

Finance & Operations Committee Meeting Transcript

March 07, 2024

1	The Children's Trust Thursday, March 7, 2024
2	3150 S.W. 3rd Avenue - 8th Floor The Children's Trust - Training Room
3	9:30 a.m 11:00 a.m.
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7	Finance & Operations Committee Meeting
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10	Committee Members (Present)
11	Mark Trowbridge, Chairperson
12	Matthew Arsenault, Vice Chair Dr. Clara Lora Ospina
13	Kenneth C. Hoffman, ex-officio Javier Reyes
14	Savier Reyes
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18	Dragidant 8 CEO
19	<u>President & CEO</u> James R. Haj
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21	County Attornavila Office
22	County Attorney's Office
23	Leigh Kobrinski Assistant County Attorney
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1	STAFF	
2	Amanda Gorski	Bevone Ritchie
3	Danielle Barreras	Imran Ali
4	James R. Haj	Juana Leon
5 6	Juliette Fabien	K. Lori Hanson
7	Lisanne Gage	Michele Mordica
8	Natalia Zea	Rachel Spector
9	Victoria Gandul	Wendy Duncombe
10	William Kirtland	Ximena Nunez
11	Yuliet Alfonso	
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CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: All right. 1 Good morning, Everybody. Welcome to our 2 Thursday, March -- Thursday, March 7th 3 Finance and Operations meeting. Thank you 4 all for being here bright and early this 5 6 morning. 7 We have a good agenda here with a 8 couple of resolutions and some other 9 updates, which I think are very important, 10 especially from our audit team, so you'll hear a little bit about that in a moment. 11 But with that, we'll call the meeting to 12 order. 13 Madam Clerk, do we have any public 14 15 comments? 16 MS. LEON: We do not have public comments. 17 18 CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: All right. 19 Thank you very much. 20 Next on our agenda is the approval of 21 the November 2, 2023, Finance and 22 Operations Committee meeting minutes. 23 Is there a motion to approve the 24 minutes as presented? 25 COMMITTEE MEMBER OSPINA: So moved.

CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Thank you very 1 much. 2 Is there a second? 3 COMMITTEE MEMBER REYES: Second. 4 CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: 5 Thank you. Any other corrections or updates? Ιf 6 7 not, all in favor, say aye? 8 COLLECTIVELY: Aye. CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Any opposed? 9 Motion carries. 10 It's always an exciting opportunity 11 12 to welcome our audit team. This is their first year working with us, and so I want 13 14 to thank them for joining us on this journey. This can be, of course -- works 15 16 very closely with Bill and his team. And, of course, one of the most important 17 18 things we do every year is audit our 19 finances. It shows the public the 20 outstanding stewardship that our team does 21 here under the direction of the Board, and 22 so I just want to say thank you, turn it over to Bill to make that introduction. 23 MR. KIRTLAND: Yes. You stole a lot 24 25 of the talking points for the introduction so far, Mark, so thank you very much.

Today we are presenting the September 30, 2023, audited financial statements. Of course, that's roughly just a little bit of five months and change ago.

So, typically, to be eligible for the Certificate of Achievement Financial Reporting and Excellence that we recently announced for the September 30, 2022, audited financial statements, it's a requirement to have these audited financial's completed and presented within the six months of your fiscal year and date.

So if all goes accordingly, we are on schedule to submit our audited financial statements following presentation to committee today. And, of course, we will follow-up with the presentation to the Board later on this month, but primarily the duties as required by the bylaws of this committee is to read the results of this audit.

So I'm going to kick it over and

circle back around at the end of Eddie's presentation. I'm introducing also Eddy Castaneda. Did I say it right? Our auditor on this job. Again, as Mark said, this is the first year of our five-year audit cycle with recent award winners in itself as our audit for the next five years. So this was kind of an introductory year, getting to know a lot of our processes and procedures, and explaining, you know, how we do things in the first year of the audit.

And I think today we're going to go through more of, like, a PowerPoint presentation style explanation of our audit. Maybe rather than meticulously going through each page of the report, I'll have you take over for now.

MR. CASTANEDA: Thanks.

As Bill said, my name is Eddy
Castaneda. I'm the audit senior manager
for MSL. Your agent Shareholder is Joel
Knopp. He's based out of our Orlando
office, so he would be here, if he could.

So as Bill mentioned, this is the

first year of our audit. First year

So before we get into our required communications, I just do want to say a special thanks to Bill and his team for helping us out throughout the audit, getting us what we need, particular things that Wendy to create this document. We've been back and forth. There's a lot of work that goes into this document, a lot of ticking and tying. A lot of flowing, a lot of information from various departments. So thank you, Wendy, for reducing the document in such a clean manner and in a timely manner, so thank you.

So our first required communication, we're required to do these communications to those by the governance, appoint an audit committee as well as for them.

So our audit responsibilities are, as we think we conducted our audit in

audits are always very fun for us, but I'm here to safely say that we had no findings. You have a quote/unquote a clean audit report.

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accordance to generally accepted auditing standards, an additional layer of standards that we have to abide by our governmental auditing standards since the Children's Trust is technically an independent special taxing district, so they are technically in Florida law government, and we have done those -- we have done our audit in accordance with those standards.

The manager's responsibility is to give us access to individuals -- unimpeded access to individuals who we request information from or have interviews with, and we're happy to say that there's no disagreements with management over any financial or accounting reporting issues that may have come up.

We're also required to evaluate the Trust's internal controls in compliance with any material, laws and regulations. We're happy to report that we had no findings there.

Significant other matters, I do want to -- I'll get into that in a moment when

we talk about the report. As Bill mentioned, we're trying to schedule -- we're trying to issue either today or tomorrow, the Trust management we'll give us certain representations saying that they gave us access to all the financial record and no one impeded our access to conduct the audit. We haven't gotten that letter yet, but I know it's in route. So that's kind of the last piece that we get. So once we get that letter, we can finalize our audit.

The assigned individual for oversight was Bill Kirtland and our audit schedule, we have to report -- the goal, the overall goal, was just to issue by the end of March 31st. As Bill mentioned, that's a six-month deadline to get the reports out so that the Trust can continue to get their GFO's.

So services deliverables versus our audit report, as I mentioned, it's an unmodified opinion, a clean opinion. We found no material misstatements, no material infractions, and no material

noncompliance with any Florida statutes or laws.

We do have an emphasis in the matter, which is an optional paragraph beyond the The Trust implemented GASB 96, report. which is just a County standard related to subscription-based technology arrangements. It's technical, I'm sure that's unverified. It was implemented this year and no findings there.

We also have three other reports as part of the ACFR, our internal control, our recording internal control compliance and other matters. Like I said, we're required to evaluate the Trust's internal control. We've done so. We have no internal control findings. Our auditor's management letter, which is the letter defined by the Florida auditor general relating to certain procedures that they want us to do as external auditors.

And the last thing, independent accounts report, which is specific to the Trust compliance with the Florida statutes over investment compliance, and we're

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happy to say that there's no violations.

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Next slide. And then briefly I'll just touch upon some high-level financial Next slide. highlights. So as you can see just a comparison from this year to last year, the change in that position is a number that you really want to focus on. It's just a change in the activity throughout the year. As you can see, it increased this year by approximately nine million as opposed to last year, which increased over two-and-a-half million. So the Trust is trending up, which is something that you always want to see.

The next slide. The general fund, which is just the main operating fund, the one fund at the Trust, ended with a net change in balance of 10 million, approximately 11 million, which is pretty healthy compared to last year, just about three million. The majority of the fund balance is restricted for the provider contracts, and that number represents roughly 49 million of your fund balance, which is all restricted.

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Next slide. And just a quick comparison of what you're budgeted to actual results came in. You can see that more revenue came in than budgeted for this year, for approximately six-and-a-half million, and also as deposited, you came under your budgeted expenditures for the year of approximately four million, so that's a good sign.

And, other than that, any questions, the committee, if you have any questions?

CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Questions? Jim or Bill, any other thoughts?

MR. KIRTLAND: Yes, I guess I have a few follow-up comments, if it's all right.

I also wanted to piggyback on what Eddy said about our own staff at the Trust. I'm also not a part of just generating -- you know, being part of the audit process and generating the reports, but, however, I do notice the finance staff, you know, day in and day out supporting this audit. They sit right next to me. I see them getting together all the work papers diligently. And even

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in the completion process, you know, we're still working hard to finish this audit. So I wanted to thank Wendy and Lisanne for really helping sort of guide, you know, this audit process. Wendy is instrumental in generating the report, you know. we all kind of have a hand in maybe some of the footnotes, but she's really driving the report. Wendy, you know, builds the structure and foundation of this report, so I wanted to give special thanks to Wendy for leading the audit process and the report generation, but a lot of what supports the report itself, you know, as stated in the presentation, internal controls and compliance that the Trust throughout the year takes 365 days, right, to make that audit, to produce that type of quality. So all the staff at the Trust are really putting their part in supporting, you know, all the policies that we have in place, and it starts, you know, at the executive level. And Jim's support and, you know, the finance team for helping enforce those policies at

times, as unpopular as they may be. So I wanted to thank, you know, all the finance staff that aren't sitting in the room and the Trust staff that are also not sitting in the room and sitting in the room for their support of the audit and the audit process as well.

As some of the numbers indicated in the presentation, we did have a change in the fund balance, about approximately \$10.7 million. This was expected, if you may remember from our millage discussions in establishing our half millage rate in the current fiscal year that we're in.

Looking at just some of the forecasted numbers, I mean, we essentially, what we thought, you know, even though we had budgeted expenditures, we do prepare for what we think is the forecast actual and realized expenditures for the year. So we found ourselves actually closing out the year maybe about \$4.6 million greater than what we thought we would finish. So it's a marginal variance where we thought the expenditures

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would be, but, however, what offset the additional expenditures was additional revenue.

Last year was extremely advantageous with interest rates and holding our funds in certificates of deposits and the interest that we earned off that. So, essentially, we about over-performed in revenue almost equivalent to the additional expenditures. So the fund balance pretty much landed right where we thought it would be with those two types of revenue and expenditure activity. So that, of course, we got half millage rate last year to support and prepare for the current fiscal year that we're in and all those additional funding selections, the additional funds that we put into the RFP's and the expansion of our funding for this current five-year cycle, so pretty soon we'll be engaging in our millage discussion as we approach the budgeting process for next year starting October 1, Seems like it's still kind of far 2024 off. It's going to arrive any moment.

I just hope that, you know, this report
helps set the stage a little bit for, you
know, just beginning that discussion in
our next committee meeting.

Later on in the meeting, we do also

Later on in the meeting, we do also have our monthly financial statements of the 9/30/2023 reports, but we have here today, you know, the annual comprehensive financial report essentially reporting on the same information, but we do have some additional information in those reports to share later.

So, with that, I don't have any additional comments.

MR. HAJ: Just quick. Thank you.

Bill, thank you for your leadership. Lisanne has been the director for finance for quite sometime. We restructured. She is the #2 in the organization in the last six months, so you'll be seeing her quite a bit.

And, Wendy, thank you for all your efforts as always. You know, I have it in my CEO talking points. The GFOA Certificate of Excellence. Ken and Mark,

1 you mentioned at the Board meeting. We haven't mentioned it at the Finance 2 Committee. This is our 11th year in a 3 row, and that's huge. I don't want that 4 to get lost, and successfully had the last 5 11 years. 6 7 Eddy, thank you for your team. 8 always have concerns when you have new auditor and how it works for the next 9 three months -- for the past three months, 10 11 but you and your team have been phenomenal 12 to work with. And I just want to give a special 13 shout out, too, because Bill and the 14 15 finance team work, but they work in 16 conjunction with the executives and all the other programs, all the other 17

departments, so thank you for the executives and directors in this room as well, and, most importantly, thank you to the Finance Committee.

CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Thank you. Welcome again, Eddy.

MR. CASTANEDA: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Any final

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1 thoughts? I do believe it's on here to approve the ACFR as it's presented. 2 So is there a motion to approve the 3 ACFR fiscal year '23? 4 COMMITTEE MEMBER ARSENAULT: So 5 moved. 6 7 COMMITTEE MEMBER REYES: Second. CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: I have a motion 8 9 and a second. Any additional discussion or thoughts? Alright, seeing none, all in 10 11 favor, say aye? COLLECTIVELY: Aye. 12 CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Any opposed, 13 14 nay? Motion carries. Thank you, again, for all the great 15 16 work with our team. And as an organization that also goes through a 17 18 nonprofit audit, I have nothing but great 19 regard for each of you for the work that 20 you do, because it's over and above 21 everything else you're doing on the day-to-day, so congratulations. 22 We have a couple of resolutions 23 today, so we'll move into those now. 24 25 First is Resolution 2024-A. This is

1 an authorization to negotiate and execute contracts with five vendors identified 2 herein and selected following a 3 4 competitive solicitation process, in an amount not to exceed \$2,348,500.00, for a 5 term of 12 months, commencing October 1, 6 7 2024, and ending September 30, 2025. Four 8 annual renewal options available at the sole discretion of the Children's Trust. 9 10 And if you look at pages 5 through 8, you get a little more detail about each of 11 12 those different scopes of responsibility for those RFP's, so please take a look at 13 that. 14 15 Is there a motion to approve this resolution? 16 COMMITTEE MEMBER ARSENAULT: 17 So 18 moved, Arsenault. CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, 19 Matthew. 20 21 Is there a second? COMMITTEE MEMBER OSPINA: 22 Second, Ospina. 23 CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, Dr. 24 25 Ospina.

We'll move into discussion. 1 MR. HAJ: Recusal. 2 CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Oh. is there 3 any recusals? My apologies. 4 COMMITTEE MEMBER REYES: 5 Recusal, I'm in a familial relationship Reves. 6 7 with WOW Marketing. CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Okay. 8 Thank 9 you. 10 Any other recusals? Alright, seeing none, moving to some discussion. See 11 RFPs, follow along. Five different 12 strands advertising creative 13 African-American and Haitian Creole media 14 15 buys, event planning and champions, which 16 you'll hear that we ultimately did not 17 move forward with. General media buying 18 and public relation services. And I think 19 you realize that we do qualify a number of 20 organizations and companies under each of 21 Some of them are well known to those. 22 you, have come back and are working with us again, and some others are new to the 23 opportunity, but the aggregate total that 24 25 we spend you see there is the

2.3485 million. 1 Discussion or questions? Any other 2 detail that you would like? You have 3 staff here to help with that. 4 COMMITTEE MEMBER REYES: What 5 happened with the event planning? 6 7 MR. HAJ: After the bid, we felt we did not need the services and that we're 8 9 going to continue the same route we're doing. It may come back this time. 10 CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: This time 11 12 around. Great question. Other thoughts? Alright, seeing 13 none, we'll move into a vote. All in 14 15 favor, say aye? 16 COLLECTIVELY: Aye. CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Any opposed, 17 18 nay? The motion carries. Thank you all 19 very much. Next is resolution 2024-B. This is 20 21 an authorization to accept a \$1,000,000.00 contribution from and enter into an 22 agreement with the Frederick A. Deluca 23 24 Foundation to fund The Children's Trust 25 Families Forward Child Care Scholarship

payments; to amend The Children's Trust 1 budget to be reflective of the contributed 2 funds: and for The Children's Trust to 3 increase the Families Forward contract 4 with the Early Learning Coalition of 5 Miami-Dade/Monroe over two fiscal years 6 7 for child care scholarship payments to the 8 Thrive by 5 early learning providers. 9 Is there a motion to approve this resolution? 10 COMMITTEE MEMBER ARSENAULT: So 11 12 moved, Arsenault. CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, 13 Matthew. 14 Is there a second? 15 COMMITTEE MEMBER REYES: 16 Second, Reyes. 17 18 CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Thank you, 19 Javier. 20 Are there any recusals? Alright, 21 seeing none, we'll move into discussion. So this is a million dollar 22 contribution. It will occur over a 23 two-year window. My understanding is that 24 25 isn't fully determined yet whether that

will be in two equal parts or be slightly
different depending on the need, but
ultimately it will be a total of

\$1 million.

Any discussion? Any questions? Jim.

MR. HAJ: I just want to highlight the work of Thrive by 5 the last couple of years, and we have a group that met last Monday called the fiscal cliff group, which is collaborative of leaders throughout Miami. Mark is a part of that group. Superintendent joined us this last Monday. We're advocating for policy at the statewide level for change to make sure that we stop the fiscal cliff and help families and help families out of poverty and send child to quality child care centers, but there's also the need, you have families who are accepting right So we put \$13 million in scholarship now. to trust, but we're looking for outside Natalia and her team, Juliette, partners. Amanda, Lori, there's a group of people who we've been beating the bush to ask

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We finally got this partner Deluca to come in on million dollars. We have other The mayor put \$3 million and other folks coming in soon. Hopefully, we have recommendations in the next year or so of more people coming in, but I do want to thank Deluca for coming in and putting a million dollars to help families right now get off the scholarship waitlist and get them into centers. Also, it's an economic issue these families can work.

So thank you, Deluca Foundation.

CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Terrific.

Any other thoughts or comments? Alright, seeing none, we'll move into a vote. All in favor of this resolution,

COLLECTIVELY: Aye.

CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Any opposed, Motion carries.

Thank you all very much for your support of both of those resolutions.

We'll now move into the CEO report. Some of it we've already alluded to, but

1 opportunities for some exciting things that are on the agenda here coming 2 forward. 3 Mr. CEO. 4 MR. HAJ: Mr. Chair, thank you. 5 Yesterday, I sent out a reminder 6 7 e-mail. Champions for Children is coming 8 quickly. April 11th is around the corner. 9 We're starting to fill up. We're already over 500. Our cap is at 1300, but we want 10 to make sure the Board is taken care of, 11 12 so if you have not RSVP, please do so. Young Talent Big Dreams Final is 13 Saturday, May 11, at the Coral Gables 14 theater -- at the Coral Gables -- Miracle 15 16 theater in Coral Gables. We'll be sending an invite if you'd like to attend. 17 18 And the monthly financial statement 19 that Bill alluded to was posted. 20 Bill, do you have any comments on the 21 monthly financial statements? MR. KIRTLAND: I'm trying to stay 22 away from being so long-winded. 23 24 I just wanted to kind of, like, dive 25 in a little bit into some of the details

of expenditures and revenues that were reported in the ACFR earlier. We would have like to have presented on September 30, 2023, financial's on an earlier date, but without the January meeting and February meeting, they sort of got pushed, you know. So it might seem a little redundant around the same day.

But as I alluded to earlier, the revenue performance -- of course, we brought in more ad valorem revenues with the millage rate increasing from one year to the next, and that equated to \$19.3 million, but as I mentioned earlier, investment earnings from this year compared to last was an increase of \$4.2 million. It really gave us an opportunity to reinvest those funds into provider services in the community.

Expenses. Because of also we're looking into additional program funding that we had assigned in the last fiscal year, we did increase in our provider expenditures by \$16 million last year. So overall in revenues and expenses, you saw

increases that led us to the \$10.7 million in growth in fund balance.

A report that we also I think are required -- can't remember the resolution number, but in previous years where we discussed Champions for Children, is that we like to report in the last financial, monthly financial each year, the performance of champions collection versus expenses and our rolling balance understanding each year just to see our fund raising efforts versus expenditures were going.

So we included in the final page of the report essentially the beginning fund balance of Champions for Children going into last year, which was \$51,000. That was our sponsorship revenue in previous years versus the contracts that we have in place to execute the event. So, again, we had successful sponsorship and ticket revenues that added roughly \$35,000 more to essentially the over-performance of sponsorships of champions compared to the expenditures.

So we just keep track of this just in case in any given year, our sponsorship goals aren't met to meet the expenditures, so we can say we still have collected, you know, revenues to cover this event fully tax free.

CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Probably better, Bill, just to do it on a year-by-year basis, 'cause it's not really a fund. So the fact that we make money three or four years ago has no relevance to today.

MR. KIRTLAND: Right.

CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: So I would just do it on a standalone.

MR. HAJ: Mr. Chair, if I may, one last thing.

The child care scholarships we mentioned about Deluca coming in. We mentioned about the Mayor. We announced it. We thanked the Commission and the Mayor, and the Mayor's Children Commission to get to this point where they added three million to our pot. Last several months we've been working on agreement

1 between the County, the Trust and the ELC. The money will be going to the ELC, but I 2 just want to make sure that we can have a 3 motion to go into the agreement, the three 4 million with the Mayor and the ELC. 5 MS. KOBRINSKI: Right. Just a motion 6 7 to authorize the Trust to enter into the agreement with the ELC and the County. 8 9 Even though the Trust isn't providing the funds, we still have that as part of the 10 agreement, because it's their program and 11 12 so we want the oversight. So just for authorization to enter into the agreement. 13 14 CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Okav. COMMITTEE MEMBER ARSENAULT: I'll 15 16 make a motion. CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: We have a 17 18 motion. 19 Is there a second? COMMITTEE MEMBER REYES: I'll second. 20 CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: We have a 21 22 second. Any further discussion? Alright, 23 seeing none, all in favor of the 24 25 authorization, say aye?

1	COLLECTIVELY: Aye.				
2	CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Any opposed,				
3	nay? Motion carries. Thank you.				
4	MR. HAJ: Thank you, sir.				
5	CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Thank you.				
6	MR. HAJ: I just want to wrap up.				
7	This is Mark, this is your last				
8	meeting.				
9	CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: It is my last				
10	finance committee meeting.				
11	MR. HAJ: So thank you.				
12	CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Thank you for				
13	coming in.				
14	MR. HAJ: I'd like to welcome Matthew				
15	Arsenault as the Chair.				
16	CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: Yeah.				
17	COMMITTEE MEMBER ARSENAULT: I found				
18	a long time ago, it doesn't come with any				
19	award.				
20	CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: No, no.				
21	Jim and I had a conversation earlier				
22	in the week, and so we'll be talking about				
23	committee chairs, vice chairs and				
24	committee engagement, so that will be				
25	something that we'll be putting together				

1 in the next couple of months as we transition, but Matthew will be leading us 2 as the Finance Chair and Treasurer of the 3 Trust, so looking forward to handing 4 him the --5 MR. HAJ: You want a gavel? 6 7 CHAIRMAN TROWBRIDGE: -- gavel. Anything else for the good of the 8 order today? 9 Remember, you've got Champions, so go 10 11 ahead and RSVP for that, for April 11th, and a couple of other things there on the 12 agenda. 13 Alright, seeing none, we will stand 14 15 adjourned. Thank you. MR. HAJ: 16 Thank you. 17 (Thereupon, at 9:56 a.m., the meeting 18 was concluded). 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER STATE OF FLORIDA) COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE) I, Lorena Ramos, National Registered Professional Reporter, do hereby certify that I was authorized to and did TRANSCRIBE the AUDIOTAPED proceeding of the Finance & Operations Committee meeting, held on the 7th day of March 2024; and that the foregoing transcript, pages 1 through 30, is a true record of my stenographic notes. DATED this 03/22/2024 in the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County, Florida. Lorena Ramos LORENA RAMOS, COURT REPORTER Registered Professional Reporter

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