to attend.

City Manager Ihekwaba further announced that Mayor Losner would be holding a meet and greet on July 30th at 10:00 a.m. with the supervisor of elections, Alina Garcia, at Mario's.

He mentioned that they were planning to have the unveiling of the mural at Losner Park on July 31st at 6:00 p.m.

Finally, he recognized the Parks and Recreation staff for doing such a great job at Blakey Park and added that this month was Parks and Recreation month and they had been hosting a series of events citywide. He urged everyone to participate in the events.

12. CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

City Attorney Matthew Pearl commented that there had been a settlement of portions of the PFAS litigation that the City is a participant in, and the City will be receiving several million dollars as a result. There will be documents that need to be executed on a timely basis in order to facilitate the transfer of the money and he was hoping he could get a motion from the Council to authorize the City Manager to execute the documents as they come in.

A motion to authorize the City Manager to execute the documents on the PFAS litigation settlement as they come in was made by Councilwoman Ávila and seconded by Vice Mayor Fletcher.

Roll call:

Councilman Roth	-	Yes
Councilwoman Ávila	-	Yes
Councilman Davis	-	Yes

Councilwoman Bailey	- Yes
Councilman Canabal	- Absent
Vice Mayor Fletcher	- Yes
Mayor Losner	- Yes

Motion carried.

13. REPORTS OF MAYOR AND COUNCIL

a. COUNCILMAN ROTH

Councilman Roth asked for an update on Flagler from Lucy Street down to Krome Avenue and Campbell Drive.

City Manager Ihekwaba responded that the initial transfer of funds coming in by the end of the fiscal year was up to \$3 million and he reminded Council that they were coming from PFAS, so the administration's recommendation would be to channel the funds to the Flagler project. He stated that the water and sewer installation along that corridor has been very challenging. The County has a roadway improvement project and they want to engage them on an interlocal joint participation project. They will pay for the resurfacing and the City will pay for the installation to the extent that it is feasible. That will resolve the problem on Flagler and, in addition, it resolves the water and sewer challenge east of Flagler. The old City Hall site is tied into a pump station that ties into the force main of Flagler, so this preempts any issues that Flanigan's would have.

Councilman Roth if it was from Krome Avenue to 8th Street.

City Manager Ihekwaba responded that it was from the south end of Flagler going all the way to Campbell Drive and stated that they reached out to the County about segments north of that, and the County informed them that that segment of Flagler was not within the CIP as of yet. Staff thought that they could use the money from PFAS to address the north segment first, but the County said they could not do that because it is a CIP project that is already funded, approved, and appropriated for the segment on the south side, and the north side will be a future CIP project. The County decided to prioritize the south side, although the north side needs it more.

Councilman Roth asked if they could get a time frame from them.

City Manager Ihekwaba replied that they will continue to monitor their capital improvement planning efforts.

Councilman Roth inquired if they could get Kionne McGhee to move up the timeline.

City Manager Ihekwaba responded that they will reach out to them to ask about the timeline.

Councilman Roth thanked everyone who participated in organizing the 4th of July event. He added that they need to extend the fireworks show.

b. COUNCILWOMAN ÁVILA

Councilwoman Ávila congratulated all the parents who were making it through the summer safe and sound and announced that they have several back-to-school supply distribution events going on. On August 2nd, the City of Homestead will be hosting one from 4:00 to 6:00. In addition to that, in District 5, community members, including Waterstone representatives, Victor Valladares and friends, Mayor Losner and family, South State Bank, Impact Signs, and This is for the Kids, have come together to provide school supplies. The District 5 community event in Waterstone is open to the public and will be held from 1:00 to 4:00. There will also be one in Malibu Bay around the same time.

c. COUNCILWOMAN BAILEY

Councilwoman Bailey commented that she was going to share some back-to-school events as well, but since that had been done, she encouraged parents to hang in there and enjoy the rest of the summer.

d. COUNCILMAN CANABAL

Councilman Davis gave kudos to staff on the hurricane preparedness event, which was outstanding and very well received. It was such an important event and he appreciated everyone's professionalism.

He commented that mosquito control had come to his attention and inquired about what the City was doing about it.

City Manager Ihekwaba replied that discussions with the County have been ongoing, but the challenge is getting them to come on a more routine schedule. He noted that earlier that afternoon, they had a conversation with the County's director of solid waste, who oversees mosquito control efforts. The last time they came was prior to the 4th of July event, but they claim they have come to Homestead 21 times since June 15th, but his position is that targeting specific places does not constitute mosquito control. It has to be a coordinated citywide approach. The director proposed a meeting between County and City staff to create a schedule. He commented that they should continue with public outreach to remind residents to eliminate standing water around their homes, among other things. He also noted that the County has a special program where people can request that they come to their residences if they need mosquito control services.

e. VICE MAYOR FLETCHER

Vice Mayor Fletcher reflected on the recent tragedy in Texas and noted the City's response through hurricane relief efforts and similar initiatives. He stated that, in the past, they have partnered with cities to assist with expertise and supplies during major catastrophes, and he was wondering if they could get a list of sister cities. He suggested exploring international sister cities to help bridge knowledge gaps, so he asked that they take a look at what other options are out there for them to get some information regarding national tragedies and to identify best practices on how they could move forward. He requested that staff provide a list to Council of what they currently have so they could get some ideas on some other opportunities they may have to get those best practices from anywhere in the world.

He stated that the 4th of July event was great and the entertainment was outstanding. The mosquitoes were not bad inside, but as soon as you walked out to your car, they were bad. He noted that he had personally seen Miami-Dade mosquito control on the southeast side of town about three times in the last two or three weeks, but that is not enough, so he agrees that they should have a routine schedule.

Finally, he mentioned the investors and how their impact had been reduced by \$680,000 from their initial fines. He questioned whether other properties in the City have that type of outstanding liens or code enforcement fines and what they could do to prevent this from occurring in the future.

City Manager Ihekwaba commented that they recently visited the national hurricane center where they exchanged ideas on mutual aid if there is inclement weather or flooding in the City. They want to make Homestead the epicenter or ground zero for hurricane preparedness based on the experiences of its residents. Also, a few days ago, they rolled out Everbridge, which is a public notification system for inclement weather. Once you register, if there is any type of storm, flooding, or inclement weather coming, it notifies you immediately. He added that they were hoping to ask for public donations for victims of the recent flooding in Texas when they have their health fair sometime in September.

Councilman Roth mentioned that, for those that are fans of Sister Act, local performers are putting on an event at the Seminole Theatre on July 18th, 19th, and 20th.

f. MAYOR LOSNER

Mayor Losner announced that the workshop on branding and signage that had been set for the 29th will be postponed; however, it is their anticipation that they will use that time slot to bring the formal agreement with respect to the development of the Homestead Regional Park.

City Manager Ihekwaba added that they would like to have individual briefings on the package before it is considered at the actual Council Meeting. He stated that the City attorney had been working beyond a normal schedule to see if they can get a package ready before bringing it forward on the 29th for consideration.

Mayor Losner shared that he, along with City Manager Ihekwaba and Attorney Pearl, had two very grueling, yet productive days of in-person negotiations.

14. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Sewell, MPA, MMC
City Clerk

Steven D. Losner
Mayor