



Town of Surfside

BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

March 17, 2021 – 4:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Chair Goldberg called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Sheryl Goldberg, Vice Chair Robert Cummings, Committee Member Andrew Craven, Committee Member Diana Gonzalez and Committee Member Lauren Bardos (arrived at 4:08 p.m.).

Absent: Commissioner Eliana Salzhauer.

Also present were Town Attorney Lillian Arango, Code Enforcement Manager Carmen Santos-Alborna, and Assistant Town Manager Jason Greene.

2. Agenda and Order of Business

3. Approval of Minutes: February 17, 2021 Budget Advisory Committee Meeting

A motion was made by Committee Member Gonzalez to approve the February 17, 2021 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes, seconded by Chair Goldberg. The motion carried with a 4-0 vote with Committee Member Bardos absent.

4. Alternate Options to Collect Service Liens on Properties – Carmen Santos-Alborna, Code Enforcement Manager

Code Enforcement Manager Santos-Alborna gave an overview of the collection of service liens and stated that if a property claims homestead exemption one cannot foreclose on the lien. The property in question is claiming homestead exemption although she believes the owner is not living at the property and she is working with Miami Dade County to verify that information.

Town Attorney Arango spoke regarding the particular service lien on the specific property which is for cutting the grass and per the Town Code the Town can place a lien on the property for the costs. She stated that homestead property is protected and you cannot foreclose on them. The liens are recorded and if the property is sold or refinanced the code enforcement lien has to be paid off. The other alternative is to file a money judgement and filing suit in court and there is a cost involved but it is an option. She stated that what other cities do is send collection letters to the owners on a consistent basis. For the higher value liens, you can consider foreclosing if they are not a homestead property. Another action is filing an injunctive relieve in court if the home

is a threat to health and safety. She stated that service liens have a priority over regular code enforcement liens and take super priority over mortgages.

Committee Member Gonzalez asked if it will cost more money to collect this money. She stated why doesn't the Town stop cutting the grass.

Code Enforcement Manager Santos-Alborna stated that you have to consider what the neighbors to that home would feel like. She stated that by not cutting the grass it could bring rats and be a nuisance that could affect them.

Town Attorney Arango stated that when there is a health concern, we abate the conditions.

Code Enforcement Manager Santos-Alborna provided an overview on the specific property and the amount of service liens it currently has assessed.

Chair Goldberg asked how much they owe the Town.

Code Enforcement Manager Santos-Alborna stated that the recorded liens against the property to date is \$7,000.00.

Chair Goldberg asked how much it would cost to file the lawsuit.

Town Attorney Arango stated that there is a \$200.00 filing fee plus attorneys' fees and you end up with a judgement, which you have to record and then try to execute on the judgement which then would depend on their assets. She stated that when it comes to significant fines it might be worthwhile but not for smaller liens.

Chair Goldberg asked if they could discuss sending a demand letter.

Town Attorney Arango stated that is a viable action and sometimes they will respond.

Code Enforcement Manager Santos-Alborna stated that they do send out twice a year a reminder letter but for this specific property they could send a different type of letter.

Town Attorney Arango stated that it is an easy option and it could be sent out by the Town Attorney's Office.

Committee Member Bardos asked if it could be sent out certified mail.

Town Attorney Arango stated that they send it out both ways.

Code Enforcement Manager Santos-Alborna stated that they have sent certified mail but they are not claiming the certified letters at the post office.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that they have been trying to notice the owners using certified mail and posting on the notice on the property and Code Enforcement

Manager Santos-Alborna will work with Town Attorney Arango to see if they can be a bit more forceful with their request.

Chair Goldberg asked if they could cut down on the services on the property.

Code Enforcement Manager Santos-Alborna stated it is currently every 6 weeks and in the summer time it will be more often.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that the Town has always felt it was best to abate this and collect it in the back end. He stated that this is a much higher collectability rate. He stated that this is a budget line item, which is \$2,500, but if the Committee would like to cut that out it would be something in their purview to make that recommendation.

Further discussion took place regarding the identified property and if the Town should continue cutting the grass as well as the nuisance issue with the property. The Committee also asked if there are any other properties that owe service liens but stated that property is the one that owes the Town the most amount of money.

Code Enforcement Manager Santos-Alborna explained how the special magistrate hearings work and how the cases are brought before the special magistrate.

Chair Goldberg stated she was concerned about a property on Abbott Avenue that owes over \$1 million dollars.

Code Enforcement Manager Santos-Alborna stated that the owners are still working on that property and obtaining the building permits required. She stated that they cannot go before the special magistrate until they are done and able to pass all the inspections.

Town Attorney Arango asked if they have a recorded lien on that property (9508 Abbott Avenue).

Chair Goldberg asked if all the liens are recorded.

Town Attorney Arango stated once they get to a certain stage in the process they are recorded. She also stated that the lien attaches to all the other properties the owner owns in Miami-Dade County.

5. Visioning Discussion – FY 2022 Budget Goals and Priorities – Assistant Town Manager Jason Greene

Assistant Town Manager Greene introduced the item and gave the PowerPoint presentation. He asked the Committee members for their goals, priorities and objectives for the upcoming budget season.

Vice Chair Cummings asked regarding the 96th Street Park project and would like to see the plans. He asked who comes up with the budget for that project and requested a copy of it. He spoke regarding what the park needs and believes it does not need a structure and even if it does, he believes that is a crazy and insane budget. He thinks that the budget is off the charts even placing a structure on the park and believes it could be built for half that price.

Chair Goldberg asked if an RFP has gone out for this project.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that the design has been part of the RFP and the firm is experienced in building parks.

Discussion took place regarding the cost entailed with this project and what is necessary.

Chair Goldberg asked who signed off on that.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that the Town Commission approved it and sees that there is no support in increasing the funding for the park project.

Committee Member Gonzalez asked if the price includes the purchase of the empty lot and agrees with Vice Chair Cummings that it is a lot of money.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that it does not include the purchase of the empty lot. He explained the process of the design portion of this project.

Committee Member Craven stated that as the Budget Committee they are to work within certain parameters and since this has already been before the Town Commission and they agreed on a major refit of the park. He does agree that the number is outrageous and he stated that what they are here to do is to put forward a motion to make a recommendation that they revisit the amount of money they have allocated for that project. He proposed to get more information on the \$2.5 million dollars and then make the motion. He stated that he does not believe they are prepared at this time to make that motion.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that the \$2.5 million dollar number was the number that the Town Commission stated that they did not want to spend more than that amount.

Further discussion took place among the Committee on not spending more money on the park and that the money could go to other areas.

Assistant Town Manager Greene asked if their recommendation is to hold the line to \$2.5 million dollars since that has already been approved and they are looking at their objectives for FY 2022.

Vice Chair Cummings asked if there is a time constraint on making a recommendation on this project before their next committee meeting.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated they could at a later time make a recommendation.

Vice Chair Cummings stated that they do not have enough information to determine if they want to approve this project funding increase. He would like to see the design firm contract, and the background that came up with the \$2.5 million.

Chair Goldberg asked regarding the new Communications Director and how they are going to go about phasing out Pinzur Communications because that is \$75,000. She also stated if they are implementing a texting type of alert system.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that they have not yet and done that but that they are working on it. He stated the Communications Director just came on board two months ago and is working towards that process.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that there two communication contracts, the Gazette is done in June and Pinzur is in September. He stated that they are currently doing a texting alert and they are looking into redoing all of that.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that that they will continue scaling back and bringing the communication services inhouse.

Committee Member Bardos stated that she would like more information and it is hard to choose three items now.

Committee Member Gonzalez would like to review the information and if they need the transportation plan between Bay Harbour and Bal Harbor and does not know the statistics of the usage of those buses.

Assistant Town Manager Greene stated that they are looking at eliminating the transportation shuttle between Bal, Bay and Surfside and they are looking at using the one that is currently being offered.

A motion was made Committee Member Gonzalez to eliminate the Town of Surfside shuttle service and support the Tri-City on Demand Service Shuttle System, seconded by Chair Goldberg. The motion carried with 5-0 vote.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Cummings to consolidate all communications and bring it inhouse, seconded by Committee Member Craven. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

Vice Chair Cummings stated that the numbers on the Savino Miller contract on page 80 are insane.

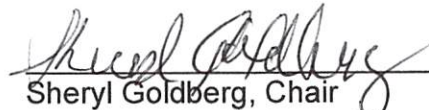
6. Public Comments - (3-minute time limit per speaker)

There were no public comments.

7. Adjournment


A motion was made by Committee member Craven to adjourn the meeting without objection at 5:09 p.m. The motion received a second from Chair Goldberg. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote.

Accepted this 21 day of April, 2021.



Sheryl Goldberg, Chair
Budget Advisory Committee

Attest:



Evelyn Herbello
Deputy Town Clerk