



Town of Surfside
Special Town Commission Meeting
MINUTES
July 11, 2023
5:00 PM
Commission Chambers

1. Opening

1.A Call to Order

Mayor Danzinger called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

1.B Roll Call of Members

Town Clerk McCreedy called the roll with the following members present:

Present: Mayor Shlomo Danzinger, Vice Mayor Jeff Rose, Commissioner Marianne Meisheid and Commissioner Fred Landsman.

Absent: Commissioner Nelly Velasquez.

Also Present: Town Manager Hector Gomez and Town Attorney Tony Recio.

1.C Pledge of Allegiance

Sergeant Matelis provided the pledge of allegiance.

2. Mayor, Commission and Staff Communication

2.A Presentation of FY 2023 Budget and Proposed Operating Millage Rate

- Hector Gomez, Town Manager

Town Manager Gomez provided an overview and presentation of the FY 2023 Budget and Proposed Operating Millage Rate. He stated the objective is to have the millage rate that will be published and that will go out on the TRIM Notice. He provided the budget calendar meeting dates. He stated whatever millage rate they decide on tonight will be the one that goes on the TRIM Notice. He stated it is very important to have a quorum for these important dates. He provided an overview of the balance sheet - reserves. He spoke regarding the General Fund balance and the unrestricted fund balance. He provided the reserves for the Building Fund, Capital Improvement Fund, Tourist Resort, the "Other" as well as the Enterprise Fund (Restricted). He spoke regarding the different initiatives. He spoke regarding FY

2024 and the funds coming in and out. He went over the presentation regarding the Fiscal Year 2024 General Fund Revenues and Expenditures. The projected FY 2024 is to collect about \$20.7 million dollars in the General Fund. They are about \$16.7 million in expenditures and the majority is in public safety. He continued with the presentation of the expenditures and collection for 2024 using a 4.2 millage rate putting in reserves approximately \$4 million dollars. He also provided a presentation on the program modifications. He went over the property values from 2015 through 2024. He explained the changes among the years, and they are in a position today that the taxable value you are looking at is an increase of 12.4% property value increase. He provided the 2023 Assessment Roll and stated it is mostly single-family homes and it did create a higher taxable value. He stated that most increases were to single family homes and condominiums. He also provided a graph of where your tax money goes to and the majority goes to Miami Dade County. He went over the Fiscal Year Millage and this is based on a 4.2 millage rate, that is how this presentation has been compiled. He mentioned that by keeping it at a 4.2 millage rate you put \$4 million dollars in reserve. He also explained how much would go into the reserve account if you reduce the millage rate and if you go to the rollback rate. He went over the different scenarios with different millage rates.

Mayor Danzinger opened the floor to public comments.

There were no public speakers.

Mayor Danzinger closed the floor to public comments.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Rose to set the milage rate at 4.2. The motion died for lack of a second.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Rose to set the milage rate at 4.19, seconded by Commissioner Meischeid.

Vice Mayor Rose explained what will happen if you bring it down to a 4.19 millage rate and he stated only 22% of the tax base comes from homesteaded residents and the majority are being paid by non-homestead residents and businesses. He provided an explanation and example of a property and how much it would cost. He mentioned that he always stated he would like to reinvest in our Town and work on the undergrounding and drainage programs. He stated that the majority of the residents want more work done in the Town.

Commissioner Landsman stated that there are very few individuals from the public present, his opinion is that the residents do deserve a break. He stated the increase in taxes are significant even if it is only \$67 a year per property on average. He stated that if they go with a 4.1 millage rate, they are still increasing taxes because the appreciated value has increased. He agrees not to go with the rollback rate. He is not in line with a 4.19 millage rate and he would recommend either a 4.1, 4.05 or a 4 millage rate.

Commissioner Meischeid stated that with her in-depth conversation with the staff she believes that a 4.10 millage rate is a good place to be and they have enough reserves.

Commissioner Landsman stated even if they go with a 4.10 millage rate you still need the majority of the commission to be on board. He is an advocate of lowering taxes but even if you go with a 4.10 millage rate it will still be a substantial increase.

Mayor Danzinger stated that he looked at the history of the millage rates in Town. He stated they have seen a trend in the last decade and if they do not move it and it stays stagnant for the last 3 years, the revenues are still going up. He would like to see a trend. He spoke regarding the capital improvement projects and buildings that are coming up. He believes they should pay it forward to the residents without an increase in taxes. He would personally like to see it go to a 4.1 millage rate to see the needle moving up. This way you can continue to fund your projects and the residents can see there is a benefit to having these buildings going up.

Vice Mayor Rose agrees that these buildings will be on the books but they will not hit the books right away. He stated only 22% of the residents that are homesteaded are impacted. He stated that he is happy he is having this discussion with the four (4) tax paying residents on the dais.

Mayor Danzinger spoke regarding the reserves and the money that is locked in that has been put into other accounts and they should be able to show the residents where their money is being invested.

Vice Mayor Rose asked if his colleagues would agree to a 4.15 millage rate.

Commissioner Landsman stated that they can do this now and he would be supportive to go with a 4.1 millage rate today and asked that in the future meetings to go possibly with a 4.0 millage rate. He wants the residents to see some decrease in taxes and be openminded for September.

Mayor Danzinger stated that he pays attention to when he opens his TRIM notice. He stated that if they want to make an impact and to send a message, this is the time to do it.

The motion fails with a 3-1 vote with Mayor Danzinger, Commissioner Landsman and Commissioner Meischeid voting in opposition.

A motion was made by Commissioner Landsman to reduce the millage rate to 4.1, seconded by Commissioner Meischeid. The motion carries with a 3-1 vote with Vice Mayor Rose voting in opposition.

Town Attorney Recio stated it is sufficient for today's vote but for the September meeting they will need all 4 votes in favor to pass the final millage rate.

Vice Mayor Rose stated that for the record he will not be going lower than a 4.1 milage rate.

Town Manager Gomez thanked the Finance Department and Budget Officer Meiri for their hard work.

3. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss before the Commission, a motion was made by Vice Mayor Rose to adjourn the meeting at 5:41 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Landsman. The motion carried with a 4-0 vote.

Accepted this _____ day of _____, 2023.

Shlomo Danzinger, Mayor

Attest:

Sandra N. McCready, MPA, MMC
Town Clerk