

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 10

Alejandro “Alex” I. Rey

Cooper City

City Manager Candidate Report

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Cover Letter and Resume

February 27, 2023

Honorable Mayor and City Commissioners
City of
19200 West Country Club Drive
Aventura
Florida 33180
[sent by electronic mail]

Honorable Mayor and Commissioners,

Attached for your review is my resume which covers 35 years of experience with Miami-Dade County, City of Miami Beach , Town of Miami Lakes and currently the City of St. Pete Beach.

During my career I have worked with large, medium and small governments with various levels of complexity and have a proven track record of successfully managing these various organizations.

I am known for being a dynamic, hard-working leader who gets results. I have extensive knowledge of government, and I use that knowledge to work with officials and the community to determine the best way to get things done for each situation.

Listed below are some examples of my experience that would be relevant for this position:

Financial, Budget and Grants -Worked five years in the Miami-Dade County Budget Office as Assistant Director; served in the County Manager's Finance Committee to review and approve all financial transaction for the County; have a track record of not having ever gone over budget during my entire tenures in Miami Lakes and St. Pete Beach; and have been successful in securing millions of dollars in grants and State appropriations.

Strategic Planning-The City of St. Pete Beach and the Town of Miami Lakes are managed through a Strategic Planning Processes which establishes our priorities. The Capital Improvement Plans is based on a series of asset management plans for roads, stormwater management, water and sewer, information technology, parks, are directly aligned with the overall strategic plan. Additionally, our budget priorities are also derived from the strategic planning process.

Accountability and Transparency - Implemented a process to have all contracts online, the city's performance measures online, and the ability for the public to submit comments by video for the Town Council meetings.

Innovative and creative - I strive to build organizations where innovation and creativity are encouraged, and employees are allowed to make mistakes when pursuing better ways to do things. As a result, Miami Lakes was the first municipality to coordinate electronic plan review with Miami-Dade County, and we are also building a transportation

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improvement as a contractor for a developer to get a contribution in lieu of impact fee credits. At a more personal level, when I was in Miami-Dade County, I negotiated agreements with private banks for a sale and lease back transaction for county assets to capture the depreciation value for the private sector and share in those profits.

Leader, mentoring, delegating- Most of the staff that has worked for me would say that the main reason they like working for me is that I am a great teacher. I do not just delegate assignments; I make sure that staff understands what the goals are and help them map a path to success.

I always expect a lot from myself and staff and the organizations that I managed perform at a high level; however, at the same time it is a friendly and caring environment.

I have a great relationship with elected officials, residents, and the business community. I am always available and responsive to all stakeholders. I work hard on building a team environment with the elected officials and help guide their decisions with facts and experience while understanding that the Commission is the one who sets policies and goals as the elected representatives of the people. Staff is tasked to implement those as efficiently and effectively as possible.

In closing, I will point out that I am an experienced manager serving over 16 years as City/Town Manager and four years with the City of St. Pete beach, with a track record of success, leaving each position in my career in good standing and with relationships and performance history to be re-hired by any organization that I have ever worked for.

Sincerely,

Alex Rey

ALEX REY
6039 La Gorce Drive
Miami Beach, FL 33140
(305) 281-8346

CAREER GOAL: To serve in an executive position in government where I can best utilize my knowledge and experience acquired over the last thirty years of public service to continue to improve the delivery of outstanding services to the public.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

City of St. Pete Beach, Florida, April 2019 to Present

City Manager

The position of City Manager serves as Chief Executive under a Council-Manager form of government for the City of St Pete Beach. The City of St. Pete Beach has 10,000 permanent residents, 15,000 seasonal residents and a significant tourist industry. The community, with a mixture of residential and tourist industry related activities such as hotels, restaurants and bars, and minor shopping areas. The City of St. Pete Beach is known for its beautiful sunset and has been recognized as one of the best beaches in the USA.

The City has approximately 130 full time employees and an annual budget for Fiscal Year 2023 of \$58 million. The City of St Pete Beach is a full service City, it manages its own Library, Fire and Rescue Department, Community Development, Parks and Recreation, Finance and Administration, Public Works and Engineering, Sewer, Stormwater and Reclaim Water utilities. Police services are contracted with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office.

Some of the most significant accomplishment include, the formulation of the first Strategic/Business Plan, the negotiated the closing of the two city managed defined benefit retirements plans and bonding the unfunded deficit of another close plan, completion of all the sewer infrastructure work required as part of a consent order and the lifting of a building moratorium, pursue aggressive approach to toward infrastructure upgrades to repairs/replace all bridges and piers in the City, finalized the a complete streets projects for two major arteries, double the parking fees collected by introducing new technology, and all of these while maintaining the millage rate at the same level.

Town of Miami Lakes, October 2002 to August 2008 and September 2010 to March 2019

Town Manager

The position of Town Manager serves as Chief Executive under a Council-Manager form of government for the Town of Miami Lakes. The Town of Miami Lakes is a 30,000-resident community, with a mixture of industrial, office and residential areas. During my tenure, I have worked with four different Mayors and over a dozen Councilmembers.

The Town's first Council was seated in April 2001, and, as the Town Manager for the initial years of the Town, I was responsible for creating all of the various departments in the Town, including but not limited

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to Building, Planning and Zoning, Police, Finance, Public Works and Engineering, Code Enforcement, Information Technology, Clerk's Office and other support areas.

From its inception, one of Town Council's Guiding Principles has been to outsource as much of the service delivery as possible, the Town only has 35 full-time employees, but engages over 150 employees from various companies to supplement the service delivery. The Operating and Capital budget for FY 2016-17 is approximately \$35 million. Miami Lakes is a community that is recognized for its beautiful green spaces, with 101 parks and 17,000 trees in a 6.5 square mile area.

The Town of Miami Lakes is managed through a Strategic/Business Planning process, and detailed medium range plans guide all of the infrastructure improvements in the Town. Over the last 15 years, the Town has upgraded most of the park, road and drainage infrastructure transferred from the county without borrowing any monies; maintaining one of the lowest millage rates in the County and securing a double AA rating from the credit rating agencies.

City of Miami Beach, Building Director, September 2008 to August 2010

The position of Building Director supervised the permit application, plans review and inspection process for one of the largest building departments in Miami-Dade County with over \$12 million in revenues per year and over 80 full-time employees. The position reported directly to the City Manager and served as part of the Executive Staff team.

In addition to supervising the Building Department, I was responsible for managing and improving the overall development review process. This process included the Building, Fire, Public Works, Planning and Zoning Departments.

Due to my extensive labor relations and management experience, I was also assigned to serve as lead negotiator for the City's Police and Fire contract renewals. This process culminated with significant concession being obtained from both bargaining units without the need to go to impasse.

Miami-Dade County, 1983 to 2002

1997 to 2002 Assistant Director -Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

The Office is responsible for preparing the Miami-Dade County \$5 billion operating and capital budgets as well as providing managerial and technical support to the County Manager's Office.

Responsibilities included representing the County in negotiations with Municipal Advisory Committees for the formation of new municipalities and with existing cities for the annexation of unincorporated areas, working with the new municipalities for the transition of County services, and developing and analyzing policy and service level alternatives for incorporation/annexation.

Additional responsibilities included developing revenue enhancement opportunities such as tax advantage leases that generated over \$50 million in new revenues for the County, support of the Mayor's Efficiency and Competition Commission, developed the County's first five-year financial plan, review departmental budgets and departmental business plans, and served on the County Manager's Finance Committee.

1983-1997 Miami-Dade Transit Agency

Metro-Dade Transit Agency is responsible for providing bus, rail, people-mover and paratransit services in the Miami-Dade Metropolitan area. It is the 15th largest transit agency in the United States with an annual operating budget of over \$200 million per year and 2,600 employees.

1993 to 1997 Assistant Director for Administration

Responsible for policy development, supervision and direction of issues relating to budgeting, grants management, financial planning, audits, revenue collection, information services, procurement and contracts, materials distribution, warranty, joint development, leasing activities, advertising contracts, labor relations, training, and employee relations.

Supervised a total of 240 positions working in these diverse areas with direct responsibility for an annual operating budget of over \$20 million per year in these areas.

Represented the Agency in relations with the Federal Transit Administration, State Department of Transportation, municipal administrators, regional transit agencies, private developers and served as Director of the Transportation and Railroad and Assurance Company Ltd., a captive insurer providing excess liability coverage.

1989 to 1993 Chief, Management and Information Services

Supervised three major areas of responsibility: Budget and Grants, Management Services, Information Services with a total staff of 35 people.

The Budget and Grants section was responsible for performing and ensuring compliance with all activities required to receive Federal, State and local funds, preparing and managing annual operating and capital budgets, as well as multi-year project budgets for the agency. The Management Services section was responsible for financial planning, revenue and ridership forecasting, performance auditing and monitoring. The Information Services section is responsible for operating and maintaining MDT A's computers and computer communications network.

1986 to 1989 Manager, Management Services

Responsible for performing productivity studies and operational audits; evaluating the agency's performance; evaluating special projects and developing a comprehensive reporting system. Supervised a staff of 9 people.

Responsible for preparing, reviewing, and monitoring capital and operating budgets; monitoring and projecting transit ridership and revenues; preparing, submitting, receiving and administering Federal and State grants. Acting as liaison between MDT A and Federal and State agencies.

1983 to 1986 Management Productivity Analyst III (Project Leader)

Responsible for providing direction and technical support to junior analysts, as well as developing project schedules, reporting progress, performing analysis, and preparing and presenting final reports on efficiency related projects.

EDUCATIONAL HISTORY:

1981-1982 M.S. Industrial Engineering.
Oklahoma State University
(All But Thesis)

1977-1981 B.S. Industrial Engineering and Management
Oklahoma State University.

REFERENCES: Supplied upon request

LANGUAGES: English and Spanish

ACTIVITIES: Played soccer at Oklahoma State University and served as volunteer soccer coach for over 15 years providing training and guidance to under-privileged children in the community.

Candidate Introduction

Alejandro I. Rey

Education

1981-1982 M.S. Industrial Engineering course work completed, all but thesis.
Oklahoma State University

1977-1981 B.S. Industrial Engineering and Management
Oklahoma State University.

Experience

City Manager, City of St. Pete Beach, Florida - April 2019 to present date

Town Manager, Town of Miami Lakes, October 2002 to August 2008 and September 2010 to March 2019

Building Director, City of Miami Beach, September 2008 to August 2010

Miami-Dade County, 1983 to 2002

- 1997 to 2002 Assistant Director - Office of Management and Budget (OMB)
- 1983- 1997 Miami-Dade Transit Agency
 - 1993 to 1997 Assistant Director for Administration
 - 1989 to 1993 Chief, Management and Information Services
 - 1986 to 1989 Manager, Management Services
 - 1983 to 1986 Management Productivity Analyst III (Project Leader)

Background

The City of St. Pete Beach has been recognized as having one of the most beautiful beaches in the County and the sunset capital of Florida. A small island community, it sits on the west coast of Florida in the Tampa Bay region. The City has a permanent population of about 10,000 residents which increases to over 20,000 in the winter month.

As a beach community, the City is a tourist destination, and it has over 30 hotels and 3,500 hotel rooms. There are many restaurants, bars and small shops associated with the tourist industry but there are no other industries in the City. However, my prior experience in Miami Lakes is probably more relevant to this position, as Miami Lakes is a beautiful suburban community with a population of about 35,000.

The City of St. Pete Beach is in excellent financial condition with a strong AA+ rating and

Alejandro I. Rey

maintains one of the lowest millages rates at 3.15 mills and the general fund reserve sits at almost 50% of budget. It is one of the safest communities in the area.

The City departments are finance, fire and rescue, library, parks and recreation, public works and utilities, and community development. Police services are provided by the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office. The total workforce is approximately 130 employees.

The General Fund Budget for the current year is \$20 million and the total budget is \$45 million.

The three most important issues facing the City are:

- The most significant issue is to maintain the correct balance between the pro-development and anti-development groups. The City had multiple lawsuits in the 2000 over the comprehensive plan, while it all got settled in 2014 with the approval of a compromise plan and a moratorium on development until certain projects were completed. These projects are now completed and now that the moratorium is lifted and a few developments have been approved, there is again a concern that the settlement may have been too much in favor of development.
- As a coastal community, sea level rise is the biggest long term issue. There are areas of the City that were built at 3.3 NAVD 88 and are already feeling the impacts during high tides.
- In the 2010s, the City struggled economically, and many infrastructure projects were deferred, over the last four years, we have maintained an aggressive rebuilding, and we are transferring over \$5 million a year from the general fund towards infrastructure rebuilt.

General, Management Style and Experience

Having achieved full retirement within the Florida Retirement System, I retired from the Town of Miami Lakes and shortly thereafter started working in St. Pete Beach, However, I still retain my home for over 25 years in Miami Beach and my children all live in Miami Beach. Working for Cooper City will allow me to be closer to them.

My management style is to run the organization strategically based on the vision and goals set by the Commission. These are incorporated into action plans for the management staff. Then, I allow them to utilize their knowledge, skills, and abilities to accomplish set goals. I present a variety of opportunities to individuals that, over time, demonstrate the capacity to do great work and grow within the organization.

Alejandro I. Rey

I believe my staff would say that I am a great mentor/teacher, and they enjoy working with me. One of my proudest achievements is that though Miami Lakes is a medium size Town, three staff members have gone to be City Managers in other cities and one is the Executive Director of a Community Development District. I challenge staff while reassuring them that I am always available for discussion or support. The organization will be recognized for our successes, and we get to share the results of a job well done. Staff can grow with confidence because I would go to bat for them. I believe they would say I am a fair man who cares about their wellbeing, personal and professional. I set clear expectations and hold staff accountable for the quality and timeliness of their work. That said, I try to use my sense of humor to develop a sense of team.

I believe the elected officials in Miami Lakes and St. Pete Beach appreciate the experience and guidance I provide. We have a strong and healthy working relationship which allows us to polish ideas and bring them to reality. They feel reassured about the City's financial position because of my financial knowledge. They have seen that our success is a result of the trust, level of preparedness and effective communication between us. I believe they would say I deliver for them, have no favorites, and that they can enjoy the working relationship.

I believe one of my greatest strengths is the ability to remain calm under pressure and during crisis situations. I develop and maintain effective working relationships to earn people's trust. I can communicate complex issues in a simple manner. My analytical skills contribute to my ability to deliver projects and solve problems. I have gained a vast knowledge throughout my forty years of professional experience.

I was born abroad, and my accent is still prevalent; however, this does not impact my ability to communicate effectively. In fact, doing business in South Florida, my ability to read, write and speak Spanish fluently has also become one of my assets.

Performance measures are essential to effective strategic management. While I was at the Town of Miami Lakes, for example, we strived to be accountable and accessible to the public that we serve. As part of this ongoing effort to become the model for transparency in government, the Town was at the forefront allowing public comments to be submitted on-line.

The City of St. Pete Beach's performance matrix includes workload measures that are used to allocate resources and quality measures that track the responsiveness to the public and performance. These measures are summarized in a report that provides a narrative for each of the measures, and shares information on departmental goals and successes. I track key performance indicators per the goals established by the Commission. A common mistake made by many organizations is to track too many outcomes, and the activity becomes a burden to the organization. Some examples of measures are crimes, police response times, plan review turn-around times, transit ridership, percentage of streetlights working, percentage of code cases closed through voluntary compliance, total dollar value of grant awards.

Alejandro I. Rey

I have a career that expands over forty years, so choosing my biggest success is a real hard choice, but if I had to choose one, it will be the imprint that I have had over the careers and professional development of so many people, allowing them to grow professionally and inspiring a love for public service.

Other notable accomplishments included building the Town of Miami Lakes organization from the ground up, as its first Town Manager, I was the second employee to get hired by the City. I established and staffed all of the departments and built a permanent government center for Miami Lakes and most recently in St. Pete Beach, during my tenure, we completed all of the infrastructure requirements to get the City out of a consent order from FDEP due to sanitary sewer overflows.

My biggest failure was not being able to institutionalize an organizational change in culture that survived my two-year tenure in a prior organization. The reversal of my innovative customer-oriented management style in the Building Department of Miami Beach was due to the change not being sufficiently institutionalized over my two-year tenure.

I have fired people in the past and feel no regrets about it. I learned early on from a prior supervisor that you do not fire people, they fire themselves. If you have clearly defined expectations, provide feedback and coaching, and the means to succeed in the organization, there will only be a few occasions for which you have to fire people.

During my first six months, I will gather an understanding of the Commission's goals and objectives, perform an assessment of all key management personnel, gain an understanding of the financial situation of the City, evaluate organizational structures and budgets, and assess the infrastructure needs to identify key concerns.

I have learned when you work well with the media, they work well with you. None-the-less, I am not one to seek the spotlight, and I always prefer to defer to my elected officials but will not shy away from the media.

I do not expect anyone in the community to express any concerns.

My family is of the utmost importance to me. I have three boys and, as they grow older, it is important to me I instill in them the qualities and moral judgment my father instilled in me. In my spare time, I like to read, play tennis and chess, and travel.

Alejandro I. Rey

Six Adjectives or Phrases You Would Use to Describe Yourself

1. Trustworthy
2. Accessible
3. Open-minded
4. Teacher-Mentor
5. Bright
6. Strong Practical ability to get things done

Reason for Wanting to Leave Current Job

I would like to get back to the South Florida area and be closer to my family.

Current/Most Recent or Relevant Salary

My base salary is \$199,000 per year plus housing allowance \$5,000, car allowance \$6,000, health insurance allowance \$30,000 and a \$30,000 a year contribution to my retirement.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
ALEJANDRO "ALEX" IGNACIO REY**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Miami-Dade County, FL	No Records Found
Pinellas County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Miami-Dade County, FL	Results Pending
Pinellas County, FL	Results Pending
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle	
Florida	No Records Found

Credit	Excellent
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Personal Bankruptcy	No Records Found
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Sex Offender Registry	Not Listed
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Education	Confirmed
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Employment	Confirmed, except for City of St. Pete Beach, FL (04/2019 – Present)
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Social Media	Nothing of Concern Found
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**Background Check Summary for
ALEJANDRO "ALEX" IGNACIO REY**

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
ALEJANDRO "ALEX" IGNACIO REY
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: ALEJANDRO REY

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?

Yes No

2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?

Yes No

3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?

Yes No

4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?

Yes No

5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?

Yes No

6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?

Yes No

7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?

Yes No

8. Please list links to all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.

Instagram
LinkedIn

9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?

Yes No

10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to:



Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM MST 03/03/2023.

(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

Property of Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes have been placed after the Internet Research to preserve the page numbering of the report.

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://thegabber.com/water-conservation-saves-st-pete-beach-money/>
February 28, 2023

Water Conservation Saves St. Pete Beach Money

Author: Cameron Healy

The City of St. Pete Beach recently announced, through its water conservation initiatives, that it saved \$100,000 in the 2022 fiscal year. With the promotion of conserving the use of reclaimed water, the city could “repair the reclaimed water system currently in place.”

Reclaimed water is “highly treated wastewater,” according to the city’s website. Most reclaimed water use includes landscape irrigation. The overall usage of reclaimed water decreased in the city, which led to saving more money than predicted.

The St. Pete Beach Water Conservation Program led the city’s conservation efforts. This program works “to educate residents and businesses on the benefits of reducing the use of reclaimed water.” It helped the city upgrade its infrastructure to distribute reclaimed water more efficiently.

City Manager **Alex Rey** said its thrilling to achieve this “milestone in our efforts to conserve reclaimed water and reduce our costs.” The dedication of the city’s residents and businesses helps the city work towards “a more sustainable future.”

The city plans to encourage others to be responsible with using reclaimed water. The city will continue its efforts in conserving water and promote the use of water-efficient technologies. St. Pete Beach residents and business can learn more about the city’s reclaimed water conservation online.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

https://www.tbnweekly.com/beach_beacon/article_51e97190-925c-11eb-ba84-e3fd90ca865b.html

March 31, 2021

St. Pete Beach city manager earns accolades, salary hike

Author: Mark Schantz

City Manager **Alex Rey** received unbridled praise, along with a 5% salary increase and \$500 a month housing stipend, when commissioners voted unanimously to extend his employment contract another two years. “I’m amazed, **Alex** has been here two years already; time sure flies,” Mayor Al Johnson told fellow commissioners during the March 23 meeting. **Rey** told commissioners, “In some ways it feels like it was just yesterday that I started. But in other ways it also feels like a lifetime; It feels very comfortable here, with the community, with the staff. It’s kind of that dual feeling that time really just flew, but it’s also a very comfortable feeling.”

“I’ve asked to extend my contract to 2024, which basically adds two years to the back end of my contract which expires next year; at that point I will be 65,” **Rey** explained. “I told the mayor I’ll have some time between now and then to think about how much more I want to work after 65; he’s a little older than me, so he understands the dilemma you go through when you get to that stage. This gives us three years to continue in the route we’re going. I think we are going in the right direction.” **Rey** said with everything the city has gone through in the last 12 months “a lot of organizations were barely able to tread water and maintain status quo. I think we have moved significantly on many of the projects the city has been pursuing. “

Johnson told **Rey**, “Looking at the list of the things we’ve accomplished as a city, with your leadership in the last year, I was amazed at three and four pages of stuff. There are mayors I talk to that if they got one page of things on their list, that’s it. The biggest example of the fact that we didn’t miss a beat was getting the library relocated and operational, renovating the old one and moving back in, all during COVID pandemic; that to me is incredible.” He said the rapport **Rey** has with residents, businesses and the city commission “is priceless.”

Commissioner Ward Friszolowski said he is “very, very, happy with the way things are going.”

Commissioner Melinda Pletcher said in comparing city managers over the years, “I will tell you what a pleasure it is to serve on this commission when you have as responsive of a city administration as we have. This is so unique.” She recommended the city offer the \$500 monthly housing allowance “to reward his willingness to stay a part of our community.”

Commissioners voted unanimously to raise the city manager’s salary 5% to \$199,500 with a \$500 a month housing allowance as long as he resides in the city.

After the vote Pletcher quipped to **Rey**, “You have to stay humble now, since you have all of us bragging on you.” **Rey** said, “I didn’t want to tell you this before you voted on the salary, but I really like what I do, so thank you very much.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tampa Bay Times (FL)
October 4, 2019

MICRO-TRANSIT BUS SERVICE COMING SOON

Author: Unknown

The city will soon implement its own micro-transit bus service and begin ferrying passengers from the area of the Don Cesar Hotel into Pass-A-Grille. City commissioners recently unanimously agreed to enter into a contract with Miami-based Beefree, which operates under the name Freebee, to provide transit service currently handled by Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority buses. Freebee provides free rides on eco-friendly cars that are similar to golf carts. The city received only one response to its request for proposals in August, City Manager **Alex Rey** told commissioners.

According to its Facebook page, “Freebee is an alternative transportation service and marketing platform that currently services Downtown Miami, Miami Beach, and Key Biscayne with a fleet of fully customized 100 percent electric vehicles.” City commissioners agreed to accept Freebee’s bid to provide three years of service for an amount not to exceed \$794,174, with the option to request an extension of the contract for two additional one-year periods.

Rey told commissioners terminating its PSTA service from the Don CeSar into Pass-A-Grille saved the city about \$150,000. Vehicles will also have a video screen that can play information about events and advertisements from businesses, he added.

Commissioner Melinda Pletcher said the service will allow employees who work along the route to use a smart phone app and find a more efficient way to get to work. “I am so excited about this service,” she said. “When I think of all the people who will benefit from it, it’s going to be amazing.”

Rey told commissioners the company will be procuring a new vehicle, which holds about five passengers and has a manufacturing lead time of six to eight weeks. The micro-transit service is expected to begin operations around mid-November to early December. The micro-transit service will operate a route through the Pass-a-Grille neighborhood from the Don Cesar Hotel down to First Avenue, following a similar route as PSTA’s Central Trolley service, with the ability to deviate from the route for on-demand trip requests, which will pick up and drop off riders closer to their origin or destination.

In addition, riders can also request Freebee service either by phone app or by flagging down a vehicle. The Freebee service offers a mobile app platform that allows riders to track vehicles in real time.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tampa Bay Times: Web Edition Articles (FL)
February 14, 2019

St. Pete Beach officially names Alex Rey as manager - The former Miami Lakes town manager was the City Commission's top choice

Author/Byline: Sheila Mullane Estrada

Alex Rey will become the city's next city manager on April 1, replacing retiring Wayne Saunders. Saunders praised the commission's unanimous vote Tuesday to hire **Rey** as a "great decision" and called **Rey** "highly qualified." **Rey** was the top candidate among five finalists considered by the commission last week.

He is the former town manager of Miami Lakes, previously served as Miami Beach building director, holds a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering and management and is working on a thesis in industrial engineering.

Rey's two-year contract includes a \$175,000 annual salary, \$5,000 in moving expenses, a \$550 monthly car allowance, a cell phone, and benefits including family health insurance, and a retirement contribution equal to 15 percent of his salary.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Alex Rey***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Miami Laker
January 3, 2019

Alex Rey reviews his legacy for Miami Lakes

Author: David L. Snelling

At the pinnacle of his career as a top executive administrator for Miami-Dade County, **Alex Rey** left his position to become the new town manager for Miami Lakes, which incorporated a year earlier, for less pay. In 2002, he took over the day-to-day operations of the newly-minted town with a skeleton staff, where he saw his opportunity to turn a ‘Hidden Gem’ into one of the best known cities in Florida. **Rey**, who spent 19 years at Miami-Dade, was part of the county’s transition team that helped Miami Lakes’ through its incorporation movement and knew the town was embarking on a special journey. “When I started here in the community, I liked the vision they had for the community and I liked the people,” said **Rey**, who replaced Dennis White, who was fired in 2002. “It’s something I felt that I could do, guide and implement that vision. I enjoyed doing it and we succeeded in the end because you put your life and heart in to it.” **Rey** is leaving behind a legacy full of accomplishments for Miami Lakes, as he’s retiring this month to take advantage of the government Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP), and taking some time off to spend with his family, capping a 36-year government career. **Rey** worked with every single Town Council since incorporation, worked out of a storefront on Main Street and the Chase Bank building near N.W. 67 Avenue and Bull Run Road and eventually Miami Lakes’ government center, which was built in 2013. He led his team into action in turning Miami Lakes into a full-fledged city, taking over the streets and recreational parks, and the special taxing districts for street lighting, pocket and picnic parks, security guard gates and lake maintenance from Miami-Dade.

After Hurricanes Wilma and Irma left South Florida in the paths of destruction, Miami Lakes arguably had the fastest clean-up and recovery efforts in the county, as **Rey**, his staff, council members and residents helped remove heavy debris and downed large trees blocking the roads. They also distributed ice and water to residents who were without power. But Miami Lakes experienced perhaps its most darkest day in 2013, when federal agents led then-Mayor Michael Pizzi away in handcuffs after he was indicted on bribery and kickback charges but was later acquitted. **Rey** held the town together and resumed achieving Miami Lakes’ goals and objectives, which led to multiple awards such as the Tree City USA, Playful City USA and GFOA, and secured millions of dollars worth of grant money. The grants were spent on the master plans for transportation, more greenways, beautification, drainage, road maintenance and information technology. **Rey** said all of the drainage from the original Miami Lakes community has been upgraded. “We got a lot of money from grants,” he said. “They give you the money because they know you will deliver the projects. They hate to give you \$1 million and not do anything with it.” Among **Rey’s** top priorities as town manager was creating a cooperative culture between elected policy makers and his administrative staff. He said the rapport led to the town’s major accomplishments since incorporation that included converting a tot-lot into Royal Oaks Park and building a new community center, rebuilding a new clubhouse for the Optimist Club of Miami Lakes and renovated two community centers. **Rey** said his staff has developed a

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Alex Rey***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

partnership with residents and volunteers and community groups to provide recreational programs for more than 1,000 and over 100 special events created by the town's various committees. "When we first started, we only had the Veterans Day Parade," **Rey** said. "Now we have over 100 events." Miami Lakes' founding Mayor Wayne Slaton once called **Rey** a budget genius because "that's where he shines the best." He always kept Miami Lakes in the black with surpluses that secured the town's economic health, especially during the 2008 economic downturn and four major hurricanes that required millions and millions of dollars for clean-up and recovery efforts expenses. In addition, **Rey** has reduced or maintained the rate for property taxes over the past 16 years, and established and maintained a credit rating of AA plus for the town's first bond issue. But the most impressive statistic was developing the town's transportation master plan and funded it with \$25 million without borrowing a penny. "It's the result of working agreements with the county and the state," he said. "We did it without borrowing any money." One challenge Miami Lakes faced was developing its own land development code to mirror the living standards of the town, which took three years to complete. The town incorporated the deed restrictions for the various homeowners associations and architectural control committees into its new code, while other areas without HOAs were initially left out. But the town eventually included them in the code with some modifications to appease all residents. "Some were grandfathered in the new code," **Rey** said. **Rey** left his position in 2008 to become the building director for his hometown in Miami Beach but returned to Miami Lakes less than a year later and picked up where he left off. He said the town's next big achievement is the new Seniors Village, which would have a "good" financial and economic development for Miami Lakes. The facilities include age restricted apartments, an assisted living/skilled nursing center and activity/community center. The project is a partnership of The Graham Companies, Miami Jewish Health Systems and Miami Lakes, which would operate the 6,000 square feet community center.

During his time in Miami Lakes, **Alex Rey** has created a managerial tree, where most of his employees have landed town manager-like positions for other entities. His former assistant town managers, Ralph Casals and Andrea Agha, are the city managers for Cutler Bay and Key Biscayne, respectively; Nicole Trench, former executive development director for Miami Lakes, is now the executive director for the Coconut Grove Business Implement District; and former planning and zoning director Darby Delsalle is now the assistant director for planning and development management for Broward County. **Rey's** protégés learned their skills under his tutelage. "We emphasized personnel development, two went on two become city managers, one executive director and one community development director, while still leaving behind a strong team of highly qualified employees," **Rey** said Mayor Manny Cid said **Rey** poured in heart and soul to make Miami Lakes the town that it is. "**Alex** has worked hard to help take the Miami Lakes brand to new heights," Cid said. "16 years of his public service career have been in Miami Lakes as our top administrator. On behalf of all 33,000 Miami Lakers, I thank **Alex** for his dedication to our community" **Rey's** replacement, Edward Pidermann, has some big shoes to fill. **Rey** said he's a "great" guy who he has known for many years and cares about the community. "The big challenge he has is people are used to my style and he has his own management style," **Rey** said. "Residents will have to adjust to his style."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Laker
October 4, 2018

Miami Lakes may use legal action for N.W. 59 Avenue land

Author: Unknown

Miami Lakes might seek Eminent Domain relief to acquire some land near Opa-locka Airport following the owner's refusal to sell his property, which stymied the town's transportation master plan for a connected road and boat storage. The land at dispute is near N.W. 59 Avenue, where the town is planning to build a road to connect to N.W. 153 Street to alleviate traffic congestion and parking spaces for the storage for residents' watercraft.

At a special meeting, council members approved hiring an attorney who specializes in Eminent Domain to give lawmakers the pros and cons of the procedure to determine if they want to take the next step. Eminent Domain is a court proceeding in which a government can force the sale of a property at fair market value for public use or in extreme emergencies. The court would ultimately make a decision.

According to Town Manager **Alex Rey**, Miami Lakes reached an agreement with Miami-Dade Aviation Department and FDOT to use their portions of the properties. But the town needs the privately-owned land west of N.W. 57 Avenue to proceed with the transportation master plan.

Rey said the owner rejected the town's initial offer of \$7 million for the property. "He had no interest of selling it because he has an emotional attachment to the property," **Rey** said. **Rey** said the timing of Eminent Domain is crucial to the project's timetable. "Construction is set to begin in 2020," he said.

The property includes a light industrial area for an auto repair shop and several garages, **Rey** said. Council members want to proceed with caution and would rather settle the issue outside of court. "I'm not in favor of Eminent Domain to buy any property," said Councilmember Nelson Rodriguez. "I don't believe in taking anyone's business or property for profit."

Cesar Mestre, an attorney who has handled Eminent Domain cases, said Miami Lakes may want to give second thoughts considering the costs. "The government pays for the court services for both sides and there might be compensation for the loss of the owner's business," he said. "It could get very expensive."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Laker
September 19, 2018

Council lowers mileage rate for 2018-2019 property taxes

Author: David L. Snelling

To give residents a tax break since property values have been increasing for several years, the Miami Lakes Town Council adopted a new rate of 2.3217 mills and an estimated \$50 million budget for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. The town initially kept the same rate for property taxes at 2.3353 mills during a budget workshop last month, however, Vice Mayor Frank Mingo proposed the lower rate at the first budget hearing.

Council members were expected to stick with it or reduce it further to 2.2906 mills, or the roll back rate of 2.2190 at the second budget hearing on September 18. The roll back rate represents \$286,183 less in property tax revenues and the 2.2906 rate is expected to generate \$7 million in ad valorem revenues, and with additional revenues, Miami Lakes' general fund operating expenses are estimated at \$17.7 million.

Council members instructed Town Manager **Alex Rey** to make several changes at the first budget hearing in addition to lowering the property rate for taxes. **Rey** and his staff restored \$59,824 taken from \$130,000 for enhanced police presence at Bob Graham Education Center and Miami Lakes K-8 Center. The program was initially funded by Miami-Dade County Public Schools (\$70,176) and a transfer from Dunnwoody developer's contribution for education purposes to supplement the cost of police security.

However, at the first budget hearing, town staff was directed to reverse the \$59,824 and restore the developer's contribution to the full funding of \$300,000, which is earmarked for educational purposes, improvements to impacted schools in the town and youth education programs. Another change made from the first budget hearing was finding money in the budget to give town staff a 2.3 percent pay hike also known as a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA).

That equates to \$62,067 for the general fund, \$2,094 for transit and transportation, \$32,037 for building department employees, \$4,376 for stormwater and \$1,577 for the facilities maintenance fund. The budget also includes a projection of revenues estimated at \$4.8 million from building permits for the new Senior Village and Assisting Living Facility; Lennar townhouses; Bob Graham/Elevate/Crescent; and N.W. 57-59 avenues development and \$2.5 million in carryover funds from 2017-2018.

The police budget increased five percent, as the town budgeted \$8.7 million for public safety services, which is 49 percent of the spending plan for next year. For other capital improvement projects, Miami Lakes is projected to spend \$3.8 million for stormwater drainage improvements including \$1.9 million for the third part of roads in West Lake (N.W. 148 Terrace/N.W. 148 Street/NW 149 Terrace; \$1 million for phase one of the Royal Oaks roadway and drainage project; and \$837,000 for the second portion of the town's canal bank stabilization.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

For transportation capital improvements, the town allocated \$5 million for projects that include \$2.3 million for N.W. 59th Avenue extension and boat storage yard; \$1.1 million for Miami Lakes Business Park East (N.W. 60th Avenue); \$685,000 for a safe routes to school project; and \$441,747 for a project to widen the Palmetto Expressway and Ludlam Road. For public safety impact fees, Miami Lakes budgeted \$430,597 for the town's license plate recognition software, and a mobile speed radar.

Miami Lakes may schedule a mail-in ballot election to ask residents to approve borrowing money to complete the master plan for Miami Lakes Optimist Park, which has been delayed for 15 years, as the town's pay-as-you-go plan is not working. The town earmarked \$2 million for the park, leaving the town \$2.5 million short to finish the much-needed improvements. The \$4.5 million price tag calls for building new basketball and tennis courts, an airnasium, walking and bike trails and replacing the park's lighting system.

In addition to approving the rate for property taxes, Council members gave their final approval for an ordinance which establishes non-advolarem assessment rates for special taxing districts for security guard gate and lake maintenance. The town will take over the districts on October 1, which is the start of the new fiscal year. Miami Lakes decided to take over the county's districts from Miami-Dade instead of handing them over to homeowners associations to save them money.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Laker
April 18, 2018

Town's annual financial audit paints positive picture

Author: Unknown

Town of Miami Lakes completed its annual financial audit successfully for fiscal year 2017 that was presented to the Mayor and Council at the April 3 Council meeting. The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) includes an introduction, financial, statistical and a compliance section reporting the financial health of the Town, in accordance with government auditing standards.

The Town is required to perform an annual independent audit by a licensed independent auditing CPA firm. This year's audit was conducted by Rodriguez, Trueba & Co., CPA, P.A. The Government Finance Officers Association has awarded the Town a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for five consecutive years, 2012-2016.

For the second consecutive year, and withstanding different auditors for the last three years, the Town's audit has been found without weaknesses, deficiencies or findings. Town Manager **Alex Rey** recognized chief financial officer Ismael Diaz, MBA, and the finance team for their work and transactional integrity.

Mariano Rodriguez, CPA and managing partner for the auditing firm, also complemented Diaz and his team for the expediency, proactivity and timeliness of the audit. The Town is in excellent financial health and in 100 percent compliance with the auditing standards.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
October 6, 2015

Miami Lakes keeps 2015-16 tax rate steady, but property values rise slightly

Author/Byline: Paradise Afshar

The Miami Lakes council approved its 2015-16 budget, and as expected the town's property tax rate is status quo. Still, most tax bills will rise slightly next year. The town's tax rate will remain at \$2.35 per \$1,000 of assessed property value, but property values in Miami Lakes have experienced a 4.4 percent growth. This means that under the tax rate a home valued at \$192,000, the median value in the town, would pay about \$337 in taxes, about \$5 more than the previous budget year. This amount assumes that the owners received the standard homestead exemption and the home's assessed value increased 0.8 percent, the maximum allowed by law this year for an owner-occupied home. The council unanimously approved the rate during a Sept. 28 budget hearing — the overall budget of the town was approved by the same amount.

Before the approximately \$16.3 million budget was passed, the council made two amendments. The first was to add \$15,000 to the budget, which the town received from Miami-Dade County Commissioner Esteban Bovo's office to cover senior programs in the town for the next six months. The second change was to put aside \$50,000 of its budget to cover an increase in the town's insurance rates as recent legal battles have made Miami Lakes a riskier client. That money will be taken from the \$56,000 the insurance reimbursed the town for paying Mayor Michael Pizzi's back pay from his time away from office while he successfully fought federal corruption charges. Both changes add \$65,000 to the town's budget. "I think we have a good budget that's fiscally sound and stable," Pizzi said. "I support the budget, I support the changes."

This budget year is a tight one. Miami Lakes council members went into the planning process with major factors looming overhead — such as the then-unknown amount Pizzi would ask the town to cover in his legal fees. Since the budget was released Pizzi's attorneys filed two suits against the town for \$3.25 million in coverage of legal bills. The town's insurance company has declined to pay that bill.

In response to these factors Miami Lakes will not get into any new beautification projects, capital improvements in the parks — other than projects already in construction — and additional policing in their budget.

In addition, town committees didn't get a raise in budget in this year — meaning that some that wanted to expand services or ask for more money had to get rid of programs and events in order to accommodate their budget. "I think we were able to fund things that are higher property and property try to get a bigger bang for the buck in terms of the committee budgets," Town Manager **Alex Rey** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 21, 2015

Public-officials insurance rates hiked in Miami Lakes after Pizzi legal drama

Author/Byline: Paradise Afshar

Miami Lakes' budget just took a hit: the town's insurance company has raised its rates by \$50,000 a year. The rate hike is the result of the town's ongoing legal drama involving Mayor Michael Pizzi that flared up about two years ago. "We were also notified that there is an increase in Public Officials Insurance of \$50K due to the current events," said a Sept. 17 email sent by Town Manager **Alex Rey** to the mayor, council and other officials. "The Public Officials & Employment Practices policy increased from \$28,463 to \$78,472." In addition, the insurance company will reimburse the town for about \$56,000 to pay Pizzi back for his time away from office. The town plans to use the reimbursement money to pay increase in insurance costs, and since it's a recurring hike, **Rey** expects it to impact the budget in future years. Last month, Pizzi filed two lawsuits demanding the town pay roughly \$3.2 million to cover his legal fees associated with his federal criminal case and reinstatement. The mayor won the criminal case in August 2014, and his reinstatement case in April, and now his legal team is in talks with the town's insurance company over the bills.

In an interview with the Miami Herald, **Rey** said the insurance rate increase is not as a result of taking the money for the reimbursement, but due to "the risk and exposure they have now." Pizzi doesn't agree. "The current events weren't generated by me, it was the city trying to keep me out of office," he said. "The only money that has paid out so far is to [former Mayor Wayne] Slaton's lawyers and [Town Attorney Raul] Gastesi." Pizzi is referring to the \$487,768 the town paid to cover the its costs of the legal battle for reinstatement, which came from money recovered from an audit. This news doesn't please some council members as Miami Lakes is working with the tight budget for the upcoming fiscal year. "It's outright disappointing," Councilman Tony Lama said. "The taxpayers deserve more than this." Miami Lakes' 2015-16 budget will not include new beautification projects, capital improvements in the parks - other than projects already in construction - and additional policing. The town's committee members are currently in the midst of working with **Rey** to determine which programs they will be able to fund. "Overall you have to judge the budget on its totality," Pizzi said. "I'm happy that compared to most cities we have low taxes and were in financial health." But some good news is on the horizon for Miami Lakes: Miami-Dade County Commissioner Esteban Bovo Jr. has agreed to pay \$15,000 to keep senior programs running for the next six months. Over the summer, when Gov. Rick Scott vetoed spending more state money on senior programs in Miami Lakes, the town council has been searching for ways to restart the adult classes. I feel that this is a critical program for the seniors of Miami Lakes that had its funding removed in Tallahassee," Bovo said in an emailed statement. "Our allocation, which covers [six] months, allows for the Town Administration to prepare their efforts for the next legislative session in January and request funding without interrupting the current services. I feel it makes sense to use district funds to support this program that is vital to so many residents in District 13."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 31, 2015

Michael Pizzi's mayoral assistant resigns Friday morning

Author/Byline: Paradise Afshar

Lisette Molina, assistant to Miami Lakes Mayor Michael Pizzi, resigned from her position Friday morning. "Due to the unfortunate work environment I will no longer be able to continue my services to the Town of Miami Lakes as assistant to the Mayor effective August 12, 2015," said Molina's resignation email, which was sent out at 9:53 a.m.

In a text message to the Miami Herald on Friday afternoon, Molina said she enjoyed her tenure with Miami Lakes and that the town's staff consists of "exemplary public servants." "It is unfortunate that due to the Mayor's continued actions, I have resigned," Molina said in the message. "My parents have instilled in me a strong work ethic, dignity and self respect. I am looking forward to continuing to pursue my career."

Pizzi handpicked Molina when he was reinstated to his mayoral seat in April. "I think she's a brilliant kid and she will be very successful," Pizzi said Friday. "I don't think it's appropriate for me or anybody else to comment on personnel issues." Pizzi was arrested in August 2013 on federal bribery charges, and began his fight to regain his mayoral seat when he was acquitted in August 2014.

Molina is the second person in the Town of Miami Lakes to announce their resignation over the past two weeks. Last week, Miami Lakes Town Clerk Marjorie Tejeda-Castillo tendered her resignation, effective Aug. 14. She resigned after Pizzi allegedly threatened to sue her and Town Manager **Alex Rey** during a July 20 meeting if two new business items on the town's July 21 agenda were implemented. The items had to do with not using the town's resources for non-town sponsored events, and that the clerk be the only person who can call up residents to speak at town meetings.

Pizzi has since said that he didn't make such threats, and that the situation was a misunderstanding, but **Rey** and Tejeda-Castillo are standing by their version of the story.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
May 21, 2015

Miami Lakes agrees to help Miami Gardens with flood management

Author/Byline: Paradise Afshar

Miami Lakes' building department will assist Miami Gardens with its flood-plain management services and technical support services. The agreement passed a 4-1 at the May 5 Miami Lakes council meeting, with Mayor Michael Pizzi the sole vote in opposition.

Miami Lakes has a top rated flood-plain management program that allots its residents a 25 percent discount in flood insurance. As part of the deal, Miami Lakes employees will aid Miami Gardens with performing flood-plain review and inspections, reviewing and updating the city's flood-plain management ordinance, determining flood zone status, and preparing flood zone maps. Miami Gardens will reimburse the town for the salary and benefits of the employees providing services, as well as pay an overhead rate.

Miami Lakes Town Manager **Alex Rey** said that the deal is part of Miami Lakes' strategic plan to start outsourcing consulting services. "We will learn in the process as well, in terms of things they might be doing that we can bring back to us," **Rey** said. "So it strengthens the technical ability of our own department as well."

Council members brought up concerns at the meeting such as employees taking on additional work, and the potential for town services being affected by the agreement. "If God forbid, there is a hurricane or a hurricane or a flood or something like that, I want our officials focused on Miami Lakes and not getting calls from Miami Gardens or Key Biscayne or somewhere else," Pizzi said.

Rey said the services provided will not be operational. "If there is a hurricane they have absolutely zero responsibilities towards Miami Gardens. Their only responsibility is here," he said. "It's more professional technical consulting than operational responsibilities."

Some on the council said they're looking forward to expanding Miami Lakes' services to other municipalities. "Our building department is the jewel of the town," Councilman Nelson Rodriguez said. "I'm just proud that we were asked by our sister city, who's pretty big, next door for us to help."

Rey said the agreement needs to be voted on by Miami Gardens before taking effect.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Laker
February 2, 2015

Town Manager Alex Rey releases Fourth Quarter Performance Report

Author: Unknown

As part of an ongoing effort to provide transparency in government, the Town of Miami Lakes released its Fourth Quarter Performance Report for the period of July to September 2014. The report provides a narrative for individual performance areas and shares information on department goals and successes. All graphs in the report are demonstrated on a fiscal-year basis and most data is shown cumulatively.

“Performance measures are effective and reliable ways to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Town’s service delivery as well as our responsibility to be good stewards of our resident’s tax dollars,” said Town Manager **Alex Rey**. “The Town takes pride in being accountable and accessible to the public we serve and publishing the Performance Report reflects that.”

The Performance Report is published quarterly and can be found at www.miamilakes-fl.gov/manager. Highlights of the report include:

- Eleven new measures were added this fiscal year.
- Second lowest crime rate and average police response time at 5:50 (best average over last 4 fiscal years).
- \$1,038,563 collected in grants (overwhelmingly surpassed the Town’s goal of \$168,750). Funds went to: Art Collaborate Projects (\$5,000); State Road 826 Beautification Project (\$100,000); School Resource Officer for Police Operations (\$3,694); West Lakes Drainage Improvements Phase A-2 (\$300,000); Transportation Planning Study to Improve Traffic Circulation (\$32,000); and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FEMA) (\$597,869).
- Increased ridership for all bus routes by approximately 7,800 riders; made upgrades to both Miami Lakes Moover circulator buses and the on-demand bus; created Android and iOS mobile applications and Trolley tracker; and added other public facing technologies and systems to provide staff with better management information.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Alex Rey
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: To view this investigation in its entirety, please follow the link below.]

http://ethics.miamidade.gov/library/closed%20investigations/2014/k_14-112_robaina.pdf
January 8, 2015



Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust

Report of Investigation

Investigators: Manuel Diaz and Sylvia Batista

Case No.: K14-112	Case Name: Robaina/Rinehart unregistered lobbying	Date Open:	CASE CLOSED Date: 1/8/15
	Subject(s): Julio Robaina Wayne Rinehart	11/03/14	

Allegation(s):

On October 30, 2014, The Miami Herald reported that former City of Hialeah Mayor Julio Robaina (Robaina) and real estate broker, Wayne Rinehart (Rinehart) had been retained by Lennar Corporation (Lennar) to promote its purchase of a vast parcel of land located in the Town of Miami Lakes (the "Town") from land owner, Lowell Dunn II.

Robaina and Rinehart, described as substantial contributors to the re-election campaign of Town councilman Ceasar Mestre, stood to make a sizeable commission on the sale of the property which is expected to sell for more than \$60 million.

It is further reported that, according to the town clerk, neither Robaina nor Rinehart are registered lobbyists in the Town, but have discussed the project with local officials.

An investigation has been initiated by the COE to determine whether Robaina and Rinehart were required to register as lobbyists prior to discussing the project with Town officials.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Investigation:

Interviews/Contacts

Alex Rey, Town Manager –

Town Manager, **Alex Rey (Rey)** was contacted and confirmed his meeting with Robaina and Rinehart. According to **Rey**, the purpose of the meeting was to clarify the conditions of the development agreement that the Town had with the Dunn family, owners of the subject property. **Rey** described the meeting as a fact-finding session between Robaina, Rinehart and the Town. Neither Robaina nor Rinehart lobbied him or other staff members during the meeting.

Rey advised that Lennar has hired lobbyist Juan Mayol, Esq., of Holland and Knight, 701 Brickell Avenue, Suite 3300, Miami, Florida 33131, who has registered to lobby in favor of the proposed development.

Wayne Rinehart, Costa Realty, 6842 Main Street, Miami Lakes, Florida 33014 –

Rinehart confirmed that he and Robaina met with **Rey** to discuss the development agreement that the Town has with the Dunn family. According to Rinehart, the meeting was fact-finding in nature and concerned an expired development agreement that the Town had with the Dunn family. Rinehart commented that the “Indian burial ground” identified in the development agreement was discussed. Rinehart advised that he did not represent Lennar at the meeting and is not a lobbyist for Lennar.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

01/06/15 – Julio Robaina –

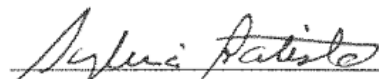
Robaina explained that he and Rinehart were involved in the actual sale of the land that is referred to as the Dunwoody Forrest property to their client, Lennar. He and Rinehart were doing due diligence in connection with the development agreement which has a great deal of ambiguity that they needed to clarify prior to moving forward with the transaction. The development agreement has been in place since approximately 2002 and continues to be in effect.

Robaina said that he and Rinehart met with **Rey** and City Attorney Raul Gastesi. He added that at one meeting the zoning official was present as well, but he does not recall his name. Again, the meetings were strictly for clarification purposes.

Robaina concluded that there has been no transaction to date, and they have not been able to enter into a purchase and sale agreement. There has been no meeting of the minds because of contractual obligations that buyer and seller have.

Conclusion(s):

Robaina and Rinehart were not required to register as lobbyists prior to meeting with Town officials in the aforementioned scenario for the reason that they were not attempting to encourage the passage, defeat or modification of ordinance, resolution, action or decision of the Town officials. Merely having an information gathering session where they are obtaining information from the City does not amount to lobbying. Thus, the instant case is closed without further action.



Sylvia Batista, COE Investigator

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 25, 2014

Miami Lakes adopts budget with changes

Author: Katie Lepri

Miami Lakes council members gave final approval Tuesday to the town's \$30 million budget after making a handful of changes to the town manager's original proposal for 2015. The Town Council unanimously adopted a tax rate of \$2.35 per 1,000 in taxable property value, which will become effective Oct. 1. Town Manager **Alex Rey** did not recommend a lower tax rate due to higher fees for police services from Miami-Dade County and lower franchise fees collected from Florida Power & Light.

As requested by the council at the first budget hearing on Sept. 9, the manager came to the second budget hearing with various suggestions on how to fund the town's committees. "I want to thank the manager and staff for the amount of work and effort that they've put into trying to support and find the funds that we need for our committees," said Councilman Tony Lama. "I think it's important for everyone to know that we're using carry-over funds, so we're not tapping into additional dollars here. We're using carry over funds to fill that gap, this is stuff that was budgeted for the current fiscal year that's closing out. It's a win for everyone."

The youth activities task force, the elderly affairs committee, the cultural affairs committee and educational advisory committee each wanted more than they had been allocated in the town manager's spending plan. Together the committees requested an additional \$38,400. The manager recommended using carry-over funds from the town's current budget to cover the requests, which was approved by the council.

At an earlier meeting, the council had deferred adopting a solid-waste franchise fee, which was a \$50,000 reduction in revenue from the budget. The fee would have been charged to companies who collect trash from condos and businesses; critics said the haulers would pass on the fee to customers.

As a result of the deficit, the manager suggested combining the \$29,000 that was originally amended for the town marketing program and deferring \$21,000 from the town's black olive tree removal program to make up the lost funds. Officials have been trying to eradicate the 3,040 black olive trees in the town because its berries leave stains and its root lift sidewalks and wrap around utility lines. "It doesn't affect our recurring maintenance activities, but it does affect the long-term, 10-year plan that we have for the black olives. But I think we should be able to find extra money the following year to make up that shortage," **Rey** said.

Vice Mayor Manny Cid voiced concern over decreasing the amount of money in the black olive removal program. "I do have a bit of heartburn in regards to the black olive removal program," said Cid. "That's a very popular program. I think it's very important because it's an everyday

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

issue." Councilman Ceasar Mestre said he would support the amendment but added that he does not plan to put the marketing plan aside.

Mestre believes that the marketing plan will bring businesses to the empty lots within the town. "I think that if we get those spaces filled, we'll be helping some of the landowners that are contributing to this, but we're going to be helping our residents by increasing revenue," said Mestre. "I will be bringing that back in November and it'll be in regards to the carry-over funds." The amendment passed without dissent. Also towards the end of the year, **Rey** said he would be bringing up a performance-based bonus program for the town's employees.

Before the final votes were taken for the budget and tax rate, Lama brought up concerns from emails that were sent to the council by the Miami Lakes Citizens Principles of Fiscal Responsibility demanding changes in the budget, which included allotments for council member's travel and reimbursement.

Councilman Frank Mingo called the emails "political attacks" although he said he was willing to forgo his travel allotment if necessary. He said the council shouldn't fall into the trap of second-guessing their actions. Lama originally proposed reducing travel expenses, but then withdrew his motion.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
June 17, 2014

**Feds seek to revoke Pizzi's bond, as suspended Miami Lakes mayor fights back -
Suspended Miami Lakes mayor says he has a right to send emails about town corruption -
but feds say some went to potential witnesses.**

Author/Byline: Jay Weaver

Free on bail since his arrest last summer, prosecutors now say suspended Miami Lakes Mayor Michael Pizzi should go to jail before he faces federal trial on public corruption charges in less than a month. Prosecutors have moved to revoke Pizzi's bond and detain him, claiming he violated the terms when he arranged to have a colleague send two email blasts about "corrupt" activity by other Miami Lakes officials to thousands of his supporters. Among the recipients: the town manager and other potential trial witnesses the former mayor was ordered not to contact by a federal magistrate judge. Prosecutors made their move against Pizzi after they said he lied to the court's probation office about his behind-the-scenes role in sending the emails in April. Pizzi's defense attorneys have called the prosecution's actions "a shocking exercise of government overreaching" while trampling on his right to free speech. They have sought to dismiss his bribery indictment. U.S. District Judge Marcia Cooke has scheduled a hearing Wednesday to decide Pizzi's pre-trial fate. His trial starts July 8 with jury selection.

Pizzi's first email, sent in early April, included references to Miami Lakes town manager **Alex Rey** in a "purported" press release made to look like it was issued by the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust, according to federal prosecutors. "The press release was misleading in that it improperly alleged that A.R. and his staff were engaged in corruption and awarding contracts illegally," stated the prosecution's motion to revoke Pizzi's bond. **Rey**, who received the email, is on the no-contact list because he is listed as a potential witness at Pizzi's upcoming trial.

Pizzi said federal prosecutors and FBI agents have completely distorted his actions by implying he fabricated the press release cited in the email blasts to intimidate potential witnesses. He doesn't dispute his role in sending them with the help of a public relations assistant. His legal team called the prosecution's strategy to revoke his \$100,000 bond an "intrusion into Mr. Pizzi's privacy and First Amendment rights," defense attorneys Ed Shohat and Ben Kuehne wrote in a response to the government's motion. "Today the government seeks to punish Pizzi, who has scrupulously avoided any real contact with anyone on the no-contact list, for exercising his First Amendment right to expose corruption in the town of Miami Lakes," they wrote Friday.

Pizzi's first unsigned email refers to an actual decision in February by the county's ethics commission that found Miami Lakes' former public works director, Hiram Siaba, violated an ethics ordinance that bars public employees from doing business with former employers for a two-year period. In April, the Miami Herald published a story about the violation. Siaba, who was hired by **Rey** in January 2011, awarded his former employer, Ballarena Construction Group, 10 projects that fell below the \$25,000 threshold for doling out contracts without going to the

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Alex Rey***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

town council for approval. Records show that Siaba agreed to settle the complaint that he violated the two-year rule, while the ethics commission advised **Rey** to be "more diligent in supervising" employees like Siaba to avoid this type of conflict. **Rey** declined to comment about receiving Pizzi's email citing the ethics violation.

Pizzi brought the violation to the attention of the county's ethics commission early last year, long before he was arrested on bribery charges. "It is appalling that the government would try to put me, or any other citizen, in jail for expressing their opinions in emails, blogs or in newspapers," said Pizzi, 51, who was quoted in the Herald's story on Siaba's ethics violation. "I would give my life to defend my freedom of speech or that of anyone else. The government is putting people in jail for exposing corruption - very ironic." Pizzi, elected twice as Miami Lakes mayor, was arrested last August on charges of accepting thousands of dollars in bribes during an FBI sting operation in exchange for his political support of bogus federal grant applications. Pizzi has pleaded not guilty to fraud charges, asserting that he received no illegal money from undercover FBI agents and a recently convicted lobbyist who flipped for the feds before Pizzi's arrest. His total alleged take: \$6,750. Pizzi's case, pitting his prominent defense team against seasoned prosecutors Jared Dwyer and Robert Senior, has heated up in the weeks before trial.

The prosecutors filed their motion to revoke Pizzi's bond on Friday. They noted Pizzi was warned back in February by the federal court's probation office not to send out political email blasts to supporters, because a potential witness on the no-contact list received one. Pizzi assured probation officials that he would remove any no-contact witnesses from his email list of 3,000 names. FBI agents recently learned that Pizzi arranged to have a colleague, identified as "Jacqueline Diaz" in court papers, send two email blasts about the ethics commission's decision involving Miami Lakes' former public works director. The emails, dated April 3 and April 8, showed they were sent from a laptop using an Internet Protocol address at a Starbucks cafe in Miami Lakes. According to the FBI, the first email - titled "Probable Cause Found that Miami Lakes' Town Manager's Staff Broke the Law" - was sent to at least five people on Pizzi's no-contact list, including **Rey**, the town manager.

Agents found out from the Starbucks surveillance video that Pizzi met with an unidentified female at the cafe on April 3. They visited her home last week. The woman said she was doing public relations work for Pizzi's defense, that he directed her to send the two email blasts, according to prosecutors. But Pizzi's lawyers condemned the FBI's tactics, saying they had no business meddling in the work of Jessica Fernandez, who was hired by the defense team in January. She said she has been paid \$3,000 for her work. His attorneys accused the agents, along with prosecutors, of unlawfully making copies of certain files on her laptop's hard drive, which they claimed contained privileged defense information. Pizzi's lawyers sought to dismiss the indictment on Monday, alleging "prosecutorial misconduct." "Apparently at the direction of prosecutors, four armed FBI agents ambushed Ms. Fernandez in her driveway as she arrived home from work," wrote Shohat and Kuehne. "They flashed their badges and told her she needed to answer their questions."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
December 30, 2011

Teen curfew takes effect at Miami Lakes' Main Street - Police and private security officers came out in force on Miami Lakes' Main Street Friday, after a mob of teens descended on the shopping center and a 16-year old was shot there on Christmas night.

Author/Byline: Christina Veiga and Margaux Herrera

After a teen mob stampeded through the Miami Lakes Main Street shopping center Christmas night — and a 16-year-old was shot in the chest — town officials promised a crackdown at the suburban shopping center this holiday weekend. On Friday night, signs leading up to the mall flashed a warning that an 8 p.m. curfew for minors was strictly in effect. Police officers, armed with fliers detailing the policy, took positions at popular drop-off points. But just after the deadline, a private security guard told a group of boys they couldn't be there — and allowed them to enter a movie unaccompanied anyway.

Alina Palacios and Ted Torres, of Hialeah, went to see a movie Friday with their 13-year old daughter. Palacios was supportive of the new enforcement because she said the area is usually full of unruly teens. "They're very rude, very disrespectful. We could not sit through a film with the yelling," Palacios said. Added Torres: "We don't allow our child here without an adult." Town officials and Graham Companies, the private company that manages the mall, hope strict enforcement of the curfew and beefed-up officer presence will deter another melee like the one on Dec. 25 — especially over the long New Year's weekend.

According to a police report, a mob of up to 5,000 young teens descended on the picturesque Northwest Miami-Dade shopping mall, set off fireworks and began fights. Police issued a "county-wide emergency" and officers from nine departments responded to the scene. Derek Rodriguez, 16 and a high school junior, was shot in the chest. He said it happened after a fight broke out in front of the Cobb movie theater. Miami-Dade police noted there were reports of gunfire at the mall, but Town Manager **Alex Rey** has questioned accounts of the shooting, saying no evidence has been found that it took place near the theater. But both he and Mayor Michael Pizzi acknowledged the Christmas chaos required the city and mall to crack down on rowdy kids.

Pizzi promised that he would spend New Year's Eve at the shopping center with his school-age children as a show of faith that the situation was under control. "I want to demonstrate to the people that we've taken back Main Street," said Pizzi.

Rey said the crowd was spurred by Facebook and Twitter posts encouraging kids to congregate at Main Street. "And one of the reasons why they were going to Main Street is they felt there was no enforcement of the rules," **Rey** said the teens later told police.

Now, Graham Companies will pay for eight off-duty police officers to patrol the two-block shopping center, up from just one officer. An additional private security guard will be on duty this weekend, bringing the total to 11 private guards. The officers will strictly enforce a "no

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Alex Rey***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

loitering” and “parental escort” policy. Kids under 18 years old will now be required to be accompanied by a parent after 8 p.m. “We take this very seriously. I live here and so do many of our employees, so we are going to turn it around,” said Carol Wyllie, executive vice president for Graham Companies.

While the shopping center has had a curfew for years, enforcement was lax, Wyllie admitted. On Friday, when the strict enforcement began, some teens hanging out around 7:50 p.m. were unaware of the curfew. One said a police officer didn’t stop him from being dropped off. “We got out of the car and he gave us a weird look, but didn’t say anything,” said Michael Lopez, 19, who was with Joey Molina, 17. Wyllie parents of unattended kids will be called. Youth who are unruly will be given a trespass notice. After that, if the teens refuse to leave, they will be subject to arrest.

The Christmas melee was the culmination of a months-long increase in crime that residents and town officials say has recently plagued the quaint outdoor shopping mall, home to storefront shops and medical offices as well as a range of eateries and a Victoria’s Secret . Ariel Martinez watched the Christmas night chaos from the balcony of his apartment on Main Street, above the Johnny Rockets restaurant. His brother captured a video on his cell phone, later posted on YouTube , of hundreds of teens running toward a parking lot with police lights shining in the background. The video had about 3,500 views as of Friday. “It’s a beautiful community, but in a way, Main Street has been attracting the wrong crowd in the past months,” said Martinez, a 31-year old computer programmer. He moved to Main Street almost two years ago, attracted by its convenient location, friendly neighbors and well-kept appearance, he said. But recently, Martinez says he’s caught kids smoking marijuana outside his apartment. Recently his parked car was pelted with eggs. “Right now, I’m thinking about moving. I don’t know. I have to see if something improves,” he said.

Business owners are banking on the new measures. They say the teens don’t spend money at the local shops and scare away paying customers. But despite the increased police presence, some businesses are taking their own measures. “On New Years, we’re closing early because of what happened,” said Jessica Cordova, a manager at the movie theater.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
October 17, 2011

Mayor wants to change planning and zoning board - The Miami Lakes town council wants to play a larger role in some of the zoning and code decisions that impact the town.

Author/Byline: Perry Stein

Miami Lakes town council has proposed a number of changes that would alter the town's Planning and Zoning Board, including a move to have the council serve as the appeals board for applicants whose requests for code variances are rejected by the board. The Planning and Zoning Board hears from residents and business owners who are requesting exceptions to certain town codes, and those wishing to appeal the board's decisions currently have to go through the court system. Mayor Michael Pizzi said the current setup of the planning and zoning board excludes the town council from many town decisions and suggested the change at the October town council meeting. He wants the council to play a larger role in big issue items, with the planning board acting only in an advisory capacity in these cases. "There are some decisions that could have town wide impact that should not get final decision by the zoning board," Pizzi said at the Oct. 11 meeting. Currently, the seven board members are architects, contractors, planners and citizens at large, appointed by each council member. Pizzi has suggested that all appointees have a professional background in planning and architecture and zoning so they can understand the town's codes. Pizzi also recommended that the board be able to approve all variances with a 4-3 vote, instead of the 5-2 majority required if an applicant cannot establish hardship. To establish hardship, a property owner must prove his or her property would be useless if the variance is not approved, a condition that rarely applies to applicants.

The other council members rallied behind these preliminary proposals and the town manager, **Alex Rey**, was instructed to write an ordinance that the council could vote on at an upcoming council meeting. **Rey** warned that in order for the board to remain effective, the council must establish criteria to determine what circumstances would allow an applicant to appeal the board's decision. "If you make it too liberal, you are going to render the Planning and Zoning Board useless," **Rey** said.

The Planning and Zoning board was created in 2009, partially to help 'depoliticize' the zoning process. Prior to that, the council would hear all requests for code variances. Tom McGrath, the current head of the board, said the variance process could turn political if the council members have the power to determine who is permitted to be exempt from some of the town's codes. "It has great potential to be political, these people are elected," McGrath said. "Politicians will often look for votes." "We give everyone an absolute fair hearing," McGrath added. But Javier Vasquez, a land use and zoning lawyer who often appears in front of the Miami Lakes board, said this power should be returned to the elected officials. "The zoning board is not elected by the people of Miami Lakes, so it is not accountable to the people of Miami Lakes," Vasquez said. "The people who were elected to make some of these tough decisions for the town was the council." The town's next council meeting is at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 8.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 28, 2011

Miami Lakes settles dispute over parks - Miami Lakes will gain ownership of all its parks in exchange for paying off more than \$1 million owed to Miami-Dade County.

Author/Byline: Laura Isensee

The town of Miami Lakes and Miami-Dade County leaders have brokered a deal to settle a years-old stand-off over the town's parks. Once finalized, the deal will mean Miami Lakes will own all its parks in exchange for paying off more than \$1 million owed to the county. Already the county has released \$206,000 in bond money previously withheld from the town. The money — part of the Building Better Communities program — had been slated for Royal Oaks Park but was set to expire April. "That shows times have changed and we have a new and improved relationship with the county," said Mayor Michael Pizzi.

At a special call meeting Wednesday, the Town Council voted 6-0 to approve the deal with the county. Vice Mayor Nick Perdomo was absent. The County Commission is expected to vote on the agreement on May 3. "After all these years, we finally own our parks," said Councilwoman Mary Collins. The nearly 100 parks have long been a source of pride and recreation for town residents. Miami Lakes never gained ownership of the vast majority of its parks from the county after incorporation a decade ago. (The town has owned Royal Oaks Park since 2001 and Miami Lakes Park since December 2002.) Despite the dispute, the town has been paying for the maintenance at all its parks. Part of the longstanding dispute: a hostile relationship between the town and former Commissioner Natacha Seijas, who was ousted from office in March. The Town Council decided not to pay money owed to the county through the Quality Neighborhoods Improvements Program, or QNIP, which was supposed to go toward road, sidewalk and sewer improvements. And the County Commission voted not to release park money from the Safe Neighborhood Parks, or SNP, program until the town paid its share of the QNIP.

Pizzi said at the meeting he thought the town took the "smart approach" on holding off on the debt. "Whether we owe it or not, we're not paying it until we get our parks," Pizzi said.

About a month after the recall in April, Pizzi and the town manager **Alex Rey** met with County Commission Chairman Joe Martinez and the county manager, Alina Hudak. Together they worked out a deal. The details include:

- * Miami Lakes will pay \$1,195,934 in QNIP money owed to the county;
- * The town will make future QNIP payments — \$153,423 a year — until 2024, for a total of \$1,994,499.
- * The county will give the town \$346,1000 in SNP money previously awarded to Royal Oaks Park, Miami Lakes Park and Sevilla Estates.
- * The county will release \$500,000 in bond money for a new police station, which will be part of the town's new government center.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 11, 2011

Miami Lakes to pay for shuttle from town budget, not transit tax - Miami Lakes will keep its shuttle bus and pay for it from the town budget after a county agency found the service didn't meet funding requirements and withheld about \$47,000 from the town.

Author/Byline: Laura Isensee

Miami Lakes will keep its on-demand shuttle service, which lets passengers schedule pick-ups. The catch: The town will use its own budget to pay for the shuttle after a Miami-Dade County agency found the service did not meet the rules last year to receive funds from the county-wide transit surtax. The agreement settles problems the county's oversight agency — called the Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust — found with the service in a 2008 audit and in follow-up reviews in 2010.

Last year, the oversight agency found the town bus was picking up and dropping off passengers at home, the grocery store or other places around town. The bus was supposed to follow a fixed route and a regular schedule, according to the rules for the surtax. Town officials maintained the on-demand service was a separate service.

The issue prompted the CITT to withhold \$47,624 from Miami Lakes for five months, from November through March. In a Nov. 1 letter to the agency, Town Manager **Alex Rey** authorized withholding the money because of "the concerns CITT staff has expressed with operations and in the interest of moving forward to resolution." "The Town has discontinued its mixed circulator service and is currently operating only demand response services funded from the Town's general fund and is not utilizing any CITT funds for these operations," **Rey** wrote.

In a reply letter, the chair of the agency, Linda Zilber, said the CITT welcomed "the opportunity to work with the Town to develop transit services that would be eligible for surtax funding." Some alternatives include a fixed-route system or a partnership with an adjoining city.

Under its 2004 transportation master plan, Miami Lakes started the bus as a circulator, targeted for lunchtime traffic in the town's downtown and corporate office areas. Over the years, the town officials found the on-demand service was more effective for people who wanted to get around town on a pre-arranged schedule. Currently, every week about 25-30 people ride the shuttle, which takes them to places like the hair salon, bank and community centers. The town has \$42,000 in its budget for on-demand transportation services.

Like other municipalities, Miami Lakes receives money from a half-penny surtax approved by Miami-Dade voters in 2002 to improve transportation and transit. A fifth of all the money goes to cities around the county. Municipalities must spend at least 20 percent of their funds on enhancing transit, such as circulator buses. Over the years, Miami Lakes has received \$6.2 million in surtax funds. This fiscal year the town was projected to receive \$765,000, according to the CITT. It is not clear how the town will spend those funds now. Miami Lakes is working on a

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

transit and transportation master plan, which will help determine future projects for the community's needs. The town may be able to use the surtax money on its shuttle in the future, because in March the county commissioners voted to make on-demand transportation service for low-income seniors and people with disabilities eligible for surtax funds.

Luis Collazo, who heads the town's elderly affairs committee, said the town's shuttle service helps improve their programs, such as senior socials. When the committee uses the town's shuttle service, the committee pays for it from its budget, he said. "There are people who can't make it out there because they don't have access to special transportation services or other ridership programs," Collazo said.

While the county and the town have resolved their difference over the bus, another dispute over the bus remains in court. Dr. Dave Bennett, an outspoken resident and critic of the administration, filed a lawsuit last April in Miami-Dade Circuit Court. The suit seeks a court order for the town to follow the rules in the future. "That's the direction the CITT didn't take. They're just talking about, 'This is the penance you have to serve for your past sins,'" said Bennett's attorney, Stephen Cody.

The town has filed to dismiss the lawsuit.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
February 17, 2011

Miami Lakes unfreezes funds for Main Street Players - Miami Lakes will unfreeze \$12,000 for the Main Street Players to help pay rent, saying the theater group has tidied up its finances.

Author/Byline: Laura Isensee

Last fall, the Main Street Players sold-out all shows of Cabaret, making the musical a big hit. But off stage, the community theater group had a problem: its finances. The town of Miami Lakes, which has subsidized the nonprofit for many years, wanted financial documents during budget season. The theater group struggled to provide them. The problem prompted the group's treasurer to resign and the town manager to freeze in November the \$12,000 budgeted for the group this fiscal year. "I thought we were in trouble," said Clara Lyzniak, president of the Main Street Players. "Without the support of the town, it would be difficult to meet the rent."

Now the theater group and the town have resolved their financial issues. At the Town Council meeting on Feb. 8, Town Manager **Alex Rey** said he recommended restoring the group's funding. **Rey** explained in an e-mail the group has a new treasurer. Other new conditions are:

- The town's grant writer will assist the nonprofit with grant applications;
- The group will provide the town with 10 unsold tickets to each event if the show is not sold out; and
- The group will give the town quarterly financial reports.

In addition, Lyzniak said a certified public accountant is giving the group pro bono guidance. The group has an annual operating budget of \$65,000 and puts on four productions a year. Funding comes from ticket sales, sponsorships, the town and Miami-Dade County.

Rey said the group has not yet given the town any quarterly report, but had submitted copies of financial documents the theater group gave to Miami-Dade County. "They are improving and we, staff and the Cultural Affairs Committee, will monitor," **Rey** said in an e-mail. As a thank you, the Main Street Players recently gave a private performance of its current production - Crimes of the Heart - for officials and other supporters. The group is gearing up for its next productions: Company in spring and the drama Extremities in the summer

The town of Miami Lakes has supported the Main Street Players for many years. The nonprofit started in 1974 and claims the title of the longest continuously running community theater group in South Florida. All the actors and staff are volunteers. Many are local residents. The current president Lyzniak, for example, got involved in 1998 when her then 7-year-old son Jason was cast in the Wizard of Oz . (He had two roles: a munchkin and a general at the Emerald City.) "The arts are a dying breed and we believe it's really important to keep them alive," Lyzniak said. Like many cultural and artistic nonprofits, the group has faced struggles at times. In 2003, the theater group almost ended because it was homeless.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Graham Companies and the town of Miami Lakes helped stave off its demise. The developer offered to lease space on Main Street at a discount rate of \$24,000 a year. The town decided to subsidize half the rent, or \$12,000. The town also paid \$16,000 to cover most of the cost to convert the space from a bookstore into a black box theater with a stage, lighting system and dressing room, Lyzniak said. In 2004, the Main Street Players opened at its new home. The town has contributed toward its rent since then.

Last November, **Rey** questioned the nonprofit’s finances. He told the Town Council in a memo that there were discrepancies on budget documents the group had submitted to Miami-Dade County on a grant application and the group had not provided any financial audit or tax information. **Rey** recommended giving the group in-kind support, not cash.

While the town money was frozen, the Main Street Players dipped into savings to help cover rent. The theater group has learned a lot from the experience, Lyzniak said. “Running a theater is not just running it from the artistic side. You have to run a theater as a business for it to be successful,” she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Alexandro Rey** is listed below.]

Miami Herald, The (FL)

February 7, 2011

SOUTH FLORIDA: Many cities issue badges to officials - It's not just North Miami: Many South Florida cities issue badges to city council members, mayors, clerks and other non-cops.

Author/Byline: Karina Chavarria

North Miami Mayor Andre Pierre had people scratching their heads earlier this month, as he tried to explain why he ordered 43 police-style badges for his three-member staff. But giving police-style badges to officials who aren't police officers has happened before in South Florida. Several cities issue badges to commissioners, mayors, city clerks, city managers and, in at least one case, department heads.

Some say the practice of giving badges to civilians invites abuse from those who might use them to avoid speeding tickets or get admitted to night clubs. "I don't know what purpose they would serve, other than if elected officials would want special treatment," said Police Benevolent Association President John Rivera. "Most of them run around with entourages anyway, so it shouldn't be that hard to identify them."

The badges carry no legal weight, but some officials say they need them in case of emergency. "Imagine what might happen during a hurricane, nuclear accident or other disaster situation," said Cutler Bay Town Councilwoman Peggy Bell, who along with the rest of the town council made the decision to issue badges this year. "A Cutler Bay official could be denied necessary access during this time of great need."

Miami Lakes Town Manager **Alex Rey** agreed. "The only time I used my badge was during hurricanes," said **Rey**, whose town issues badges to the manager and elected leaders. "I was walking around in my jeans and wanted police to know I was a town official."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
December 15, 2010

Council agrees to borrow \$8.3 million - The Miami Lakes Town Council gives final approval to the town's first bond issue.

Author/Byline: Laura Isensee

Miami Lakes Town Manager **Alex Rey** headed to Wall Street last week after the Town Council gave the final OK for the town's first bond issue, for up to \$8.3 million. The money will buy property near Main Street from the town's developers, The Graham Companies, and pay for the construction of a two-story government center, with nearly 25,000 square feet.

A bond is a loan borrowed from investors. The town would have 30 years to repay these bonds, which would be taxable to investors. The town estimates the interest rate will be around 4.4 percent. The Wall Street rating service Moody's recently gave the issue a rating of Aa3, the third-highest.

The town is promising to repay the bonds using its tax on electric bills. Since no property-tax money is involved, a referendum isn't required. The council's final vote was 4-3 to borrow the money.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
November 29, 2010

Miami Lakes tackles potholes

Author/Byline: Laura Isensee

Miami Lakes police made a recent sweep of the town. The target: not burglars that break in at night, but potholes that make cars go bump. Before the sweep, the town had received 25 complaints from residents about potholes. Some were for the same problem spots. The police, who noted potholes during regular patrols, found two more potholes during their sweep. The survey finished in November. Overall, the town has issued work orders for 18 potholes. The effort is part the town manager’s plan to revitalize the public works department.

Town Manager **Alex Rey** said in an e-mail that public works was one of his first priorities when he officially started as manager in September. **Rey** said all potholes have been repaired.

Three months ago, potholes were a bigger problem, with more than 30, said Vice Mayor Nick Perdomo. Perdomo said he is pushing for the town to address other roadway issues, in particular the safety on a stretch of Miami Lakes Drive where the thoroughfare lacks turn-in lanes. Perdomo’s proposed solution: install signs prohibiting U-turns to prevent traffic congestion and accidents.

Councilman Nelson Hernandez, who made infrastructure a large part of his campaign for Town Council, said potholes may seem like a small issue but are a sign of how the public works department is doing. “I think proper infrastructure in any municipality should take precedence because it affects businesses and residents,” Hernandez said. “What I would like to see in addition of resurfacing the potholes is to take a more proactive approach to our infrastructure,” Hernandez later added.

In addition, the town recently got help from about 18 kids from the Young Marines of Miami-Dade. The group cleaned up litter on Ludlam Road and Main Street in November.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 16, 2010

Public input sought on proposed budget

Author/Byline: Laura Iseness

In order to balance falling property tax revenues and keep the town's tax rate the same, Miami Lakes may cut several positions, freeze cost-of-living salary increases and consider new sources of revenue. Those are some ideas in the town's proposed budget for the 2010-2011 fiscal year, which Town Manager **Alex Rey** released last week. The Town Council will review the preliminary budget at the first public budget hearing on Thursday at 5 p.m. at Royal Oaks Park Community Center, at 16500 NW 87 Ave. The town is expected to receive \$15.4 million in revenues, which is about \$100,000 less than the \$15.5 million in the 2009-2010 fiscal year budget.

Meanwhile, the value of all the real estate in the town has fallen 11 percent over the past year. That means the town will receive \$736,000 less than last year from property taxes with the proposed rate unchanged at \$2.447 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Rey wrote in his budget message that tough financial times make it increasingly important to balance priorities with long-term sustainability. "However, like in life, every difficult situation also presents us with the opportunity and the challenge to reassess and improve the way we have done things in the past," he wrote.

Some of his proposed changes to the way the town has done things in recent years include:

- * Control budget expenditures at the department level, instead of line-items.
- * Reestablish a solid waste franchise fee effective April 2011, boosting town revenue by \$175,000 a year.
- * Consider a red-light camera program, with \$50,000 set aside to start the initial process.
- * Spend \$300,000 for new information technology for the town's accounting and building permit systems. The proposed budget also slashes several administrative positions. **Rey** proposed freezing the position of deputy town manager for six months, saving the town more than \$50,000. After the six-month freeze, **Rey** may eliminate the position.

Other staff changes include:

- * Reduce staffing at the building department by two full-time employees, a receptionist and one permit clerk. In addition, move the chief building inspector to part-time. **Rey** estimated those changes would put the cost of the department at \$793,000.

In the 2009-10 budget, the building department had an operating budget of \$918,796.

- * Eliminate the post of police captain from the town's contracted police force, saving \$190,000.

Other proposed staff transfers would save another \$70,000.

- * Cut the position of public information officer and instead give those duties to the mayor's assistant and hire a procurement manager.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

* Hire a dock master or marina manager for the marina in Northwest Miami-Dade, develop an operations plan, purchase equipment and start programming under a \$50,000 budget request.

* No cost of living or merit increases for employees' salaries, though individual bonuses may be given at the end of the fiscal year in September 2011.

Meanwhile, **Rey** proposed maintaining the budgets for the town's committees.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 29, 2010

MIAMI LAKES: Former Miami Lakes Town Manager Alex Rey returning to old job - Miami Lakes has approved Alex Rey as its new town manager with a starting base salary of \$188,000.

Author/Byline: Laura Isensee

Miami Lakes will have former Town Manager **Alex Rey** return to his old job in September, after the town council approved the mayor's nomination Thursday night. **Rey** served the town for six years but left in 2008 during an election cycle to lead the scandal-plagued building department in Miami Beach. "I'm happy to be back," **Rey** said.

Many residents and several council members applauded the appointment of **Rey**, recognized as a veteran administrator who knows the town. "We need him and we need him now," resident Martha Gonzalez Rovirosa told town council members.

Yet **Rey's** appointment by Mayor Michael Pizzi drew questions and concerns, as well, including the lack of advertising for the position despite a council directive for staff to do so in April, and the cost of the contract, which gives **Rey** a starting base salary of \$188,000.

In an e-mail to Councilman Richard Pulido, interim manager David Ofstein wrote that a draft advertisement had been prepared in April, but the outgoing manager, Frank Bocanegra, "directed to put the item on hold until further notice." Ofstein told The Miami Herald that he "didn't even realize that it had or had not been advertised." "It wasn't necessarily on my radar screen," Ofstein added, citing work on the town's budget.

Some residents shared their disappointment with the failure to advertise the job. Others, like Esperanza Reynolds, questioned the salary. Reynolds urged the council to consider a salary more appropriate to the town's size and said "we need to be very mindful of what we pay" officials. Reynolds calculated that the contract, salary plus benefits, is worth \$1.4 million over five years.

Another resident, Angel Gonzalez, quipped: "We're not hiring LeBron James or Dwyane Wade. We're hiring a town manager with a financial background who can do a budget and read a balance sheet." **Rey's** base salary is more than the \$168,000 that the last manager Frank Bocanegra earned and is also more than the \$135,000 salary cap proposed by Pizzi in a May memo. At the meeting, Pizzi presented a survey of managers' salaries, ranging from \$165,000 in Doral to \$231,000 in Miami Beach. "A good manager is worth his weight in gold," Pizzi said.

Under the town charter, the mayor appoints the manager while the town council approves the nomination. At the meeting, the mayor spent half an hour explaining why he wanted to bring back **Rey** as the town enters the budget season and is hunting for a new town hall. Afterward, the mayor said he viewed **Rey's** return as the biggest accomplishment of his tenure as mayor. "I think he's a superstar," Pizzi said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The final vote for **Rey** was 5-2, with council members Richard Pulido and Nancy Simon voting against. Pulido, participating via teleconference while on vacation, said he had concerns with the search process while Simon said the contract was too costly. "I think \$188,000, while you are very well deserving, is not something that this town needs to pay for a town manager," Simon told **Rey** before casting her vote.

During the meeting, the town council haggled over **Rey's** five-year contract and whittled away some benefits. Those changes included changing the health insurance to a basic family plan; eliminating a \$400 monthly stipend for expenses; and replacing any cost-of-living increase with an incentive-based bonus tied to the manager's ability to cut \$150,000 from the budget by the end of the fiscal year.

"I'm a taxpayer, too, and this is my money, too," said Vice Mayor Nick Perdomo, who proposed many of the contract changes. Perdomo noted the value of hiring a candidate who does not need on-the-job training. Bocanegra, a former police officer, did not have experience managing a municipality -- which "cost the town money," Perdomo told residents.

Rey's official start date will be Sept 6. Until then, he will advise the interim town manager on the budget and other matters on a consulting basis, for a fee of \$145 per hour.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 4, 2008

Departing manager gets tearful tribute - Town officials and residents said goodbye to long-time Town Manager Alex Rey, who is leaving for a job in Miami Beach.

Author/Byline: Laura Figueroa

Even at the most heated of council meetings, where scuffles on the dais are often an expected affair, **Alex Rey**, the town's six-year manager was known for keeping his cool. If **Rey's** six years in the job were marked by his calm composure, then he offered a slight crack last week -- becoming choked up as he gave his farewell speech at a party in his honor. "This feels like leaving your family," **Rey** said to more than 70 guests at the Don Shula Hotel and Golf Resort, his voice slightly cracking. "A week ago I took my son to college. That was an emotional moment. This feels the same." In June, **Rey** announced his plans to accept a job in Miami Beach, where he will head that city's scandal-plagued building department.

During an Aug. 27 celebration, officials and residents touted **Rey** as the man who helped set the foundation for the town government -- having been with the town six of its eight years. "He put together a team that became the foundation of what Miami Lakes is and what it's going to be," said Mayor Wayne Slaton. "He actually created a town from scratch," the mayor continued. "There are a lot of managers, but only a few of them can say they were the manager that put down the foundation of an administration."

Rey's departure almost drove Councilwoman Mary Collins to tears, as her voice choked up speaking about him. "He's the most honest, honorable man I've had the opportunity of working with," Collins said.

After the stroll down memory lane, **Rey** was presented with a proclamation from the town and a plaque of appreciation from the staff. "I was the captain of a team and I had the luxury of selecting the players on my team," **Rey** said. "For better or for worse, you are part of my team." **Rey** said the hardest part of leaving the town will be leaving behind the staff. "They really are part of my extended family," he said. "They're a great group of guys and gals."

Throughout the farewell celebration -- where guests munched on platters of cheese and vegetables -- **Rey** was recognized for his calm demeanor. "I've never seen Alex lose his temper on the dais or to the public," Slaton said. "Alex has a calming effect."

Rey's official start date in Miami Beach is Sept. 2, but the town is drafting a consultant agreement so he can assist during the upcoming budget season. Zoning and Code Enforcement Director Evelyn Roig was named interim manager until a replacement is found. A decision on a permanent manager will likely be made after the October mayoral and town council election.

Wrapping up his speech, **Rey** said: "I'm always going to be there for Miami Lakes."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Please note that from this article to the end of the Internet Research, **Alexandro Rey** will be referred to as **Alex Rey Panama**, **Alex** or **Panama**. **Alex Rey Panama** was the name that **Rey** was known when he came to the United States from his native El Salvador]

Miami Herald, The (FL)
June 26, 2008

MIAMI LAKES: Election may have influenced manager's departure - Town Manager Alex Rey's resignation announced last week has some people wondering what role politics played in his decision to quit his job.

Author/Byline: Laura Fogueroa

Two high-profile job offers might have made it easier for Town Manager **Alex Rey** to resign his post in Miami Lakes on June 19, but had he decided to stay, his future could have been tied to the outcome of elections scheduled for October. **Rey** dodged the political crossfire by accepting the job of building director of Miami Beach. "I didn't want to wait on the outcome of the elections," said **Rey**, whose contract was up for renewal.

Waiting on the election would have meant waiting to see who would be elected mayor, the official who picks the manager. Incumbent Wayne Slaton recruited **Rey** in 2002 and gave him a glowing evaluation when he last came for review in July 2007. His rivals have not been as kind. During council meetings, Councilman Roberto Alonso often has criticized **Rey's** performance, and while Councilman Michael Pizzi has largely supported **Rey's** work, in July he proposed to extend the manager's contract for only three months past the election.

Rey will remain on the job long enough to help shape the town's next budget but should be at work in Miami Beach by August. That will leave Slaton and the current council to appoint an interim manager to see the town through the election. Slaton said he will ask Assistant Manager Marielena Salazar to fill the position at least through October. "I would have rather that the council would have extended his contract, but they didn't, so he had to do what was in his best interest," Slaton said. "I'm not concerned in the least about what his leaving means in the context of the election. I have always supported him and he served this town well for as long as he did."

If reelected, Slaton said he would have liked to keep **Rey** in Miami Lakes. Alonso, however, remains a critic, saying he is unhappy with the timing of the decision. "I told him I'm disappointed he did it like this," Alonso said. "In life, if you think you're doing a good job, you shouldn't be afraid of losing it. If elected, I had no intention of firing him immediately." Alonso said **Rey** "still had time" to prove himself. "He had July, August, September all to prove he is the manager for the next mayor," Alonso said. "All the candidates are in-house so it's not like we didn't know who he is or how he works."

As for his assessment of **Rey's** performance, Alonso took a political jab at Slaton, saying the manager was "overworked." "I believe he took a lot of the mayor's responsibilities and handled it himself," Alonso said. "I'm sure it was easy to get burned out. I know that he often met a lot with

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

the residents. Those are issues that are supposed to be resolved with the mayor." Slaton chuckled when asked to respond. "I respect Mr. Alonso and I'm not going to go there," Slaton said.

Pizzi said he would have "supported an extension of at least a few months" past the election for **Rey** to give the new mayor time to "review managerial candidates." He would have nominated **Rey** to be in the pool of potential candidates. "I thought he did a good job as manager," Pizzi said. "He was fair to me. There were rooms for improvement that I would have brought up had we voted on another extension."

Rey's biggest supporter on the council, Mary Collins, was defeated in her attempt to get his contract extended by six months, instead of three, during the evaluation in July. "The timing is horrible," Collins said. "It's in the middle of hurricane season; we have the budget coming up. But we really caused that ourselves by only extending his contract to December. I remember warning everyone about it: December is no time to go out job-hunting."

Rey did an "excellent" job in his time with the town, Collins said, praising him as a deft number-cruncher. "He is just a master at contracts," Collins said. "He is just great about negotiating for the best deal and getting all of the smallest details taken care of."

Councilman Robert Meador said he admired **Rey's** "excellent financial stewardship."
Councilman Richard Pulido lauded him as a "constant professional."

Still, Pulido and Meador were among the main proponents of extending **Rey's** contract only three months past the election. "I thought it was very inappropriate that you have an election where there's a possibility of making a substantial change in the composition of the council, but you have to inherit the contract of the previous administration," Pulido said.

Rey is the fourth town manager, serving six years in the eight-year history of Miami Lakes. Miami Lakes Civic Association Vice President Angela Garrison acted as manager during the community's early transition from an unincorporated community. Merritt Stierheim, a former county manager, held the post before becoming Miami-Dade schools superintendent. He was succeeded by Dennis White, who ran into criticism from council members over what they said was his temper and lack of communication. White was fired in September 2002 after a year and was replaced within days by **Rey**, then known as **Alex Rey Panama**. **Rey** had been a candidate for the job when White was hired.

Councilwoman Nancy Simon, who cast the only opposing vote in the 2002 decision to hire **Rey**, compared the manager situation to riding out a hurricane. "If you've never been through a hurricane, then you might start to get nervous," Simon said. "But, after you've been through a couple of hurricanes, you're used to it; you hunker down and, when it's all over, you prevail."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
June 20, 2008

MIAMI BEACH: Manager takes pick of 2 trouble spots - An experienced local administrator was offered jobs at two of South Florida's most troubled government agencies.

Author/Byline: Matthew I. Pinzur and Tania Valdemoro

With a respected 25-year career in local government, **Alex Rey** had a quintessentially Miami choice this month: which public scandal to tackle. **Rey**, 49, who resigned as Miami Lakes' town manager on Thursday, had offers to become the finance chief of Miami-Dade's cash-bleeding transit agency or director of Miami Beach's scandal-rocked building department. 'My 19-year-old said, 'Dad, why is it that all these people in trouble want you to help them out?' " **Rey** laughed. "I don't know if it's a compliment or not." He picked Miami Beach, saying it was "a better career move for me." He will inherit a hornet's nest on the Beach, where the bribery arrests of two building officials and one planning department official in March illustrated frequent complaints by developers, employees and politicians. Building Director Thomas Velazquez quit Tuesday, police have questioned the assistant manager and investigators are continuing to probe the department. "I do like professional challenges," **Rey** said. He said he began talking with Miami Beach City Manager Jorge Gonzalez earlier this month after being told he was the top choice for the high-ranking job at Miami-Dade Transit. That department has struggled for years to make ends meet, with the skyrocketing cost of fuel and other costs creating a grim financial outlook. A Miami Herald series this month reported Transit will fall far short of the promises made in 2002, when voters accepted a half-cent sales tax to expand service. **Rey** was on verge of accepting that job when he was approached by the Beach's Gonzalez. "He's been able to build a city government from scratch in Miami Lakes," Gonzalez said. "What that tells me is that he can put a team together, implement structure, create and carry out policies and motivate people."

Rey spent 20 years in the county bureaucracy, rising to assistant director of the budget office. He left in 2002 to run Miami Lakes, then an infant government with just two employees. It now has 20 workers and a \$16 million budget. "**Rey** will have to lend some order to the [building] department and lower the tension there," Gonzalez said. At the same time, he will have to hire consultants to review the department's procedures and recruit a permanent building official; Gonzalez decided to permanently split the jobs of managing the department and signing off on permits, both of which had been done by Velazquez. **Rey** is married to Kathie Brooks, Miami Beach's budget director. Until he takes office -- mid-August, at the soonest -- Beach Planning Director Jorge Gomez will serve as interim building director and former assistant building director Richard McConachie will return from retirement to serve as the city's building official to approve permits and certificates of occupancy. The decision to leave Miami Lakes was driven, in part, by politics, **Rey** said. With a contentious mayoral race looming in October, he said he didn't want to risk being replaced as part of a new administration. "Jobs in my pay ranges don't come around that often, and when my contract didn't get approved past December last year, I started looking," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
June 15, 2008

No meeting of the minds on room use

Author/Byline: Laura Figueroa

It's about the size of a large walk-in closet, but these days a 200-square-foot office in the Miami Lakes Community Center is creating a big headache between town officials and the decades-old Miami Lakes Civic Association. For the first time in the town's eight-year history, an emergency meeting was called to address escalating tension between the town and the association regarding an office at the community center.

Just before midnight Tuesday, after a grueling five-hour town council meeting, the council decided, after an additional hourlong emergency session, what it had decided just two months earlier: to give the town manager jurisdiction over scheduling meetings at the office. This time, however, there is a proviso allowing Town Manager **Alex Rey** the power to file a lawsuit to evict the civic association as a last resort.

"We've had two shootings in the past few weeks in Miami Lakes," said Councilman Richard Pulido. "We've had stray bullets flying around our community. We're dealing with overcrowded schools, we're dealing with financial uncertainty -- and that's just a short list that came to mind -- and here we are at midnight or close to midnight for another time talking about a conference room. Honestly, if we were running a business we'd all be fired."

The meeting was called after civic association president Angela Garrison fired off an angry e-mail to **Rey** on June 4 over use of the room. Garrison said the town failed to inform her that a town committee meeting was scheduled for the office on June 2, when she and other association members planned to use the space that night. "Please be advised that any further unauthorized use of this office will be considered trespassing," Garrison wrote in the e-mail to **Rey**.

Councilman Michael Pizzi objected to the tone of the e-mail and called for the meeting with less than 24-hour notice under a special provision in the town's charter. Pizzi says the town's needs for the publicly financed space should take priority. "We have residents using a facility paid for by taxpayer dollars, we have an organization threatening to charge them with trespassing. This situation puts those residents in jeopardy," Pizzi said at Tuesday's meeting.

Still unclear after the discussion was who should have preferential use of the meeting room, which is housed in a building paid for by the county 12 years ago but currently maintained with money from the town's budget. "If they're going to pull the jurisdictional card, then we should be deemed owners of that building," Pulido said of the county. "We're the ones paying for the water, for the lights, for the grass to be cut." No formal written document between the county and the town was drafted outlining use of the office space; it's all been a series of verbal agreements with the county, **Rey** told council members.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

In an election season, the center dispute produced political jabs Tuesday night between Pizzi and Mayor Wayne Slaton. Pizzi and Councilman Roberto Alonso are seeking Slaton's position in elections set for October. "You pretty much buried your head in the sand and made excuses," Pizzi told Slaton at the meeting. Slaton countered by exercising his power as chairman of the meeting to cut Pizzi short. "Councilman Pizzi, now you're making this personal," Slaton said. When Pizzi asked to be allowed to continue speaking, Slaton responded: "No, you may not finish your condemnation of my opinion."

For some in the town, the squabble over the office is seen as less an issue about space and more one about politics. Many of the civic association's 3,000 members have supported Slaton's reelection bids -- he has served as mayor since incorporation in 2000 -- but board members have often been at odds with Pizzi and Councilwoman Nancy Simon. The vote authorizing **Rey** to enforce the town authority over the office space was 4-2. Pizzi, Pulido, Simon and Meador voted in favor of the measure and Collins and Slaton voted against it. Alonso was not present.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
May 18, 2008

VICE MAYOR TANGLED IN LETTER DISPUTE

Author/Byline: Laura Morales

Miami Lakes officials and police are investigating the origins of two letters purportedly from Vice Mayor Nancy Simon on town letterhead that appeared at a condo complex. Two residents of the complex, Villas of Miami Lakes, have sent a lawyer's letter to the town claiming the letters defamed them and demanding they be paid damages.

The letters are topped with the words "Town of Miami Lakes" and a grainy, seven-year-old photo of Simon. Both letters refer to condo resident Gustavo "Gus" Abella's police record and point readers to the Miami-Dade Clerk of Courts website, which the letters give as www.miamidade.com, for details. Attached to each letter are separate sheets containing basic details of five court cases. The website contains a link to the county's official website, miamidade.gov, where information can be found on Abella's cases going back to 1978; but the records do not show any conviction against him. Abella is joined by his wife Miriam Mendoza in a claim against the town for \$200,000 for alleged defamation because the letters mention her as a candidate for the condo board.

In an interview with The Miami Herald, Simon flatly denied that she had anything to do with the printing or circulation of the letters. On Thursday, Town Manager **Alex Rey** said the town was investigating the source of the letters. He said also the Florida League of Cities is looking into Abella's demand for damages.

Simon said she was alerted to the existence of the letters by a resident and she immediately called on town police for an investigation. According to a police report Simon filed in late January, Villas resident Edmy Gomez, who Simon said was an acquaintance of hers, called the vice mayor to inform her about the letters. Gomez said she found them affixed to her front door. Gomez did not return a call Thursday for comment. Abella, reached by phone, declined to comment. Mendoza did not answer her cell phone. "This sounds like I'm being set up," Simon said. "Why would I do something like that?" Simon noted while the letters have the words "Town of Miami Lakes" at the top, they were not typed on the official Miami Lakes letterhead, which includes the town seal and the address of Town Hall.

But in a letter dated April 10 to Mayor Wayne Slaton, **Rey** and Simon, attorney Joseph Glick accused Simon of being behind the letters and demanded the town pay damages of \$200,000. If the town did not respond within six months, a lawsuit would follow, Glick wrote in his letter to the town. Glick claimed the letters caused Abella and Mendoza to suffer "injury to their reputations and health" and they were experiencing "shame, humiliation, mental anguish and hurt feelings." Glick said in an interview the town "can come to us to negotiate a settlement or they can also try to prove they're not at fault, and we'll gladly take a look at that."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Abella and Mendoza have filed suit against the Villas of Miami Lakes Condominium Association, Glick told The Miami Herald, but that could not be confirmed by deadline time Thursday. The letters controversy highlighted an ongoing dispute between Simon and Abella that has included a 5-2 decision by the Town Council in April to pay a \$8,219 legal bill for Simon. The bill, which attorney Milton Hirsch reduced from \$12,000, stemmed from the vice mayor's attempt to obtain a permanent injunction against Abella. Simon said she filed the injunction because, she claimed, Abella stalked her for more than a year, yelling insults at her outside council meetings and tailing her around town with Mendoza. The couple, longtime political critics of the vice mayor, has denied ever stalking or harassing Simon. A judge dismissed the injunction, citing insufficient evidence.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 13, 2008

MIAMI LAKES: Town will pay vice mayor's legal tab - The Town Council voted to pay a legal bill incurred by Vice Mayor Nancy Simon after the attorneys reduced the initial charge of \$12,000 by almost a third.

Author/Byline: Laura Morales

The Miami Lakes Town Council voted 6-1 at its meeting Tuesday night to pay a legal bill of more than \$8,000 for Vice Mayor Nancy Simon who took a resident to court claiming harassment and lost the case. Councilman Michael Pizzi, saying tax dollars should not be used to pay a bill not first approved by the council, cast the lone "no" vote.

All others, including Simon, backed the motion that was introduced by Councilwoman Mary Collins. Collins said she hoped the council was not setting a precedent. "We can't just go out and hire lawyers without coming before the council first," Collins said. Pizzi, himself an attorney, agreed, saying Wednesday that he cast his dissenting vote for that very reason. "I was concerned that the bill was still too high. It paid three lawyers and a paralegal," he said. "I don't think we would have authorized it if it had come to us beforehand."

Simon hired a legal team headed by Milton Hirsch to seek a permanent injunction against Gustavo Abella. The vice mayor said Abella and wife Miriam Mendoza would follow her to her car after meetings, yelling insults, and tail her around town in their white truck. "He didn't like my vote in favor of allowing certain signs," Simon said at a March 11 council meeting. She was referring to a council discussion on restricting political signs in the town. On Oct. 5, 2007, police were called to Miami Lakes Town Hall to break up a verbal confrontation between Simon and Mendoza. Abella has denied that he or his wife, who are longtime political critics of Simon, have ever stalked or harassed the vice mayor.

The acrimony between Simon and the couple heated up last summer after Abella and Mendoza filed a complaint with the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation accusing Simon of selling real estate without a license. In January, the state found that Simon's license had not been valid during the part of 2005 cited in Abella's complaint. Simon has said problems arose with her license because of illness and a paperwork mix-up and that Abella's accusation had been politically motivated.

The matter of Simon's legal bill first came before the council on March 11 but was deferred to give Town Manager **Alex Rey** time to try to get it lowered. **Rey** told council members at Tuesday's meeting that he and Town Attorney Nina Boniske met with Hirsch and negotiated a reduction in the fee from \$12,000 to \$8,219. "He said he had already reduced it but it was not significant enough to fight over."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Alex Rey***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 13, 2008

MIAMI LAKES: Miami Lakes civic leader apologizes for outburst - The head of the local civic society said she will not resign despite an outburst at a recent Town Council meeting.

Author/Byline: Laura Morales

The president of the local civic association lost it at Tuesday's meeting of the Miami Lakes Town Council. During a discussion about town committees' meeting facilities, exchanges between some council members became heated and loud, with Councilman Michael Pizzi the loudest of all. At that point, Angela Garrison, president of the Miami Lakes Civic Association, and a group of supporters got up to leave. Words were traded from the floor. Pizzi said Garrison called him 'a pig' during the exchange, but she strenuously denied saying that in an interview with The Herald. Nevertheless, as she was leaving, Mayor Wayne Slaton told Garrison, who is his friend and has worked on his political campaigns, that she was out of order. Pizzi said later that it was not the first time Garrison had been rude to him in the middle of a council meeting. "She gave me the finger at the meeting when we discussed whether or not to ban political signs in the town," Pizzi said in an interview Thursday. After Garrison left, the Council unanimously approved a motion by Pizzi denouncing her behavior and emphasizing a need to maintain proper decorum at all times in council meetings. Garrison said Thursday that, while she didn't believe it excused her own behavior, she was "sick" of what she called Pizzi's "rude and loud" manner on the dais. "I was upset with the way he is so disrespectful to his colleagues," Garrison said in a phone interview. "It was unnecessary the way he was speaking to Mary Collins."

Relations between Garrison and the Council deteriorated following the council meeting on March 11, when members voted to move meetings of several town committees to the civic association's longtime meeting space at the Community Center West at 15101 Montrose Rd. Town Manager **Alex Rey** sent staffers to build a wall at the center to divide the roughly 450 square-foot conference space into two rooms. Garrison said later that she and other association members sat on the floor in protest and tape being used to mark off the area was put on them. As a result of the Council's decision, the civic association was relegated to a much smaller area, about 150 square feet, **Rey** said at the time.

On Wednesday, Garrison sent The Miami Herald Neighbors a letter to the editor apologizing for her conduct. "I lost my temper. It was wrong, it was inexcusable and an embarrassing moment that I totally regret," she wrote. "The council is right to chastise my or anyone else's similar verbal insults." Pizzi said Thursday that he thought Garrison should resign as head of the association, a 43-year-old organization that plans activities for residents to build a sense of community. "She was way out of line," Pizzi said. "For the president of a civic association to just throw a tantrum like that is just disgraceful." Garrison said she had no intention of doing so. "Yes, what I did was wrong, but I don't see why that means I should step down," she said Thursday.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
March 23, 2008

MIAMI LAKES: Council votes down ban on gifts - Town Council members, at a special meeting, struck down a ban proposed by Councilman Michael Pizzi on gifts from vendors or contractors to town officials and staff.

Author/Byline: Laura Morales

Miami-Dade is almost as notorious for political sleight-of-hand as it is famous for its beaches and nightlife. Amid the latest parade of scandals, many folks are short on trust and hungry for tougher ethics laws, according to Miami Lakes Councilman Michael Pizzi. But, at a special meeting of the Miami Lakes Town Council on Tuesday, a four-member majority nixed a pared-down version of a measure banning gifts from current town vendors and contractors to council members or staff. The law also would have barred vendors who give money to a council member's campaign from receiving contracts with the town for one year.

Under current county regulations, public officials may receive gifts as long as any gift valued at more than \$100 is disclosed; officials don't have to report gifts under \$100. Town law already forbids current vendors or contractors from giving money to a council member's campaign. "I thought this was a no-brainer," Pizzi said of his proposed ban during an interview on Thursday. "It protects the employees from undue influence and takes away the perception that government is for sale." Council members Richard Pulido and Robert Meador supported the proposal.

But council members Roberto Alonso and Mary Collins, Vice Mayor Nancy Simon and Mayor Wayne Slaton didn't see it that way. "Every time someone tries to rewrite campaign finance laws, they create loopholes you can drive a truck through," Collins said. Pizzi's proposal wouldn't stop a vendor from contributing through someone else, she said. "I can't support this. I don't accept gifts and I don't get fined for campaign violations; I've never been," Collins said. "But, in the spirit of not being personal about this, I feel very strongly."

Alonso said he felt the proposal cast doubts on the council's ethics. "The message we're sending is we're afraid that we're crooked. My integrity is not going to be questioned," Alonso said. "I don't have to have an ordinance to follow the law. I don't give gifts or take them." Pizzi, who modeled his ban on a measure being considered by the county, said Wednesday that many residents of Miami Lakes and other areas have told him they feel money has too much influence on government everywhere in the county.

The Miami-Dade Ethics Task Force is recommending identical legislation to the County Commission. Task Force Executive director Robert Meyers, who has appeared on Pizzi's Saturday radio show calling for tougher ethics laws, said a commissioner has to sponsor the ban for it to be heard at County Hall and, if passed, will likely apply countywide. "It's subject to change," Meyers said. "We will be presenting it to the League of Cities so we can get their feedback."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Lakes Councilman Richard Pulido said current laws create an "unfair" process. "I may not be a vendor today but I may be under contract next month so now's the time to butter you up," he said. "There's tremendous opportunity for impropriety."

Though not voting on the issue, Town Manager **Alex Rey** said Pizzi's ban mirrors rules he has set for his staff. "I have no problem with the total banning of gifts from corporations or prospective vendors," **Rey** said. "I feel it keeps everybody clean. It's a good policy. I do that already."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
October 7, 2007

COUNCIL OK'S \$500 STIPEND

Author/Byline: Laura Figueroa

Slashed from the Miami Lakes budget was \$5,000 for a State of the Town address, \$25,000 for a residents survey and \$20,000 for an promotional ad campaign. But while council members have trimmed more than \$120,000 from the \$17.9 million budget, they have also approved, for the first time, a \$500 monthly car stipend for each of members in a vote that attracted little discussion. At the Sept. 18 council meeting, Councilman Roberto Alonso proposed a total of \$36,000 be allotted to the six council members for a car allowance.

So far, the only elected official receiving a car allowance has been Mayor Wayne Slaton, who gets a \$7,200 annual car allowance, along with an \$18,000 annual salary, as set out in the town charter. Compared to the mayor's \$1,500 monthly salary, the charter provides for members to receive a monthly \$400 stipend.

In July 2006, voters rejected a proposed charter amendment that would have allowed members to increase their stipend by ordinance. Of the roughly 2,400 ballots cast during the referendum, 75 percent opposed the council voting on its own salary increases. "I know some of you don't need it, don't want to use it, don't want to take it, you can donate it, but I would like to get a motion through the legal channels, if it can be done, to have a \$36,000 car allowance for the six council members," Alonso said at the Sept. 18 meeting.

Seconds after Slaton called for a vote, the measure was approved swiftly 5-2. No discussion took place -- unusual for a council where meetings tend to last more than four hours because of long and heated discussions. Alonso, along with Robert Meador, Richard Pulido, Nancy Simon and Slaton voted for the car allowance. Vice Mayor Mary Collins and Michael Pizzi voted no. "I voted against it because I thought it was a back door pay raise," Collins said in a phone interview Thursday. The car allowance proposal went against the will of the voters as expressed in the 2006 referendum, she said.

Pizzi shared that view. "In a year when we expressed the need to tighten our belts, when we're telling the committees to tighten their belts, what kind of message are we sending when we're doubling the compensation to the council?" Pizzi said after the meeting.

Town Manager **Alex Rey** said the vote for the car allowance did not violate the town charter because the council members were not voting on their salaries. Council members who voted in favor of the car allowance said the measure would merely compensate those who use their car for town business, putting them on par with the gas allowance given to the mayor.

"It's costing us money out of our own pocket to be council members," Simon said. "Gas was \$1 a gallon when we were all first elected; now its \$3.50." And, she said, the allowance might

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

encourage more people to run for council. "Every time you ask someone to run, many times they don't because there is a lack of incentives," Simon said. "A lot of people would like to run for office but they can't afford to give up their jobs or to take off time from work for all of the duties you face when you become a member of the council," she said.

Pulido said he supported the measure to "ensure parity" between the mayor and the council. Alonso and Meador did not return phone calls on Thursday.

Rey said the council members should start receiving their \$500 checks by the end of the month.

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 29, 2007

MIAMI LAKES: Taxes drop, but budget won't follow - Residents can expect to see small savings in their property tax bills but may have to pay to use park facilities.

Author/Byline: Laura Figueroa

The average Miami Lakes home owner can expect to see roughly \$60 in savings in his or her property tax bill after the Town Council tentatively approved a new tax rate mandated by the state's tax reform legislation. The reduced rate leaves Miami Lakes with \$263,000 less in its budget than last year. The town still expects to collect \$7.5 million in property tax revenues as part of its \$17.8 million budget.

On July 17, the council lowered the tax rate from last year's \$2.75 per \$1,000 of assessed property value to \$2.47. That means that the owner of a home assessed at \$230,000 and applying the standard \$25,000 homestead exemption would pay \$508 in taxes, compared to last year's \$561. Miami Lakes may not feel the tight financial squeeze of other municipalities forced to not only roll back their tax rate but also to reduce budgets by up to nine percent. The town is part of a special group of municipalities that did not have to cut back their budgets because they recently incorporated.

In order to make up for some of the financial losses, Town Manager **Alex Rey** has proposed implementing fees for park facilities and programs, such as renting out park pavilions for events. **Rey** is proposing also to bring back a solid waste franchise fee for businesses. Currently companies pay only a \$250 application fee to use solid waste services, but Assistant Town Manager Mariaelena Salazar said the town may revert to charging a franchise fee, which has yet to be determined.

Some measures in the proposed budget, which the council will discuss at two public workshops scheduled for Sept. 4 and 18:

** Increasing improvement projects for parks by allocating \$10,000 for work such as painting the community centers.

** Allocating \$5,000 for the state of the town address, compared to \$10,000 budgeted last fiscal year. The town spent roughly \$5,000 of its own money for this year's first formal address, and Baptist Hospital pick up the tab for the remaining \$5,000.

"We were fortunate to get a sponsor this year and hopefully we will be able to get another sponsor next year," Salazar said.

** \$6.5 million to the county for policing services, up \$430,000 from what was budgeted last year. Most of the increase -- \$400,000 -- is for overtime costs for special programs, such as patrolling areas prone to robbery.

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

As for the roughly \$1.6 million Miami Lakes pays to the county annually in mitigation fees, **Rey** said the town does not plan on paying that money and will hold it in reserve as part of its capital improvement fund. The state legislature unanimously approved a measure in May calling for the end to all mitigation payments, but the county has filed suit, claiming legislators overstepped their jurisdiction by passing the law.

Miami Lakes also voted at its July Town Council meeting to hire a lawyer to file its own lawsuit against the county calling for an end to the payments. "Given that state law is saying we no longer have to pay mitigation, I didn't find it appropriate to put the money [in the general fund budget,]" **Rey** told council members at the meeting.

If the court decides Miami Lakes must pay the mitigation fee, **Rey** said, the money could then be transferred to the county. If not, the council would decide what to do with the dollars. At one point council members discussed refunding the money to residents, but are waiting the outcome of the state lawsuit. Though cities such as Coral Gables have been faced with laying off employees and cutting services, Salazar said the problem is not that serious or the relatively new town.

When drafting the budget, staff did not take into account more revenue cuts that could come if voters approve super-sized homestead exemptions in January, Salazar said. "At this level it's uncertain," she said. "It might pass, it may not pass. Either way we really need to be conservative in our planning."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 19, 2007

Town manager lauded, critiqued

Author/Byline: Laura Figueroa

The expiration date of **Alex Rey's** contract read Sept. 30, 2008, but at the town manager's annual evaluation some council members were already looking a year ahead to the next municipal election and how that may affect **Rey's** role. With the mayor's post and four council seats up for grabs in October 2008, some council members said perhaps a newly elected council would not want to "inherit" the staff of the previous administration.

The council unanimously approved extending **Rey's** contract by three months until the end of 2008, so that he could use his experience to aid in the transition to a new council. Council members then left it up to the next council to decide whether to extend his contract beyond Jan. 1, 2009.

"In about 13 months the voters of this town will have the right that is given to them to, in essence, say, 'We want to see a new composition to our town government,' " Councilman Richard Pulido said at the meeting. "I think [voters] should have the right to say if they wish to see a change in the majority of the council . . . they also have a right to speak to the town's administration. Otherwise, I think we're telling [voters] their vote is somewhat irrelevant, that you can change a majority of the council but you're going to be subjected to the previous council's administration." Pulido, the newest member of the council, and council members Robert Meador, Michael Pizz and Nancy Simon, were elected in October 2006; they are not facing reelection in 2008. Mayor Wayne Slaton is up for reelection and has already drawn one challenger, Councilman Roberto Alonso, which creates a vacancy for Alonso's seat on the council. Vice Mayor Mary Collins' term expires in 2008.

Pizzi made a motion to extend **Rey's** contract by three months, though Collins said at the meeting it should have been extended to six months. **Rey's** contract was set to expire just 15 days before the Oct. 14, 2008, election date. "You have to look at it from the manager's standpoint," Collins said. "Why not six months? That's not fair to him as an individual. . . . I appreciate that the voters want new changes but why not make it six months instead of 90 days?"

The council, at the manager's request, unanimously approved increasing **Rey's** paid vacation time from 15 days to 20 days. **Rey** said he was not seeking an increase to his roughly \$160,000 salary. Even if he were, several council members felt it was time to put a cap on the amount the town manager's position is paid. "There has to come a point in time where you have to have a ceiling on what the position warrants pay-wise and benefits-wise," Meador said.

Though the manager's contract states that his annual evaluation should be held by Oct. 1 of each year, a series of scheduling conflicts and canceled workshops postponed the latest review by nine months, when it came up as part of the council's recent regular meeting. The roughly hour-long

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

discussion of **Rey's** performance was mixed, with most members saying he made great strides building departments and staff, but they still wanted to see improved communication between town staff and the council. "There's been times where I've gotten my news from The Miami Laker in anticipation of the meetings," Meador said, referring to a weekly local publication. "I've found that disheartening."

Slaton, who rated **Rey's** work on six categories from fiscal management to achievement of objectives, gave the manager several "excellent" and "above satisfactory" comments. "I think the manager is always available and never shuts himself out," Slaton said during his critique of **Rey**.

Alonso said he hated being "blunt in public with someone that I like" but he added that he would like to see more changes within the departments. "I would like to have you here for many, many, many years," Alonso told **Rey**. "I just hate to see a lot of the cities that started after us now ahead of us."

Pizzi said he sometimes felt "out of the loop" on town affairs but he too praised **Rey's** work. "You should be commended for actually developing a parks department, a building department," Pizzi said. "In the beginning we were pretty much a glorified homeowners association."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Alex Rey** is listed below.]

Miami Herald, The (FL)

June 24, 2007

CITIES TO SLASH BUDGETS AFTER TAX CUT

Author/Byline: Laura Figueroa

While some Northwest Miami-Dade municipal officials are fretting over ways to trim their budgets in lieu of the recent state Legislature rolling back property tax rates, others are relieved the expected cuts aren't going to be as severe as they thought.

Miami Lakes Town Manager **Alex Rey** said though the town is saved from shaving a percentage figure from its budget, it is expected to lose roughly \$300,000 in property taxes when the tax rate rolls back to the 2006 rate. **Rey** said the town will determine how to deal with the loss when it starts preparing for budget hearings in the next two months.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 24, 2006

COUNCIL TO LOWER TAX RATE BY 3 PERCENT

Author/Byline: Laura Figueroa

Miami Lakes is proposing a reduction in its tax rate from \$2.82 per \$1,000 of assessed value to \$2.74 - a 3 percent reduction. During budget workshops in August, staff and council members grappled with the tax rate, most wanting at least 2 percent deducted from the current tax rate. "We've pretty much had consistent healthy growth in this area," explained Town Manager **Alex Rey**. "We're trying to eliminate the increases felt for the property owners."

The town council will meet 6 p.m. Wednesday at Miami Lakes Middle School to vote on the proposed \$17.3 million budget that will go into effect Oct. 1 and runs through Sept. 30, 2007. It will adopt the new rate at this meeting.

A reduction in the tax rate would mean that the owner of a \$207,197 home - the median value of a home in Miami Lakes - could expect to pay \$499 in property taxes, subtracting the \$25,000 homestead exemption. Reducing the tax rate would shave off roughly \$16 from what the homeowner would pay if the tax rate remained the same as last year. "Because we've been able to grow so much as a town over the past six years we can afford this," said Councilman Mike Pizzi who urged the council to reduce the rate. "We have all the funding we need for the youth center, for the fire station, for the enhancement of the community."

Among the changes to the previously proposed budget is a \$20,000 reduction in the salary offered for an administrative assistant to the mayor. The position will pay \$45,000 rather than the initial \$65,000 advertised. "Some of the council members expressed that figure should come down," **Rey** said.

While the bulk of the money, roughly \$6.1 million, will go toward paying the county for police services, other proposed plans include investing \$99,000 for 300 trees as part of the town's tree replacement program; \$7,500 for a portable skate park for area teens; and \$100,000 for improvements to Miami Lakes Park.

This second and final budget hearing - initially scheduled for Sept. 18 - was postponed because the 10-day minimum notice of the meeting in the local media had not been met, as required by state law. **Rey** said the setback will cause no major issues in getting the budget approved in time. "We planned things within [enough] time to get everything done," **Rey** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
February 2, 2006

REDRAWN BOUNDARY LINE LEAVES NOBODY HAPPY IN FARM DISPUTE

Author/Byline: Rebecca Dellagloria

On one side of the fence are the Lowell Dunn family and their cows, trailers and other assorted farm equipment. On the other side are their neighbors - two Miami Lakes doctors who don't like the stench, noise and inconvenience of a farm operation behind their homes. And somewhere in the middle is the Miami Lakes Town Council. For months, the council has done little but listen as Drs. Pedro Carballo and David Bennett vented their frustration at meetings and direct staff to take whatever action they could.

Tuesday, the council finalized a rewrite of its agricultural land development code. While the code rewrite was already in the works long before the Dunn saga began, the change will have implications for the Dunn property, one of only a handful of remaining agricultural properties left in town. The new code changes the required distance between buildings used to store farming materials and the rear property line from 15 to 50 feet. And neither side is happy.

The Dunns' attorneys have accused the town of passing "private legislation" aimed at their clients. Carballo and Bennett say a 50-foot setback isn't far enough. "I'm no longer sure if I'm for or against it," Bennett told the council. "I don't know why this has turned into something personal; it never was. We are under a lot of emotional strain at this time."

The council stands by its new zoning code. Modeled after a similar code in Southwest Ranches in Broward County, the section dealing with setbacks on farmland includes a provision that would allow land owners like the Dunns to request a hearing before the town if they find the new requirements hamper their farm operation. That, said Town Manager **Alex Rey**, gives the land owners an out. It also reduces the town's liability, if it was to get sued.

Councilman Michael Pizzi said he didn't care if the Dunns filed a lawsuit against the town or him. A slander suit was filed by the Dunns against Councilwoman Nancy Simon last year. "I don't want to give the public perception that there's any act of cowardice going on," said Pizzi, who in December prevailed upon the Dunns to move the trailers back to 25 feet from the wall, which they did. "When residents come to us with a problem, we have a duty to act. . . Legislation is one way to provide relief."

Dunns' attorney sees it differently. "It's clear the intention of this ordinance is to burn the Dunn property," Attorney David P. Reiner told the council during its zoning meeting Tuesday. "It doesn't appear anyone on the council has heeded the warnings for potential litigation."

Lowell Dunn II said Thursday that his family has no intention of moving the trailers or other farming equipment back to comply with the new law.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
January 8, 2006

TOWN WILL UNVEIL NEW CONTRACT

Author/Byline: Rebecca Dellagloria

Soon, when residents call the station, they will hear ``Town of Miami Lakes Police," rather than ``Miami-Dade Police Department, Northwest District" now that the town has renegotiated its police contract with the county. After more than a year of back-and-forth, Miami Lakes Town Manager **Alex Rey** is sending a draft of the contract to the Town Council to review.

It will hold a public workshop at 7 p.m. Monday in the conference room on Main Street, where the council will review the document and make any necessary revisions before it goes to a vote on Jan. 24. The renewed contract is valued at \$5 million. Likewise, the contract will go to various county boards for approval, a process that could take several months, said **Rey**. First, though, the town must give its approval.

Among the major points of contention that delayed the negotiation process were provisions regarding the town's ability to purchase its own police vehicles and to select its own towing contractors. Both issues concerned the county, **Rey** said.

Calls to Pedro Velar of the County's Office of Strategic Business Management were not returned at press time. Ultimately, both sides agreed that Miami Lakes has the option of purchasing its own vehicles and then donating them to the county. In return, the town is spared the county's vehicle acquisition cost, saving it \$600 per month.

``Some people felt that we could do better in terms of negotiating a price for the vehicles and controlling the age of the fleet," **Rey** said. If it turns out that the town would end up paying more on its own, he said they could simply opt to continue using the county's police cruisers.

The county also agreed to let Miami Lakes choose a towing company, once the county's towing contracts expire in about a year.

Under the new contract, police also will begin responding to all nonemergency calls, with the town footing the cost. The town also will have more control over the rotation of officers assigned to the Miami Lakes district in order to retain the best people, **Rey** said.

Once the contract, which covers the three-year period between November 2004 and November 2007, expires, the town has the option of not-renewing it and could opt to create its own department.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
December 18, 2005

EX-TOWN PLANNER VENTS IN E-MAIL

Author/Byline: Rebecca Dellagloria

After completing his final day of work as town planner of Miami Lakes, Armando Valdes sent out an explosive e-mail to the members of the Town Council alleging mismanagement on the part of the town manager, low morale among employees and potential impropriety on the part of one council member. Town Manager **Alex Rey** said he was surprised by the angry tone of the memo, and he dismissed it as nothing more than gripes from a disgruntled ex-employee.

Valdes submitted his letter of resignation Oct. 31, after two years on the job and completed his final day of work Dec. 2. Monday, he sent out a no-holds-barred account of matters he said he needed to "get off his chest." The allegations contained in the e-mail, which was sent to the Mayor Wayne Slaton and council members include contentions of favoritism by **Rey** toward certain employees, low morale among staff and disorganization that Valdes said led him to resign. Valdes said in the e-mail he did not want to quit, only that he wanted the manager to hire additional employees to help with the work load of planning and zoning issues. But, he said, he was rebuffed. "For a town that has more rules and restrictions than any other city in the county, having only one person to handle planning and zoning issues is absurd," Valdes wrote in the e-mail.

Rey said he told Valdes he could bring on another part-time employee to aid the recently hired part-time plan reviewer so there would be, in effect, two people working on planning and zoning issues at all times. He said Valdes did not find that to be sufficient. "We had conversations about the fact that he had a lot of work piling up," said **Rey**, who said he urged Valdes to reconsider his decision to quit at the time he submitted his resignation. "I said, 'It might look like you have a lot of work right now. But I don't see it as permanent.'"

Another allegation in the e-mail is that Councilman Roberto Alonso put pressure on **Rey** to move along an application for a zoning variance by the owners of a business to whom Alonso had leased the retail space. The applicant, Havana Group Cigar Club, which opened this month in Royal Oaks Plaza, have three zoning variance requests pending with the city. The variances include requests to sell wine and beer within 100 feet of a school, which is not permitted under the town code; to permit a roof sign in place of a wall sign; and to reduce the required number of parking spaces by three. The application package was filed in July and has taken months to complete. Valdes claims **Rey** was "getting pressure" from Alonso to move the application along, even though there were problems with some of the documents and others were missing. Both **Rey** and Alonso vehemently deny that charge. "It is a very serious allegation indeed, and it's not true in my mind in any way, shape or form," **Rey** said.

What happened, both **Rey** and Alonso said, was that Valdes mishandled the application, not providing the owners with correct information or timetables for submitting documents. **Rey** did

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

say Alonso spoke to him once, several months ago, about making sure the store owner knew how to navigate the process, saying she was not being helped by Valdes. ``He told me to make sure to talk to the people because they were frustrated by the fact that they weren't receiving all the information," **Rey** said.

Alonso agreed. ``The thing was completely disorganized," Alonso said. ``What I discussed with my manager was to get the thing over with, to get them the right information so they can proceed. I would do that for anyone, not just for people who I give a lease."

Yadina Vargas, the owner of the store, said she was a first-time business owner and didn't know anything about variances. She said Valdes was not helpful in explaining the process and at times seemed uninterested in her case. She also denied trying to get ``special favors" through her connection to Alonso. ``If that was the case, things should have been done a long time ago," Vargas said.

Alonso said he told **Rey** from the beginning that he handled the store lease and that he would recuse himself from voting on the issue when it comes before the council in January. ``To me, honestly, when I read his letter, I saw it as an angry person who left his job," said Alonso, who denied he did anything improper. ``It doesn't bother me. It's not true."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Alexandro Rey** is listed below.]

Miami Herald, The (FL)
November 13, 2005

COUNCIL DEFENDS DEBRIS CLEARING POLICY

Author/Byline: Rebecca Dellagloria

Also up for consideration during the meeting was the renewal of Town Manager **Alex Rey's** annual contract. Councilwoman Nancy Simon pulled the contract off of the consent agenda - where routine items are passed all at once - for discussion. Simon, who has publicly criticized the manager in the past, said the move was not personal, only that she disagreed with the process by which the council considered the contract. Simon pointed to the original language of the contract, which called for evaluations of the manager by the council 160 days after renewal - something Simon said was not being followed. "This is not a personal thing at all," said Simon, "but when we created this contract, we had certain things that we wanted to do."

Councilman Roberto Alonso agreed with Simon that if the manager was to be given a salary and benefits package worth \$220,000 annually, he too wanted the opportunity to evaluate the manager more fully. Alonso moved to defer the contract renewal until a public workshop could be held. "I am very happy with you, but there are some things I'd like to see accomplished," Alonso said to **Rey**. "And if I'm going to give you a raise, I want to see those things done."

Pizzi and Collins disagreed with Simon and Alonso, saying the council had ample time in which to evaluate his performance. "I evaluate the manager every single day - in every phone call, in every discussion," Pizzi said. "If I don't think the manager is doing a good job, I wouldn't wait until his anniversary, I would put it on the agenda immediately and maybe call an emergency meeting."

A majority of the council agreed with Pizzi and approved **Rey's** contract 4-3.

Rey, who has worked in city government for more than 15 years, said he didn't take the council members' comments and concerns personally. "I take that at face value," said **Rey**. "I enjoy what I do and I enjoy doing it here. I was happy that I'll be here for a little while longer."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 29, 2005

TAXES TO STAY ABOUT SAME IN LAKES

Author/Byline: Rebecca Dellagloria

To keep taxes low for homeowners in Miami Lakes, the Town Council at its final budget hearing Sept. 22 made a last-minute reduction of its property tax rate for the upcoming year, in order to keep pace with rising property values. While homeowners who take the standard homestead exemption won't pay any less in taxes than they did last year, the council assured they wouldn't pay anymore, either. In a unanimous vote, the council cut the tax rate by 3 percent - matching the maximum a property's taxable value can increase under state law - to keep pace with the market. The lower tax rate will apply only to homesteaded properties; any apartment landlord, business owner or person who lives in a home without a homestead exemption will likely see a hike in their property taxes.

Instead of last year's \$2.91 per \$1,000 of appraised value - or even \$2.87 per \$1,000 of appraised value as the Town Manager **Alex Rey** proposed - the new property tax rate for fiscal year 2005-06 will be \$2.82. So, the owner of a home valued last year at \$195,000, after taking the \$25,000 exemption and assuming a three percent increase in assessed value, will pay about \$495 - the same as for last year. The council stopped short of adopting the county's suggested tax rate, which would have given homeowners increased tax relief. "To rollback a little bit every year is the proper way to go," said Councilwoman Mary Collins. Councilman Michael Pizzi, who proposed the tax rate reduction, echoed that sentiment. "I like the trend of reducing the millage a little every year," he said, referring to the property tax rate.

In order to fund the lower tax rate, about \$217,000 will be taken from reserve funds - \$100,000 more than **Rey** initially allotted toward tax relief. **Rey** said as the year progresses he would look for other places to trim in the budget to replenish the reserves. "We need to balance the budget," **Rey** said. "We can take the money for now from the reserve and come back later and do specific program changes." But, town officials assured, services will not be affected.

The council also finalized its \$26.4 million budget, with additional funding for a new park, a code enforcement officer for commercial areas, lights for the tot-lots, tree trimming and planting and curbing around cul-de-sacs.

In response to a recent town survey of residents that suggested the town's staff and police department did not communicate enough with them, the council approved increased funding on a variety of initiatives. They include printing fliers and increasing advertising in the community newspaper, enhancing the town's website and having staff available on weekends.

Mayor Wayne Slaton commended the council on the budget - and for not having to cut any jobs or services while reducing the tax rate. "I want to congratulate our council and our staff for achieving this for the town of Miami Lakes," Slaton said at the meeting.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 24, 2005

VOTE OUTCOME CLOUDED BY CONFUSION

Author/Byline: Rebecca Dellagloria

Following months of speculation and debate, the Miami Lakes Town Council on Tuesday shot down a proposed development agreement with Lowell Dunn that would have expedited the construction of Northwest 87th Avenue in the western section of town. Only, it did so narrowly, amid much confusion. In consecutive votes, the council voted against denying the agreement, then against its approval - one council member voting against her own motion, another reversing himself on the second vote.

Even the council was befuddled; for a solid minute or two, it was unclear what had been decided. "When the clerk has to spend five minutes trying to figure out how we voted and even the chair was confused about what we had to do, I don't think that's the way to make a decision about something that important," said Councilman Michael Pizzi, who supported the measure.

The conflicted nature of the voting only hints at the complexity of the issue that was before the council. On the one hand, the town would have facilitated the expansion of Northwest 87th Avenue, between Northwest 154th and 162nd streets, opening up a severely congested traffic artery while providing a connection to the town's northwest quadrant. Other benefits would have been a youth center, free of cost, within the next few years, and land for the county to construct a fire station in the northwest section.

On the other hand, the deal would have preserved the development rights of the Dunn family to build on the Dunnwoody Lake and Dunnwoody Forest properties for 10 years at the current level of traffic capacity. Now, the roadway likely won't be expanded until construction begins on Dunnwoody Lake - which the Dunns agreed to under conditions set when the council approved the property's rezoning in 2002.

Much of the dissent centered on the fate of Madden's Hammock - a sacred Tequesta Indian ground on the Dunnwoody Forest site. The Dunns had agreed to give the town the right of first refusal to purchase the Hammock, when they decided to sell. But, Councilman Robert Meador pointed out, that concession did not guarantee the town would be able to afford the land - estimated to be in the \$20 million range. He voted against the deal.

Councilwoman Nancy Simon agreed. "I don't see what the benefit would be for the town," said Simon, who voted against the agreement. "By virtue of the fact we're giving them 10 years concurrency, we're upping the value of the land - thereby cutting our own wrists, because we're never going to be able to buy that land."

Lowell Dunn II, who handled negotiations on behalf of his family, told the council rejection of the agreement would not guarantee the Dunns would begin negotiations on the Hammock. The

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Dunns added several provisions to the deal - including the youth center, the fire station land and the right of first refusal on the Hammock - at the council's behest after the last meeting. "You have the developer at a place where I never thought we would be," Dunn II told the council. "Tonight you have the opportunity to change the lives of everyone on the west side of Miami Lakes. And, whatever you choose, either way, will have a long-term impact."

Councilwoman Mary Collins, who initially made a motion to deny the agreement because the sale of the Hammock was not part of the deal, later voted in its favor. Collins said her change of mind did not mean she had a change of heart. "I really wanted to leave the door open to renegotiate the contract," Collins said Wednesday. "If it was a 4-3 vote, it was still negotiable." Pizzi and Councilman Peter Thomson also voted both times in favor of the deal.

Collins, who passed on voting until everyone else had done so, said she "counted votes" to see which way it would go. Once she realized the motion to approve the agreement was going to fail, she voted for it. "I felt like I didn't want to slam doors," Collins said. "But if it had gone the other way I would have voted the other way."

Vice Mayor Roberto Alonso, conversely, voted first against denying the deal, then against its approval. His sudden switch was surprising, given that he appeared to be leaning in favor of it during the meeting. "We have to think about the west side," Alonso told his fellow council members. "If you vote no, you're depriving the people of a fire station."

Alonso said Thursday that he "had his reasons" for voting the way he did. "I wanted to go through the regular motion, not the denial motion," he said, explaining his two votes. "I hope they can bring it back with a more workable deal from both sides. The door is open."

Pizzi suggested the agreement was doomed once Miami Lakes City Manager **Alex Rey** recommended against its approval, prior to the meeting. **Rey** rescinded his negative recommendation during the meeting, instead lending his support. His main concerns included funding of the roadway expansion and a \$3 million contribution the Dunns would make for its construction. But the day before the meeting, **Rey** received assurances from Miami-Dade County Manager George Burgess that the county would construct the roadways with the \$3 million, thereby assuaging his concerns.

After the final vote, Mayor Wayne Slaton asked town staff if the council's rejection of the agreement prevented the Dunns from bringing back another proposal - presumably one that would be more amenable to members. Staff said it would not.

Pizzi felt the council wasted an opportunity. "We were able to squeeze more out of the Dunn family than I thought we ever would have. And then after squeezing them for five months, we got everything we asked for and then voted no," Pizzi said. "We screwed the town permanently."

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
December 19, 2004

ELECTION LAWSUIT DROPPED

Author/Byline: Monica Hatcher

Defeated Miami Lakes Town Council candidate Diane Dominguez has dropped her lawsuit against the town challenging the results of the Oct. 5 election. Dominguez, 31, a law student and newcomer to politics, could not be reached for comment Friday.

She claimed that possible voting glitches on election day, including a power outage at one precinct and mishandling of the mailing and processing of absentee ballots, may have marred the outcome of her race against incumbent Vice-Mayor Roberto Alonso. Alonso defeated Dominguez by 58 votes.

Town Attorney Nina Boniske said Dominguez had not served the town or any of the defendants with the suit, so the town had not taken any legal action to defend itself.

Alleging voting problems much like those that sparked the Florida recount of 2000, Dominguez filed a lawsuit claiming that mishandled absentee ballots, malfunctioning voting machines and outright fraud might have led to her loss to Alonso.

The suit named as defendants Alonso, the town's canvassing board, Interim Town Clerk Meighan Pier, the entire Town Council, Town Manager **Alex Rey**, Miami-Dade Elections Supervisor Constance Kaplan and the county elections department.

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
November 25, 2004

TOWN PAYS DISPUTED MITIGATION FEE

Author/Byline: Monica Hatcher

The Miami Lakes Town Council voted at a special meeting on Monday to make its \$1.5 million mitigation payment to the county - nearly two months after the fee was due - with hopes the county would look favorably on renegotiating the fee. But if County Commissioner Natacha Seijas, who represents the area, has her way, there will be no adjustment of the bitterly disputed fee the town agreed to pay annually as a condition for its incorporation. "We have no interest in renegotiating the fee," Seijas said in a phone interview Tuesday. "They have not proved their case. What they have done is try to bamboozle us and put us in a position of distrust."

By a 6-1 vote, the council decided to end the standoff with the county over the fee, heading off an almost certain county lawsuit supported by Seijas to get the money. Town Manager **Alex Rey** said he handed the check to County Manager George Burgess in a private meeting Tuesday morning. A public meeting had been scheduled Tuesday under the county-initiated conflict resolution procedures - state required meetings that must take place before one government can sue another. But the meeting was canceled after the council decided to pay.

Councilman Michael Pizzi, who introduced the motion to withhold the payment in September, cast the dissenting vote Monday. He was outraged over the council's decision. "We just gave away another \$1.5 million of our taxpayers' money and have absolutely nothing to show for it," Pizzi said in a phone interview Tuesday. "We capitulated to all of the county's threats without receiving a single guarantee that we're going to get anything out of it."

Other council members disagreed, saying the intended effect of withholding the fee had been accomplished. "We achieved our goal of raising awareness in the county of the importance of the issue to our residents," Mayor Wayne Slaton said at the meeting Monday. "Prior to this we weren't at the table with them."

Seijas said she disagreed with the Slaton's assessment of the town's position and she fired a warning shot at other cities that may be considering taking similar action. "We're not at any table and the only awareness they have raised of the County Commission is how irresponsible some of the new municipalities could become if they are not respectful of their charter," Seijas said.

Rey's take on his meeting with Burgess Tuesday was it had been a "step in the right direction." "We met for an hour in which we discussed all the issues the county had taken in reaction to us withholding the payment," **Rey** said in a phone interview.

Miami Lakes sparked a confrontation with the county when the Town Council decided to withhold payment of the fee at its Sept. 30 due date, saying the incorporation of Miami Gardens

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

and Hialeah's annexation of land to the town's west were cause for an analysis of the amount. But Seijas said the town's argument was flawed because Miami Lakes failed to consider the other unincorporated communities such as Palm Springs North, The Moors and the Country Club area, which, she said, also rely on the town's mitigation dollars. "I do not understand why Miami Lakes thinks it's an island," Seijas said.

In retaliation for the town's refusal to pay the fee, the County Commission voted to withhold \$1.1 million in utility franchise fees and a \$250,000 grant for the development of Royal Oaks Park, as well as initiate the conflict resolution procedures.

With the payment issue behind them, **Rey** said Burgess would begin working on getting those funds released to the town. Burgess said by paying the money the town had done the right thing but having negotiations as a condition for the payment was not part of the deal. He did not, however, rule out meeting with town officials. "I've always said I'm not opposed to sitting in the future to talk to anyone about anyone about anything," Burgess said.

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 23, 2004

MIAMI LAKES MAY BE SUED OVER FEE

Author/Byline: Monica Hatcher, Jennifer Mooney Piedra and Yudy Pineiro

A decision by the Miami Lakes Town Council to put its annual \$1.5 million mitigation payment into an escrow account, rather than handing it over to the county, is raising the hackles of Miami-Dade County commissioners. At their regular meeting Tuesday, irked commissioners discussed the possibility of suing the town if the money is not paid by the Sept. 30 deadline. But they took no action. County Manager George Burgess said in a memo to the commission after the meeting that he would review the county's options and recommend legal action, should the town refuse to pay the fee on time.

The Miami Lakes Town Council approved a motion last week to put the money in an escrow account pending negotiations with the county to have the fee reduced or spent on town parks. "I believe it is an expressed violation of the town's charter, as well as the spirit and intent of our discussion with the Miami Lakes Municipal Advisory Committee, which was chaired by the town's current mayor," Burgess wrote.

Led by Commissioner Natacha Seijas, who represents Miami Lakes in District 13, commissioners agreed to "go after our money by any means necessary." Some commissioners were alarmed that Miami Lakes would be setting a precedent that would be bad for the county. "I think it's time to face that problem because today it is Miami Lakes and tomorrow it is another place," said Commissioner Rebeca Sosa.

But the feared domino effect may already have started. Palmetto Bay, which pays about 40 percent of its property taxes - or \$1.5 million - in mitigation fee decided Monday to follow Miami Lakes' lead. The Village Council, in approving its new budget, voted to put aside \$100,000 in an escrow account. The village argues that based on its agreement it doesn't owe the county that amount. "I'm in full support of what Miami Lakes has done," Mayor Eugene Flinn said. "I think we're all making a good faith offer."

Leaders in Palmetto Bay and Doral had already said they supported Miami Lakes' move to withhold payment. Both Flinn and Doral Mayor Juan Carlos Bermudez said they would be discussing a course of action with the county about their mitigation agreements in coming months. Doral will pay \$7.3 million this year.

The mitigation fee, equal to \$1 per \$1,000 of all property taxes levied by a municipality, is pegged to the consumer price index, which increases each year. The mitigation policy was formulated in 2000 after the county grew concerned that incorporation of more wealthy communities would adversely affect Miami-Dade's ability to provide services to tax-poor areas. "[The mitigation fee] is a way for us to make incorporation possible without negatively affecting the poor areas of the county," Commissioner Katy Sorenson said. Miami Lakes' action, she said,

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

“completely flies in the face of what we are trying to accomplish.” The money is designated for a Municipal Service Trust Fund to pay for police services in neighboring unincorporated communities, as well as to serve as a retainer fee for technical assistance from the county.

Miami Lakes became the first municipality required to pay the fee; communities that incorporated earlier do not have to pay it. If the town is successful in renegotiating the fee, Sorenson suggested, the county's incorporation program could unravel.

Miami Lakes Town Manager **Alex Rey**, who was a chief architect of the mitigation policy while he was assistant director of the Miami-Dade Office of Management and Budget, said getting the county's attention was precisely what withholding the payment was intended to do. “We've been trying to negotiate, but it's just not moving fast enough,” **Rey** said in a phone interview Tuesday.

The Town Council first proposed putting the money in escrow in June, but **Rey** asked for a delay until September, when the payment would become due, to allow time for negotiations. Assistant County Manager Alex Muñoz said in a letter to **Rey** on Sept. 14 that the county would be unable to address any adjustment to the fee until a week before the payment becomes due.

Rey argues the recent incorporation of Miami Gardens - a beneficiary of the Miami Lakes mitigation fee - should trigger an adjustment according to the agreement approved by both the town and the county. The agreement states the mitigation fee would be reassessed when the population of unincorporated areas that receive services falls below 500,000; or when the per capita tax rate of unincorporated areas exceeds the rate county-wide; or when the incorporation of “low-tax base areas decreases the need to continue payment at that amount.”

Miami Lakes Councilman Michael Pizzi, who has led the town's efforts to seek an adjustment of the payment, said changing circumstances brought to light the inequities of the fee. “The goal here is not to start a war with the county but merely to get the county to see that it's not fair for Miami Lakes residents to pay millions of dollars and get nothing in return when other cities are not paying anything,” Pizzi said in a phone interview Tuesday.

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
June 17, 2004

RESIDENTS SATISFIED, POLL SHOWS

Author/Byline: Monica Hatcher

Miami Lakes received high marks in a recent survey of residents, with an overwhelming majority saying they would recommend the town to friends, family and co-workers for its well-maintained streets, friendly and effective police, attractive parks and responsive government. Among the 400 homeowners and renters surveyed in the poll commissioned by town officials, 91 percent gave a 3 or 4 rating on a 4-point scale about how likely they were to recommend the town.

The survey, conducted March 22 through April 14, also concluded that 83 percent of residents' expectations of overall service at Town Hall had been met or surpassed. "The results came out good," Vice Mayor Roberto Alonso said, "but there is always room for improvement."

The glowing report came just months before town elections in which Mayor Wayne Slaton, Alonso and Council members Peter Thomson and Mary Collins are up for reelection. Pedro Carballo, a 12-year resident and critic of Miami Lakes government, said he would expect the results to be skewed in favor of the current administration. "I think it was a political ploy by council members to get nice things said about the town before the election," Carballo said in a phone interview Tuesday.

Alonso denied there was any political motivation. He said the results reflected more about the town's overall administration than members of the council. "It has nothing to do with me being reelected," he said.

The poll found home owners and long-time residents were less effusive in their praise than renters; 79 percent of home owners said their expectations had been met, compared to 92 percent of renters. Long-time residents and home owners were also more likely to say the town had become a worse place to live and were generally tougher in their evaluation of how tax dollars were being spent, how effectively the town communicated with residents, the effectiveness of storm water drainage and the level of code enforcement.

"A person who has been in a community for a very long time will always perceive the way the community was 20 years ago as better than it is today," Town Manager **Alex Rey** said Tuesday. "If you roll back the clock 20 years, there wasn't the traffic or the crime there is today," **Rey** said. Those who lived longer than 11 years in the town generally responded that they were satisfied with the amount of attention being paid by the town to newer neighborhoods. They were also more likely to say they were pleased with the friendliness and approachability of the police.

The survey, which cost \$27,000, was conducted by Lake Worth-based Profile Marketing Research. It looked at residents' views of the town in categories that included overall satisfaction,

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taxes, communication, parks and recreation, code enforcement, police and safety. In all categories, more than 50 percent gave the town high ratings, including 32 percent who said they paid just the right amount of taxes and 25 percent who believed taxes were high but they were getting higher quality services than expected. Fifty-seven percent said they were satisfied with the way the money was being spent by town officials.

However, the survey indicated that most residents had the perception that they were paying a higher percentage of their tax bill to the town than they actually did. **Rey** said residents surveyed thought 75 to 80 percent of their tax dollars goes to the town; in fact, he said, only 13 percent of the tax bill does. ``We feel that once we communicate to residents how little of their tax bill we're getting, that number is going to be even higher," **Rey** said.

Like Alonso, **Rey** and some residents saw room for improvement. In an open-ended question asking respondents where they saw need for attention, most responded that the town should address traffic-related issues by building roads, improving traffic flow and providing better drainage. Some residents recommended the town improve public relations and the quality of education.

Copies of the survey findings are available by calling Town Hall at 305-364-6100.

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 22, 2004

PROPOSED BAN IGNITES PROCEDURAL DISPUTE

Author/Byline: Monica Hatcher

A controversial proposal to impose sweeping rules against peddlers, street vendors and panhandlers in Miami Lakes was pulled before it reached the Town Council for a first reading. The reason: Two council members complained about the procedure by which the draft ordinance made it on the agenda. Council members Michael Pizzi and Nancy Simon said when they received their package for the April 13 meeting, the agenda included an ordinance dealing with vendors, solicitors and peddlers. The item had not been previously discussed, as is customary. The item triggered calls by Pizzi and Simon to Town Manager **Alex Rey** expressing concern as to why they were only now being made aware of the measure. The ordinance named **Rey** and Vice Mayor Roberto Alonso as sponsors. When the meeting convened, the item was pulled from the agenda without comment.

But the issue could be far from over. Town rules allow the manager to direct the town attorney to prepare policy legislation, but council members wishing to do so must first put the issue before the council for consideration as new business. Assistant Manager Ralph Casals initiated the measure because of complaints from residents about peddlers. Alonso asked that his name be placed on the item as a co-sponsor when he happened to be in the office of Town Clerk Betty Arguelles and he overheard Arguelles discussing the item with Casals. "The vice mayor happened to be in my office when I was printing a draft of the agenda," Arguelles said in an e-mail to the town manager that was made available to The Herald. "I was reviewing the vendors item with Ralph getting all the backup and memos. Mr. Alonso stated that he was happy something was being done about regulating the vendors and requested to be a sponsor. His name was added in the final draft as a sponsor at his request."

Rey confirmed that Casals had been working on the issue on his own, and he took responsibility for its appearance on the agenda. "Sometimes so many plates are spinning and we've been dealing with so many other things, I just didn't give it the proper attention and time. That's where the breakdown in communication occurred. The criticism falls on my shoulders," **Rey** said in a phone interview Tuesday.

In separate interviews Friday, Pizzi and Simon expressed concern that procedural rules may have been violated. Simon said she was concerned that if **Rey** hadn't directed his staff to put the ordinance on the agenda, then the staff must have acted without his knowledge or consent. Pizzi found the oversight disturbing for other reasons. "Under our charter, the manager runs our town," Pizzi said. "Under our charter, it is illegal for individual council members to give any direction to the staff and it is equally inappropriate for the staff to take directions from individual council members. That's the manager's job."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Alex Rey***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

In a phone interview two days after the April 13 meeting, Alonso confirmed that he had seen a draft and wanted his name added as a co-sponsor because he supported the idea of curbing peddling and vending in the town. But he denied that he had directed any staff member to initiate the ordinance. "Who am I to tell the staff to do anything?" he asked. Alonso said concern about panhandlers and vendors had been an issue for the council for a long time and had been discussed on several occasions. "If anybody says we haven't discussed this before, they must have been sleeping at the meetings," Alonso said.

Mayor Wayne Slaton agreed with Alonso that the issue had been discussed in the past. "I have discussed my concerns on the issue of street vendors, solicitors and the negative effect of, and the consequences they have on the community, in previous council meetings," Slaton said in an e-mail to The Herald. He appeared surprised to hear that anyone had taken issue with the agenda item. "Concern? There was no mention of concern at the council meeting about this item by anyone on the council. Who has a concern and didn't raise it at the meeting?" Slaton asked.

But some other council members denied the issue had surfaced in the past. Council members Mary Collins and Peter Thomson said in separate phone interviews that they could not recall having discussed the issue in previous council meetings or workshops. But, unlike Pizzi and Simon, they said they were not concerned about any bending of rules. Collins said she assumed that if the ordinance was on the agenda without having been discussed, it was because of an emergency, such as a death at an intersection that had prompted a proposed ban on street vendors. Thomson said ordinances are routinely put on the agenda without discussion when sponsored by staff.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Alex Rey***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Miami Herald, The (FL)
September 28, 2003

TOWN GIVES GOOD NEWS: LOWER TAXES

Author/Byline: Elizabeth Baier

Felipe Vidal was one of only three Miami Lakes residents who voiced disapproval of the final Miami Lakes budget at a public hearing Tuesday night. The 34-year-old father of two, who lives with his parents and has been unemployed since June, disagreed with the council's priorities. "I have to wonder why we're spending money on certain things and not others," said Vidal in a phone interview Friday. "The core problem before was that there wasn't enough money to do everything [the town] wanted, but now that there are funds, they are trying to get too much done in a short amount of time at the expense of people that are struggling through a rough economy." The council voted 5-2 to approve the budget, lowering the property tax rate from this year's \$3.057 for every \$1,000 of taxable property value to \$2.968 per \$1,000. The rollback represents about \$11.12 in savings, setting the tax at \$371 on an average home, instead of \$382.12. Mayor Wayne Slaton, who proposed a reduction in the property tax rate at the first budget hearing earlier this month, gained support from Vice Mayor Roberto Alonso and council members Mary Collins, Robert Meador, and Peter Thomson. Council members Michael Pizzi and Nancy Simon opposed the tax rate and the overall budget. Pizzi and Simon wanted a deeper cut in the tax rate to \$2.785 for every \$1,000 of assessed property value. "For three years the mayor and other council members have scoffed at the notion [of lowering the tax rate] but now they embraced this concept," Pizzi said by phone Thursday. "It's galling to see [the mayor] advocate it as his own idea when he [and others] opposed it for so long." But Slaton was optimistic that, with town enjoying a surplus, the \$2.968 tax rate will be enough to give residents some tax relief while still funding needed improvements. "We inherited an aged infrastructure of parks, drainage, roadways, street lights and code violations that need a tremendous amount of work to bring them up to the standards that our residents expect and deserve," Slaton said in an e-mail Thursday to The Herald. "We incorporated to provide services."

The \$18.8 million budget, which represents a 28 percent increase over last year's \$14.6 million, projects a \$3.5 million surplus - up from \$414,773 initially estimated. Of that amount, \$1.9 million will be a refund from the county for overcharges for police services from Dec. 5, 2000, the date of incorporation, to Sept. 30, 2001, according to Town Manager **Alex Rey**. The budget includes \$50,000 for beautification, \$170,000 for Miami Lakes Park parking facilities, \$50,000 for the Bob Graham Education Center facilities, \$50,000 for tot-lot equipment, \$130,000 for improvements along Northwest 87th Avenue north of 163rd Street and \$40,000 for enhancements on Miami Lakeway North. Simon, who led the fight for the police refund, said the council could have given some of the money back to residents. **Rey**, who recommended the \$2.968 tax rate, defended his proposal. "The improvements are there and the residents are starting to notice them," he said at the meeting. "People are not complaining as much about how long some of the services take. [The council] has given us a big challenge and it's up to us to manage it all now."

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
April 20, 2003

TOWN MANAGER REY TO RECEIVE 5 PERCENT RAISE

Author/Byline: Aimee Juarez

The Miami Lakes Town Council unanimously agreed that Town Manager **Alex Rey** has fulfilled his duties over the past six months and he is being rewarded. **Rey**, who was hired in October, will receive a 5 percent increase in his salary, currently \$120,000 a year. At a special council meeting

April 10 at Miami Lakes Middle School, **Rey** presented a summary report of his performance, and his seven bosses decided he had earned the \$6,000 raise. "The manager's done very well over the last six months," Mayor Wayne Slaton said. "To say that he got a positive evaluation from the entire council, I think, is an understatement. He's done a remarkable amount of tasks that we all had outlined and wanted to see done or achieved in his first six months."

During **Rey's** first 180 days in office, he instituted \$300,000 in cost reductions after engineering, policing, code enforcement, building and financial service contracts were reviewed and amended. The town has also seen additional revenues, such as \$200,000 generated in water utility taxes and \$215,000 in parks impact fees. **Rey**, who left his \$130,800 job as an assistant director in the county's Office of Management and Budget to become town manager last fall, has also helped Miami Lakes complete most of its remaining county transition issues, including zoning, public works and storm-water management. "Nobody deserves it more than he does. It's a pleasure to work with him," said Councilwoman Mary Collins, who had been a Miami-Dade County commissioner while **Rey** worked with the county transit agency between 1983 and 1997. "He never forgets anything, big or small."

In addition to organizing public workshops and reviewing contracts at Miami Lakes, **Rey** also works with council members on their specific goals. He worked with Councilwoman Nancy Simon in her effort to ensure the town receives credit for police calls during the town's first year, bringing in \$600,000 in savings. "At the beginning of his employment, the council established goals for him to complete in a six-month period so we would have a gauge with which to measure his performance and he's successfully completed most of the items on this list," she said.

For Councilman Robert Meador, **Rey's** big task is to help bring the seven council members together and the manager has done just that. "I really appreciate him following up on some unresolved issues. He's definitely brought up the speed really fast even with seven people vying for his attention," Meador said. "Not all journeys lead to the same destination, but in this case, he is keeping us on the same destination and keeping us all focused." **Rey** takes the accolades in stride. "I feel very good about the fact that it was a unanimous decision," he said. "I hope they continue to say nice things about me."

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
March 30, 2003

REMARK ABOUT RACE OF AREA STIRS FLAP

Author/Byline: Aimee Juarez

Pinecrest Mayor Evelyn Greer reacted angrily to a suggestion by a Miami Lakes official that her village would not annex neighboring communities because those communities have black residents. She was responding to a comment by Miami Lakes Town Manager **Alex Rey** during Tuesday night's Town Council meeting when the issue of annexing land to the west was being discussed. Miami Lakes Vice Mayor Roberto Alonso compared the possible future of the town if Hialeah annexed the land west of Interstate 75 to that of Pinecrest in South Miami. Alonso asked **Rey** if Pinecrest, which incorporated in 1996, needed to expand its borders by annexing a neighboring community. "That would be a black neighborhood," **Rey** responded, a reference to areas like Goulds and Perrine, both of which are just south of Pinecrest and have mostly black populations.

"I was stunned to learn that Town Manager **Alex Rey** advised the Town Council last night that the Village of Pinecrest had declined to annex an area because the area was 'black,'" Greer said Wednesday in an e-mail to **Rey** and Miami Lakes council members. "This statement is untrue and has no basis in reality. Pinecrest has never and would never decline to annex a 'black area.' The concept is abhorrent. In fact, Pinecrest has never considered an annexation, has never initiated an annexation effort and has consistently declined to expand its boundaries."

Rey, who dealt with incorporation and annexation issues in South Dade for three years while an assistant director in the county's Office of Management and Budget before becoming Miami Lakes town manager in October, said his comment was misunderstood. He apologized Wednesday afternoon. "I never intended to imply that Pinecrest was not annexing any of the surrounding communities because of their race," he said in a written statement to Greer and Miami Lakes council members. "My statement was derived from having met with representatives of those communities on several occasions and them having expressed to me that they want to retain their historical boundaries and not be absorbed by any other community. I meant no disrespect to the village of Pinecrest."

Rey expanded on that statement Friday, telling The Herald, "I think people immediately tend to think that when two communities are thinking of not annexing each other that the poor community will always be wishing to be annexed by the rich community, and I think that's what people thought I meant and that it was the reason Pinecrest wouldn't want to annex them. "But they don't really stop and think that money isn't everything that drives a community. Economically, it might be better but, in terms of defining a community culture and core perspective, it doesn't. And that's one of the motivators out there: identity."

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Rey's bosses on the Town Council agreed his comment was innocent. Mayor Wayne Slaton said he did not consider **Rey's** comment was meant to be offensive and that he was satisfied with the apology. He said he spoke to Greer, and they both regarded the incident as a misunderstanding.

Councilman Peter Thomson said the comment was misunderstood because it lacked further explanation. "I think he was probably trying to say something that didn't come across properly," Thomson said Thursday. "I don't think he meant it in a negative way. He just didn't explain that very clearly. He should have expounded on it and not just have left it as the one statement."

Councilman Michael Pizzi agreed. "I think it's always inappropriate to classify neighborhoods by race, ethnicity or religion, but I think **Rey's** comment was an innocent slip of the tongue," Pizzi said Friday. "I don't think he's racist or biased. I don't think he meant any harm. His apology is good enough for me, and I think we need to move on."

Friday, Greer said the matter had been resolved. She said **Rey's** response "explains the misunderstanding and resolves the situation." "I think that it is best to leave it at that; the incident is over," she said.

Rey accepted the blame. "I guess it was my fault that I never explained myself further," he said. "I just left it there. Hindsight is 20/20."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
January 23, 2003

NEW RULES GIVE TOWN `MORE BANG FOR BUCK'

Author/Byline: Aimee Juarez

The Miami Lakes Town Council has amended its rules to require council approval of large professional service contracts. At its meeting on Jan. 14, council members unanimously doubled Town Manager **Alex Rey's** discretionary spending to \$10,000 for the purchase of goods but he must choose the supplier from the top three price quotes.

Rey must now advertise open bids for professional service contracts, such as consulting, that cost more than \$10,000 and choose among the three top bidders. If the contract is worth more than \$25,000, he must submit the three top bidders to the council which will select the winning bid. ``This makes it easy to be responsive to the town," said **Rey**, adding that the revision gives the town ``more bang for its buck."

A loophole in the town's previous procurement ordinance only allowed the council to consider three bids from professional service contracts, such as consultants, in the \$1,001 to \$5,000 range. ``If you wanted to buy a hammer for \$2,000, you'd have to bid it out," said Council member Michael Pizzi, who first proposed amending the ordinance last March. ``If you wanted to hire a computer programmer for a million dollars, you could. It was reform that we needed badly."

Councilmember Nancy Simon said the amendment created fair opportunities and allowed flexibility for the council and the manager. ``He has enough flexibility to function and make sure that the town runs smoothly," she said. ``It is the job of the council to keep our eyes open at all times because we have to be fiscally responsible and be the watchdog for the citizens."

Mayor Wayne Slaton did not return a phone call and an e-mail Tuesday.

Pizzi said the council's decision was a reaction to bad publicity the previous ordinance created. ``All scandals can usually be traced to corruption in bidding and procurement," Pizzi said. ``Unfettered discretion in contracting leads to corruption and leads to taxpayer dollars being squandered. Reform makes sure that tax money is used wisely and that contractors selected give the best value and the most efficient service for taxpayer dollars."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
October 13, 2002

TOWN MANAGER GIVES THE JOB `120 PERCENT'

Author/Byline: Tiffani Knowles

When the town of Miami Lakes hired **Alex Rey Panama** as its new town manager, the community got a 20-year Miami-Dade County government employee who brings a wealth of knowledge about budgets, contract negotiations and annexation and a belief in a respectful working environment. He will need all his expertise and experience. **Rey**, 44, is the town's third manager since Miami Lakes incorporated in 2000. Merrett Stierheim, a former Miami-Dade county manager, served as interim manager and then quit to become Miami-Dade County Public Schools superintendent. Dennis White, who succeeded Stierheim after less than a year, was fired last month by a unanimous vote of Town Council members who disliked what they said was his hostile management style. **Rey** says he is the opposite of that characterization. "I have dealt with many contentious groups in the past," **Rey** said Wednesday. "I'm always going to be courteous and treat you with respect." Town Clerk Betty Argüelles is already impressed. "He's certainly gotten down to business very quickly," Argüelles said. "I have to say he's thrown himself into his work 120 percent."

Alex Rey Panama - as **Rey** was known when he came to the United States from his native El Salvador - left his \$130,800 job as assistant director of the county's Office of Management and Budget. He managed the county's \$4 billion operating and capital budget, as well as providing managerial support to the county manager's office. He started work at Town Hall on Oct. 1 at an annual base salary of \$120,000, along with \$60,000 in benefits and other compensation. "Both places are very dynamic and energized," he said, comparing the town's office to that of the county's. "But at this level it is much easier to get things done quickly. In the last bureaucracy it felt like driving an aircraft carrier."

With his first town council meeting on Wednesday behind him, **Rey** has already played an integral role in advising the Town Council on a zoning application for a 156-acre residential and commercial development. Mayor Wayne Slaton and Councilwoman Mary Collins formally welcomed him at the meeting. "We're so happy you're here," Collins said. "We appreciate all the hard work you're done so far." The Miami Beach resident said his aim is to make Miami Lakes "the place to live." "This means you're providing the right amenities, you've solved problems with transportation, roads, traffic and you have the right mix in your community," he said. While at Miami-Dade County, **Rey** worked with new municipalities for the transition of county services and developed policy for incorporation and annexation. He was among county officials who negotiated with Miami Lakes community leaders seeking to create a municipality. "This job is chief cook and bottle washer and I think I bring a lot experience in different areas to the position," **Rey** said. He has already begun setting up one-on-one appointments with council members and visiting businesses and residents. "It's important they match the name with the face," he said. "That's the beauty of municipal government."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 4, 2002

TOWN IN DISPUTE WITH COUNTY OVER WASTE FEE

Author/Byline: Tiffani Knowles

The Miami Lakes Town Council is hoping to break a nine-month impasse with Miami-Dade County over the collection of a fee paid by waste haulers. The county is continuing to collect 15 percent of a waste hauler's total gross receipts for monthly service to commercial and multifamily residential establishments, over protests from town officials.

Last September, on the recommendation of then-interim Town Manager Merrett Stierheim, the council voted unanimously to adopt an ordinance enacting its own municipal solid waste monthly franchise fee, also set at 15 percent. The town began talks with the county in October in hopes of persuading Miami-Dade officials to drop the fee. The issue remains unresolved. At stake is \$72,000 in projected income for the town.

Town officials sent out franchise applications to the 27 waste hauling companies that operate in Miami Lakes. Of those firms, 18 responded and included the application fee of \$1,000. If the county continues collecting its 15 percent fee, it would mean the waste haulers would become liable for two 15 percent charges. "The county has a gun to the heads of these waste haulers," Mayor Wayne Slaton said at a town workshop on June 25. "They say the county will revoke their licenses if they don't pay their fee."

Councilman Michael Pizzi, who sponsored the waste fee ordinance, fears that if the county refuses to drop its fee, waste haulers will pass the fee on to business owners and condominium residents. "This is what is known as a pass-along fee, meaning that it is passed on to the consumers," Pizzi said in a memo to the council dated June 24.

At the June 25 workshop, Pizzi recommended that the council postpone collection of the town's waste franchise fee until the dispute with the county is resolved. If the county refuses to cooperate, Pizzi believes the town should take legal action. "The county is stealing our 15 percent," Pizzi said Monday. "We have to clean up spills, we have to maintain the roads, we're the ones providing the service. But under no circumstances should our residents have to pay an extra fee."

Town Attorney Nina Boniske does not believe a lawsuit would be cost-efficient for Miami Lakes. "I don't think it's legal for the county to impose a fee for a service they don't provide," Boniske said at the workshop. "But I don't think this town wants to spend money on a lawsuit."

Alex Rey Panama, assistant director of the county's Solid Waste Management Department, said the county adopted an ordinance in 1996 that imposes a disposal facility fee on waste haulers that is different from a municipality's waste franchise fee. "The disposal fee is collected to insure concurrency," said Panama, referring to a stand-by capacity for trash required by the county's

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

charter. An addendum to the county's 1995 waste ordinance was passed in 1996 that said a private hauler may not collect, transport or deliver solid waste for disposal without payment of a disposal facility fee to the county ``in the unincorporated areas of Dade County, as geographically configured on the effective date of this ordinance."

The town of Miami Lakes incorporated in December 2000. Pizzi believes the town should not be treated differently from the other municipalities that incorporated prior to 1996. ``All we're asking is that we get the same treatment as Hialeah, Hialeah Gardens and city of Miami," Pizzi said.

Debbie Higer, chief of service development for the Solid Waste Management Department, said the municipalities were ``grandfathered out" of the new system, a direct result of a Supreme Court ruling in 1994 that said municipalities did not have to dispose of their trash in county facilities. ``Miami-Dade County was hit very hard during this time. We did a number of things to diversify our revenue, including this ordinance," Higer said Tuesday.

The county also created inter-local agreements to ensure that municipalities disposed of their waste in county facilities. Currently, the county imposes its 15 percent disposal fee on three municipalities: Miami Lakes, Sunny Isles Beach and Pinecrest. ``There was a compliance problem in Pinecrest," **Panama** said. ``They're supposed to pay the fee, but they haven't been paying it."

Miami Lakes patterned its ordinance after that of Pinecrest, which enacted its own waste franchise fee - of 10 percent - soon after its incorporation in 1996. Vice Mayor Roberto Alonso believes the town should fall in line with Pinecrest and not delay its collection of a municipal fee. ``As a town, we need to grow up," Alonso said. ``It's time that we stand on our two feet and tell the county that they're wrong. I think we should send letters to the residents telling them it's not us that's overcharging [them], it's the county."

Slaton suggested that Pizzi, the town attorneys and Town Manager Dennis White seek a clarification of the county ordinance and possible amendment of the law. But **Panama** said the county does not plan to change the disposal fee. But he agreed to meet with the town to discuss the matter. ``I always welcome municipalities to discuss any issues with me," he said.

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Alex Rey** is listed below.]

[CB&A Note: To view this Lawsuit in its entirety, please follow the link below.]

<https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp2/184/1273/2470563/>
December 18, 2001

Rogers-Libert v. Miami-Dade County, 184 F. Supp. 2d 1273 (S.D. Fla. 2001)

U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida - 184 F. Supp. 2d 1273 (S.D. Fla. 2001)
184 F. Supp. 2d 1273 (2001)

Patricia ROGERS-LIBERT, Plaintiff,
v.
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, Defendant.

No. 99-2886-CIV.
United States District Court, S.D. Florida, Miami Division.

*1274 *1275 Roberta Fulton Fox, Miami, FL, for plaintiff.
William X. Candela, Dade County Attorney's Office, Miami, FL, for defendant.

SUMMARY JUDGMENT ORDER
JORDAN, District Judge.

Patricia Rogers-Libert sues her former employer, Metropolitan Miami Dade County ("Miami-Dade"), for alleged gender and national origin discrimination (Counts I and II) in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e, et seq., and alleged age discrimination (Count III) under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act ("ADEA"), 29 U.S.C. § 621, et seq. Federal jurisdiction exists pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331.

Ms. Rogers-Libert, a white female over the age of 40, alleges that she was discriminated against in connection with her nonpromotion to the position of Manager of Management Services at the Miami-Dade Transit Agency. Ms. Rogers-Libert also *1276 alleges that her supervisors at the Transit Agency retaliated against her after she complained about the discriminatory treatment, thereby creating a hostile work environment and ultimately resulting in her constructive discharge (Count IV). Miami-Dade moved for summary judgment on all of Ms. Rogers-Libert's claims, and on October 5, 2001, I granted that motion [D.E. 85]. The basis for that decision is set forth below.

In 1989, Ms. Rogers-Libert's position at the Dade County Housing and Urban Development was eliminated and she was "bumped" to an AO3 position at MDTA. Her immediate supervisor at MDTA was **Alex Rey Panama**. Ms. Rogers-Libert served in this position until December of 1990. During this time, she never filed a complaint concerning Mr. **Panama**'s conduct with

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Alex Rey

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MDTA's Fair Employment Practices division (FEP) or the County's Office of Fair Employment Practices (OFEP).

*1277 Ms. Rogers-Libert applied for a promotion to Manager of Budget and Grants in 1990. Mr. **Panama** was the hiring manager and selected Ms. Rogers-Libert for the position. She served in this position until her resignation in 1996.

In May of 1993, MDTA conducted a resume recruitment for Manager of Management Services. This position became vacant when Pam Levin was promoted to Chief of Management Services, replacing Mr. **Panama**, who was promoted to Assistant Director of Administration.

Only two candidates, Ms. Rogers-Libert and Alberto Parjus (a Hispanic male under the age of 40), were interviewed by a four-member panel. Both applicants met the minimum qualifications for the position. The panel consisted of Ms. Levin (a white female), Mr. **Panama** (a Hispanic male), Terence McKinley (the Special Assistant in Policy and Development Strategic Management and a white male), and Ruby Hemingway (Chief of Public Services and a black female). Initially, the interview panel did not include Ms. Hemingway, but after submitting her first panel selection, Ms. Levin was notified by the FEP that she would need to select an additional panel member in order to create racial balance.

During the structured interview, panel members asked Ms. Rogers-Libert a total of 10 questions and scored her responses. Mr. Parjus was asked the same questions, in the same order, and scored on his answers. The scores were as follows:

	Mr. Parjus	Ms. Rogers-Libert
Mr. McKinley	85	85
Ms. Hemingway	74	86
Mr. Panama	92	84
Ms. Levin	<u>83</u>	<u>77</u>
	334	332

The score sheets were collected by Ms. Levin and taken to an adjoining conference room, where Ms. Levin and Mr. **Panama** tabulated the scores. Ms. Rogers-Libert did not witness the actual tabulation, and did not speak with any of the panel members except for Ms. Hemingway. A handwriting analysis conducted by Anthony McAloney on behalf of Ms. Rogers-Libert found that the score sheets of Ms. Levin and one other panelist had been manually erased and altered. Mr. MacAloney's report identified two score sheets that had erasures or had been altered Ms. Levin's and panelist D's. Panelist D's scores were written in pen. Ms. Rogers-Libert does not know when any of the changes in Ms. Levin's or Mr. **Panama**'s score sheets occurred

On May 31, 1994, Ms. Rogers-Libert filed a verbal complaint with the FEP's administrator, Jomoya Mobotu, claiming that the recruitment process for the position of Manager of Management Services was not fair... Mr. Mobutu's report concluded that despite the concerns

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Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

he raised about the interview process, it "was not inherently unfair to Ms. Rogers-Libert or to any other applicant." [2]

Beginning in June of 1994, Ms. Rogers-Libert reported to Mr. Parjus. Ms. Levin, who reported to Mr. **Panama**, was Mr. Parjus' supervisor. In March of 1995, Mr. Parjus issued Ms. Rogers-Libert a performance evaluation with an overall rating of "above satisfactory" for the period covering December of 1993 to December of 1994, and she was granted a merit increase of 4%.

On April 26, 1994, Ms. Rogers-Libert filed a charge of sex, age, and national origin discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). On June 26, 1995, Ms. Rogers-Libert filed a retaliation complaint with the EEOC. On May 27, 1998, the EEOC issued a letter of determination as to both charges. The EEOC's investigation determined that the Transit Agency appeared to have tampered with the scoring process. The representatives of the EEOC conducted an on-site visit to review original documents but Miami-Dade did not produce the documents at the time. Miami-Dade did not respond to a pre-subpoena letter requesting the production of those documents.

In April of 1995, Ms. Rogers-Libert filed a retaliation claim with the EEOC charging that retaliatory acts had taken place at work since the time of her EEOC complaint.... Ms. Levin and Mr. **Panama** disrupting the orderly work flow of projects that Ms. Rogers-Libert was responsible for and their taking other actions that interfered with her ability to perform her duties,...

Ms. Rogers-Libert maintains that as part of their scheme to promote a Hispanic male under the age of 40, Mr. **Panama** and Ms. Levin limited the number of eligible candidates to be interviewed for the position, then tampered with the results of the interview scores so that the successful applicant would be male, Hispanic, and under the age of 40... to prove her claim of tampering, Ms. Rogers-Libert relies on her handwriting expert's report as evidence that Mr. **Panama** and Ms. Levin purposely altered the interview results to result in the selection of Mr. Parjus..... Mr. **Panama** acknowledged that, using a pen, he traced over his scores during the interview process, as was his practice, and declared that he made no changes to his or anyone else's score sheets after the interviews were concluded.

Ms. Rogers-Libert has not offered any evidence to show that this explanation was merely pretext for a decision based on age discrimination. While she suggests that Ms. Levin altered the scores after the completion of interviews, there is nothing in the record to substantiate this claim.

The only other evidence Ms. Rogers-Libert offers is that Mr. **Panama** had made comments in the past that "he preferred working with younger people because they had more energy," and that another employee "must be getting senile because he was getting up in years," and that he made remarks about division directors needing to retire because they were not up to the job. These comments (which Mr. **Panama** denies ever making) were made sometime after Ms. Rogers-Libert became manager of Budgets and Grants in 1992....

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Alex Rey

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... Ms. Rogers-Libert's testimony, however, is that she never told Mr. **Panama** her age at the time of her application for promotion to Manager of Management Services, and that Mr. **Panama** never inquired about her age. Moreover, there was nothing on either *1284 candidate's resume to indicate age, nor anything in the application packet that indicated the candidate's age... Additionally, Mr. Panama's affidavit states that he did not know the age of either Ms. Rogers-Libert or of Mr. Parjus when the interviews were conducted. The panelists scored the candidates based on answers to questions posed during interviews and each has submitted an affidavit stating that they were not influenced by any comments made by anyone about the candidates, nor did any of them discuss their scores with other panelists. Additionally, none of the panelists commented on either applicant's age, race, or sex, and the panelists reviewed their score sheets and testified that the scores accurately reflected their assessments of the candidates. The panelists also said that no one attempted to influence their assessment of the candidates.... There is no inference from the record evidence that Ms. Rogers-Libert was the victim of age discrimination to create a material issue of fact.

....Ms. Rogers-Libert has not shown an adverse employment action.

.... Ms. Rogers-Libert's allegations, considered in the light most favorable to her, are not sufficient to support her retaliation claim

.... indication that a reasonable person would have perceived the work environment so intolerable that they would have felt forced to leave. Indeed, in a resignation memo dated December 22, 1995, Ms. Rogers-Libert wrote the following to Danny Alvarez, the Deputy Director of the Transit Agency:.... This language does not seem "like the language of someone who feels his working conditions are so intolerable that he has no choice but to resign."

....Finally, to the extent that Ms. Rogers-Libert has made a claim for a hostile work environment, that claim too must fail.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
June 23, 1996

OHIO BUS MAKER WITH MONEY TROUBLE LEAVES DADE STRANDED

Author/Byline: Anne Martinez

An Ohio-based bus manufacturer has run into financial problems, leaving Dade County's bus system and more than a dozen other transit agencies across the country empty-handed for now. Metro-Dade Transit Agency officials ordered 77 buses from Flxible Corp. in January 1995 to replace its 16-year-old vehicles -- the oldest in the county's fleet. The agency's deal was for cash on delivery. Flxible, which has filed for protection from its creditors in U.S. Bankruptcy Court, promised delivery of the first 39 buses by January of this year and the remaining 38 by the end of this month. None have been delivered.

Alex Rey Panama, transit agency assistant director for administration, said he knew there was a problem when Flxible's manufacturing plant in Delaware, Ohio, closed for the holidays in December and did not reopen. "That's when we started to get worried," he said.

Executives at Flxible and its parent company, General Automotive in Ann Arbor, Mich., did not return several calls from The Herald.

Panama said that Flxible -- which the county had a five- year contract with since 1990 -- filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection earlier this month, although the bus agencies were not officially notified. "We learned about it from other transit agencies," **Panama** said. "They didn't even write a letter."

The transit agency for West Palm Beach jumped ship just in time. Dan Stanford, maintenance director for Palm Tran, said the agency transferred its contract in December to another manufacturing company when administrators realized that Flxible could not deliver their 32 buses by the end of May.

Panama said the transit agency is filing for damages and will be reviewing new bids for the \$15 million contract within the next three months. "The contract (with Flxible) was cash on delivery," he said. "That's probably the only good thing about this situation."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Alex Rey***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Miami Herald, The (FL)
August 21, 1994

DEADHEADS JITNEY COMMUTES RULED INELIGIBLE

Author/Byline: Rick Hirsch

For more than a year after Hurricane Andrew, four private companies provided free jitney rides on a variety of routes in South Dade. The Metro-Dade Transit Agency hired them, under an agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. When the program ended in September 1993, the county had paid \$38 million. It expected FEMA -- which had set aside up to \$45 million for the emergency transportation contract -- to pick up the tab. Wrong. After an audit, FEMA notified the county that it had overpaid the private operators by nearly \$8 million -- mostly for time spent shuttling empty jitneys back and forth to the start of their routes.

In the transit trade, it's called deadheading. In the language of FEMA, it's an ineligible expense -- \$8 million FEMA doesn't intend to pay. The county -- and Dade's advocate with FEMA, the state -- howled in protest and appealed the ruling.

FEMA inspectors knew the county intended to pay for the down time, said **Alex Rey**, the Metro Transit Agency's assistant director for administration. But the county didn't get that provision written into the report that FEMA prepared on providing the jitney funds, a critical omission in the FEMA funding process. "We didn't just go gung-ho and spend all their money," **Rey** said. "We were maybe too honest with them."

The appeal process will take some time. But Bob Adamecik, federal coordinating officer for FEMA in Miami, minces no words about what he thinks should happen: "We're not going to pay them for down time."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Alex Rey

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
October 30, 1988

MINI-BUS NETWORK TO EXPAND

Author/Byline: Paul Schukovsky

KAT, the Kendall Area Transit mini-bus system, will expand Monday with a new Sunset Drive route and the westward extension of two existing routes. The shuttle service, which transports Kendall residents to the Dadeland North Metrorail Station, has received a \$2.4 million grant from the state to allow the expansion, said **Alex Rey Panama**, manager of management services of the Metro-Dade Transit Agency. About \$1 million will be used for the construction of a park and ride lot at a Kendall location yet to be determined, said Deborah Higer, marketing chief for the Transit Agency. About \$1.4 million will be used to operate the expanded KAT system and to buy five new KAT vans.

The new Sunset Drive route will go to the Metrorail station from the West Lakes Plaza Park & Ride lot at Southwest 152nd Avenue. The Kendall KAT, which used to start at Southwest 127th Avenue, will begin at the Kendall Hammocks Park & Ride lot at Southwest 157th Avenue. There still will be a stop at Southwest 127th Avenue. The Killian KAT will extend west by looping past the Hammocks Town Center Park & Ride to the AmeriFirst Bank at Southwest 147th Avenue. And a new, midday service begins Monday that will combine the Sunset and Killian KATs and run every 30 minutes between 9:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. The current KAT service operates during morning and evening rush hours. Metro Transit is planning a shuttle service from the Homestead Greyhound Station on Mowry Street to the Dadeland North Metrorail Station, Higer said. The service begins Nov. 27 and will use full-size buses. Also beginning Nov. 27 is a route connecting Sweetwater and Westchester to the downtown Miami bus terminal at Flagler Street and Southwest First Street, near the Government Center Metrorail station.

The new services all are designed to increase ridership on Metrorail, said Metro Commissioner Larry Hawkins, a member of the transportation committee. Hawkins said if more people use KAT, traffic congestion in Kendall will be reduced. "The real bottom line is we are trying to make it as easy, efficient and convenient as possible for people to get to and use the Metrorail," Hawkins said. "Additional KAT routes and vehicles are one way to do that." KAT has been averaging 650 passengers a day, according to a Transit Agency analysis for January through May. It cost \$1,700 a day to provide the service, and revenues were \$460 a day. The fare for KAT to and from Dadeland North is \$1.25. With a Metrorail pass, the fare is \$1.50. The fare for the new Homestead service will be \$1.25. It will cost an additional quarter for a Metrorail pass.

Research Compiled by: Shannon Farr
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes
Alex Rey

Melinda Pletcher – Commissioner, St. Pete Beach, FL 727-455-6633

Ms. Pletcher has lived in St. Pete Beach since the late 1980s and has been on the Commission since 2013. She lives in the same neighborhood as Mr. Rey and has gotten to know him and his wife. The Commission hires three charter officers, the Manager, the Clerk, and the Attorney. She has worked with three different managers and was part of the assessment and interview process when he was selected. She has worked with other municipalities as the city and county level. He is the most highly productive, thoughtful, and responsive manager there is.

Mr. Rey has not only made excellent hiring decisions, but he has determined how to retain staff with the limited resources they have. He believes in professional development and mentors the employees. He gives them more responsibility and sets expectations but is kind, patient and understanding when they are having issues, which is impressive. For example, during a big underground project the Public Works Director lost his son. Mr. Rey could have let things go and then blamed the issues on this Director, but instead he took control of the department and led the project to give this individual a little time to recover from the tragedy.

Mr. Rey has mentored and cultivated many of their employees. One employee resigned to be closer to his family and left on good terms. Mr. Rey kept in touch with him, and he ended up coming back to St. Pete Beach. Mr. Rey does not let anything slip. Other managers tend to put off, or sometimes ignore, residential complaints, Mr. Rey takes care of it immediately, even the small concerns. He meets with residents and groups, plays tennis with residents, and eats in the local restaurants. He did not have to live in City limits, but he wanted to be part of the community, so he rented a place in St. Pete Beach even though his housing costs are 50% higher than that for homes just over the border.

St. Pete Beach has 10,000 residents but their population quadruples on the weekends. Mr. Rey must balance the interests between residential and tourism. He recognizes how important it is to breed a level of confidence and trust in the city. When a cell tower was being installed in front of a condo, residents were upset and thought it was a health hazard as well as being displeasing. The City could not refuse the cell tower. Ms. Pletcher was trying to work through it and reached an impasse, so she called Mr. Rey. He arrived in ten minutes and reviewed the situation. He stated that it was a line-of-sight issue, which provided the clarity that everyone needed. In making that statement, everyone understood the real concerns and they decided to move the cell tower where it would be buried in landscaping. He resolved the matter in about 30 seconds.

Public Transit is very important to Ms. Pletcher, and she asked Mr. Rey about his experience in public transit in her interview with him because she had not made any progress with the previous manager. Sometime after he was hired, she asked if it was a good time to meet with the transit group, and he suggested they meet that very evening. He came in with ideas about micro transit being used in another community and everyone loved the idea. They moved the project through, and it has been the most well received initiative. Both residents and tourists love the enhancements, and it is very efficient. Another improvement that Mr. Rey suggested and implemented was to set up online systems for permits and parking passes.

Reference Notes
Alex Rey

A playground at a park was in poor shape and needed to be replaced. Mr. Rey looked at the makeup of the community and realized that they could install new playground equipment, but there were no children to use it. He suggested that they install adult exercise equipment at the park instead, and everyone was so happy. Rather than just replacing what was there, he looked at what was most beneficial for the residents in that section of town. With an abandoned property, he suggested that the city create a waterfront park and boardwalk, and it is such an asset to the community. He is very creative in coming up with better solutions and options.

One Commissioner was an auditor with IBM and he audits everything. He respects Mr. Rey but can be micromanaging. Even so, Mr. Rey is very patient. All the elected officials and the residents have tremendous respect for Mr. Rey. He has negotiated many franchise and redevelopment projects that have been so favorable to the community. He has so much experience and such a great temperament, he does not let anything phase him.

Mr. Rey has been involved in typical government controversy. For example, people who are upset because a project was approved, but he has not been involved in any personal controversy. One Commissioner pointed out that Mr. Rey charged his electronic vehicle at city hall and felt he was abusing his position. Ms. Pletcher was appalled by the public shaming over this instance. She did the math, and the electricity costs were \$1.98. Alex met with this commissioner one on one to have a discussion because he wants everyone to have confidence and trust in the system.

Mr. Pletcher would hire Mr. Rey, he does a great job and is very analytical. He is not checked out, even on vacation. He takes pride in his people and trust them, but he is available. He is doing a great job for St. Pete Beach.

Words or phrases used to describe Alex Rey:

- Tremendous integrity,
- Entrepreneur spirit – he thinks more creatively than other managers,
- Very well researched,
- Very analytical,
- Energetic, and
- Great temperament.

Strengths: Highly productive, thoughtful, responsive.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Carmen Olazabal – Assistant Building Director, Miami Beach, FL 787-307-2054

Ms. Olazabal has known Mr. Rey since 2009, he was the Building Director for Miami Beach and she was the Assistant Building Director. She has also worked for Miami Lakes and St. Pete Beach as a consultant while Mr. Rey has been the manager.

Reference Notes
Alex Rey

Mr. Rey is amazing and one of the best supervisors that Ms. Olazabal has ever had. Mr. Rey is very creative and always pushing the envelope to provide services to the city and the best customer service that he can. Whether it is the permit counter, or receptionist, he always ensures that people who come in have a place to be heard. He is proactive in solving problems.

Always energetic, Mr. Rey is always improving operations. He provides the leadership that is necessary to move forward in an organized and very strategic way. He met annually with the staff and Council to establish goals and priorities for the next year. He does not like to use the word retreat, because they are creating a strategic plan to move forward not backwards, so he called it the yearly strategic advancement. At these meetings they talk about issues and how the organization can be more efficient. He then takes the established goals and creates a work plan.

One issue that Mr. Rey identified was mobility and traffic related. Certain parts of town are difficult to access because of canals or other obstacles. Mr. Rey worked to secure grants and other funding sources to build overpasses or roads to connect these areas to the rest of the community. He is very creative in organizing the work but also in financing it. He shares the vision so that everyone is moving in the same direction, and he incentivizes the staff to be proactive. He does not micromanage, which Directors appreciate, and he understands that perhaps 80% of their decisions will go well. When something is not going well, he uses a collaborative approach to address it, which helps Directors feel more confident in making decisions. His Directors can move faster and make better decisions because he clearly defines the goal.

Mr. Rey hires employees who are proactive and hands-on. Employees like to work for him and if the opportunity arises, they tend to move with him. He is also very good at working with existing staff. He motivates everyone.

As manager, Mr. Rey was expected to be in the community and he was. He held focus groups and community meetings on various matters. He wanted to hear from residents how the City was working for them and what problems they are encountering. He instituted a new system which helped them see statistics on waits at City Hall, so he could adjust staffing to better serve the public. He was out in the community looking for feedback, and then he ensured that the changes made had the effect he was looking for. If not, he adjusted the process until it did.

Mr. Rey has past experience working in a budget office. He understands the limitations in government finance and what certain funds can be used for. He is very aware of grant programs, appropriations, and alternate revenue streams. He provides information on state appropriations to the Council so they could benefit from them. He understands the requirements of each grant and ensures they meet the criteria, which optimizes the chance of success.

In his role Mr. Rey works with various personalities. He does not take anything personal, and he understands that the Council sets the vision for the community. He is very fact oriented and presents options as well as the positives and negatives of the idea. He ensures that every initiative is funded and will not move forward until funding is established. He is very flexible

Reference Notes
Alex Rey

and does not keep pushing a matter once the elected officials have voted no, which minimizes the drama. He always stays cool and collected as he understands and respects differences of opinions.

Mr. Rey has not been involved in any personal or professional controversy. Ms. Olazabal is not aware of anyone who has a negative opinion of him.

Ms. Olazabal has met a number of managers and Mr. Rey is first on her list to hire. He is an amazing leader, and any city would be lucky to have him. She highly recommends him.

Words or phrases used to describe Alex Rey:

- Proactive,
- Genuine,
- Honest,
- Extremely ethical,
- Reliable,
- Visionary, and
- Excellent leader.

Strengths: Creative, exceptional customer service, listens, proactive.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Andrew Dickman – City Attorney, St. Pete Beach, FL 305-335-1303

Mr. Dickman has known Mr. Rey since 2019, when Mr. Rey became the manager for St. Pete Beach. Mr. Rey put good systems in place so that when he is not available, everything runs smoothly. He is good at developing procedures so that everything does not get funneled to him thus creating a bottleneck.

Mr. Rey is a pleasure to work with. He is very innovative and knowledgeable. He is highly skilled and has a very entrepreneurial mindset. He is a receptive listener to lawyers, which is not always the case with government officials. He is always inclusive.

When hiring, Mr. Rey looks for people who have the necessary skills for the job. Mr. Dickman disagreed on a few of his hires because they did not have quite the right background and experience, but Mr. Rey was right in hiring them and they have done very well for the city. He is not afraid to think outside the box and he cultivates the staff in the organization.

Reference Notes
Alex Rey

Whether switching the parking system for public parking on streets or some other method, Mr. Rey has brought many innovative ideas to the city. The city operates at a high level for a city of their size. He stays abreast of trends in the field.

St. Pete Beach is a small city even though it is known as a destination. Mr. Rey attends community meetings, town hall meetings, and other civic meetings. He does a great job with the community and has done a tremendous job of assimilating to their culture in the Tampa Bay area as he came from Miami- Dade and they are quite different. St. Pete Beach is on a barrier island. Mr. Rey has brought climate change to their attention so that they can prepare for future environmental changes.

Mr. Rey led workshops to develop a strategic vision for the community. He did a number of listening sessions in the community and then worked with the elected officials and the staff. The process was very elaborate and high level. They examined what they do well and what could improve. He did a great job at facilitating that process for the long term benefit.

In situations where he had the right to lose his temper, Mr. Rey has never lost his composure. He is even keeled and full of energy. He is very logical and not emotional. He came from a more stressful environment and so he knows how to handle stress.

Everything in St. Pete Beach is controversial, they are working to move all the ordinances that involve the beach into one chapter called the Community Beach Ordinance. Many hot button issues related to beach ownership are involved, and they are discussing about whether options like smoking, fishing, and riding a bike on the beach are allowed. The situation is fraught with legal concerns, but Mr. Rey has handled it well. As far as Mr. Dickman knows, Mr. Rey has not been involved in anything controversial.

Mr. Rey is the perfect choice for a city that has some challenges and needs modernization. He is very innovative both operationally and financially. He is always looking for ways to save money or increase revenue. He has done a great job in St. Pete Beach. Mr. Dickman has enjoyed working with Mr. Rey and learning from him.

Words or phrases used to describe Alex Rey:

- Innovative,
- Caring,
- Fast,
- Organized,
- Strategic, and
- Prepared.

Reference Notes
Alex Rey

Strengths: Innovative, very knowledgeable, entrepreneurial, receptive, inclusive, develops processes so that everything functions smoothly, extremely organized.

Weaknesses: His pace is 3 times anyone else. He moves very fast and very quick, and it could be helpful to downshift a little at times. However, it is much better to have an employee who works too fast than an employee who is slow to complete his work. As an example, Mr. Rey will sometimes put something on the agenda that he has not discussed with Mr. Dickman. However, when asked to pull the item off the agenda until it can be reviewed, Mr. Rey immediately complies.

Cynthia Alejo – Human Resource Director, Miami Lakes, FL 786-553-7244

Ms. Alejo has known Mr. Rey since 2006. He is an outstanding manager, she has never worked for anyone like him. He is always on target, always a step ahead, and he is very results oriented so he gets things done.

Mr. Rey makes good decisions, and he maintains operations at a high level. He has an engineering background, so he is good at analyzing processes. He led them through many projects, like the opening of the community center, and is a good mediator. He showed great leadership in any issue.

One of the advantages to hiring Mr. Rey is that he has many contacts. He attends County and regional meetings and keeps everyone informed. He is very involved with transportation at the County level. He takes employees to meetings so that he can introduce them. He knows everyone. He is always a gentleman with the public. He is not a man of many words so you will not have a one-hour conversation with him, but he quickly finds a solution to any issue.

They were not expecting hurricane Irma to be as bad as it was. The city was flooded, and they had major power outages. Mr. Rey led the staff and was always calm. He has solutions and answers, but he let the team manage the process unless they needed his help. One of the most significant concerns was power as they do not have underground cables. He intervened with Florida Power and Light after the team tried to contact them but could not reach them. He was able to get through.

Finance is Mr. Rey's forte, he can put a budget together and retains all the information in his head which means he can answer questions on the spot. The Councilmembers never complained about his work being late, and they would have if it was. Whatever is asked of him, he completes. He is always very calm and never reacts emotionally. In difficult situations with employees, like theft or fraud, he maintains a nice demeanor, listens, and looks for a solution. Residents are sometimes demanding and rude, but it never influences his behavior. He stays professional.

Reference Notes
Alex Rey

The city had controversial items, though Mr. Rey did not cause it, he just helped guide them through it. Nothing in his background would concern a reasonable person. Mr. Rey retired from Miami Lakes because he was in the Florida Retirement Plan DROP program. They were very disappointed to lose him, and he was immediately hired by another community.

Ms. Alejo would hire Mr. Rey. He was a great manager. His gift for hiring the right person for each position is an asset.

Words or phrases used to describe Alex Rey:

- Creative,
- Mentor,
- Good work ethic,
- Highly detailed,
- Intelligent, and
- effective.

Strengths: His greatest strength is budget planning. His ability to not only pick the best applicant on qualifications but also on fit, very smart, does things the right way.

Weaknesses: Occasionally Ms. Alejo found things out later than she would have liked. Mr. Rey always apologized when something was missed.

Cesar Mestre – Former Council Member, Miami Lakes, FL 786-285-5161

Mr. Mestre has known Mr. Rey since 2010 when he was elected as a Council Member for Miami Lakes. He has enjoyed working with Mr. Rey and spearheaded extending Mr. Rey's contract in 2014.

Mr. Rey is innovative and open minded. He implemented performance-based budgeting, which is a new way of doing the budgeting for Miami Lakes. This method includes tying statistics to the budget performances. Performance-based budgeting has helped Miami Lakes make more cost-efficient and effective budgeting decisions.

Mr. Rey is always polite and professional, and especially so when dealing with the public. He handles public forums very well, even when faced with complaints or criticism. He stays calm and dignified when answering questions. He treats everyone with respect, be it a staff member, a citizen or an elected official.

Mr. Rey is involved in the Chamber of Commerce and maintains an open-door policy. He is always available by e-mail or phone and welcomes citizens into his office if they have a need to discuss something with him in person.

Reference Notes
Alex Rey

Mr. Rey is a leader. He is not overly aggressive and inspires others to do their best. He handled an emergency transition excellently when the former Mayor was arrested and charged with federal crimes. Mr. Rey helped the City through this difficult time and helped the interim Mayor transition into his position easily. Mr. Rey takes care of the tasks given him in a timely way.

Mr. Rey has the knowledge, the demeanor and the patience to adequately do the job given him. He has proven his abilities throughout the years. He will continue to be an excellent Manager in any other location.

Words or phrases used to describe Alex Rey:

- Patient,
- Knowledgeable,
- Levelheaded,
- Patient,
- Reliable, and
- Professional.

Strengths: Knowledgeable of his position.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Manny Cid – Mayor, Miami Lakes, FL 305-798-3073

Mr. Cid has known Mr. Rey since 2012, when he was elected as Vice Mayor. They worked well together. Miami Lakes has seven elected officials, with a vast array of differing ideas and opinions. Mr. Rey was adept at bringing them all together. He helped them come to a consensus for the good of the community.

Mr. Rey is open to new ideas. He is not stuck in his ways. He embraces new methods of doing things and is a quick learner. He helped Miami Lakes transition into a Contract City Model. Mr. Rey previously worked for the County and took what he learned from that position to benefit the Town of Miami Lakes.

Mr. Rey was frequently out in the community attending community functions and events. He made it easy for residents to access the government. Miami Lakes was the first city in the nation to allow residents to record comments on their telephones and forward it to the Town Clerk to play during the municipal meetings. This made the citizens feel more heard and part of the process of planning for their community.

Reference Notes
Alex Rey

Mr. Rey is patient. He understands that there are certain timetables in running a municipality. He works on a strategic plan and helps keep the ball moving forward so that future staff can have a roadmap when they need it.

Mr. Rey had excellent public speaking skills. All their council meetings are streamed live on the municipality's website, so the community has access to what is being decided in the meetings. All their previous meetings can be accessed online as well.

Mr. Rey is able to surpass controversy and stay positive. He is steady, and because of it, the citizens can count on him to always make a positive contribution to their community. Mr. Rey understands the past but also understands that they need to move forward and continually improve. Because he learns from the past, he is able to strengthen his community for the future. He will make an excellent Manager for any municipality.

Words or phrases used to describe Alex Rey:

- Open,
- Accessible,
- Timely,
- Transparent,
- Methodical, and
- Patient.

Strengths: Able to bring everyone together.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Raul Gastesi – Attorney, Town of Miami Lakes, FL 305-801-1292 305-818-9993

Mr. Gastesi has known Mr. Rey since 2002. They have daily contact in their dealings together. Mr. Gastesi is highly impressed with Mr. Rey and fully refers him for any managerial position.

Mr. Rey is innovative. He has a wide array of knowledge and applies this knowledge to his position as Town Manager. He is willing to teach and share advice as well as being willing to listen and learn from others.

Mr. Rey was instrumental in leading the Town through a crisis when their previous Mayor was arrested. He dealt with the press exceptionally well and was able to portray the town in a positive manner. He helped keep the Council together and united without pointing the blame. Mr. Rey is straight and to the point when giving public presentations. He takes the lead on strategic planning sessions and knows how to lead the municipality.

Reference Notes
Alex Rey

Mr. Rey is patient with the pace of government, yet helps them continually move forward. Staying within budget is a priority for him.

Mr. Rey is a man of integrity. He has excellent people skills and is knowledgeable about municipal management. He will be a strong leader in any position.

Words or phrases used to describe Alex Rey:

- Bright,
- Intelligent,
- Consistent,
- Experienced,
- Confident,
- Prepared, and
- Inclusive.

Strengths: Excellent people skills.

Weaknesses: None identified.

George Lopez – Former Councilperson, Town of Miami Lakes, FL 305-726-9600

Mr. Lopez worked with Mr. Rey during 2010 while acting as the Chairman for the Planning and Zoning Board. Mr. Rey has an extensive knowledge base and puts his knowledge to good use as Town Manager.

Mr. Rey is adept at being open minded and friendly to everyone he comes in contact with. He balances his responsibilities without picking sides or losing control of his emotions. He has an innate ability to remain neutral when looking at an issue, in order to logically find the best outcome for the municipality.

Mr. Rey represents everyone on the council well. He is fair and open to everyone. He has good people skills and speaks well in public settings. Although he is fluent in English, he does have a small accent, which some people might find difficult to understand.

Mr. Rey always comes prepared to meetings. He can answer every question given him without hesitation. He knows how to work with a small budget and did so without raising taxes and even came out with a surplus at the end of the year.

Mr. Rey is a dedicated Manager and will be an asset to any municipality. Mr. Lopez gives his recommendation without any hesitation.

Reference Notes
Alex Rey

Words or phrases used to describe Alex Rey:

- Efficient,
- Patient,
- Diplomatic,
- Friendly,
- Neutral, and
- Knowledgeable.

Strengths: Wide array of knowledge.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Nelson Rodriguez – Vice Mayor, Town of Miami Lakes, FL 305-281-3001

Mr. Rodriguez has known Mr. Rey since 2006 but began working with him in 2012. Mr. Rey was a true professional in every aspect of his life. Mr. Rodriguez values the time that they worked together.

Mr. Rey was people oriented instead of task oriented. He took care of his employees as well as the citizens of the Town. He had a way of helping people feel valued and important. He did the job, but in a way that motivated others to do their best.

Mr. Rey immersed himself in the work. He knew the history of the Town and what the citizens' needs are. He always made time for the individual and maintained an open-door policy.

Mr. Rey understood the need to allow sufficient time to see change. He did not try to rush through things. Mr. Rey was patient with the pace of government because he understood everything that needed to happen in order to be successful.

Mr. Rey is innovative. He is a clear and concise public speaker, and truly wants the best for his community. He is friendly and outgoing and will be a valuable asset to any community.

Words or phrases used to describe Alex Rey:

- Professional,
- Motivator,
- Leader,
- Easy going,
- Knowledgeable, and
- Understanding.

Reference Notes
Alex Rey

Strengths: Friendly personality.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein and Amanda Jenkins
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