



**Town of Surfside
Special Town Commission Meeting
Final Budget Hearing
MINUTES
September 30, 2021
5:01 p.m.**

Town Hall Commission Chambers - 9293 Harding Ave, 2nd Floor
Surfside, FL 33154

1. Opening

A. Call to Order

Mayor Burkett called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

B. Roll Call of Members

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

Present: Mayor Charles Burkett, Vice Mayor Tina Paul, and Commissioner Nelly Velasquez.

Absent: Commissioner Charles Kesl and Commissioner Eliana Salzhauer

Also present were Town Manager Andrew Hyatt, Assistant Town Manager Jason Greene and Town Attorney Lillian Arango.

2. Discussion Regarding Millage Rate and Budget – Andrew Hyatt, Town Manager

Town Manager Hyatt introduced the item and spoke regarding the budget cycle and milage rate and turned it over to Assistant Town Manager Greene.

Assistant Town Manager Greene provided a presentation regarding the milage rate and budget along with the roll back rate. He read into the record the taxing authority statement.

3. Final Millage Rate Adoption Resolution for FY 2022 - Andrew Hyatt, Town Manager

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE FINAL MILLAGE RATE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 2021 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2022; ANNOUNCING THE ADOPTED FINAL MILLAGE RATE OF 4.3499 MILLS WHICH IS GREATER THAN THE ROLLED BACK RATE OF 4.1046 MILLS COMPUTED PURSUANT TO STATE LAW BY 5.98%, PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Town Clerk McCready read the title of the resolution.

Assistant Town Manager Greene introduced the item and gave the process of tonight's meeting and provided a presentation of the milage rate and budget.

The following individuals from the public spoke:

Jeffrey Platt spoke regarding leaving the milage rate the same.

George Kousoulas spoke regarding leaving the milage rate the same.

Marianne Meisheid read Sheryl Goldberg, Chair of the Budget Advisory Committee's comments into the record to leave the milage rate the same. Ms. Meisheid also agrees with leaving the milage rate the same.

Jeff Rose spoke regarding leaving the milage rate the same to have the undergrounding and 96th Street Park. He spoke regarding homestead properties do not see much of a difference when the milage rate is changed. The people that get the tax rate increase are those that are investors, second home owners and the wealthy.

Marina Sarabia spoke regarding leaving the milage rate the same and not go back to the rollback.

Horace Henderson spoke regarding not increasing taxes in Surfside.

Commissioner Velasquez would like to keep it the way it is.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that she would like to keep the milage rate the way it currently is.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that they need to stop playing games and there are projects like undergrounding that need to take place.

Mayor Burkett stated that he disagrees, and property values have gone up and the residents are already paying more, and they should not continue paying more. He stated that he will not be bullied into raising taxes.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that when Mayor Burkett spoke about respecting the process it is setting the milage rate and budget, which is the most important thing they do. She stated that keeping the milage rate will assist with unexpected situations like the Champlain Tower. It is important to have the money in the reserves in order to move forward with projects they want like 96th Street Park.

Mayor Burkett stated that it is important to have a balance. He stated that he is confident that they will have enough money to have the projects done.

Commissioner Velasquez asked Assistant Town Manager Greene what was the roll back rate ten years ago.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that the rates continue going up after Mayor Burkett was not in office because they needed the money.

Commissioner Velasquez stated if he has gone to a gas station or buy wood, a piece of plywood, all products have significantly gone up and he wants to lower the amount of money this Town receives, that is irresponsible.

Further discussion took place among the Commission regarding the increase in the tax bill relative to the ones with homestead and investment properties as well as the funding needed for certain projects.

Assistant Town Manager Greene mentioned the milage rates in the past 15 years.

Vice Mayor Paul stated it took 10 years to get it back to where it is now.

Mayor Burkett stated that if there is something needed to justify the increase he would support it. He asked Assistant Town Manager Greene to give an example of the increase.

Assistant Town Manager Greene spoke regarding the cap with homestead properties.

Mayor Burkett spoke regarding the impact on residents with the rollback scenario.

Commissioner Velasquez discussed her TRIM notice and commented on her property tax bill for just the Town of Surfside, keeping the same and in comparison, to the rollback rate it is only a difference of \$100 a year. She stated that they do not control Miami Dade County charges and their taxes.

Mayor Burkett stated that the rollback rate puts the Town at the same budget as last year.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that her bill would only increase by \$100 a year at the proposed rate.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that in general the concept being captured is that the municipality would collect about the same dollars.

Further discussion took place among the Commission regarding the difference between the rollback rate and the proposed rate.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that it is around the same amount as last year and explained what the rollback rate.

Mayor Burkett stated that he will not be voting to increase the rate.

Town Attorney Arango stated the consequences if the Town Commission does not adopt a budget and milage rate.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that the Deputy Property Appraiser stated that if the Town does not adopt a budget and milage rate by today it will be catastrophic for the entire Miami-Dade County.

Mayor Burkett asked Commissioner Velasquez what she proposed at the last meeting.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that she proposed 4.2 at the last meeting but would listen to the residents and keep it the way it is.

Commissioner Velasquez asked Town Attorney Arango if one Commissioner could attend remotely via telephone.

Town Attorney Arango stated that it is against the Town's code and they cannot have any attending remotely.

Commissioner Velasquez spoke regarding resident comments.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that she bases her decision on the recommendations of Town Manager Hyatt, the Budget Committee, Assistant Town Manager Greene, and Town Attorney Arango.

Mayor Burkett stated that the undergrounding would not be compromised. He stated that he understands Commissioner Velasquez' argument. He stated that generally raising the taxes for the residents is a bad idea. He stated that he does not want to sit on a Commission that raises taxes.

Commissioner Velasquez spoke regarding the projects including the 96th Street Park, and the Abbott Avenue drainage.

Mayor Burkett asked if Commissioner Velasquez is expecting to borrow the money or write a check.

Commissioner Velasquez stated the Town will borrow the money, but that money has to be paid back.

Mayor Burkett asked how much encumbered amount is in the bank account.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated it is around \$16 to \$18 million unrestricted.

Further discussion took place among the Commission regarding the cost of the undergrounding.

Mayor Burkett asked how much was put in the reserves last year.

Assistant Town Manager Greene addressed the comments made by Mayor Burkett.

Further discussion took place among the Commission regarding the amount going into the bank.

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Paul to have the milage rate as stated in the resolution, seconded by Commissioner Velasquez. The motion carried with a 2-1 vote with Commissioner Kesl and Commissioner Salzhauer absent and Mayor Burkett in opposition.

Mayor Burkett asked for the current fiscal year, which year the park was budgeted for.

Assistant Town Manager Greene gave the cost and tax rates in the past.

Further discussion took place among the Commission regarding the amount of revenues in the past, expenditures, budgeted amounts and revenues collected.

Mayor Burkett stated that he does not see raising taxes as a priority because they have the money for the undergrounding and Abbott Avenue drainage.

Mayor Burkett asked Assistant Town Manager Greene if they would collect the same amount as last year if they go to the roll back rate.

Assistant Town Manager Greene explained what the rollback rate is.

Commissioner Velasquez spoke regarding the cost for the undergrounding, Abbott Avenue drainage and the 96th Street Park.

Vice Mayor Paul asked what happens if they do not adopt a budget and what fines they are facing.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that they will not allow the Mayor to hijack this.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that they are not increasing the taxes.

Vice Mayor Paul spoke regarding historically the tax rate and how it affected the Town. She spoke how this will affect the Town and the reserves.

Town Attorney Arango stated that they need a unanimous vote and there needs to be a compromise.

Assistant Town Manager Greene provided some suggestions of possibly 4.2 and the lowest in 2009 was 4.73 and those are viable options.

Assistant Town Manager Greene read into the record based on a 4.3 milage rate would be an increase of 4.76% would represent \$611,000 over the rollback rate of 4.1046.

Mayor Burkett spoke regarding when he was Mayor in the past, relief to the residents and the revenue the Town collected ten years ago in comparison to the amount being collected now.

A motion was made by Commissioner Velasquez to set the milage rate at 4.3, seconded by Vice Mayor Paul. The motion carried with a 2-1 vote with Commissioner Kesi and Commissioner Salzhauer absent and Mayor Burkett in opposition.

Commissioner Velasquez left the dais at 6:23 p.m.

Mayor Burkett recessed the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

Commissioner Velasquez returned to the dais at 6:33 p.m.

Mayor Burkett reconvened the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

Vice Mayor Paul stated that she would go to 4.2 in order to compromise.

Further discussion took place among the Commission regarding a new milage rate.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that she met in the middle when she suggested 4.2.

Vice Mayor Paul agrees with Commissioner Velasquez.

Mayor Burkett stated he does not believe there is a justification to raise the milage rate.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that the milage rate suggested by Mayor Burkett would be 4.1523.

Commissioner Velasquez stated that this is an ego thing for the Mayor and she is trying to compromise. She stated that tons of residents that have emailed her and texted her stated that they want the 4.3499 milage rate.

A motion was made by Commissioner Velasquez to set the milage rate at 4.2, seconded by Vice Mayor Paul. The motion carried with a 2-1 vote with Commissioner Kesl and Commissioner Salzhauer absent and Mayor Burkett in opposition.

Assistant Town Manager Greene read into the record the 4.2 milage rate would be 2.32% higher than the rollback rate and that would generate \$298,000 difference, which is about the number you are losing from collecting from the Champlain Towers South.

Commissioner Velasquez left the dais at 6:45 p.m.

Mayor Burkett recessed the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Commissioner Velasquez returned to the dais at 7:05 p.m.

Mayor Burkett reconvened the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Mayor Burkett stated that he went over the numbers with Assistant Town Manager Greene and the loss of the Champlain Tower South and that will assist with his decision.

Assistant Town Manager Greene read into the record the 4.2 milage rate would be 2.32% higher than the rollback rate and that would generate \$298,000 difference.

A motion was made by Commissioner Velasquez to set the milage rate at 4.2, seconded by Vice Mayor Paul. The motion carried with a 3-0 vote with Commissioner Kesl and Commissioner Salzhauer absent.

4. Public Comment

There were no public speakers.

5. FY 2022 Final Budget Adoption Resolution - Andrew Hyatt, Town Manager

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF SURFSIDE, FLORIDA, ADOPTING A FINAL BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING OCTOBER 1, 2021 AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2022; PROVIDING FOR EXPENDITURE OF BUDGETED FUNDS; PROVIDING FOR BUDGETARY CONTROLS; PROVIDING FOR GRANTS AND GIFTS; PROVIDING FOR BUDGET AMENDMENTS; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Town Clerk McCready read the title of the resolution.

Assistant Town Manager Greene introduced the item and the budget summary will be lowered by the recalculation number. This would reduce the milage rate by \$13,136,116, the change is made in the budget summary.

The following individuals from the public spoke:
Jeff Rose

A motion was made by Commissioner Velasquez to approve the resolution, seconded by Vice Mayor Paul. The motion passed with a 3-0 vote with Commissioner Kesl and Commissioner Salzhauer absent.

6. Public Comment

There were no public speakers.

7. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Velasquez to adjourn the meeting without objection at 7:09 p.m. The motion received a second from Vice Mayor Paul. The motion carried with a 3-0 vote with Commissioner Kesl and Commissioner Salzhauer absent.

Accepted this 9th day of November, 2021.

Attest:



Sandra N. McCready, MMC
Town Clerk



Charles W. Burkett, Mayor