



CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

CITY MANAGER'S ANNUAL REPORT

Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners,

As we enter into 2024, I would like to reflect on the incredible journey we have collectively undertaken in 2023. The year has been marked by several significant milestones for the City of Sunny Isles Beach. We are delighted to announce that our Police Department has earned accreditation from the Florida Commission for Law Enforcement Accreditation (CFA), a recognition that testifies to the department's unwavering commitment to highest standards, professionalism, and accountability. Additionally, we are pleased to welcome Officer Roxana Martinez as the first female motor officer in the department's history. Officer Martinez has completed motor school training with the Miami-Dade Police Department, making her part of an exclusive group of women who have successfully passed this course and can now hold the title of Police Motor Officer. Lastly, I am thankful to announce that I have recently been awarded the Credentialed Manager designation from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). This recognition acknowledges local government managers who, through their education, experience, and adherence to high standards of integrity, are deserving of this credential. These achievements highlight the City's unwavering commitment to excellence, and we are proud to have set these new benchmarks.

Per your direction, as part of our ongoing efforts to improve pedestrian safety, we have completed the sidewalk widening project on the west side of Collins Avenue from 173rd to 174th street in 2023. Furthermore, we have been preparing to launch new scooter enforcement, as per the passing of Ordinance 2023-609, and educating the public about it. We are committed to making our city safer for pedestrians and will continue to take appropriate measures for achieving the same.

Other major accomplishments include lowering the millage rate, the completion of the drainage improvements on 172nd street, and a series of well-attended events that catered to residents of all ages, further strengthening our community's bonds. We are continuously striving to improve our community's well-being, and we remain committed to making it an even better place to live, work, and visit.

As we look ahead to 2024, we are excited about the many opportunities the acquisition of 18126 Atlantic Boulevard will provide for our residents. Additionally, the start-up of the Intracoastal Police Athletic League (IPAL) of SIBPD and Aventura Police will provide an opportunity to further connect with our youth. We are committed to achieving more and making a positive impact through new programs, initiatives, and improvements.

In this report, you will find highlights of each department's achievements in 2023. Thank you for all your support! I recognize that these accomplishments and success would not be possible without your leadership and guidance. We're excited for what 2024 has in store. As always, please feel free to come and see me if you have any questions or concerns.

Building

In 2023, the Building Department continued with its dedication and commitment to provide services for the protection of life and building safety of the community. We diligently sought and implemented new technologies, as well as other innovative ways to streamline and modernize our department. The department implemented new technologies, including the electronic plan review process/software as well as a floodplain management software solution to increase our department's efficiency and effectiveness. As we move into a new year, we look forward to the development of our new, expanded space, where we can provide state-of-the-art service to our community.

Capital Improvement Program

Drainage is a long-standing infrastructure priority. In 2023, we completed the 172nd Street drainage improvements to finally resolve the flooding issue on that roadway by raising the road. This project came in on time and under budget. The Golden Shores pump station permitting is finalized, and bidding and construction will commence in 2024. Meanwhile, minor spot repairs have been made to the system in areas discovered to be underserved during the Golden Shores Undergrounding project. At the present time, these minor improvements, along with the additional temporary pumps are working to keep the homes and driveways safe.

Construction nears completion on the Meditation Garden that will open in early 2024, as we continue the design and permitting of Bella Vista Bay Park and the Intracoastal Sports Park. Bella Vista Bay Park will include a marina for our police boats. The Intracoastal Sports Park will include tennis courts, a multi-sports court, and much needed bathrooms, along with a nice open space for families to enjoy.

Cultural & Community Services

The Cultural and Community Services Department this past year ran its first senior summer camp, which served approximately 113 senior residents. The camp provided a variety of activities designed to keep them mentally and physically fit, as well as giving them more varied opportunities to get up and out of their homes. With the support of the Commission, we expanded our free SIBeHealthy programs from two (2) to four (4) classes monthly. Also, with the help of our friends over at Palm Medical Center, Adult & Seniors hosted their first fully sponsored event last Halloween, which had an attendance of 118 residents and total in-kind donations of \$3,748. This past year, the City's 25th Anniversary celebration was revamped and taken to the shoreline in three different locations with record breaking attendance. In partnerships with Trump Hotel, Newport Hotel, and Solé, we were able to provide over 5,000 attendees with a variety of meal options, while giving residents live entertainment, and our first ever drone show. For the first time, Lawn Tennis was introduced during our Fall Season by Coach Lushane, and it was a successful program with both age groups having full registration.

Code Compliance

In April 2023, the City Commission passed an ordinance that restricted the times when trash and recycling receptacles could be placed out on the curb. Code Compliance took proactive steps to communicate this to the neighborhood and used warning notices. As a result, 100% participation was achieved without any citations. Additionally, 2023 was a very busy year on the beach and pier, and Code Compliance increased their patrol of these areas to mitigate complaints about activities that violated the City's Code. The team's efforts were more effective thanks to new signage that provided support.

Code Compliance issued 133 special event permits, 111 new business licenses, and 653 business license renewals in 2023.

City Clerk

On December 15, 2022, the City Commission, via Resolution No. 2022-3449, established the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) to evaluate and make recommendations on potential changes to the City's charter. The CRC convened five times and proposed 14 amendments. These amendments were submitted to the City's electorate in a referendum held on May 23, 2023, all of which were approved. Notable revisions include: The City Clerk now reports to the City Commission, a change from the previous structure where they were appointed by and reported to the City Manager. The City Commission's monthly compensation was corrected to reflect the previously approved amounts based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) that had not been implemented. This resulted in an increased rate of \$2,100 for the mayor (up from \$1,250) and of \$1,700 for commissioners (up from \$1,000). These salaries will now adjust according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL.

All 14 amendments have been integrated into the City's Code of Ordinances and are available for review online at:

https://library.municode.com/fl/sunny_isles_beach/codes/code_of_ordinances

Finance

During the past year, the Finance department received the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the year ending September 30, 2022, and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 2022-2023 budget. The city's procurement staff plays a crucial role in maximizing cost savings while ensuring the provision of high-quality goods and services. Additionally, Procurement must balance factors such as establishing fair supplier relationships, managing risk, while staying current with procurement laws, best practices, and actively participating in the South Florida Purchasing Board. Their efforts resulted in a significant cost savings of \$116,176 for the city in 2023 through cost negotiations.

In addition, Finance negotiated several interest rate increases, going from an interest rate of 1.75% and 2.50%, respectively, up to 5.25% for both money market accounts. Due to these negotiations and the market, the annual yield on cash and investments increased from 2.37% to 3.88% as reported in the October investment report. This resulted in

investment earnings of approximately \$3 million. The department also completed its first-year audit with the new audit firm, Marcum LLP, and no audit deficiencies were identified.

Moreover, to provide ongoing training and development, Purchasing and Accounts Payable held monthly Finance/Procurement trainings for new and existing staff members. Purchasing also held a *How to do Business with the City Workshop* in the Summer of 2023 where over 20 interested businesses attended. They also worked with many departments to release 10 solicitations during the year.

Lastly, both Assistant Finance Director Natalie Obando and Senior Accountant Brandon Popescu have successfully passed the CPA exam. For the first time ever, the department will have three licensed CPAs, bringing the highest level of professionalism and accountability to the Finance Team.

Human Resources

In 2023, the Risk Management division successfully closed 28 claims and recovered a total of \$147,631.61. Additionally, there are pending payments amounting to \$11,394.42. The Recruitment division saw significant activity with 69 new hires and 37 promotions, indicating a dynamic year in terms of staffing and career advancement within the organization. Some notable achievements for the year include several key initiatives. A significant highlight was the four-week on-site Supervision in Government training series attended by 47 city supervisors, which encompassed eight modules. These modules covered vital topics ranging from transitioning to a supervisory role to performance management and legal aspects of supervision.

The 2023 Life Scan Wellness program, conducted in September, was another major achievement. Forty-five employees underwent comprehensive wellness physicals, including cardiopulmonary fitness evaluations and full-body exams. The program's success and high participation rates have led to plans for expanding it in 2024.

Additionally, mandatory citywide training for all city staff was completed, covering essential topics such as ethics in the workplace, sexual harassment awareness, workplace diversity, and security awareness. This training included specialized additional hours for supervisors in sexual harassment awareness.

Information Technology

In 2023, the Information Technology Department completed several major projects. The largest of these was the citywide fiber project, which was completed in December. It consisted of interconnecting 11 city properties with underground fiber, which today provides reliable connectivity to all sites for WiFi, cameras, and other city services. In addition, we completed the implementation of three security initiatives that were awarded through the 2023 CyberGrant from Florida Digital Services, as well as a fourth security initiative funded by the IT Department. These projects greatly enhance the City's cyber-readiness. Finally, we completed the replacement of our core computing platform upon which all of our internal services and applications operate.

Media

This year, the Media Division was recognized by the National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC), winning a prestigious Blue Pencil & Gold Screen Award in the Print Magazine category for Sunny Isles Beach Live & Play Magazine. The magazine is a comprehensive guide to all recreation programming taking place in Sunny Isles Beach and continues to be mailed to our Sunny Isles Beach Resident ID cardholders quarterly.

In preparation for the launch of a redesigned city website in 2024, Media collected user input via a community survey and navigation test. The information obtained showed us how users navigate our website and what types of information they are looking for. This will assist with launching a more user-friendly and streamlined city website that better serves our residents and promotes transparency. We also obtained the domain name sibfl.gov, which will be launched along with the new website.

Media furthered the city's rebranding rollout, creating graphic designs for an extensive amount of collateral, from new signage installed at every beach access path, to redesigned vehicle wraps for our city shuttle bus and department vehicles, signage to assist with our Police Department's accreditation process, and a variety of promotional materials for the Scoot Safe! Sunny Isles Beach campaign.

Audio/Visual (A/V) upgrades in our Commission Chambers included replacing outdated equipment such as the closed captioning encoder, amplifiers, speakers, and microphones.

On our digital media platforms, we reached 10,000+ followers on Instagram and had 3.4 million impressions on our social media platforms. Our website saw 262,000 visitors this year. We increased our email blast open rate percentage to an average of 44%. Our video team produced 158 videos. PD is now on Instagram as well – you can follow them at @SunnyIslesBeachPD.

Planning & Zoning

Planning & Zoning was successfully restructured and is fully staffed. A new position of "Zoning Plans Examiner" was created to focus on the review and inspection of building permits and business licenses. With this achievement, the department can now focus on necessary ordinance revisions, Comprehensive Plan amendments and improving process efficiency, such as becoming fully digital and integrating with online platforms. We obtained final approval and adoption of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. This was followed by an analysis of the Comp Plan and Zoning Code to identify the need to remedy the inconsistencies for future development.

Successfully negotiated and on-boarded a new landscape architect consultant, Miller Legg. Now that they have been consistently working with us over the year, a landscape code ordinance will be drafted and presented in 2024 to update the landscape code. The update will better serve the community by clarifying procedures and focusing on native plant species that can withstand the unique coastal conditions.

Police

The Police Department's Accreditation Unit achieved a groundbreaking milestone in 2023 by successfully navigating the department through its inaugural accreditation assessment. This rigorous process involved meticulous scrutiny of the department's policies, procedures, and practices against Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation recognized standards. Led by our Accreditation Manager Doug Robertson, the unit meticulously prepared the department, ensuring adherence to best practices in areas like property and evidence, records, training, and more. Their diligent efforts culminated in the Police Department meeting and exceeding the stringent criteria set forth by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation in just fourteen (14) short months when we they were given twenty-four (24) months to complete this monumental task. The achievement not only validates the department's commitment to excellence but also signifies a significant step towards fostering trust, transparency, and professionalism within the community we serve.

Equally important was the advanced technology implemented in the police department. At the forefront was a comprehensive overhaul of the License Plate Recognition (LPR) systems which were strategically deployed around critical locations such as schools and places of worship. This initiative bolsters surveillance capabilities and aids in proactive law enforcement. Our Officers' arsenal has been fortified with new state-of-the-art firearms with red dot sights, and a flashlight to ensure they're equipped with the latest tools for efficient and effective policing. A significant upgrade was done to the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) video management software which amplifies the department's surveillance prowess and empowering better monitoring and analysis of public spaces.

The Police Department's Communications Unit underwent a transformative upgrade by integrating cutting-edge technology like a Hiperwall, and an enhanced dispatch software called Carbyne. The Hiperwall, a high-performance video wall system, revolutionizes real-time monitoring and data visualization capabilities. It enables seamless coordination among officers by displaying live feeds, maps and critical information, enhancing their situational awareness and response efficiency.

Additionally, the incorporation of Carbyne, an advanced emergency response platform, revolutionizes communication during emergencies. Its integration provides instant access to precise location data, live video streaming, and real-time information sharing, empowering dispatchers, and responders to address incidents swiftly and accurately. This tech infusion significantly elevates the department's operational effectiveness, enabling quicker response times, improved decision-making, and enhanced coordination among units. As a result, the Communications Unit is a pivotal hub in the department's mission to ensure public safety through the utilization of state-of-the-art technology.

Public Works

In 2023, Public Works took a more active role in the maintenance of all facilities, including parks. As the city continues to evolve and add more infrastructure, we found it best to combine some services to realize some cost savings and efficiencies. Major improvement projects include the completion of the new fence and lighting at the popular soccer field at Senator Gwen Margolis Park, the renovation of the Bill Lone Beach Access restroom, and improvements to The Spot, a new location for teen programming. Unexpected and unpredicted major wind and rainstorms visited Sunny Isles Beach creating substantial damage to trees, signs, and fencing while depositing debris across the city in parks, streets, and public right-of-ways. Responding immediately late at night and working through to ensure parks and streets were open for the public in the morning, all divisions of the Public Works team, along with Parks, got the city back into shape. Working with our landscapers, some trees are scheduled for replacement as they cannot be salvaged. Through it all, with portable pumps, the Stormwater Division maintained roads to reduce flooding once the rain stopped.

Fleet took on a new challenge this year with a variety of makes and models of vehicles. Past practice was to maintain the majority of vehicles with one or two manufacturers to more efficiently manage warranty, preventive maintenance and repairs. The lack of inventory led us to purchase what was available, leaving the Fleet operation to manage more contracts with more vendors in more locations. We are always looking at ways to improve this for the future.

Commission Chambers received a makeover this year with new carpet, refreshed paneling, reupholstered seats, and fresh paint. After 18 years in use, this was a much-needed project that has greatly improved the space.