

City of Miami Homeland Defense/Neighborhood Improvement Bond Oversight Board

MEMO

To: Joe Arriola, City Manager
From: Robert A. Flanders, Chairman
Date: October 15, 2004
Re: Homeland Defense/Neighborhood Improvement Bond Oversight Board (BOB)
Annual Report for The Year 2003 as Per Sec. 2-890 of The City Code

Pursuant to City Code Section 2-890 (Annual Report of City Boards and Committees), please accept this memorandum as the annual report of the BOB for the year 2003 in the manner and format prescribed in the City Code as follows:

City Code Question No. 1: Whether the board is serving the purpose for which it was created?

BOB Response: Miami's first BOB was created in 2001 by the City Commission to serve in an advisory capacity to the City overseeing and monitoring implementation of the proceeds of the \$255 Million in Bond Funds for Miami's Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). The BOB is fulfilling its purpose diligently with the input and vision from the Mayor's office, the City Commission, and with the extensive assistance and education from the City Manager's office and the CIP Department.

City Code Question No. 2: Whether the board is serving current community needs?

BOB Response: City Administration estimates the City of Miami's current unmet capital needs at roughly \$1.5 Billion. The Bond proceeds and other monies currently available for Miami's CIPs total \$520 Million, approximately 1/3 of the total needed.

To serve in the fairest interests of the entire community and in view of the \$1 Billion shortfall, we have remained solidly on-track with the prudent BOB guidelines we established for all CIPs brought before us: A.) Is the project and its budget on the list specifically identified by the City Administration and set forth in informational pamphlets and media releases prior to the November 2001 election, or in the City Ordinance (as amended) creating the BOB, or one of the Commissioner's prioritized personal district projects or been sent to us by the City Commission as an item approved by their resolution and thereby recommendation?

B.) Have all available matching grants been applied for and the funds secured? C.) Has the CIP and its budget been approved by the CIP Department and secured the approval of the City's Boards having an interest and by the BOB Audit Committee? D.) Will the CIP be purchased, implemented and/or constructed within the timeframe that the BOB has established? E.) What is the actual cost of operation and maintenance and has a line item been established in the City's Budget for the following year to reflect the cost of operation and maintenance of the new item and/or facility?

City Code Question No. 3: A list of the board's major accomplishments.

BOB Response: The Commission's creation of the Homeland Defense/Neighborhood Improvement Bond Oversight Board was a historical first for Miami. BOB members are cognizant that their responsibilities include the restoration of the public's trust in the City's fiscal ability to raise general obligation bond funds and to insure that the funds are wisely spent on the intended improvements, with no fraud, waste or abuse. Restoration of our fellow taxpayer's trust in Miami will allow the City to continue to create improvements in its infrastructure.

To speed the CIP process so that the projects are implemented in a timely fashion, our Audit Sub-Committee holds several meetings each month to review new projects and to be updated on the progress of existing projects. The BOB actively engages with each City Commissioner and with the Mayor so that we may operate capably, with their vision and objectives in mind.

BOB members believe that "communication is king", so the BOB Communications Sub-Committee was created to improve the public's awareness of Miami's CIP improvement projects. Now the monthly scheduled BOB meetings are televised live from Commission Chambers, and the BOB has an attractive, user-friendly website within Miami's Official Website so that our citizens may easily learn when, where and how their CIP funds are spent. We have taken every opportunity to meet with and respond to the media's requests for information.

WEBSITE ADDRESS: <http://www.ci.miami.fl.us/bondoversight/>

The BOB's first informational meetings were held on May 21, 2002. On October 22, 2002 we approved our first three Bond CIP projects: \$25,000 to match the \$100,000 grant awarded to the Miami River Commission to construct the Greenway adjacent to the Miami River Circle, \$931,496.42 for the Miami Police Department for Homeland Defense equipment and \$1,500,000 to the Miami Fire Department for Homeland Defense Preparedness Initiative. Since then we have recommended for approval many city-wide and district projects that the Commissioners and the Mayor have identified as the most critical. We share their sense of urgency to get shovels in the ground.

City Code Question No. 4: Whether there is any other board, either public or private, which would better serve the functions of this board?

BOB Response: To our knowledge – no other board – either public or private – has been created and educated to specifically address Miami's Capital Improvement Projects program.

City Code Question No. 5: Whether the ordinance creating the board should be amended to better be able to serve the purpose for which it was created?

BOB Response: The Ordinance was amended by the City Commission unanimously so that it may better serve the purpose for which it was created.

City Code Question No. 6: Whether the board's membership requirements should be modified?

BOB Response: In our opinion, no condition exists that would warrant any change at this time.

City Code Question No. 7: The cost, both direct and indirect, of maintaining the Board?

BOB Response: Since much of the city staff's time is voluntary, the annual cost of maintaining the Board for 2003 remains difficult to estimate. As the portion of staff salaries attributed to the Board include employees from the City Manager's office, the CIP Department, Law, Media Relations and all other city departments required to assist in the function of the Board, the total cost would have to include both personnel and other indirect City expenses.