

--MEMORANDUM--



TO: Mayor and Commissioners

FROM: Commissioner Vince Lago

DATE: June 1, 2018

SUBJECT: Interfering with Hiring Process

I have recently been made aware of some information that heavily concerns me. In May 2015, City Manager Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark initiated the hiring process to employ the Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Safety, Frank Fernandez. Standard protocol requires all individuals seeking employment with the City of Coral Gables to undergo a background investigation.

In an email dated May 2, 2015 (enclosed) the City Manager requested the International Association of Chiefs of Police's background investigator contracted by the City to: "neither seek nor include any information for Broward PBA or Jeff Marano individually as it will hold no credibility nor value in my decision making". The Assistant Director of Training and Professional Services for the International Association of Chiefs of Police responded to our then Human Resource Director, Elsa Jaramillo with the following statement: "We will not comply with Ms. Swanson-Rivenbark's request in any way. For the background investigation to have merit, we will not restrict the investigation in any way or limit access to sources".

As government officials it is our duty and obligation to be transparent and accountable. Interfering in hiring protocols such as background investigations can jeopardize our city's image and in a worst case scenario, allow an individual with an unpleasant background to work in our community. We are thankful and fortunate this is not the case in this instance.

Regardless of the character of the person or entity the City Manager was requesting to exclude as part of the investigation, the process was interfered with nonetheless. We must never tolerate this kind of behavior especially when our City is known to uphold the *highest standards* when hiring police officers and personnel. According to the International City/County Manager Association's (ICMA) Code of Ethics, City Managers demonstrate by word and action the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in all public, professional, and personal relationships in order to merit the trust and respect of the elected and appointed officials, employees, and the public. To interfere in hiring processes breaches the public trust and makes citizens doubt our City's governing practices which city officials should always remain cautious about.

If you would like to discuss this incident in more detail, I invite you to do so at the upcoming Commission meeting on June 12, 2018.

Cc: City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos