



CITY OF DORAL
Office of the City Manager
Letter to Council

LTC No.: 117-2017

To: The Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Edward A. Rojas, City Manager

Date: October 16th, 2017

Subject: **Clarification of Statements Made Concerning the 2017-18 Budget**

This Letter to Council (LTC) is to clarify to the Mayor and City Council-members of recent statements that were made with respect to the 2017-18 City Budget.

It has come to my attention that several statements have been made that may give the residents of Doral the wrong impression of the 2017-18 City Budget. Some statements were made at a public forum as recently as of October 13, 2017.

With respect to the Police Budget, at no time has the Police Department been denied a request to hire additional Police Officers. On Thursday, October 12, 2017, the Police Department held a ceremony at City Hall in which a newly hired Police Officer was sworn in along with six (6) Police Service Aides therefore, bringing the current staffing to 123 of the 131 budgeted positions. The 2016-17 City Budget allowed for the hiring of eight (8) additional Police Officers. During the fiscal year 2016-17, only ten (10) Police Officers could be hired. Locally, out of 100 applicants for the position of Police Officer, upon the completion of the full background, only ten applicants meet the qualifications. We continue to hire only the best-qualified candidates for the position of Police Officer in Doral.

The number of sworn Police Officers in last year's budget increased from one twenty three (123) to one hundred and thirty one (131). The safety of our residents has always been a priority for the City of Doral and will continue to remain a priority. Presently, the Department has openings for eight (8) positions that have occurred because of people retiring or being hired by another agency. During the 2016-17 fiscal year, six (6) Police Officers left the agency to go work at another Police Department or retired.

The Human Resources Department has advertised for the position of Police Officer continuously and will do so until all the positions are filled. For the 2017-18 Police Budget,

Police Chief Donald De Lucca did not request any additional Police Officers since not all the positions from the previous budget had been filled. We currently have eight (8) open Police Officer positions. Background searches are currently in the process to fill these positions.

With respect to the computers that have been donated to the South Florida Digital Alliance in the past years, this program has never been a budgeted program. Previously, the Information Technology Department each year in preparation for their annual budget makes a determination after speaking to each Department Director and reviewing the inventory of current computers on the number of computers that need to be replaced. Presently, the City of Doral has established a replacement cycle policy for computers, which is now four (4) years. Utilizing the South Florida Digital Alliance, the City of Doral in previous years has donated 170 computers. Those computers were donated to the following schools: Dr. Rolando K Espinosa K-8, 50 computers; John I. Smith Elementary, 50 computers; Eugenia B. Thomas K-8, 50 computers; and Devine Savior Academy, 20 computers. In the fiscal year 2017-18 budget, thirteen (13) Mobile Laptops were budgeted for replacement. If these computers prove to be viable for donation, a donation will be made to the South Florida Digital Alliance.

I hope that this clarifies any statements that were made about the 2017-18 Budget that was approved by the City Council. As you recall, the budget process is an extensive undertaking that began with the Strategic Planning Session that occurred in February 3rd and 4th of 2017. After that, each Department submitted draft budgets. Individual meetings were then conducted with each Department Director to review the Department's submitted draft proposal. At least two (2) of these meetings occurred with each Director. The Mayor and City Council were then briefed on the status of the budget process. Two (2) Public Work-Shops were then held to review the proposed Budget in detail. Finally, two (2) budget hearings were held to approve the proposed budget.

I think that it is important as we work to implement the approved budget the citizens of Doral have accurate information. If you should have any questions about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

c: Albert P. Childress, Deputy City Manager
City Department Directors