

## **Governance Meeting Report Assignment**

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## 1. Introduction

The Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners approves the annual budget for the Miami-Dade Public Library System (MDPLS). As the governing body for fifty library branches within MDPLS, the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners aims to maintain the current standard of services for the Library District. Furthermore, the governing body adheres to various requirements, such as a forty-year certification, which strives to complete capital projects within a five-year forecast (Levine Cava, 2023b). While the 2023-2024 fiscal year operating budget proposal was not selected for a public hearing, the entire agenda and meeting addresses urgent issues affecting multiple communities within Miami-Dade County. Overall, it was vital important to attend the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners meeting because positions the MDPLS within its governing body.

While I was unable to attend the Miami-Dade Board of Commissioners meeting in-person on Tuesday, July 18, 2023, I observed the six-hour long recording of the meeting to appreciate function and structure of the governing body of the county (Miami-Dade County, 2023b). With the meeting agenda establishing a comprehensive outline of the proceedings, I observed how the chairman (Oliver G. Gilbert, III), deviated slightly from the agenda to emphasize certain agenda items. Instead of initiating the meeting with an invocation, a roll call, and the pledge of allegiance, the chairman situated these items after special presentations spotlight the exemplary service of individuals within the Miami-Dade County government and with the community. As outlined by the County Commission Rules, a commissioner who requests a resolution or ordinance in the agenda becomes its primary sponsor, while additional commissioners who join the agenda item become co-sponsors. This is an important point because it determines the content and structure of the presentation and the discussion of the agenda items among the commissioner on the dais.

## 2. Key Issues in the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners Meeting

To highlight certain ordinances that were supported or challenged by the public during agenda item 1G, I would like to summarize ordinance 14A1, which creates heat standards for outdoor workers. Furthermore, I would like to summarize ordinance 5D, which proposes an increase in the fee for residential solid waste collection to cover a shortage of \$38.8 million towards the end of FY 2023-2024 (Lavine Cava, 2023a). While most of the public voiced their frustration and concern with the slow response from the County Commissioners with both ordinances, the commissioners and the mayor succinctly conveyed various reasons why these ordinances were deferred by this governing body.

For the agenda item 14A1, it was heartbreaking to listen to the testimonies of outdoor workers in fields of construction, agriculture, and landscaping who lacked proper access to shade, water, and necessary breaks to counteract heat exhaustion. In addition, advocates, union leaders, and community members emphasized the importance of passing the ordinance. According to a medical student from the University of Miami, agenda item 14A1 is profoundly important because twenty five percent of individuals in Miami-Dade County work outside. This statistic reinforces how a worker-led campaign, “Que Calor,” has been advocating for protection from

extreme heat and life-threatening conditions for the past two years. Conversely, agenda item 5D impacts the lives of retirees within Miami-Dade County by proposing an increase of trash collection services to \$36.00 or \$116 monthly to fill a shortage in funding these services.

However, the Department of Solid Waste (DSWM) affirms that the county must raise trash collection fees for every household in the county. According to Mayor Levine Cava (2023a) the county has continued to borrow funds from the county's disposal fund, to protect homeowners from rapid increases in fee. However, this temporary solution is not sustainable, but the county is indecisive about the optimal solutions to avoid reducing trash pickup services or increasing monthly fees to homeowners. Overall, homeowners on a fixed income face the highest hardship because they are already experiencing inflated insurance cost and property taxes. During their opportunity to voice their support or opposition to agenda item 14A1, a resident was outraged by the comments of an elected official who encouraged residents to vacate Miami-Dade County if they could not afford higher property taxes and service fees (MDC, 2023b).

### **3. The Library District's Placement within its Governing Body**

Within the context of the governing body of the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners, the Miami-Dade Public Library System (MDPLS) is situated within the "Management and Budget Department" agenda item (MDC, 2023a). According to Mayor Levine Cava (2023b), the resolution was put to a vote, duly passed, and adopted on July 18, 2023. Within the context of the Office of Management and Budget, this section with the agenda proposes resolutions for other county-wide systems such as the Fire Rescue District and the Unincorporated Municipal Service Area (MCD, 2023b). Miami-Dade County (2023b) outlines that most of these resolutions were add-ons within the agenda and voted on prior to the public hearing. Overall, the agenda items presented during the public hearing, such as agenda item 14A1 and agenda item 5B, impact the Management and Budget Department (item 8G) because they highlight how other public concerns impact millage rate of other services within the county.

### **4. Taxation Basis and Funding of the Miami-Dade Public Library System**

According to Mayor Levine-Cava (2023b), the Miami-Dade County Library District relies on an ad valorem revenue source or a property tax base that is assessed by property values. Furthermore, Miami-Dade County's Chief Financial Officer utilizes a millage rate to fund the services of the Library District. A millage rate is expressed as a one mill equaling \$1.00 for each \$1,000 of property value (Miami-Dade County, 2023c). Mayor Levine Cava (2023b) highlights how the resolution recommends that the Library District operate with a millage rate of 0.2812 to provide sufficient revenue to support the services and the operations of the Library District within the 2023-2024 fiscal year. In other words, the recommendation of the millage rates initiates the library's budget from ad valorem or property tax revenue.

## **5. Annual Operating Budget of the Miami-Dade Public Library System**

As derived from the resolution's millage rate recommendation, the FY 2023-2024 operating budget, revenue, or income for the Miami-Dade Library District is \$101.831 million (Levine Cava, 2023b). Because per capita income is utilized to dictate the average income per person within the total population of the Miami-Dade Library District: 2,496,435 (Miami-Dade Public Library System, 2023). Therefore, the per capita income for the 2023-2024 fiscal year is \$40.79. According to last year's adopted resolution for 2022-2023 fiscal year, the Library District's annual budget was \$90.461 million (Levine Cava, 2022).

## **6. Friend Group, Support, and Advocacy in the Miami-Dade Public Library System**

With 6,762,294 library visitors every year, MDPLS is in an advantageous position to support library programs and services with library volunteers and advocacy. Within the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the MDPLS collaborated with the Friends of the Miami Dade Public Libraries to raise funds for the Miami Foundation's annual Give Miami Day (MDC, 2023a). In addition, the Friends raised \$20,145 to support library programs and foster awareness of the library's value to the community. In their capacity to further advocate for the values of the MDPLS, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a resolution (R-1019-22) to declare every November as "Miami Book Month" (MDC, 2023a). Overall, these initiatives communicate the value of the Miami-Dade Public Library System to various stakeholders with the community.

### References

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