

# City of Pembroke Pines, FL

*City of Pembroke Pines  
Charles F. Dodge City Center  
601 City Center Way  
Pembroke Pines, FL 33025*



## Meeting Minutes - Draft

**Tuesday, March 31, 2026**

**6:30 PM**

**Regular Commission Meeting (or at such time as the 4:00 PM City  
Commission Workshop in Room A-101 has adjourned)**

**Commission Chambers**

### **City Commission**

*Mayor Angelo Castillo  
Vice Mayor Michael A. Hernandez  
Commissioner Thomas Good Jr.  
Commissioner Maria Rodriguez  
Commissioner Jay D. Schwartz*

**6:30 PM REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

**Present** 5 - Mayor Angelo Castillo, Vice Mayor Michael A. Hernandez, Commissioner Thomas Good Jr., Commissioner Maria Rodriguez, and Commissioner Jay D. Schwartz

Also present: City Manager Charles F. Dodge, City Attorney Samuel Goren, and City Clerk Gabriel Fernandez.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Miss Broward County Teen America and Former Miss Pembroke Pines Gabriella Perez-Ortega.

**NATIONAL ANTHEM**

The National Anthem was performed, led by Miss Broward County Teen America and Former Miss Pembroke Pines Gabriella Perez-Ortega.

**MAYOR ANGELO CASTILLO STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS**

Mayor Castillo shared that the state of the city is strong and that the City of Pembroke Pines is the second most populous city in Broward County and the 11th most populous in the State of Florida. The mayor expressed that Pembroke Pines is and has remained a highly respected community where one can live, raise a family, retire, conduct business, or recreate. The mayor continued that the city has also remained a highly diverse economic engine, all while maintaining and retaining a suburban lifestyle.

The mayor commended the city as well as City Hall, praising how it is filled with outstanding and excellent public servants who are experts in their fields and keep the city moving forward. The mayor noted that the city remains a low-tax city, all while being known for its excellent municipal services. Mayor Castillo commended the city for its real estate market and noted that the demand for homeownership remains high, and commercial activity does as well. Mayor Castillo shared his unofficial motto for Pembroke Pines, that being the city that cares, can, and does.

Mayor Castillo commented on the bond referendum that was defeated last March and rebuffed the idea that the defeat should hang around his neck as a political burden. The mayor shared that the bond referendum is not a political burden, and residents do not view it that way either. The mayor explained that the city's residents know that doing nothing was and is not a solution to the city's problems. The mayor continued that the people wanted progress; however, he shared that they did not approve of the timing of it and could not finance it the way they had in years past.

Mayor Castillo continued that for a significant period of time before he was elected mayor, he knew and understood that the city's infrastructure was rapidly aging, and the list of the city's needs was growing. The mayor explained that the city's needs vary and include improvements and repairs to roads, drainage, parks, traffic, and more. Mayor Castillo continued that the city required increased capital investment in order to offset the deterioration of the city's amenities and infrastructure.

The mayor explained that the city required a reinvigorated infrastructure program to restore what the city offers to the levels and standards that the community expects and deserves. Mayor Castillo noted that in response to those needs, the Commission confronted those concerns with diligence and enthusiasm, sharing that the Commission always does what the city requires.

Mayor Castillo shared that the city has faced new challenges, including uncertainties in trash and recycling, as well as vacancies in key positions

such as police and fire, and a lack of a clear plan guiding the direction the city will take.

The mayor noted that those challenges have been addressed, sharing that the police office's vacancies have been filled, there is now a strong strategic plan guiding the city, the issues surrounding trash and recycling have begun to be addressed, and are moving in favorable directions. The mayor continued that the city has adopted a series of charter and ordinance reforms that have made the city safer, stronger, and more focused.

Mayor Castillo reiterated that he does not regret the bond referendum and affirmed that it was considered, improved, and refined over many years and that the commission advanced it because it was the right solution. The mayor reaffirmed that the voters have the final say and that the commission listened when the voters said no and respected their decision. Mayor Castillo shared that the commission did not place blame; they adapted and prioritized how to deliver the improvements that are most critical without raising taxes.

Mayor Castillo affirmed that he still supports the plan and stands behind his decision and commends his colleagues for doing the same. The mayor shared that the city is not looking back and is focused on how to progress. Mayor Castillo noted that the city has increased resident engagement and is in constant communication with residents and is determined to deliver results. The mayor shared that real leadership is not about saying no; it is focused on completing the job.

The mayor detailed that over the next three years, the city will rehabilitate all its parks, complete road and traffic easement projects, and address flooding to the fullest extent possible. Mayor Castillo affirmed his and the city's commitment to restoring recycling, all while maintaining and upholding their objection to trash incineration. The mayor continued that the city is focused on addressing the issue of housing affordability in coordination with partners in the private sector.

Mayor Castillo noted that the commission and the city won't be able to do as much as they wanted to, but will do what they can without increasing taxes or tax burdens. The mayor explained that, unlike initially planned, the city will not be able to build or finance a new public safety complex, nor will it be able to advance the economic development agenda to the same degree that it had previously planned to. The mayor emphasized that the city must find other ways to meet its objectives, but reaffirmed that the city will move forward and overcome the challenges that it faces.

The mayor shared that approximately \$66 million in capital infusion will address the bulk of the city's needs, which will reinvigorate Pembroke Pines for many decades to come. The mayor explained that he is proud of the commission for upholding community standards and for respecting the will of voters and never losing momentum. Mayor Castillo shared his belief that victory only comes to those who solve problems and explained that Pembroke Pines is a problem-solving city that steps up and accomplishes the job.

Mayor Castillo emphasized that the city is great because it listens, learns, and leads together as a community and as a family. The mayor expressed his confidence that the city will continue to meet and rise above its challenges.

Mayor Castillo shared his appreciation for the Police Department and commended them on reducing the crime rate in Pembroke Pines by 33% over the course of 2025. The mayor shared that the now fully staffed police department has increased community patrols by 15% as well as traffic enforcement and education efforts by 14%. The mayor also noted that code compliance has seen a voluntary compliance rate of over 80% and that the police department now has a comfort K-9 named Jellybean.

Mayor Castillo commended the Fire Rescue Department for their role in the community and for providing firefighters with high-quality equipment and training to ensure their readiness, safety, and success. Mayor Castillo recognized the Fire Rescue Department for being awarded gold recognition for Water SMART Community by the Florida Department of Health and the PEDReady GOLD Tier designation from the state of Florida for pediatric emergency readiness. The mayor also commended the department for launching the first free learn-to-swim program designed to help children at risk, delivering over 300 free lessons to more than 60 children in partnership with the YMCA.

Mayor Castillo shared that the Fire Rescue Department, through their partnership with Pembroke Pines' charter schools, offered emergency responder training for students. The mayor detailed that the department established a fire cadet program for local high schools, allowing students to develop firefighting training skills and explore careers in fire and rescue services.

The mayor commended the fire department for maintaining property fire loss per capita well below the national average and for achieving high rankings in response times, both nationally and locally. The mayor noted that the Fire Rescue Department also achieved 100% fire code

compliance in all reported fire hazards, completing a total of 11,627 fire and life safety inspections, and provided public education outreach to 15,922 individuals. The mayor noted that the fire prevention bureau conducted over 11,000 annual fire safety inspections, 5,500 annual fire life safety inspections, and 1,600 building pre-inspections.

Mayor Castillo thanked the Fire Rescue Department for their continued leadership and for keeping the city and its residents safe.

Mayor Castillo highlighted the accomplishments of the Pembroke Pines Charter Schools, noting that the graduation rate for the 2024-25 school year is 100%. The mayor explained that this rate exceeded the district's graduation rate by 8.6% and the state's graduation rate by 7.8%. The mayor shared that the 96.5% of 377 educators were rated "Highly Effective" on their teacher evaluations, reflecting the exceptional quality of instruction across the schools.

Mayor Castillo praised the Planning and Economic Development Department and reported that the department issued 210 residential certificates of occupancy. The mayor mentioned that the department has helped with permitting and supporting the State-of-the-Art WM Recycling Facility, the largest in Florida. The mayor also highlighted recent growth in healthcare, including the permitting and construction of three new standalone emergency rooms that will improve healthcare access in the community. The mayor stated that those three facilities are HCA FSER, which is operational, Baptist FSER, which is under construction, and Memorial Manor FSER, which is also under construction.

The mayor shared that staff assisted in the design, permitting, and inspection of the Flamingo Road Greenway, a project completed in partnership with Broward County. The mayor recognized County Commissioner Nan Rich and County Commissioner Alexandra P. Davis and thanked them for their leadership and support. The mayor noted that the department permitted the Waste Management Recycling Facility Microhabitat Project, a collaborative effort involving Waste Management, Tandem Global, and local students. The mayor stated that nearly 750 native shrubs, wildflowers, grasses, and trees were planted at the new WM Recycling South Florida facility and explained that the resulting microhabitat now supports a biodiverse ecosystem that benefits local wildlife.

The mayor reported that since January 2025, 80 percent of all plan reviews were completed within five business days, and 40 percent were completed within one business day. The mayor stated that 10,254 permits were issued and that 52,225 inspections were completed,

including structural, mechanical, plumbing, electrical, zoning, fire, engineering, and landscape inspections. The mayor noted that the department processed 1,712 residential reroofs, 2,124 residential window and door permits, and 295 commercial reroofs.

The mayor shared that zoning issued 443 certificates of use and processed 2,367 residential reroofs, 2,360 residential window and door permits, and 307 commercial reroofs. The mayor noted that the city collaborated with Broward County and the South Florida Community Land Trust to preserve affordable rental units through the acquisition of the CASA Apartments. The mayor reported that several major affordable housing developments, including Southwest Hammocks, Southport, Pembroke Tower, and Douglas Tower IV and VI, were completed and occupied, resulting in nearly 600 new affordable rental units.

The mayor explained that Information Technology continued work to improve efficiency, streamline workflows, and enhance service delivery. The mayor stated that IT enhanced the Tyler Technologies ERP system across Finance, Utilities, EnerGov, Asset Management, and HR and Payroll, and completed municipal security improvements. The mayor added that IT also improved GIS data accuracy, asset mapping, and public-facing applications.

Mayor Castillo stated that the Utilities Department completed significant water and sewer infrastructure upgrades to the Biscayne aquifer wells and wastewater lift stations. The mayor shared that 596 water services and meters were replaced in the Cedarwoods community to improve reliability. The mayor reported that a plan of action began to remove PFAS from the city's drinking water to meet the EPA deadline of April 26, 2029, without requiring additional taxpayer funding.

Mayor Castillo explained that the Public Services Department completed painting, reroofing, construction projects at various city buildings, irrigation control upgrades, and landscaping improvements at all five charter school campuses. The mayor stated that digital monument signs were installed at multiple locations and that a new traffic signal was installed on Palm Avenue and Southwest Seventh Street. The mayor reported that the department completed the design of the seepage pump station that will assist with drainage west of Northwest 172nd Avenue and north of Pines Boulevard.

Mayor Castillo shared that milling and resurfacing projects were completed in Towngate, Honeywoods, Chapel Lake Estates, Pembroke Lakes Section 2, and Pembroke Lakes Section 6. The mayor stated that the department successfully transitioned to digital permitting with the full implementation of the EnerGov system, improving tracking and

efficiency.

Mayor Castillo reported that Community Services obtained grant funds from the Florida Department of Transportation through the Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Program to provide five new buses for senior transportation, requiring only a ten percent city contribution. The mayor stated that senior transportation provided 21,569 trips during fiscal year 2024 to 2025. The mayor shared that the Carl Shechter Southwest Focal Point Community Center continued to expand programs reflecting community diversity and secured a new six-year contract with the Area Agency on Aging of Broward County.

Mayor Castillo explained that at the Howard C. Forman Human Services Campus, the Southwest Hammocks development opened a privately funded apartment complex serving more than one hundred adults living with mental health challenges. The mayor noted that on-site staff ensures resident support, wellness, and safety. The mayor stated that renovations continued on a building that will provide 25,000 square feet of new space for city services by the end of 2026. The mayor reported that the city hosted a free food distribution event at the campus in partnership with Commissioner Alexandra P. Davis and Farm Share.

The mayor shared that at the Pines Place Apartment Complex, the city welcomed the Memorial Hospital Adult Primary Care Mobile Clinic and the Joe DiMaggio Children's Mobile Clinic to provide no-cost medical services. The mayor stated that Phase One of the refacing of Tower Two was completed and that security system upgrades are underway.

Mayor Castillo reported that at Pines Point Senior Residences, exterior windows, pedestrian doors, and storefront systems were replaced using a 660,000 dollar grant. The mayor noted that the fire alarm system was modernized with a 277,209 dollar grant and that elevator upgrades were completed using a 1,136,000 dollar grant.

The mayor stated that the Human Resources Department had fully automated the city's recruitment process and moved to a paperless hiring system. The mayor explained that HR partnered with Academic Village High School to launch an internship program for the 2025 to 2026 school year and introduced new employee engagement events and expanded training workshops.

Mayor Castillo reported that the Finance Department refunded the 2015 General Obligation Bond, saving an estimated 3.5 million dollars in net present value and 400,000 dollars annually. The mayor stated that the city maintained a balanced budget for five consecutive years without

increasing the operating millage rate and implemented PaymentWorks to improve vendor management and financial controls. The mayor noted that the city earned the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for fiscal year 2024.

The mayor shared that the City Clerk's Office processed more than 3,000 passport applications and supported city commission meetings through agenda preparation and documentation. The mayor reported that the Local Business Tax Receipt department generated more than 3.8 million dollars.

Mayor Castillo explained that the William B. Armstrong Dream and Spring Valley Park Community Center and Passive Park opened, transforming the former hockey rink into a community destination. The mayor stated that the city approved more than 5.5 million dollars in park improvements and more than 4.1 million dollars in roadway and infrastructure improvements, and ordered eight of ten playground replacements. The mayor reported that traffic signal boxes were wrapped with artwork by past art festival poster contest winners and that the city partnered with the American Cancer Society and the Florida Panthers to install a custom-painted panther sculpture named Hope near City Hall.

Mayor Castillo stated that the Youth Advisory Board hosted its first student-led Career Fair and Life Skills Event. The mayor noted that renovation began at the Pines Recreation Center, which will be operated with the Boys and Girls Club and include a Life and Workforce Readiness Center. The mayor added that new life skills programming began at the Village Community Center through a partnership with Fathers MIA.

Mayor Castillo shared that the Procurement and Sustainability Department received the National Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award. The mayor explained that procurement thresholds and processes were updated and that the department expanded to include Sustainability, Sanitation, and Solid Waste services. The mayor noted that the city launched a Sustainability and Green Initiatives webpage, added a Sustainability Spotlight in the City Connect newspaper, updated the Sanitation and Solid Waste website, and introduced the Find My Trash or Bulk Pickup Day tool. The mayor stated that a new agreement with Republic Services will provide quarterly Household Hazardous Waste drop-off events.

Mayor Castillo reported that the city launched the We Love Pembroke

Pines Foundation to support community-driven initiatives. The mayor stated that student volunteers supported food drives, kindness campaigns, and city events. The mayor noted that the foundation's first fundraising event raised approximately 66,000 dollars and that upcoming projects include Adopt a Street, Sidewalk, and Park programs.

The mayor closed his remarks by reflecting on the city's strengths and the quality of life enjoyed by its residents. The mayor encouraged residents to appreciate the opportunities and sense of community that define Pembroke Pines and expressed his pride in the city and confidence in its future.

Mayor Castillo shared that Pembroke Pines residents are fortunate, getting to live in a tropical paradise that is accompanied by a beautiful, diverse, and hardworking citizenry. The mayor highlighted all the great services residents enjoy, including parks and amenities. Mayor Castillo shared that millions of Americans would gladly exchange places with Pembroke Pines residents if it were possible. The mayor shared that the city's future is secure and promising. Mayor Castillo expressed how glad he was that he and his family decided to settle in Pembroke Pines.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT OF ITEMS TO BE PULLED FROM AGENDA**

There were no items pulled from the agenda.

## **PRESENTATIONS:**

The mayor recognized State Representative Robin Bartleman, First Lady of Pembroke Pines Lisa Castillo, and Felicia Robinson.

**PRE-2** PRESENTATION NO. 2: MAYOR CASTILLO WILL PRESENT A PROCLAMATION TO KERRY-ANN BROWN AND THE GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL) VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZING APRIL 2026 AS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH AND VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION MONTH IN THE CITY OF PEMBROKE PINES

Mayor Castillo and Broward County Commissioner Nan Rich read a proclamation detailing that nationally, April is recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Commissioner Rich communicated that Guardian AD LITEM (GAL) provides legal representation as well as many forms of support for abused, neglected, and abandoned children throughout the State of Florida. Commissioner Rich shared that GAL has a very diverse team of experts in various subject matters, such as attorneys, child welfare professionals, and trained volunteers.

Mayor Castillo proclaimed April 2026 as Child Abuse Prevention Month and Volunteer Appreciation Month and encouraged residents to learn how they can help children.

Kerry-Ann Brown shared her appreciation for the volunteers who help make the work that they do possible. Ms. Brown shared that GAL represents children who have been abused, abandoned, or neglected, and communicated that the organization is always looking for volunteers, whether they be attorneys, mentors, or anyone else. Ms. Brown provided the website to reach out to the organization as [guardianadlitem.org](http://guardianadlitem.org).

Commissioner Nan Rich expressed her appreciation for being included and shared that they will be doing the same at the Broward County Commission meeting because GAL is her favorite program. Commissioner Rich detailed that they started the program back in 1980 in Miami-Dade and in Broward shortly after. Commissioner Rich noted that there was no state-wide Guardian AD LITEM program until she was in the legislature, noting that they all worked together for the benefit and the best interest of children.

Commissioner Rich shared how she received the support of then-Governor Jeb Bush for a bill on the Guardian AD LITEM program and was able to pass the bill. Commissioner Rich praised the volunteers as the best at working with children and at representing the best interests of the children.

**PRE-1 PRESENTATION NO. 1: ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE WINNER OF THE DISTRICT 3 NATALIE BELMONTE GREAT YARD AWARDS FOR MARCH 2026.**

Assistant City Manager Stamm announced that the winners of the District 3 Natalie Belmonte Great Yard Award for March 2026 are Antonio and Christine Perez for their property located at 1450 NW 122 Avenue, Pembroke Pines, FL 33026 in Pembroke Lakes. The assistant city manager commended them on their yard and expressed his pride in announcing their win.

Commissioner Rodriguez addressed the Perez family and presented them with the award, as well as a gift card. Commissioner Rodriguez questioned the Perez family about what the secret to their success is.

Christine Perez shared that the family works together in the garden and that their secret is their desire to make something beautiful and then planning how to accomplish that.

Commissioner Rodriguez congratulated the Perez family and thanked them for helping make Pembroke Pines beautiful.

Mayor Castillo expressed his appreciation for the code enforcement officers and noted that they were the ones who selected the winner for this award.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT OF BOARD AND COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

- BA-1** BOARD APPOINTMENT: MAYOR CASTILLO WISHES TO ANNOUNCE THE APPOINTMENT OF REBECCA STATON-REINSTEIN AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD (CURRENTLY SERVING AS AN ALTERNATE MEMBER).

Mayor Castillo announced the appointment of Rebecca Staton-Reinstein as a regular member of the education advisory board, who is currently serving as an alternative member. The mayor sadly announced the resignation of a board member, but announced that Rebecca has experience on the board and thanked her for all that she has done on the board. Mayor Castillo asked her what her experience with the board has been so far.

Rebecca Staton-Reinstein detailed that members are each assigned to certain schools and work with the principals of those schools to inform them and provide them with access to all of the many services that are offered to them. Ms. Staton-Reinstein shared that members do various projects, including a STEM project, which she particularly enjoys, as she was a scientist. Rebecca Staton-Reinstein shared that she loves to see the looks on the faces of the parents and students when a problem has been solved.

Rebecca Staton-Reinstein continued that the board also does reading days, where each year members are assigned to different reading levels and present a book and read/articulate it to the students. Ms. Staton-Reinstein shared how much fun she has on the board and in interacting with students.

Mayor Castillo communicated that he is honored to have Rebecca Staton-Reinstein, as a lifetime educator, as a member of the Education Advisory Board. The mayor thanked Rebecca Staton-Reinstein for all the work she has done.

## **ITEMS AT THE REQUEST OF THE PUBLIC**

Claudio Loveras of 5401 SW 199th Avenue, Durango Estates, announced that his purpose is to receive clarification about comments from the March 18, 2026, Commission Meeting. Mr. Loveras, addressing Commissioner Schwartz, commented that at the last meeting, the commissioner made remarks about a dilapidated horse, an illegal structure, manure going into the canal, and a retired police officer being the perpetrator of these events. Mr. Loveras questioned Commissioner Schwartz on whom he was referring to when he made his remarks.

Mayor Castillo, addressing Mr. Loveras, clarified that he is entitled to ask his question, but the commission does not comment on or interact with speakers in this format, and that this is the speaker's opportunity to speak.

Mr. Loveras, addressing the mayor, shared that he feels compelled to address several statements that were made regarding him that he described as inaccurate and unsubstantiated during the March 18th Commission Meeting. Mr. Loveras shared that the statements that were made are damaging to his character and reputation. Mr. Loveras clarified that Commissioner Schwartz implied that his horse is being deprived of adequate grazing, space, and nutrition.

Mr. Loveras countered the statement that horses require 35,000 square feet of grazing and shared that this only applies when grazing is the sole source of nutrition. Mr. Loveras clarified that in his case, his horse is fed, supplemented, and cared for according to modern equine veterinary standards. Mr. Loveras questioned how Commissioner Schwartz could claim to have been around horses all his life and not have knowledge of basic equine care and nutrition.

Mr. Loveras addressed the claim from Director Stamm that his barn is 25 feet from the property line and countered that his barn is 30 feet from the property line. Mr. Loveras responded to the comments made regarding unprocessed manure ending up in the canal and claimed that those comments were erroneous and false, stating that all the manure is removed from his property and none ends up in the canal. Mr. Loveras communicated that Commissioner Schwartz's claim that the horse would not have been there if not for an illegal structure is false, and he constructed a barn and has complied with the city's requirements.

Mr. Loveras shared that Commissioner Schwartz stated that his mind was blown that a retired police officer would engage in this situation,

claiming that the Commissioner was implying that Mr. Loveras was committing wrongdoing and had criminal intent. Mr. Loveras shared that the comments are misleading and inappropriate considering the facts, as he has followed all requirements and procedures. Mr. Loveras shared his concern that these statements from the previous commission meeting are now public record and that the commission's platform has been weaponized against a private citizen.

Mr. Loveras accused Commissioner Schwartz of undermining Commissioner Rodriguez, his commissioner, and encouraging her to bring false allegations against Mr. Loveras. Mr. Loveras communicated that he would like a public correction as well as an apology from Commissioner Schwartz.

Mayor Castillo thanked Mr. Loveras for coming and airing his concerns and communicated that the matter came forth as a commission item and that staff were directed to investigate the claims, generally, not targeted at any specific individual. Mayor Castillo shared that the Commission is here to respectfully represent every homeowner and wanted to make sure that Mr. Loveras is aware that this was not malicious, nor was it aimed directly at Mr. Loveras. The mayor specified that he and his colleagues did not specifically engage in that discussion in either a malicious or targeted manner, nor do they engage in back-and-forth conversations during commission meetings with more items on the agenda.

Mayor Castillo suggested that Mr. Loveras and Commissioner Schwartz meet privately, talk, and try to resolve this matter. The mayor clarified that there was a directive issued for staff to investigate the matter, and it was expressed that there is uncertainty if cities even have jurisdiction in this specific area. The mayor reiterated that no one was intending to aim the discussion at Mr. Loveras.

Mr. Loveras responded that he is the only retired police officer who owns a horse in the city; therefore, the comments could only have been directed at him.

Mayor Castillo reiterated how much he and the city value him as a retired police officer and as a citizen and promised that the staff will proceed in a way that is fair to everybody involved.

Mr. Loveras responded that he did feel like he was being targeted at the commission meeting.

The mayor responded that he and Commissioner Schwartz can and

should get together and discuss that.

Commissioner Rodriguez added that Mr. Loveras is her constituent and that he received a letter from the Solid Waste Authority about the water samples, sharing that she will provide that information to Mike Stamm. Commissioner Rodriguez continued that she also received information from the South Broward Drainage District, which shared that their regulations regarding horse manure are directed by the Broward Drainage System.

Commissioner Rodriguez shared that, to her untrained eye, it seems that he is following all the guidelines. The commissioner noted that she visited Mr. Loveras' property, and the horse looked healthy, and she got to feed the animal. Commissioner Rodriguez expressed her appreciation to Mr. Loveras for being in attendance and bringing attention to this issue, and shared that she does not want any of the residents to feel attacked, particularly by someone who has not visited the property.

11. VICE MAYOR HERNANDEZ COMMISSION ITEM #2: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO MOVE ALL FUTURE PEMBROKE PINES ELECTIONS FROM MARCH TO NOVEMBER, AND POSSIBLY DIRECTING THE CITY ATTORNEY AND CITY ADMINISTRATION TO PREPARE APPROPRIATE LEGISLATION TO ACCOMPLISH THIS DIRECTIVE.

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Hernandez, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to direct the City Attorney draft an Ordinance to change the election date under state law from the current March period to November and to allow for a first reading on April 15, 2026, simultaneously the City Attorney will verify the City will have ballot access and what the deadline would be. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye** 5 - Mayor Castillo, Vice Mayor Hernandez, Commissioner Good Jr., Commissioner Rodriguez, and Commissioner Schwartz

**Nay** 0

## PRIOR TO THE VOTE BEING TAKEN:

Vice Mayor Hernandez read Item 11 into the record by title.

Vice Mayor Hernandez called Broward County Commissioner Nan Rich to speak.

Commissioner Rich shared that the vice mayor's proposal reminded her of Mayor Eric Hersh, who asked her as a legislator to allow for proposals like the vice mayor's to be allowed to occur. Commissioner Rich communicated that more people vote when elections take place in November and that the idea that people will not vote all the way down the ballot, where local elections tend to be, was disproved in the City of Weston. Commissioner Rich shared that Weston has been very happy since adopting a proposal similar to what the vice mayor is suggesting.

Commissioner Rich shared that they are trying to use their money on things that are important to the people of our community. Commissioner Rich shared that the March 26th elections cost \$147,000, describing it as outrageous compared to costs from normal elections. Commissioner Rich urged the commission to support the vice mayor's proposal and noted that there are different ways to accomplish it, one of which involves voters. Commissioner Rich shared that she likes what the commission is doing and is here to express her support.

Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that he is not looking to accomplish his proposal the city way, electing for the residents to vote on it. The vice mayor noted that there would be an arduous process to make the proposal a reality, noting that the legislative process would involve multiple rounds of voting, the supervisor's review, and then placement and acceptance on the November 2026 ballot. Vice Mayor Hernandez emphasized the need for more civic engagement and shared that when he looked at the voter turnout difference, data showed that in 2024, there were roughly 30,000 registered voters in District Four during his special election. Vice Mayor Hernandez noted that compared to the other election, the number of votes for the commission seat was low.

Addressing Commissioner Rich's prior statement, he expressed that he does not like being at the bottom of the ballot, nor the attrition rate that comes with it. Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that 67% of District 4's residents cast a ballot in his race, emphasizing that the cost was approximately a dollar per voter and the costs were about \$21,000. The vice mayor communicated that for the March 2026 elections, the costs were \$147,000. The vice detailed that his race had about 9% turnout rate, sharing that he won 76% of the vote but would not have minded winning by less for there to have been higher turnout rates.

Vice Mayor Hernandez communicated that at Century Village, residents told him that, minus the vice mayor sending a text or an email, they forget about the election. Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that important races lead to more voter engagement. The vice mayor expressed that he doesn't believe it to be the fault of the Supervisor of Elections and that he spent a fair amount of his campaign finances informing voters that there was an election on March 10th. The vice mayor continued that, additionally, only being able to vote in person on election day led him to propose that his colleagues consider changing election dates.

Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that historically, Broward cities typically have elections in March until the last 8 years. The vice mayor noted that Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood have moved their elections to November. The vice mayor noted that Miami had a different approach by which they attempted to move the election date without putting the election date change on the ballot. Vice Mayor Hernandez noted that in Miami's case, the state attorney general became involved, and the judges said that Miami could not do that.

Vice Mayor Hernandez elaborated that he is opposed to even exploring an option to change the election date without putting it on a ballot because of what happened when Miami tried, and because voters should have a say and their will should be respected. The vice mayor noted that he has never met anyone who has commented that they enjoy voting in March, rather many ask why the city still votes in March at all when the other cities do not.

Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that the supervisor of elections provided a memo, which detailed that beginning in November 2026, candidate-only municipal elections would not incur a cost. Vice Mayor Hernandez clarified that it is a significant cost saver for the city, but emphasized that this is only true for candidate-only municipal elections and would not apply if there were charter amendments or ballot items. The vice mayor described the change as common sense and as beneficial to fostering voter engagement and voter efficacy. Vice Mayor Hernandez divulged that despite its size, Pembroke Pines still has a community feel, where neighbors look out for one another, and he attributed this to the work of himself and the commission.

Vice Mayor Hernandez reiterated that it is important to follow the will of the voters, but noted that to put this on the ballot, it would cost the City of Pembroke Pines \$2.79 per voter, totaling approximately \$340,000. The vice mayor continued that another ramification of this proposal is that the commissioners would have eight months added to their terms. The vice mayor noted that he has discussed this proposal with the Supervisor of

Elections, Joe Scott, the city attorney, city clerk, city manager, and assistant city managers, and thanked them for the information that they have provided.

Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that he wants to hear his colleagues' opinions on this proposal and noted that with November elections, there would be more opportunities to engage. The vice mayor continued that he wants to discuss this because he believes it is important for Pembroke Pines to follow the example of the majority of other cities in Pembroke Pines, especially given that the city is still growing. The vice mayor reiterated his desire to have a conversation with the other commissioners on this topic.

Vice Mayor Hernandez expressed his appreciation to those who have gathered here in support and recognized each of them.

Vice Mayor Hernandez shared an email from Broward County AFL CIO, which communicated their support for the vice mayor's proposal and praised the move as good for democracy as well as a good use of taxpayer dollars. The vice mayor also shared that Denise Horland, a City of Plantation council member, expressed her support. The vice mayor shared that the turnout is the most important factor, equating low turnout with low engagement. The vice mayor noted that there is a clear numerical turnout rate difference between the March and November elections, and noted that even in non-presidential election years, the turnout is still roughly ten times the amount of voter turnout as in the March elections.

Mayor Castillo shared that a motion is not required to have a discussion on this topic. The mayor expressed that he has resisted changing the elections from March to November, explaining that he was concerned about partisanship. The mayor explained that in Florida, there is a law requiring city commissioners to run non-partisan, sharing that everyone gets to participate in the election. The mayor noted that, in fact, he was advised that commissioners should not even widely inform people of their party affiliation. Mayor Castillo expressed that to him, the idea of pretending to be a political Switzerland is comical; however, that is what the law requires.

The mayor continued that with partisan elections come partisan issues and conflict, expressing that historically, March is for nonpartisan elections because there was wide awareness that partisanship was a problem. Mayor Castillo explained that changes occurred, and three commissioners were running on the same ballot as the partisan races, while two were not. The mayor affirmed that the people want their

elections in November, explaining that there was a good reason for a March election, but the world has changed. Mayor Castillo shared that he still has misgivings and concerns, but he supports commissioners being on the ballot with other elected officials in November.

Mayor Castillo noted that the community believes it is necessary, and it will undoubtedly save the city money. The mayor commented that, as the city pays county taxes, he finds it mindboggling that the city must pay for any elections. The mayor shared his shock that putting one question item on a pre-existing ballot costs \$350,000 and questioned how that value was calculated, or why it should apply, as they are conducting the election anyway. The mayor continued that it is absurd to have to pay large sums of money to ask a question in March, but if you ask it in November, it is free, and you receive significantly higher voter turnout rates.

Mayor Castillo communicated that if the motion is made, the commission should advance the proposal and explain to residents that the change is necessary because it saves money and advances democracy.

Commissioner Good shared that when he was on the South Broward Drainage Board, he ran on Presidential cycles and received a minimum of 30,000 each election. Commissioner Good contrasted those numbers with the number of votes received as a Pembroke Pines Commissioner, sharing that he does not disagree with any of the comments that have been made thus far. Commissioner Good expressed that he does have an opposing view to that of the mayor and the vice mayor, sharing that March races exist to prevent national political issues from dominating the local races. Commissioner Good communicated that non-partisanship is very important for local municipalities, expressing that when campaigning, he is frequently asked for his party affiliation and that it is easier to convince people in March that he is non-partisan and there to represent them, than in November amidst the national political turmoil.

Commissioner Good highlighted the March race in Boca Raton, sharing that it allowed the voters to focus on important local issues, particularly development, which was an incredibly important matter. Commissioner Good continued that in Boca Raton, the voters changed their entire commission, expressing their disapproval of the proposal. Commissioner Good noted that because the ballot was in March, there were no distractions, and there was a relatively good turnout.

Commissioner Good reiterated that when he campaigns, he campaigns for local government, not for party politics, and expressed his understanding of those who disagree. Commissioner Good shared that

in his opinion, it is a matter of choosing whether money or control of local politics is more important. Commissioner Good expressed that, to him, it is control of local politics that matters most.

Commissioner Schwartz shared that for him, the District Two races have always fallen on the presidential primary cycles. Commissioner Schwartz noted that in the past, it took District Four three election cycles for their voter turnout to equate to a single one from his district. Commissioner Schwartz also expressed concern that, at one time, District One's elections seemed to be decided by a single community. Commissioner Schwartz shared his history of helping those who have run for elected office win their elections and noted that every campaign is different, but the local elections were more interesting, personalized, and unique.

Commissioner Schwartz noted that the concern is that national partisan rhetoric creates apathy in the electorate and is unfavorable to candidates who do not belong to either party. Commissioner Schwartz noted that with local politics, partisanship does not matter. Commissioner Schwartz noted that on packed ballots, people often vote for people whom they do not know, emphasizing that this can create consequences for local elections. Commissioner Schwartz detailed that the commission needs to verify that changes to the charter are necessary, well-vetted, and in the best interest of the public.

Commissioner Schwartz explained that in 2008 and 2012, the commission had to move the elections from March to January, detailing that after that, in 2016, due to national factors, the elections were moved to March, requiring the Commission to pass an ordinance extending the terms of those who were serving. Commissioner Schwartz noted that when this occurred, his term was extended by six weeks, which was uncomfortable for him. Commissioner Schwartz shared that now they are considering an eight-month extension and noted that they may as well say the Commissioners have a 5-year term and expressed that the voters were not considering this in 2024.

Vice Mayor Hernandez raised a point of clarification and asked Commissioner Schwartz not to mischaracterize what he said, clarifying that voters would have the final say.

Commissioner Schwartz asked when he mischaracterized the vice mayor and asked for clarification on what he said.

Vice Mayor Hernandez responded that Commissioner Schwartz said that it was not contemplated by the voters, sharing that it's never been contemplated by voters because it's never been put on the ballot before.

The mayor decided that Commissioner Schwartz could reclaim his time, as he offered clarification, even if the vice mayor did not like his clarification.

Commissioner Schwartz questioned whether November elections would dilute local issues or benefit particular candidates or incumbents. Commissioner Schwartz shared that he would support bringing this to the voters after there are more public workshops, as well as after data and community input have been collected and analyzed. Commissioner Schwartz noted that, to his knowledge, there has not been a public outcry to move the mayor's, District two, or District three's race to November, although he understands Districts one and four need more participation.

Vice Mayor Hernandez interjected, stating that those statements are inaccurate, as his district has had the highest participation in any district race.

Commissioner Schwartz noted that there is an imbalance between turnout when the mayor and commissioners are elected, explaining that if all races ran in a presidential year, then everything would be equal, and they would ensure the largest turnout rate possible. Commissioner Schwartz elaborated that, based on the data from 2008, 2012, and 2016, this is the case.

The mayor questioned what the difference is between turnout rates in midterm and presidential elections. Mayor Castillo shared that, to his understanding, November elections generate the highest voter turnout rates.

Commissioner Schwartz responded that the turnout rate difference is about 50% and continued that the City of Pembroke Pines has always supported grassroots campaigns, which should be inexpensive. Commissioner Schwartz shared that, in his opinion, a November cycle dramatically increases the number of doors that need to be knocked on and the number of residents that need to be reached.

The mayor questioned why that would increase the number of residents that need to be reached, explaining that in his mind, the number of voters remains the same regardless of when the election is.

Commissioner Schwartz responded that generally, as they share the same campaign manager, he and the mayor both know what to expect in each election. Commissioner Schwartz emphasized that campaigns would become expensive and would invite more special interest dollars

into a race that does not need that kind of pressure. Commissioner Schwartz, addressing the vice mayor, shared that he does believe that we owe the residents more discussion on the matter, including data-driven vetted information to be shared with the city's four major condos, and no less than one outreach event for each commission district. Commissioner Schwartz continued that data should include a comparison of the last 28 years of election cycles, noting that 2024 had the lowest mayoral turnout rate in 28 years.

Commissioner Schwartz noted that compared to Hollywood, which borders his district and has the same number of voters, he received 2,500 fewer votes. Commissioner Schwartz communicated that large-scale changes like this should be driven by public benefit and that there should be discussion of having all five seats run in the Presidential Primary in March.

The vice mayor clarified the voter turnout and shared that for the November 2022 cycle, the turnout rate was 49%, and for November 2024, the turnout rate was 65%. The vice mayor noted that Commissioner Schwartz previously stated that there was a 50% difference between the turnout rates and questioned where he got that data. The vice mayor clarified that there will be no action tonight.

Commissioner Schwartz communicated that he has no problems continuing the discussion to move the item forward.

Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that he is concerned about meeting a deadline to put the item on the ballot, which is just before Labor Day, according to Supervisor of Elections Joe Scott. The vice mayor expressed that before that date, any proposals have to be legally sufficient for them to be put on the ballot for November 2026. The vice mayor once more reiterated that he was not suggesting voting on an item today; they are just discussing the idea.

The vice mayor reported the statistics for his commission race in November 2024, sharing that approximately 21,000 voters participated in the election. The vice mayor shared that in the next election, the turnout was only 9%, sharing that he does not believe it is a good use of taxpayer dollars to spend that much money, describing Pembroke Pines as a victim of its own success. Vice Mayor Hernandez continued that it costs \$2.79 per registered voter, so whenever a new voter registers, it becomes more expensive, clarifying that more registered voters is always a good thing despite the costs.

Vice Mayor Hernandez agreed with Commissioner Schwartz that public

input is very important in this matter and clarified that he just wanted to correct the numbers, as he is the only one who has been on a November ballot for a role on the commission.

Commissioner Rodriguez commented that she agrees on the points that were presented, but has come to different conclusions on them than her colleagues. Commissioner Rodriguez acknowledged that while commissioners may face questions about their party affiliation, the ultimate responsibility of candidates is to inform residents of what they will be voting for. Commissioner Rodriguez clarified that it's the job of candidates to inform residents of local issues, and if they want to vote for you because of what they perceive your party affiliation to be, that's their decision. Commissioner Rodriguez shared that when she ran in 2024, while the race was non-partisan, it was still partisan because it happened alongside the presidential primary.

Commissioner Rodriguez noted that citizens are so divided in their politics that even in March, people are still asking you the same questions; it just might be the same number of people. Commissioner Rodriguez commented on the cost breakdown, questioning the logistics of it.

Vice Mayor Hernandez reiterated that what was explained to him by the supervisor was that if you are placing a charter amendment on the ballot, there would be a fee of \$2.79, totaling approximately \$345,000. The vice mayor clarified that the supervisor's memo shared that the candidate-only municipal elections would not incur costs, specifying that moving forward, the city would still have to pay to put charter amendments on the ballot. The vice mayor asked the city manager for clarification.

Commissioner Rodriguez thanked the vice mayor for bringing this topic up and shared that she has always supported moving the elections to November, given how low the turnout rates are. Commissioner Rodriguez shared that for her campaign, she not only reached out to frequent voters, but she also reached out to newly registered and younger voters as well to try to appeal to wider parts of the electorate. Commissioner Rodriguez explained that although it is cheaper in March, she does not believe that it is impossible to do the same thing in November, even though it may be more challenging.

Commissioner Rodriguez shared that those who deserve to be in the position will work much harder to earn it. Commissioner Rodriguez shared how last summer, Rebecca Thompson and she knocked on doors and interacted with residents to inform them of the services that

they each offered. Commissioner Rodriguez emphasized that work like that is what candidates should be doing regardless of the election date.

Commissioner Rodriguez commented on Boca Raton's circumstances, sharing that from her perspective, a loud minority in the city accomplished their goals of stopping development. Commissioner Rodriguez shared that she believes that with grassroots campaigns, loud minority groups have a louder voice than other groups. Commissioner Rodriguez expressed that there were likely many young families in Boca Raton that were hoping to benefit from the development. Commissioner Rodriguez suggested that those families weren't communicated with, and the loud minority was able to get the support that they needed from other groups. Commissioner Rodriguez communicated that her comments on the matter come from individuals related to Boca Raton's commission.

Commissioner Rodriguez shared that turnout nationwide is 60% for national elections and 40% for midterms. Commissioner Rodriguez continued that, regardless of whether the election year falls on a midterm or presidential year, having elections in November is preferable to the current system. Commissioner Rodriguez explained that she does not support having the entire commission on the ballot at the same time, describing it as bad for the continuity of the city. Commissioner Rodriguez detailed that the institutional knowledge needs to be maintained by someone.

Commissioner Rodriguez added that she also feels uncomfortable adding those eight months, but supports putting it on the ballot so residents could decide that for themselves. Commissioner Rodriguez shared her belief that this proposal democratizes the city and that it will be beneficial to the city.

Vice Mayor Hernandez apologized to Commissioner Rodriguez, recounting that she brought the matter up in 2024 and they did not place it on the ballot. The vice mayor introduced a point of clarification, sharing that the City of Hollywood's mayoral race had 58,364 voters.

Commissioner Schwartz clarified that he was not referring to the mayoral race but the district at large.

Vice Mayor Hernandez continued that in the March 2024 elections, there was only a Republican primary, attributing the decline in voter turnout at that time to the fact that many Democrats did not vote. The vice mayor presented data showing that the majority of voters in Broward County and the City of Pembroke Pines are registered Democrats.

Commissioner Schwartz communicated that this will be considered by the voters and said that it should not be surprising when residents communicate that they like nonpartisan services and prefer elections not to be hyper-partisan.

Vice Mayor Hernandez clarified that in November, when asked for his political party, he responded that his affiliation is Pembroke Pines and that he could not go into details. The vice mayor detailed that he used to work for the previous mayor of Miami-Dade County, who was a Republican and still won his non-partisan election despite everybody knowing he was a Republican. Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that he rejects the idea that partisan considerations matter more than individual considerations, emphasizing that to him, it's the person, not the party. The vice mayor described that he represents residents with various political affiliations and agreed with Commissioner Schwartz that the city's issues are non-partisan.

The mayor questioned City Attorney Goren on the legality of the proposal, sharing that he believed that a Commission could not vote to diminish the length of elected officials. The mayor continued that if the election date changes under state law, an elected official could serve for longer than their term.

City Attorney Goren responded that the mayor is correct and that it is more difficult to reduce a term than it is to extend a term.

The mayor communicated that he does not mind when his election is; his interest is in encouraging more people to vote and increasing voter turnout rates. Mayor Castillo shared that staggered terms exist in every legislature so that there is always someone accessible who knows the procedure and is familiar with it.

Commissioner Schwartz responded that the Commission appointed a charter review commission that looked at staggered terms and election dates. Commissioner Schwartz detailed that with the imbalances between the districts, the mayor's seat is in an advantageous position for the southern half of the city. Commissioner Schwartz explained that this is because districts one and four can run for mayor, and then those districts have elections, whereas those seats are filled months later. Commissioner Schwartz continued that with Districts two and three, you can either run for the position of mayor or run for re-election as a commissioner. Commissioner Schwartz proposed that if the city is moving elections to November, to take the mayor out of the cycle and align the commission districts.

The vice mayor raised a point of clarification and shared that he and Commissioner Rodriguez proposed a charter amendment that was approved with 69% of the vote, requiring an appointment, removing the commission's previous discretion. The vice mayor also shared that the supervisor of elections made it clear that there would be no municipal elections in August, meaning they would happen in November.

Mayor Castillo shared that it was for that reason that they had their first municipal elections and expressed that it was hard for him to follow Commissioner Schwartz's logic, as he was a part of the vote that led to November elections in the first place.

Commissioner Schwartz commented that had the mayor agreed to resign, District 4's seat could have been filled earlier.

Mayor Castillo and Vice Mayor Hernandez countered that they did not want to discuss this topic. Mayor Castillo continued that all the information pertaining to that was explained by the city attorney and complied with state law. The mayor shared that he knows that Commissioner Schwartz does not care for the decision that was made or how it was made.

Commissioner Schwartz requested that the mayor keep decorum.

Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that Commissioner Schwartz made comments about past elections for district four, resignations, and running for mayor. The vice mayor clarified that what Commissioner Schwartz is referring to has completely changed due to the charter amendment.

Commissioner Rodriguez commented that it is likely cheaper for special interests to influence a March race than a November race. Commissioner Rodriguez reminded the commission that primaries are closed; therefore, people with no party affiliation do not typically participate in those elections, and to make elections as non-partisan as possible, it might be best to move the elections to November, as voters without party affiliations vote in those elections.

The mayor thanked Commissioner Rodriguez and agreed with her.

Steve Reinstein of 13100 SW 11th Court, Pembroke Pines, Florida, 33027, addressed the commission. Mr. Reinstein agreed that elections should be in November because people don't vote except in November, attributing this to schooling, which taught that elections are the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Mr. Reinstein shared that

the data and the statistics are true, but the question is why people are not voting, not just what they do, which is what the data shows.

Scott Barnett from 19346 SW 5th Street shared that he has had concerns about overreach from the previous city commission. Mr. Barnett conveyed that there are cases where commissioners interfere with other districts that are not their own. Mr. Barnett expressed that there's nothing wrong with having an interest, but an unrelated commissioner taking the lead on an issue in someone else's district does not make sense. Mr. Barnett continued that he remembers a previous discussion regarding the election qualifying period and shared that the problem was that it was being decided by the dais and not by the people.

Mr. Barnett shared that he also remembers the discussion to move the district four special elections to August, as well as when Joe Scott, the supervisor of elections, issued the memo indicating that they would not be having an election in August. Mr. Barnett shared that he was not pleased with the supervisor and called him to share his concerns, and left satisfied that the supervisor was following through with his campaign promise to have elections during periods with higher voter turnout.

Mr. Barnett continued that he agreed with many of the points Commissioner Rodriguez was making, especially regarding her loud minority. Mr. Barnett shared that in his opinion, the bond referendum was defeated at the hands of a loud minority that was able to take control of the narrative. Mr. Barnett questioned whether the bond referendum would have been successful had it been on a ballot with higher voter turnout.

Mr. Barnett addressed Commissioner Good and shared that he knows he is opposed to the idea due to partisan considerations; however, he expressed that now that they have discussed the issue, the genie is out of the proverbial bottle, so now the proposal needs to be considered by the people.

Mr. Barnett continued that he believes that in this case, the people have to be allowed to vote on this matter, otherwise the commission would be guilty of preventing the people from being able to make their own decisions. Mr. Barnett emphasized that, given the political atmosphere, more decisions need to be placed back into the hands of the voters. Mr. Barnett shared his hope that a motion on this proposal be made and expressed that now is the time to do this.

The mayor thanked Mr. Barnett for his comments and recounted that there are three commissioners who are willing to move to November

elections, one who is undecided and sees the value in both approaches, and one who is opposed.

Commissioner Schwartz clarified for the mayor that he is open to moving the item forward tonight and having a public discussion on it. Commissioner Schwartz expressed his frustration at being misunderstood.

Mayor Castillo expressed that they could move for a ballot question with public input or put forth some other motion. As the item was brought by the vice mayor, the mayor left the creation of the motion to his discretion.

Vice Mayor Hernandez conveyed that he would like to work in parallel with City Attorney Goren.

Mayor Castillo noted that there was a comment made about the charter review board, sharing that the board is created every 10 years. The mayor detailed that the board has absolute authority to put forth any item regarding the charter, so there is nothing improper about the commission deciding to place an item before voters before sending it to a charter board.

The vice mayor shared that he would like to work collaboratively with everybody, as he noted that he agrees with everybody on the commission about the proposal. Vice Mayor Hernandez communicated that he would like to explore an ordinance, as to his understanding, in order to place a charter amendment on the ballot, first there would need to be an ordinance with a ballot question, a first reading, and a second reading.

City Attorney Goren added that there would also need to be coordination with the supervisor of elections. The city attorney stated that the ordinance, if adopted by the commission, would need to be filed in a timely manner with the supervisor of elections, and then the supervisor would need to accept it for the purpose of placing it on a ballot.

Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that he would like to direct the administration, especially the city attorney, to speak with the supervisor of elections and his counsel and return on April 15th with drafts of what an ordinance and ballot language for this proposal could look like. The vice mayor also requested that the administration coordinate with representatives of the supervisor of elections office to meet with the commission on April 15th.

The vice mayor clarified that the purpose of the meeting would be to obtain clarification from the supervisor's office on the supervisor's position on this matter and to explain the benefits of cities moving elections to November. Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that the supervisor or his representative could provide clarification on the new direction that cities would not have to pay for candidate-only ballots. The vice mayor explained that the difficulty lies in determining how he can aggregate all the information and transform it into a motion.

Commissioner Rodriguez raised a point of clarification, sharing that when it comes to public outreach, the city is not allowed to use taxpayer funds to talk about a topic after a ballot question, only before.

Mayor Castillo explained that because this is a contemplated action, due to its contemplative nature, the city is allowed to host town hall meetings to discuss it.

Commissioner Rodriguez added that if the item is added to the ballot, the city would have only participated in an education campaign, not a campaign aimed at influencing the result of that ballot question.

Mayor Castillo shared that, for a fee, the city could survey the registered voters of Pembroke Pines to see if there's an interest in changing election dates.

Vice Mayor Hernandez explained that he has no issue with there being a survey, but did not want the survey to be a part of his motion. The vice mayor explained that although he supports the ideas of townhalls and surveys, he does not want them to be incorporated into his motion. The vice mayor suggested discussing those proposals at the commission meeting on April 15th, 2026.

City Attorney Goren suggested that, based on the suggestions of the vice mayor, the motion would be to direct the city attorney's office to draft an ordinance to change the election date under state law from the current March period to November by ordinance. The City Attorney continued that the motion would have a first reading by the 15th of April, but the city attorney's office would verify that there would be ballot access in November for the November ballot. The city attorney continued that any initiatives the city chooses to take, regarding public information campaigns, would occur concurrently with the previously explained steps that his office would take.

City Attorney Goren summarized that the motion would be a motion to draft and return to the commission for review. The city attorney clarified that it would be an ordinance, and the meeting to discuss it would be a public hearing for the purpose of discussion, and that the ordinance would not be adopted until there was a second and final public hearing.

The mayor questioned the vice mayor on whether the city attorney's proposal was sufficient.

The vice mayor, before making a motion, asked for the opinions of his colleagues on the commission and received their approval to move forward.

City Attorney Goren explained to the vice mayor that he could delay and or control when the second and final public hearing would be. The city attorney explained that the vice mayor would be required to have the hearing within 10 days for adoption, but could actually schedule the second hearing for a later time.

Mayor Castillo shared that if the commission votes to pass it on first reading, there would then be a reason to host town hall meetings and gauge public interest. The mayor expressed his belief that the town hall meetings should be citywide, but left it to the commission to decide.

The vice mayor agreed with Mayor Castillo, but clarified that he does not want to incorporate that into his motion at this time.

The city attorney shared that the exact motion will be refined through coordination between his office and that of the city clerk.

Following the motion and the second, Commissioner Good clarified that he does not disagree, although he has a different point of view. Commissioner Good shared that consistent with his previous stances, he is in full support of the ballot question being presented to the public.

City Attorney Goren clarified that the second reading would not be delayed, but deferred.

The mayor explained that they will see the matter before them once more at the commission meeting on April 15th, 2026.

## **COMMISSION AUDITOR REPORT:**

None.

**APPEALS OF BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT DECISIONS:**

None.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

The commission took a three-minute recess for Commissioner Rodriguez.

**Approval of the Consent Agenda**

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Hernandez, seconded by Commissioner Good Jr., to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye** 5 - Mayor Castillo, Vice Mayor Hernandez, Commissioner Good Jr., Commissioner Rodriguez, and Commissioner Schwartz

**Nay** 0

1. MOTION TO RELEASE LETTER OF CREDIT # FGAC-24401 AND ACCEPT MAINTENANCE LETTER OF CREDIT # FGAC-25701 FOR THE PROJECT: TUSCAN SPRINGS AKA SKYRISE TOWNHOMES AND RECORD BILL OF SALE AND EASEMENT DEDICATION.

**A motion was made to approve on the Consent Agenda**

2. MOTION TO RELEASE PERFORMANCE BOND #108104688 AND ACCEPT MAINTENANCE BOND #108344069 FOR THE PROJECT: SOUTH FLORIDA DISTRIBUTION CENTER, BUILDING C. AND RECORD BILL OF SALE AND EASEMENT DEDICATION.

**A motion was made to approve on the Consent Agenda**

3. MOTION TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF THE ACCESS CONTROL SYSTEM UPGRADE FROM SAFEWARE, INC., IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$340,449.48, UTILIZING GOVMVMT CONTRACT #24101-RFP-DST, PURSUANT TO SECTION 35.18(C)(6) OF THE CITY'S CODE OF ORDINANCES.

**A motion was made to approve on the Consent Agenda**

4. MOTION TO APPROVE ADDENDUM NO. 1 TO ASSIGN THE MANAGEMENT SERVICES AGREEMENT FROM FLORIDA HYDROCORP INC. TO HYDROCORP OF FLORIDA, LLC FOR THE CITY'S WATER SYSTEM CROSS-CONNECTION CONTROL AND BACKFLOW PREVENTER TESTING PROGRAM.

**A motion was made to approve on the Consent Agenda**

5. MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 4, 2026, REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING.

**A motion was made to approve on the Consent Agenda**

6. MOTION TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF FOLLOWING LIST OF VEHICLES FROM DUVAL FORD FOR THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$202,604, HARDY CHEVROLET FOR THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$80,750.05, GARBER CHEVROLET FOR THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$1,387,378.50, STINGRAY CHEVROLET FOR THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$493,219.62, BOZARD FORD FOR THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$510,840, TALLAHASSEE CHEVROLET FOR THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$50,358.74, TERRY TAYLOR DELAND NISSAN FOR THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$185,510, FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$2,910,660.91 FOR SIXTY-ONE (61) VEHICLES, UTILIZING PRICES ESTABLISHED BY THE FLORIDA SHERIFF ASSOCIATION'S BID # FSA 25-VEL-33.0: "PURSUIT, ADMINISTRATIVE & OTHER VEHICLES," PURSUANT TO SECTION 35.18(C) OF THE CITY'S CODE OF ORDINANCES.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

ONE (1) 2026 FORD F-150 4X4 CREW CAB XLT

ONE (1) 2026 FORD EXPLORER ST-LINE RWD

PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT / FLEET & SURPLUS DIVISION

ONE (1) 2026 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 1500 CREW CAB

PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT

ONE (1) 2026 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 1500 CREW CAB

ONE (1) 2026 FORD TRANSIT T-350 HIGH ROOF CARGO VAN

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

ONE (1) 2026 FORD EXPLORER ST-LINE RWD

UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

ONE (1) 2026 CHEVROLET BLAZER

POLICE DEPARTMENT

THIRTY-FOUR (34) 2026 CHEVROLET TAHOE 4X2 PPV

NINE (9) 2026 FORD EXPLORER ACTIVE RWD

ONE (1) 2026 CHEVROLET EXPRESS 3500 CARGO VAN

FIVE (5) 2026 FORD EXPLORER ACTIVE RWD

FIVE (5) 2026 NISSAN MURANO SV AWD

**A motion was made to approve on the Consent Agenda**

- 7. MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENT WITH WEEKLEY ASPHALT PAVING, INC. FOR MISCELLANEOUS REPAIRS OF SIDEWALKS, SWALES, STREETS AND OTHER WORK ON AN AS-NEEDED BASIS TO COMPLY WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA), UTILIZING PRICING ESTABLISHED IN BROWARD COUNTY'S BID # PNC2124420B1, FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$500,000, PURSUANT TO SECTION 35.18(C)(5) OF THE CITY'S CODE OF ORDINANCES.

**A motion was made to approve on the Consent Agenda**

- 8. MOTION TO APPROVE REQUEST TO ADVERTISE SOLICITATION(S):
  - (A) PSPW-25-12 "SEEPAGE STORMWATER PUMP STATION"
  - (B) PSPW-26-04 "CITYWIDE PRESSURE WASHING SERVICES"
  - (C) PSPW-26-05 "EXTERIOR PAINTING OF PEMBROKE PINES CHARTER SCHOOL - CENTRAL CAMPUS"

**A motion was made to approve on the Consent Agenda**

**QUASI JUDICIAL CONSENT AGENDA:**

**ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:**

**SECOND READING ORDINANCES:**

**FIRST READING ORDINANCES:**

**RESOLUTIONS:**

**REGULAR AGENDA:**

**REPORTS OF LEAGUE AND MPO REPRESENTATIVES**

Commissioner Rodriguez explained that at a recent training for the dignity index, those in attendance, including Commissioner Good and herself, were presented with useful information. Commissioner Rodriguez explained that the training relates to elected officials, as it covered ways to keep the conversation dignified and maintain decorum. Commissioner Rodriguez continued that dignity and contempt were discussed, and shared that the information can be found at [dignity.us](http://dignity.us).

Commissioner Rodriguez shared that the training informed that there were approximately eight steps between contempt and dignity. Commissioner Rodriguez explained that the training provided information on how to build skills for dignified disagreement. Commissioner Rodriguez conveyed that, as elected officials, the commission often disagrees and encouraged the commission to review the materials she provided and, if available, attend a training in the future.

Commissioner Rodriguez shared her hope that the commissioners could maintain respect and dignity towards everyone on the dais and in every conversation that is had tonight or in the future. Commissioner Rodriguez reiterated that the website has a lot of information on the topic, and if they need any more information, they can reach out to Denise Horland, who is the President of the League of Cities.

Commissioner Rodriguez shared that on Thursday, April 9th, 2026, the director's meeting will be in Deerfield. Commissioner Rodriguez shared that for general meetings, there are two tickets, and the appointee to the League does not necessarily need to be the one to attend.

Commissioner Good shared that there was nothing new to report from the MPO.

## REPORTS OF THE CITY MANAGER AND CITY ATTORNEY

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Hernandez, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to approve a shade meeting requested by the City Attorney on April 15, 2026, at the conclusion of the Regular Meeting to discuss the pending case between the Florida State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police Inc, vs the City of Pembroke Pines. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye** 5 - Mayor Castillo, Vice Mayor Hernandez, Commissioner Good Jr., Commissioner Rodriguez, and Commissioner Schwartz

**Nay** 0

City Manager Dodge continued a conversation from a prior commission meeting, regarding the scheduling of a budget visioning retreat on April 22nd, 2026, where Commissioner Rodriguez was not available. The city manager explained that on April 29th, there is a workshop on municipal solid waste and asked if Commissioner Schwartz is available that day. The city manager clarified that the meeting would take some time, approximately two and a half hours, and that the start time could be adjusted as necessary.

Commissioner Schwartz indicated that he is available for the workshop on the 29th. Commissioner Schwartz proposed having the workshop at an earlier time.

The city manager and commission agreed on 4:00 pm as the start time for the workshop.

Commissioner Good questioned when the commission could expect to have information prior to the meeting.

The city manager shared that the commission should receive information at least a week in advance, as there is a lot of information being presented.

Commissioner Good questioned if he could get partial information sooner and expressed his eagerness to be informed as soon as possible.

The city manager indicated that the administration could provide Commissioner Good with what they have available.

The city manager shared that the budget visioning retreat needs to be scheduled. In response to the mayor, the city manager clarified that the retreat could not be on the same day as the workshop on the 29th, as it would be too much for one day.

The city manager clarified that the budget visioning retreat could be held on the same day as the workshop.

The city manager shared that the budget visioning retreat would provide an outline of the budget projection and introduce the budget, allowing for discussion on pressing issues.

The city manager scheduled the budget visioning retreat for April 29th, 2026.

Commissioner Schwartz questioned whether the city manager could send the visioning PowerPoint to the commission.

City Manager Dodge answered that he would send the presentation.

Commissioner Rodriguez proposed an earlier start time, expressing that she does not want to be rushed. Commissioner Rodriguez expressed that at the earlier workshop, she felt rushed despite having two and a half hours.

City Manager Dodge expressed that he does not believe that they need an all-day meeting for this discussion.

Commissioner Rodriguez shared that her schedule is clear on April 29th, 2026, and proposed an earlier start time if they plan to discuss garbage, recycling, and visioning on the same day.

Vice Mayor Hernandez questioned how much time the administration needs to make their presentation.

The city manager responded that he would not need that much time. The city manager shared that the question is how much time the commissioners would need to ask their questions and make their comments.

Commissioner Schwartz questioned whether the visioning presentation could be made in 90 minutes.

City Manager Dodge explained that he could provide the outline of the budget in approximately 30 minutes.

Mayor Castillo shared that, to his understanding, the commission could meet at 4:00 p.m. and have the budget meeting in an hour and then have

the solid waste discussion for a handful of hours. The mayor indicated that he would work to ensure that everybody has sufficient time to discuss and deliberate.

The commission and administration agreed to the mayor's suggestion for the meeting to be on April 29th, 2026, at 4:00 p.m.

City Attorney Goren, beginning his report, asked for advice from the commission on a pending lawsuit, the case of the Florida State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police, Inc., a Florida not-for-profit corporation, versus the City of Pembroke Pines and Jose Vargas, with the case number of 25-CB-61620EA. The city attorney requested that the commission help with the scheduling of a shade meeting for April 15th at the conclusion of the regular meeting, when Special Counsel Chris Sterns is available, which would include himself, Mr. Sterns, potentially Jacob Horowitz, City Manager Dodge, the mayor, and the commission, and the court reporter. The city attorney indicated that he would like to seek the commission's advice under the statute that references 286.011(8).

The city attorney continued that the commission would have a public meeting, which is a sunshine meeting, sharing that a shade meeting begins in public, then conducts itself in the shade, and then ends publicly. The city attorney asked for the commission's advice on certain conditions and matters pending.

The city attorney, responding to the mayor, clarified that there would be a court reporter in the room with the commission, per state law.

## **COMMISSION ITEMS:**

9. COMMISSIONER JAY D. SCHWARTZ ITEM #1: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO DIRECT THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO PROVIDE ANNUAL ETHICS ONLINE TRAINING, COMMENCING IN 2026, TO PEMBROKE PINES CITY EMPLOYEES AND WORKFORCE NO LATER THAN THE END OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR. COMMISSIONER SCHWARTZ WILL ALSO QUERY THE CITY ATTORNEY ABOUT A SUNSHINE LAW CONCERN BETWEEN PEMBROKE PINES ELECTED OFFICIALS VIA EMAIL INTERACTIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS.

**This Commission Item had No Action Taken.**

Commissioner Schwartz read Item 9 into the record by title.

Commissioner Schwartz recounted an earlier discussion on employee ethics and training, sharing that he was instructed to reach out to Administration and Mr. Rotstein. Commissioner Schwartz shared that the proposal under discussion was to have bi-annual training virtually, which every two years will include new employees beginning in 2026.

The mayor shared that he recalls Commissioner Schwartz being directed to reach out to staff and return with a specific proposal regarding ethical training.

City Manager Dodge added that the city has a policy in the handbook on ethics that every employee signs when they are hired, covering ethics extensively. The city manager expressed that he does not believe that there is anything else that can be added that goes beyond what is already provided. The city manager shared his belief that training would be redundant and just repeat what is already detailed in the existing policies.

Commissioner Hernandez explained that he appreciates anyone trying to add ethics training to any municipality or organization that has not already received or familiarized itself with it. Commissioner Hernandez conveyed that to him, the training would be redundant and unnecessary as staff already undergo ethical training.

Mayor Castillo reiterated that he recalls that Commissioner Schwartz was supposed to meet with staff and present a proposal to the commission. The mayor stated that the conversation that was originally held was vague and general, and the manager and city attorney indicated that such training was already being done. The mayor expressed confusion about what the commission is being asked to advance and asked if Commissioner Schwartz wanted to defer this item so he could meet with staff and provide specifics at the next commission meeting.

City Manager Dodge expressed that Mr. Rotstein was not available to be on the phone.

Commissioner Schwartz clarified that after the aforementioned meeting, he spoke to Mr. Rotstein, who indicated that ethics training is virtual and could be done, and that there are between six and eight cities in Broward County that are currently doing training. Commissioner Schwartz shared that he needs to defer the discussion until the April 15th commission meeting and add specifics on what he'd like the

commission to do.

Commissioner Schwartz explained that ethics training does not apply equally.

Mayor Castillo shared that he had been contacted by staff asking whether they needed to separate Commissioner Schwartz's item into multiple pieces. The mayor indicated that, in this case, it was permissible but warned that, typically, combining two separate, unrelated issues is not in order. The mayor clarified that these should be two questions, as if a motion arose, it would be difficult to differentiate between the two of them.

Commissioner Schwartz referenced replying to all in email and expressed that he does not recall getting a reply to all from the vice mayor, commissioner Good, or commissioner Rodriguez regarding items that are coming in front of the commission. Commissioner Schwartz shared that when the commission is reached out, they all get put on a list and asked the commission to refrain from replying to all, whether they support an item or not, when it is a part of an upcoming agenda.

Commissioner Schwartz affirmed that everyone has the First Amendment right to express their opinions on social media; however, he condemned disparaging colleagues with misinformation. Commissioner Schwartz noted that there was a comment made about grass turf fields that implied that he dragged a collective of children before the commission, was privately voting differently than what he had said publicly, and was attempting to change the narrative. Commissioner Schwartz shared that the only way such a statement is possible is if someone spoke to the vice mayor.

Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that the parents and children who were in attendance during the discussion on artificial turf were misled and were not originally planning on attending. The vice mayor specified that the item was a consent item on the agenda and shared that the families were told that there was a commissioner who was opposed to the item. The vice mayor described Commissioner Schwartz's behavior as despicable and detailed that he posted on Facebook because he disagrees with Commissioner Schwartz's behavior.

The vice mayor shared that he has more objections about Commissioner Schwartz's behavior. Vice Mayor Hernandez detailed that Commissioner Schwartz had 50 children and their parents sat and waited for an item, posted about synthetic fields, and then manipulated the narrative to

make it seem as if Commissioner Schwartz was defending them by raising questions about insurance requirements. The vice mayor highlighted how long Commissioner Schwartz has been a commissioner and asked him if he truly believes that Somerset's leadership, staff, and students would have shown up to support an item that they did not understand and their attorneys did not review.

The vice mayor reaffirmed his belief that he was well within his constitutional rights to post what he did, and he stands by it, due to how wrong he perceived Commissioner Schwartz's behavior to be. The vice mayor expressed his anger towards Commissioner Schwartz and thanked him for voting to approve the item with the rest of the commission, despite not supporting it.

Commissioner Schwartz, addressing the vice mayor, shared that he is disappointed in his interpretation and perception of the events under discussion. Commissioner Schwartz explained that the facts and narratives propagated by social media are constantly in flux when the full, complete story is not provided.

The mayor halted the discussion between Commissioner Schwartz and the vice mayor and directed them to have this discussion privately, as no official business was being discussed. Mayor Castillo explained that the dais should not be considering what was posted on Facebook and reaffirmed that the vice mayor and Commissioner Schwartz need to discuss this privately.

Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that if a sunshine meeting is necessary, he is happy to meet.

The mayor directed the city attorney to have the vice mayor and Commissioner Schwartz post a meeting and discuss their concerns, reiterating that such a discussion could not be had here.

Commissioner Schwartz continued with his item, requesting that the members of the commission refrain, and specifically, the mayor refrain from attacking residents and their mothers.

Commissioner Rodriguez requested clarity from the City Attorney about replying all, and if it only becomes a sunshine violation if someone else replies.

Mayor Castillo explained that there is only a sunshine violation if there is an exchange via the reply all option. The mayor detailed that they have been providing instruction on the specifics of the law for at least 12

years, and he has never had a personal concern with it.

Commissioner Rodriguez clarified that if someone else replies all, then other members would have to be cognizant and not reply all as well.

**10. VICE MAYOR HERNANDEZ COMMISSION ITEM #1: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE CEREMONIAL POLICE BADGES GIVEN TO THE CITY COMMISSION.**

**A motion was made by Vice Mayor Hernandez, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez, to direct the City Attorney to draft a resolution discontinuing the issuance of ceremonial badges to the Commission by the Police Department and recalling all badges currently held by Commissioners. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye** 5 - Mayor Castillo, Vice Mayor Hernandez, Commissioner Good Jr., Commissioner Rodriguez, and Commissioner Schwartz

**Nay** 0

## PRIOR TO THE VOTE BEING TAKEN:

Vice Mayor Hernandez read Item 10 into the record by title.

Vice Mayor Hernandez clarified that the badges are not police badges; they are ceremonial badges and possess no policing powers. The vice mayor expressed how honored he was to receive the ceremonial badge when he was sworn in. The vice mayor shared that he has never carried it around, and it has stayed in his office since he first received it. Vice Mayor Hernandez referenced June of 2025, and noted that at that time the city received requests for comments on allegations made against Commissioner Schwartz at Flanagan High School, where he was previously employed.

The vice mayor explained that after that incident occurred, he called the now-retired assistant police chief Carlos Bermudez and informed him that he no longer wanted his ceremonial badge. The vice mayor affirmed that he has no authority and that he is not a police officer, nor does he experience the worries and dangers that first responders do. Vice Mayor Hernandez clarified that his attempts to relinquish his ceremonial badge were a sign of respect.

The vice mayor read a report from the state attorney, which stated that Commissioner Schwartz allegedly removed a police style badge from his pocket and brandished the badge while questioning three students, all of them minors. The vice mayor explained that Commissioner Schwartz was an adjunct professor from Emory Riddle, teaching aviation classes at the school. The vice mayor noted that the principal of Flanagan High School clarified that only the security team, including resource and police officers, are allowed to question students, clarifying that teachers do not have this authority.

Vice Mayor Hernandez emphasized that Commissioner Schwartz did not have the authority to brandish a badge, question students, or accuse them of possessing marijuana, which they did not possess. The vice mayor read the report, stating that an Unknown man walked up to O.B and said, "Where's the weed?" and "Who has the weed?" and pulled a badge that was in a wallet out of his pocket and said welcome to America. Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that the reports are all consistent with each other and all claim that Commissioner Schwartz presented himself as an officer. Vice Mayor Hernandez stated that a Special Agent found all of the witnesses and their testimonies to be credible and found that other school employees provided consistent accounts of the incident.

The vice mayor explained that he does not believe that the City of Pembroke Pines should ever repeat this incident and therefore would put

forth a simple motion. The vice mayor motioned that the City of Pembroke Pines discontinue the practice of issuing ceremonial badges to members of the city commission, beginning immediately and continuing until a future commission decides to reverse it. The vice mayor continued to motion that each ceremonial badge that is currently in the possession of any member of the commission be taken back by the City of Pembroke Pines' police personnel if the manager deems it appropriate.

The vice mayor shared that when he was first sworn in, he harbored no animus toward anyone, including Commissioner Schwartz. Vice Mayor Hernandez shared that he is not perfect and does not linger on feelings of hatred nor on political rivalries; he only desires to enjoy life with his family and serve the public. The vice mayor highlighted that Commissioner Schwartz's actions reflect on everyone in the dais. The vice mayor expressed that he wants to have a collegial relationship with Commissioner Schwartz, but the actions that Commissioner Schwartz has taken have impacted all the commissioners and the mayor.

Vice Mayor Hernandez expressed that he wants tonight to be a reset of the commissioners' relationships and claimed that he would like to reintroduce respect and put this incident behind them. The vice mayor reiterated that he strongly disagrees with what Commissioner Schwartz did regarding the children and stated that he has a motion on the floor.

The mayor clarified that with commission items, they typically take motions after discussion and explained that when he was first elected, he received the badge and felt honored. Mayor Castillo clarified that the badge was a sign of respect and was purely ceremonial and explained that it is clear that when you're given something like a badge, it is not to be misused. The mayor explained that the badge had been in his desk drawer for 20 years until he handed it off to the vice mayor and expressed his sadness to learn that Vice Mayor Hernandez returned that badge, when two of the mayor's predecessors also held that badge.

The mayor indicated that at 4:00 p.m., he returned his badge and wanted to ensure that he held onto it for as long as he could, as a sign of respect. Mayor Castillo described the shock the city felt when the incident at Flanagan High School occurred, expressing that he could not believe it when he heard it. The mayor shared that he was relieved when charges were not brought against him and expressed the affection that he still has for Commissioner Schwartz's family, remembering when times were different between the two of them. The mayor expressed his shock at the fact that Commissioner Schwartz had the badge in his pocket, in his possession, as well as the fact that Commissioner Schwartz never

offered an apology to the students, school, or residents for his actions and the reputational effect that they had.

Mayor Castillo expressed that he returned his badge to show that the city does not operate in that way and shared his hope that this never has to be discussed again. The mayor expressed confusion on how someone can access a school without possessing a school ID and expressed the bizarreness of brandishing a badge to children and stating welcome to America.

The mayor expressed his agreement that the practice of ceremonial badges should be terminated. The mayor reiterated that there is nothing more important than upholding public trust.

Commissioner Rodriguez shared that the actions of the Commissioners, whether online or in person, do reflect on the other Commissioners and on the city. Commissioner Rodriguez indicated that she never received a badge nor did she want one, and therefore has nothing to relinquish.

Commissioner Schwartz's wife, Stacey Schwartz of 8310 Northwest 16th Street, Pembroke Pines, Florida 33024, expressed her dissatisfaction and claimed that complete information has not been shared and that information has been cherry-picked to create a narrative different from the reality of the situation. Mrs. Schwartz shared that no one present has seen the complete investigation as she and Commissioner Schwartz have. Mrs. Schwartz expressed her desire for the full investigation to be released, including full body-cam footage, claiming that the bodycam footage that is available was leaked and is not representative of the entirety of the footage.

Mrs. Schwartz expressed her surprise at the media coverage, as the investigation was not one that typically people would see. Mrs. Schwartz expressed that the ceremonial badge does not represent a certain district, nor does it indicate that one is a police officer, clarifying that it has city commissioner printed on it. Mrs. Schwartz shared that since 2016, Commissioner Schwartz has been consistently beaten down in an orchestrated, joint effort and expressed her desire to simply voice how she has been feeling.

City Attorney Goren stated that, if it is the wish of the commission as a majority to direct a resolution to be prepared that would essentially eliminate badges in any way, shape, or form as described in the motion, as a policy of the commission, that his office will draft it, if directed to do so.

**Commission Agenda Q&A to be forthcoming, as / if / and when available via the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/mtkmvsud>**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

The mayor questioned whether there was an appetite to review the failed charter questions to analyze if the commission is interested in advancing them again. Mayor Castillo noted that it is not uncommon for charter questions not to pass on the first attempt but to pass in subsequent attempts. The mayor asked the commission how they would like to proceed.

Commissioner Good agreed to review the charter questions but questioned whether there would be an additional charge for every charter question.

City Clerk Fernandez clarified that there are charges for additional pages, costing \$0.15 per registered voter for every additional page.

Mayor Castillo directed the city attorney to bring back an item and memo the commission any additional information.

The city attorney and the commission agreed to the mayor's proposal.

Commissioner Rodriguez reiterated that everyone on the dais disagrees with one another at times and expressed her hope that moving forward, when they do disagree, they don't interpret it as a personal offense. Commissioner Rodriguez shared that life continues outside of the commission and does not take anything that is said in chambers personally, especially when it is just an expression of another thought process. Commissioner Rodriguez confessed that sometimes it can feel personal, such as not being greeted, and expressed that she tries her best to be amicable.

Commissioner Rodriguez explained that it is important to be able to accept disagreements, as all the commissioners are voting for the best interests of their constituents. Commissioner Rodriguez expressed that she and the city have grown tired of the combative, malicious, and hostile spirit that has been present within the commission and expressed her hope that the city could move past it.

**OLD BUSINESS:  
ADJOURN - 9:58 P.M.**

**CITY OF PEMBROKE PINES**

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**Gabriel Fernandez  
City Clerk**