

MINUTES
2nd Working Budget Workshop
August 27, 2025
6:00 PM
Government Center
6601 Main Street
Miami Lakes, Florida 33014

1. Call to Order:

The meeting began at 6:12 p.m.

The following Town Councilmembers were present: Councilmember Fernandez, Councilmember Cuadra Garcia, Councilmember Garcia, Councilmember Herzberg, Councilmember Sanchez and Vice Mayor Morera. Mayor Dieguez attended the meeting physically at 6:53 p.m.

The following Town Staff members were present: Town Manager Edward Pidermann, Deputy Town Manager Tony Lopez, Deputy Town Clerk Alexis P. Martinez, Deputy Town Attorney Lorenzo Cobiella (attended meeting at 7:37 p.m.), Budget Officer Melissa Hernandez, Chief Financial Officer Kay Grant, Public Works Director Omar Santos, Building Department Director Daniel Angel, Communications and Community Affairs Director Clarisell De Cardenas and Assistant to Mayor, Joshua Villorin. Parks & Recreation Director, Jeremy Bajdaun attended the meeting via Zoom.

2. Public Comments:

(Phonetically spelling of each speaker's name will be used throughout the minutes unless correct spelling is known)

Ms. Ezperanza "Hope" Reynolds came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. She stated that budget season causes an influx of public records requests for the Town Clerk. She explained that she would like to propose adding a link under the Town Clerk's page on the Town Website for budget season frequently asked questions. She further explained that this proposed link would house every public records request relating to the current budget cycle. She stated that the Town Charter should protect the residents' needs and not wants. She stated that as per the Town Charter, Miami Laker's are entitled to receive, fair, equitable, and prompt treatment. She urged the Town Council to do what is right for the Town. She stated that she hopes that the outcome of the Council's deliberations will yield a rollback rate.

Mr. Alex Ariano came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He explained that the revenue adjustment has been set to five percent, which exceeds the actual maximum discount. He further explained that in the fiscal year 2023-2024 the Town collected \$8,541 in interest on owners' funds. He stated that it appears unnecessary to budget for recurring Special Taxing Districts meetings. He explained that a policy should be considered that requires meetings

to be scheduled only when there are at least 50 percent of the owners that sign in favor of the changes to infrastructure or services.

Ms. Bonnie Cintron came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. She stated that she sees a lot of room in the budget for cuts. She explained that many of the expenses in the proposed budget are unnecessary. She stated that the FPL Franchise Fee should never have been doubled.

Former Councilwoman Marilyn Ruano came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. She went over the carryforward amendments that were approved during her tenure as a councilmember. She stated that raising the millage rate is not necessary. She urged the Town Council to keep the millage rate flat.

Mr. Abel Fernandez came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He explained that the millage increase is not just numbers on paper and represents real hardship for real families. He further explained that due to inflation the prices for necessities have increased. He urged the Town Council to scrutinize every expense in the budget.

Ms. Claudia Lucas came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. She stated that the Town continues to come forward with ideas for new facilities while not being able to maintain their current facilities. She further explained that it is unfair for residents to have to take on the tax burden of the Optimist Park maintenance. She stated that the Town's expenses are overstated, and the Town's revenues are understated. She urged the Town Council to keep the millage rate flat.

Mr. Homero Cruz came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He explained that many residents are not happy with the 36% increase. He urged the Town Council to do the right thing and work with Town Staff regarding the Budget.

Mr. Anibal Perez came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He explained that being fiscally responsible means that the government should look at its processes to make sure that they are efficient and effective. He explained that the Town Council should conduct an efficiency study that cuts down on Town waste and inefficiency.

Ms. Inelda came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. She stated that she is here to speak on behalf of herself and all the elderly residents in the Town of Miami Lakes. She explained that the elderly community cannot afford an increase in the millage rate. She further explained that the elderly community has had to cut down on essentials because they no longer can afford the cost of living.

Ms. Esther Colon came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. She stated that it was irresponsible to set a millage rate of 2.63 and advertise it as a 36% increase. She stated that in last year's budget, \$499,332 went to Optimist Park. She stated that the Town's expenses are overstated, and the Town's revenues are understated. She stated that the Town Council's travel

budget is an unnecessary expense. Deputy Town Clerk Martinez stated for the record that the Office of the Clerk received a written public comment from Mr. Alberto Aguiar.

There being no further public comments, public comments were closed.

3. Item Discussed:

Town Council posed questions and provided proposed cuts and suggestions to Town Staff regarding the budget line items, including but not limited to Building Permits Technology Fee, School Crossing Guards, Consultants, Travel & Per Diem (various sections), foregoing Town devices, Coaching Background Checks, STD Advertising, renewal / sending contracts out for rebid and Senior Citizen Rebate. Town Staff and Deputy Town Attorney Cobiella provided additional feedback and answered questions posed by Town Council.

Claudia Luces came before Town Council again to answer questions and provide additional explanations about the Educational Advisory Board AP Language Arts Program and the STEM Elective Courses.

Carlos Andres came before the Town Council again to answer questions and provide additional feedback regarding the Public Safety Committee Breakfast Appreciation budget line item and its reallocated funds for the Car Show.

Additional budget line items were discussed including but not limited to Committee Budgets, attendance of Town events, reallocated funds, Professional Services, sidewalk budget maintenance, pocket parks, tree maintenance and Oak Tree swale issues in Satori. Town Council requested a separate notes section to be added to the budget line items packet where all of their proposed cuts, suggestions and request would be highlighted for review at the next budget workshop meeting.

4. Adjournment:

This meeting was adjourned at 10:18 p.m. Approved this 16th day September 2025.

Joshua Dieguez, Mayor

Attest:

Gina M. Inguanzo, Town Clerk

MINUTES
3rd Working Budget Workshop
September 3rd, 2025
6:00 PM
Government Center
6601 Main Street
Miami Lakes, Florida 33014

1. Call to Order:

The meeting began at 6:00 p.m.

The following Town Councilmembers were present: Councilmember Juan Carlos Fernandez, Councilmember Angelo Cuadra Garcia, Councilmember Ray Garcia, Councilmember Steven Herzberg, Councilmember Alex Sanchez, Vice Mayor Bryan Morera and Mayor Joshua Dieguez.

The following Town Staff members were present: Town Manager Edward Pidermann, Town, Deputy Town Manager Tony Lopez, Attorney Raul Gastesi, Town Clerk Gina M. Inguanzo, Deputy Town Clerk Alexis P. Martinez, Deputy Town Attorney Lorenzo Cobiella, Legal Attorney Matthew Perez, Budget Officer Melissa Hernandez, Chief Financial Officer Kay Grant, Building Department Director Daniel Angel, Communications and Community Affairs Director Clarisell De Cardenas, Special Projects Manager John Yanes and Assistant to Mayor, Joshua Villorin.

Public Works Director Omar Santos and Chief Technology and Innovation Officer German Cure attended the meeting via Zoom.

2. Public Comments:

(Phonetically spelling of each speaker's name will be used throughout the minutes unless correct spelling is known)

Ms. Magaly Bear came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. She stated that she and her husband have been Miami Lakes residents for 36 years. She explained that in her household, when expenses go up, she has to cut her budget. She urged the Town Council to do the same and make the budget cuts necessary to keep the millage rate flat.

Mr. Dave Bennett came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He thanked Albert Aguiar for analyzing the budget, which merits the Mirtha Mendez award. He stated that most of the Town residents who still have a mortgage payment cannot afford the proposed millage increase. He urged the Town Council to address this issue.

Ms. Esperanza "Hope" Reynolds came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. She stated that the agenda for the 3rd Budget Workshop was not published until a couple of hours ago, at approximately 1pm. She explained that in Florida, all state level agencies are required to publish an agenda and backup materials for workshops at least seven days before the meeting. She

stated that all official workshop materials are considered public records and that the public has the right to inspect them. She explained that in the case of local government, there are fewer specific requirements but still the obligation to provide constituents with an agenda within a reasonable time period.

Mr. Mauricio Bear came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He stated that today he is looking at a millage rate of 2.6372 as opposed to 2.073. He explained that he is opposed to the increase in the millage rate because he has never seen a public institution or government say no to a tax decrease. He stated that the residents need answers as to why the millage rate has increased from one year to the next.

Mr. Angel Gonzalez came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He stated that if the current proposed millage rate is approved, it will represent a tax increase of \$464.62 in his home. He stated that every time house is sold in Miami Lakes, their taxes double. He explained that if the 6% FPL Franchise Fee passes, then he will be paying an extra \$208. He stated that the elderly community that lives on a fixed income cannot afford this tax increase.

Mr. Alex Ariano came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He stated that Town of Miami Lakes posted a notice by the guard gate to advise the residents that starting September 22nd, the guard will ask drivers to use the Visitor Lane after 10 P.M. for identification. He stated that there is no legal basis to demand identification from residents or visitors attempting to drive to their homes on a public street. He stated that asking drivers for ID's appeals to the resident's sense of security, but it is a clear violation of rights, as is taking a permanent picture of their ID.

Mr. Albert Aguiar came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He stated that the Town's budgeted revenues have consistently underestimated actual revenues throughout the years. He explained that for the fiscal year ending in September 2025, actual expenditures are essentially the same as the adopted budget. He stated that the only new major expenses necessary for the coming year are the Police contract and the requested Cola increases. He explained that the Council's authority is not to manage line items but to set the tax rate. He stated that there is no justification for approving this tax increase. He thanked the Town Council for their time and their service.

Mr. Michael Cosculluela came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He explained that at a national and local level, the current political climate is hawkish on public spending. He stated that the state of Florida has an outstanding reputation nationally for being fiscally responsible. He urged the Town Council to keep this in mind and make the tough decisions necessary to keep the millage rate flat. He thanked the Town Council for their public service.

Mr. Tomiliano came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He discussed concerns regarding the proposed millage rate increase.

Mr. Jorge Lazo came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He discussed concerns regarding the proposed millage rate increase. He explained that the increase of the property and utility taxes poses a challenge to many residents. He explained his concerns regarding the new homeowners at Serenity Point.

Mr. Abel Fernandez came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He urged the Town Council to drill down into the numbers, verify the information given to them, question assumptions and then make their decision. He stated that the residents of the Town of Miami Lakes are counting on the Town Council to be stewards of their hard-earned money.

Ms. Enid Lomax came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. She discussed concerns regarding the proposed millage rate increase. She explained that she is here to request that the Town Council stop charging real estate taxes to senior residents. She stated that the expenses for Optimist Park are not necessary. She urged the Town Council to fix the potholes and sidewalks.

Ms. Susan Gil came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. She discussed concerns regarding the proposed millage rate increase. She urged the Town Council to keep the millage rate flat.

Mr. Miguel Martinez came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He discussed his concerns regarding South Florida construction and the challenge of the Blasting Advisory Board. He urged the Town Council to keep the Blasting Advisory Board's budget at the same rate.

Mr. George Arena came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He discussed concerns regarding the proposed millage rate increase. He explained that if the proposed millage rate remains the same, the county and state taxes will begin to increase as well. He stated that the budget should focus on the Town's needs and not wants.

Ms. Bonnie Cintron came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. She discussed her concerns regarding a recently approved grant program. She stated that there is waste in the budget that the Town Council needs to do away with.

Mr. Homero Cruz came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. He discussed concerns regarding the proposed millage rate increase. He urged the Town Council to do the right thing and keep the millage rate flat.

Ms. Esther Colon came before the Town Council to participate in Public Comments. She stated that the doubling of the FPL Franchise Fee is unnecessary. She thanked the Town Clerk's Office and Vice Mayor Morera for providing her with the documents that she requested via public records requests. She then discussed her concerns regarding the proposed millage rate increase.

Mr. Julio Barrera participated in Public Comments via Zoom. He discussed concerns regarding the proposed millage rate increase. He urged the Town Council to do what is right for the residents.

Mr. Caesar Mato participated in Public Comments via Zoom. He discussed concerns regarding the proposed millage rate increase. He stated that the budget should be focused on realistic goals and necessities. He urged the Town Council to do what is right for the residents.

Mr. John Newmann participated in Public Comments via Zoom. He stated that he is opposed to the proposed millage rate increase and the doubling of the FPL franchise fee. He further stated that it was irresponsible for the Town Council to approve of the proposed millage cap. He urged the Town Council to consider the residents and vote to oppose the proposed millage cap.

Ms. Isabella Diaz participated in Public Comments via Zoom. She discussed concerns regarding the proposed millage rate increase. She thanked the Town Council for listening to the concerns of the residents.

3. Item Discussed:

A. Sunshine Meeting on Working Budget (General Fund Preliminary Budget)

Town Council posed questions and provided proposed cuts and suggestions to Town Staff regarding the budget line items, including but not limited to General Funds Expenditures Town Council & Mayor, Town Clerk, Town Administration, Information Systems, School Crossing Guards, Public Works, Parks & Recreation, Recreation Services, Committees, Communications & Community Affairs and the Special Revenue Funds. Town Staff and Town Attorneys provided feedback and answered questions posed by Town Council.

4. Adjournment:

This meeting was adjourned at 12:05 a.m.

Approved this 16th day September 2025.


Joshua Dieguez, Mayor

Attest:



Gina M. Inguanzo, Town Clerk