



INTERIM INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
February 16, 2026

PREPARED FOR

**Mayor and Members of the City Commission
Of North Miami Beach**

PREPARED BY

**ALGO LAW FIRM, LLP
815 Ponce De Leon Blvd, Suite 101
Coral Gables, Florida 33134**



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY3-10

INTERVIEW NOTES11

CONCLUSION 29

CHORONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS30

OFFICIAL RECORDS LIST31



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction:

On January 20, 2026, the City of North Miami Beach Commission passed a resolution requesting that Interim City Manager Andrew Plotkin to hire an independent firm to conduct an internal investigation to determine whether elected officials acted improperly towards city staff, improperly interfered in administrative operations and vendor selections, and/or engaged in activities that could be considered ethical or Charter violations.

On February 2, 2026, the ALGO Law Firm, LLP was hired to conduct this internal investigation by Interim City Manager Andrew Plotkin. The Firm was tasked to complete this Report by February 27, 2026. This Interim Report provides various findings of possible City of North Miami Charter violations which require further interviews and investigation.

Employee A:

Throughout the interview, Employee A exhibited a generally cooperative demeanor but showed signs of discomfort when discussing Mayor Michael Joseph, as well as communications related to Interim City Manager Andrew Plotkin and inquiries regarding vendor procurement. The investigators noted that Employee A provided a physical file of supporting email messages relevant to the investigation. (Refer to Official Record #1).

Key findings from the interview revealed that Employee A alleged unprofessional conduct by Mayor Joseph, characterized by disrespectful interactions and improper responses to greetings. Additionally, Employee A reported receiving multiple communications from the Mayor regarding operational matters and vendor engagements, which deviated from standard administrative protocols of the City of North Miami Beach. Noteworthy occurrences included direct vendor recommendations from the Mayor to include AECOM and Figgers Communications, and a visit where the Mayor inquired about project delays.

The interview raised serious concerns regarding procurement integrity, particularly regarding practices aimed at evading formal Request for Proposal (RFP) requirements by structuring project costs to remain below thresholds that would trigger such procedures and Commission approvals in potential violations of the City Charter.

Employee B:

Employee B was identified as a crucial witness due to his senior role, direct interactions with elected officials, and possession of contemporaneous documentation. Employee B provided



hundreds of pages of emails, text messages, invoices, and procurement documents, all of which were secured for the investigative file. (Refer to Official Records #2-12).

During the interview, Employee B was initially guarded but became increasingly cooperative. His demeanor shifted significantly when discussing direct confrontations with Mayor Joseph and vendor procurement interference. The investigation revealed numerous allegations of alleged improper conduct and administrative interference by Mayor Joseph. These included direct communications with senior staff about operational and procurement matters, the use of aggressive and obscene language toward Employee B, and in-person inquiries about project delays that bypassed established administrative protocols. He exhibited visible emotional distress when recounting an aggressive phone call from the mayor that was overheard by his minor child.

Employee B reported regular interference in vendor selection, identifying multiple vendors allegedly influenced by Mayor Joseph, including Figgers Communications and AECOM. Noteworthy findings included vendors being referred directly by Mayor Joseph and a systematic practice of structuring projects to avoid triggering formal Request for Proposal (RFP) processes. (Refer to Official Records #5 and 6).

Employee B also highlighted potential irregularities regarding lobbyist contracts and payment practices, noting that lobbyists were often paid without valid agreements and without proper documentation of services rendered.

Concerns were raised regarding the mayor's travel expenses to Japan, which included late reconciliations and excessive costs that were inconsistent with City policy, including an upgrade to First Class resulting in a charge in excess of \$3,000 to the City. (Refer to Official Records #8 and 12),

Employee C:

During the interview, Employee C initially exhibited evasiveness and vagueness in response to several inquiries. This necessitated multiple follow-up questions to extract substantive responses. When confronted with documented facts from prior interviews, Employee C became more forthcoming. Despite proclaiming his knowledge of proper ethics and procedures, he recounted instances where senior officials pressured him to circumvent established processes, raising concerns about ethical and legal integrity.

One of the critical findings was the allegation of the circumvention of the City's purchasing authority and procurement process. Employee C described the approval and implementation of a contract with Figgers Communications for an emergency notification system, even though the City already had an effective \$12,000 system (Code Red) in place. Figgers charged \$48,000 per year



without prior municipal experience. Employee C opposed this procurement and refused to sign a purchasing exception; however, approval was granted by Interim City Manager Andy Plotkin, allegedly under the influence of Chief of Staff/Interim Assistant City Manager Marlene Monastime. (Refer to Official Record #13).

Additionally, the interview revealed improper influence by elected officials in administrative operations. Employee C noted that several elected officials exerted indirect pressure on Interim City Manager Plotkin, affecting administrative decision-making. He mentioned that this pressure was subtle but pervasive, undermining the separation between policy and administration intended by the Charter.

Another significant finding involved allegations of attempted manipulation of official records concerning the recent City Manager interviews. Employee C detailed an incident in which Mayor Joseph contacted him by phone and requested that he alter the official interview recordings for City Manager candidate Marlene Monastime. The Mayor's demands included disconnecting the recording equipment and editing the recordings. Employee C recounted that the distressing interaction with Mayor Joseph lasted approximately 40 to 50 minutes, leading to significant emotional anxiety and fear of retaliation for refusing his unethical requests. During this interaction, Employee C faced intimidation and hostility from Mayor Joseph, who resorted to profane accusations and threats. Employee C further stated that this behavior contributed to a hostile work environment, forcing him to take personal time away from work to cope with the distress from the incident.

Employee D:

Employee D served concurrently as Parks Director and Interim City Manager during the period in question. Despite describing his role as transitional and intentionally limited, Employee D acknowledged that his signature was required for personnel actions, procurement approvals, and financial disbursements. He noted that items presented to him as procedurally compliant were generally approved and that he relied heavily on subordinate departments, such as the Chief Financial Officer and procurement staff, to ensure compliance. This dual-role structure placed Employee D in a position of ultimate administrative authority, notwithstanding his characterization of the interim role as "keeping the wheels on the bus."

Employee D stated that he avoided policy creation and major initiatives, citing the anticipated arrival of a permanent City Manager. However, he also acknowledged that he approved procurement actions and payments to ensure operational continuity. He admitted that he did not independently verify all contracts or financial documentation and that he signed approvals when informed that procurement guidelines had been followed. These admissions establish active



executive participation in approvals, coupled with limited or lack of due diligence, during a period of heightened governance risk.

During the interview, Employee D repeatedly stated that he did not recall or was unaware of various matters, including payments and contracts involving Figgers. Employee D maintained that if documents bore his signature, “he assumed that the right path should have been followed by department directors.”

Employee E:

Employee E, a Senior Management Analyst who reports directly to the City Manager, has a critical role that involves oversight of grants and strategic initiatives, coordination with City Manager directives, and regular interactions with registered lobbyists. This position provides Employee E with credible access to internal financial controls, procurement practices, and administrative operations.

Employee E confirmed a working relationship with all seven elected officials, stating he has not personally witnessed inappropriate conduct and affirmed a lack of direct evidence of Charter violations by elected officials. However, Employee E raised significant allegations regarding internal administrative and financial misconduct, particularly involving the CFO and internal finance operations.

The allegations include claims that the CFO created chaos by neglecting core responsibilities and bypassing standard administrative protocols by communicating directly with individual commissioners. Employee E suggested that instability in finance leadership led to systematic failures in internal controls and noted that certain departments allegedly inflated budget requests to generate discretionary funds, with the library mentioned as a notable example. Additionally, allegations of frequent absences from critical responsibilities were made against the CFO.

Employee E emphasized the importance of transparency and policy compliance under prior City Managers, indicating that such practices included rigorous reviews of invoices and contracts. These remarks act as mitigating factors, suggesting any breakdowns in compliance may have occurred after shifts in leadership rather than indicating a systemic historical issue.

Employee F:

Employee F's testimony alleged critical deficiencies in governance, including breakdowns in Charter-mandated administrative controls and a lack of transparency regarding compensation



and procurement practices. Risks associated with failing to adhere to ethical standards, such as those involving gifts and travel, were also recognized.

The investigation revealed that Employee F believed the Building Department enterprise fund to be at a surplus of \$5.2 million and raised concerns about fragmented procurement processes, inconsistent approval authority, and the bypassing of mandated reporting structures. Furthermore, the testimony indicated limited independence within Human Resources and staff reluctance to report concerns, creating an environment that jeopardizes ethical standards and compliance.

Employee F's disclosures related to gifts and travel brought attention to potential violations in regulatory requirements regarding prior authorizations and transparency. The investigation also identified issues with budgetary controls, where surplus funds have not been adequately managed, highlighting risks in fiscal responsibility and oversight.

Additionally, compensation documentation for Employee F was documented and submitted despite Employee F stating she had no knowledge of the paperwork or the amount of her salary increase but verified she received a salary increase upon her interim appointment. (Refer to Official Record #11).

Moreover, Employee F noted a culture of fear surrounding the reporting of operational and fiscal concerns, compounded by potential political retaliation and the influence of elected officials on HR processes.

Employee G:

Employee G revealed various findings regarding procurement practices and bid waivers. A proposal from Figgers Communications, amounting to approximately \$48,000, originated from the City Manager's Office without a traditional competitive solicitation. Although IT and Procurement reviewed this proposal, there was an existing similar vendor already in place known as Code Red. Employee G acknowledged that not all procurements necessitate solicitation and noted that bid waivers are rare, accounting for only around 10% of procurements. The potential governance concerns stem from City Charter provisions prohibiting undue influence by elected officials in administrative matters. (Refer to Official Record #6).

Furthermore, the investigation examined the engagement of a lobbyist named Darkhorse outside the established competitive lobbyist pool. Darkhorse was engaged in a water-related matter without clear directive authority, raising issues regarding compliance with procurement policies and the procurement code. Similarly, findings related to AECOM, a company in the pre-approved



CCNA A&E pool, indicated no direct charter violations but emphasized the need for strict adherence to conflict-of-interest prohibitions. (Refer to Official Records #5, 6, & 8).

The various engagements of lobbyists and procurements raised concerns over the established processes, particularly with the Mayor's Japan trip, where potential policy violations regarding airfare and upgrades were noted. (Refer to Official Record #12).

Even though Employee G demonstrated cooperation and knowledge of procurement procedures during the interview, her comments brought attention to several systemic governance issues. These include potential influences on procurement processes by administrative directives, inadequate oversight of travel expenditures, and possible lapses in enforcing lobbyist pool restrictions.

Employee H:

Employee H provided various irregularities such as the City Manager recruitment process, governance structure, and handling of an internal complaint involving the Mayor and Employee C. Key issues arose, particularly regarding the management of a heated verbal confrontation between the Mayor and Employee C, which HR failed to document.

Employee C reported being reprimanded for the handling of a public records video, during which Mayor Joseph allegedly pressured him to alter the content, potentially violating the Charter and state public records law. Although Employee H conferred with the City Attorney, he was told by the City Attorney that he had already spoken to Interim City Manager Plotkin and advised Employee H to disregard the incident. HR's failure to document this incident and lack of formal procedures created significant governance risks and exposure to claims related to a hostile work environment. As a result, Employee C took his own personal time to decompress from the verbal abuse he experienced with Mayor Joseph. (Refer to Official Record #15).

Instances of irregularities in the recruitment process were also identified, where different interview settings for candidates led to perceptions of favoritism. Employee H acknowledged the importance of uniformity in recruitment practices, as inconsistencies could jeopardize the fairness and transparency implied by the Charter. Furthermore, the governance environment was described as unstable, marked by frequent leadership changes and undue pressure from elected officials, undermining the framework established by the Charter.

Oversight gaps in the recently launched ethics and fraud hotline were noted, indicating a lack of clarity in reporting processes and performance metrics, which could weaken accountability mechanisms. (Refer to Official Record #16).



The findings reveal weaknesses in documentation and communication, as well as an overreliance on informal conflict resolution, fostering a reactive rather than structured governance approach. The highest legal risks identified stem from failures in documentation, inadequate guidance from the City Attorney, and unaddressed allegations against Mayor Joseph concerning public record alterations.

Employee I:

Employee I provided an interview that covered P-Card oversight, travel spending, mayor-staff interactions, potential public fund misuse, dual employment and time-reporting for a mayoral aide, and workplace retaliation concerns. One of the findings revealed that Employee I maintained custody of three P-cards related to mayoral and commission activities but inherited a significant backload of unreconciled transactions, which included charges that she did not initiate or authorize. A specific instance involved a purchase of flowers for an event honoring the city clerk amounting to over \$200, which Employee I was unaware of and believed did not align with public purpose use.

Additionally, Employee I discussed reimbursement concerns associated with the Mayor's trip to Japan. Although the trip was approved through an emergency agenda item, she learned of significant airfare upgrades that lacked prior approval from the Commission and did not comply with the City's travel policy. Employee I further described instances of administrative interference where the Mayor allegedly instructed staff not to communicate directly with her and circumvented her involvement in matters related to her administrative responsibilities.

Moreover, concerns emerged about a mayoral aide who reportedly holds dual employment, working full-time for North Miami while also spending approximately 29 hours per week for North Miami Beach. Communication overlaps and inaccuracies in time reporting suggest potential violations of governance boundaries.

Employee I also expressed fear of retaliation regarding her potential complaints against the Mayor, indicating a lack of confidence in impartial investigations by the City. This perceived retaliatory climate raises significant governance concerns as it undermines the integrity of internal reporting mechanisms and could inhibit administrative oversight, which is contrary to the expectations set out in the Charter.

Overlapping Concerns with Mayor Joseph and Figgers Communications:

A federal investigation involving Rep. Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick which included mention of Mayor Joseph and Freddie Figgers (CEO of Figgers Communications) illustrates potential ethical and legal dilemmas surrounding public trust and the procurement processes. There



appears to be a complex relationship tying together the alleged coercive actions of Mayor Joseph listed above, the contracting practices with Figgers Communication, and the implications of their interactions concerning federal funding as alleged by United States House of Representatives Committee on Ethics December 16, 2025 report.

Correspondence by Sherece George Depusoir:

A written memorandum dated February 11, 2026 was received from the Chief Procurement Officer Sherece George Depusoir. This memorandum was written after she received a visit from the City Attorney who advised that he had been informed that the Special Charter Investigation had commenced and that employee interviews were underway. He inquired as to: (1) the identity of the firm retained, (2) who selected the firm, (3) who approved the engagement, (4) the cost to the City, and (5) whether and how a procurement process was conducted to retain the firm. After it was explained to the City Attorney as to the process completed, he had no further questions.

The investigative team did not inquire with the City Attorney as to if this is common practice of him to inquire as to vendor selection, but if it is, the City Attorney should agree to be interviewed by the investigative team to provide light as to the many issues raised in this report.



INTERVIEW NOTES

Employee A:

Improper Communications and Administrative Interference

Employee A stated that he received multiple phone calls and communications from Mayor Joseph regarding:

- Operational matters.
- Project initiatives.
- Requests and recommendations to engage specific vendors.

He indicated that such communications were inconsistent with the appropriate process and chain of command and were reported through administrative channels.

Vendor-Specific Areas of Concern

Employee A identified multiple vendors associated with potential ethics and Charter violations, to include:

- AECOM
- Figgers Communications
- CSG Cyber Security
- Darkhorse (a lobbying firm)

Key incidents included:

- Mayor Joseph recommending or encouraging the use of the above listed vendors.
- Mayor Joseph contacting Employee A directly regarding vendor proposals.
- A documented instance in which Mayor Joseph appeared in person at Employee A's office, the first and only in-person visit—to inquire about delays in a project.



- During that visit, Mayor Joseph allegedly placed AECOM on speakerphone in Employee A's presence.
- Employee A subsequently received a call from AECOM indicating they were contacting him at the Mayor's request and were asked to submit a proposal directly to him. Employee A recalled that AECOM's proposal ranged between \$450,000 and \$480,000, under the \$500,000 ceiling placed by the Commission.

Employee B:

Improper Conduct and Administrative Interference by Mayor Joseph

Employee B reported repeated instances in which Mayor Joseph:

- Initiated direct communications with senior staff regarding operational and procurement matters.
- Used profane, aggressive, and demeaning language toward Employee B.
- Appeared in staff offices to question project delays and procurement decisions.
- Bypassed the City Manager and established administrative chain of command.

Employee B identified multiple vendors connected to alleged improper influence by Mayor Joseph, including but not limited to:

- Figgers Communications
- AECOM
- CSG Cyber Security
- Darkhorse Strategies (Lobbyist)
- Ramba Consulting Group (Lobbyist)

Key findings include:

- Vendors reporting that they were referred directly by Mayor Joseph.



- Vendors submitting invoices and performing work without executed service agreements.
- Attempts to charge City “P-Cards” and later backfill procurement documentation.
- Procurement exemptions and service agreements executed after services were rendered.
- Interim City Manager Andrew Plotkin approving purchase orders and payments despite known deficiencies.

Alleged Circumvention of Procurement Thresholds

Employee B reported a systemic practice in which projects were structured at or below approval thresholds to avoid triggering formal RFP requirements. This practice undermines competitive procurement safeguards and exposes the City to legal and financial risk.

Lobbyist Contracting and Payment Irregularities

Employee B identified repeated instances where:

- Lobbyists were paid without valid service agreements.
- Invoices lacked documentation of services rendered.
- Payments were directed or expedited at the mayor’s request.
- Total lobbying expenditures escalated significantly without corresponding authorization.

Travel and Credit Card (“P-Card”) Concerns

Employee B identified irregularities related to Mayor Joseph’s travel, including:

- Late reconciliation of charges.
- Airline, lodging, and upgrade expenses are inconsistent with City policy.
- Emergency agenda placement for international travel (Japan Trip, June/July 2025).



- Senior administrative staff consistently handling questionable expenses.

Employee C:

Circumvention of the City’s Purchasing Authority and Procurement Process

Employee C described the approval and implementation of a contract with Figgers Communications that replaced an existing emergency notification system (“Code Red”), despite the following facts:

- The City already maintained a functioning system at \$12,000 annually.
- The Figgers system costs \$48,000 annually.
- Figgers had no prior municipal implementation history.
- The City was Figgers’ first client for this type of system.
- The City was invoiced before the product was operational.
- Negative references were received from the City of Pompano Beach.
- Employee C explicitly opposed the procurement.
- Employee C refused to sign a purchasing exception.
- Approval was nonetheless granted by Interim City Manager Andy Plotkin, allegedly at the direction or influence of Chief of Staff and Interim Assistant City Manager Marlene Monastime.

Improper Influence by Elected Officials in Administrative Operations

Employee C stated that elected officials, while not directly issuing orders, exerted pressure indirectly through the City Manager, describing the environment as:

“They put pressure but not pressure. They will say something to the City Manager and they will pressure.”

Attempted Manipulation of Official Records – City Manager Interviews



Employee C provided detailed testimony regarding a January 2026 incident involving the mayor and recorded City Manager candidate interviews:

- As alleged by Employee C, The Mayor requested Employee C to:
 - Disconnect recording equipment.
 - Leave the office.
 - Edit or alter official interview recordings to remove portion where City Manager Candidate was reading from notes.
- Interviews of two candidates (Monastime and Cameau) occurred at private residences.
- The mayor requested:
 - Audio-only presentation for certain candidates.
 - Full video presentation for others.
- Employee C refused unless a disclaimer was added noting edits.
- The mayor reacted with:
 - Profanity.
 - Accusations.
 - Personal attacks.
 - Statements implying retaliation.

Statements of Concern Attributed to the Mayor

- “I should have known I couldn’t fucking trust you or HR.”
- “You’re doing this because you’re fucking afraid of Fortuna & Phyllis.”
- “You’re going to fuck me over.”

Intimidation and Hostile Conduct Toward City Staff

Employee C described the interaction with the mayor as:

- Intimidating.



- Emotionally distressing.
- Lasting approximately 40–50 minutes.
- Severe enough to require time off from work.

Employee C stated:

- He felt he would “lose either way”.
- He feared retaliation.
- He believed refusing the request was the only ethical option.

Employee D:

Procurement and Financial Controls

During the interview, Employee D repeatedly stated that he did not recall or was unaware of:

- Payments and contracts involving Figgers, including monthly checks.
- Vendor invoices submitted absent executed contracts.
- Payments approved after services had already been rendered.
- Reallocation of funds for unbudgeted initiatives, including Aecom-related expenditures.
- Budget details for special events, lobbying, or building fund allocations.

Despite these stated gaps in knowledge, Employee D maintained that if documents bore his signature, “the right path should have been followed by department directors.”

Structuring to Avoid Procurement Thresholds

Employee D denied personal awareness of intentional circumvention.

Elected Official Interference



Employee D described incidents involving Mayor Joseph engaging in inappropriate conduct toward staff regarding procurement decisions, including the use of profanity and expressions of dissatisfaction with vendor selection outcomes with the IT Department.

Although Employee D denied receiving direct instructions to violate policy, his testimony confirms a culture with an environment in which elected officials customarily exerted pressure on administrative processes, contrary to the City Charter's separation of powers.

Recordkeeping, Transparency, and Interview Conduct

Employee D demonstrated limited familiarity with:

- The City's building fund.
- Lobbying contracts and lobbying budget changes.
- Special events funding mechanisms.

Investigators observed that Employee D was evasive, frequently responding with "I don't recall," "I'm not sure," or conditional language. Notable non-verbal behaviors included visible nervousness, approval-seeking between interviewers, and discomfort when questioned regarding oversight responsibilities—knowledge inconsistent with expectations of a City Manager-level executive.

Employee E:

No Allegations of Misconduct by Elected Official

Employee E consistently stated:

- He has a working relationship with all seven elected officials.
- He did not personally witness or experience disrespectful or inappropriate conduct by elected officials.
- He is not aware of direct Charter violations committed by elected officials.

Allegations of Internal Administrative and Financial Misconduct



Despite denying wrongdoing by elected officials, Employee E made multiple concerning statements regarding senior administrative officials, specifically the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and internal finance operations.

Employee E alleged the following:

- That the CFO “created chaos” and failed to perform core CFO responsibilities.
- That the CFO communicated directly with individual commissioners, outside standard administrative channels.
- Finance leadership instability contributed to systemic breakdowns in internal controls.
- Certain departments allegedly inflated budget requests to create “slush funds,” with the library cited as a significant example.
- The CFO was described as frequently absent from director-level responsibilities.

Statements Supporting Administrative Compliance (Mitigating Factors)

Employee E strongly defended the conduct of former City Managers Mario Diaz and that of the Interim City Manager Andrew Plotkin, stating that:

- They were not “rubber stamps”
- They rigorously reviewed invoices, contracts, and policies
- All vendors, contracts, and policies were personally monitored and reviewed.
- Transparency and accountability were emphasized

These statements serve as mitigating context, suggesting that breakdowns occurred after or outside of those leadership frameworks, rather than as a systemic historical practice.

Employee F:

Quarterly Gift Disclosures:



- Employee F submitted and provided a photocopy of a quarterly gift disclosure form covering Morocco (October 26, 2025) and Tallahassee (November 19, 2025) to the investigative team.
- Confirm filings with the appropriate City office in compliance with disclosure requirements.

Governance, Separation of Powers & Administrative Oversight

Department heads reporting to Employee F routinely bypass her and report directly to the City Manager. The organizational charts were regarded as imprecise, with ambiguous reporting lines that often-lacked consistent adherence. Although Employee F had administrative responsibilities outlined in the Charter, the Employee was excluded from budget meetings.

Procurement, Vendor Selection & Bid Waivers

- Vendors, including Figgers Communications, were engaged through bid waivers or exemptions, without Employee F recalling contract values, approving authorities, or documentation.
- Elected officials were reported to have direct contact with vendors, bypassing procurement and staff safeguards.
- Employee F served as a conduit for the City Manager but had no visibility in procurement approvals.

Gifts, Travel & Ethics Compliance

- A \$5,000 VIP legislator appreciation reception ticket in Tallahassee.
- A Sister Cities trip to Morocco paid entirely by the Kingdom of Morocco.
- Travel occurred and was considered within her official duties, not personal leave.
- Employee F acknowledged awareness that travel authorizations were sometimes completed after travel occurred, with reimbursements processed post-facto.

Budgetary Controls & Building Department Enterprise Fund



According to Employee F, the Building Department enterprise fund maintains a \$5.2 million surplus, which Employee F stated has exceeded legally permitted reserve limits. No clear approvals, resolutions, or corrective actions were implemented despite acknowledged concerns. Employee F had no authority or visibility into expenditures or reserve management of the Building Fund.

Personnel Actions, Compensation & Documentation

- Employee F received a salary increase upon appointment as Interim Assistant City Manager.
- There was no Personnel Transaction Form (PTF) submitted, reviewed, or confirmed.
- Employee F did not know her current gross salary, the amount or basis of the increase or even when the increase became effective.

Human Resources Independence & Reporting Failures

- Employee F and other staff expressed reluctance to report concerns to HR due to:
 - o Perceived information sharing between HR and elected officials
 - o Fear of retaliation
- A commissioner contacted Employee F within minutes of her City Manager application submission.
- Staff complaints were reportedly not addressed or resolved.

Lobbying & External Relationships

- Lobbying budget exceeded \$400,000 and was also increased.
- For easier administration, two sections of the lobbying budget were combined.
- Miami Marketing Strategies was flagged as questionable because its registration status and compliance with procurement regulations remain uncertain.

Statements of Ethical and Governance Concern



- Fear of political retaliation when raising operational or fiscal concerns.
- Pressure from elected officials discouraging candid evaluation of departmental efficiency.
- Signing documents on behalf of the City Manager without consistent formal delegation.

These statements collectively demonstrate a culture inconsistent with Charter-mandated transparency, accountability, and professional administration.

Employee G:

Procurement Practices and Bid Waivers

- Proposal originated from the City Manager's Office.
- No traditional competitive solicitation was conducted.
- IT and Procurement reviewed the proposal and rejected it.
- The City already had a similar vendor (Code Red).
- Amount was near and under the \$50,000 threshold.
- Employee G acknowledged not all procurements require solicitation.
- Bid waivers are rare (~10% of procurements).

Lobbyist Pool and Darkhorse Engagement

The group of lobbyists was chosen through a competitive selection process that took place in 2022 and 2023. All lobbyists are required to be selected from that group.

- Over \$50,000 requires Commission approval.
- Under \$50,000 approved in-house.
- Darkhorse was not part of the competitively bid lobbyist pool.
- Darkhorse was engaged for a water-related matter.



- Direction came from the Manager's Office and/or City Attorney's Office.
- Employee G does not recall who specifically directed the engagement.

AECOM

- AECOM is a pre-approved CCNA A&E pool.
- Provides P3 and consulting services.
- If consulting on a project, they cannot bid on same project.
- Multiple departments use AECOM via task orders.

Red Speed (School Speed Zone Cameras)

- Commission approved contract.
- Contract pending execution.
- Commissioner contacted Employee G regarding status.

Travel Oversight – Mayor's Japan Trip (\$4,000 + Airfare \$3,000 upgrade)

- Travel required City Manager approval before booking.
- Three centralized P-cards used.
- Personal P-cards removed.
- Upgrades and convenience charges are prohibited by policy.
- Airfare (\$4,000) charged to procurement P-card after booking difficulties.
- Employee G does not specifically recall reviewing reconciliation.
- She admitted that she might have authorized the reimbursement if the upgrade had not been clearly identified.



- Finance focuses on mathematical accuracy, not policy compliance.
- Per diem system (80% advance; \$200–\$300 reconciliation typical).

Building Fund Oversight

- Purchases “should” go through procurement.
- Employee G does not manage fund restrictions.
- Acknowledges statutory restrictions apply.

Gift Disclosure

- Vendor sent Christmas gift cards.
- Returned via certified mail.
- Aware of \$100 disclosure threshold.
- Support staff retains documentation.

Elected Officials – Interaction & Governance

- Limited direct interaction.
- Described environment as professional.
- Commissioners occasionally contact her directly about contract status.
- She would report concerns to the City Manager.

Statements of Concern / Internal Control Weakness

- Near-threshold procurements (\$48,000–\$50,000) without formal solicitation.
- Engagement of non-pool lobbyist (Darkhorse).
- Lack of clear recall regarding direction from Manager’s Office.



- Admission that prohibited travel upgrades could be inadvertently approved.
- Finance review focuses on math, not compliance.
- Building fund oversight not directly monitored by procurement.
- Heavy reliance on Manager's Office routing of vendor proposals.

Employee H:

Alleged Direct Interference by the Mayor with Administrative Staff

- Employee C reported being berated by the mayor for approximately 45 minutes.
- The subject matter involved publication of a Zoom interview video in response to a public records request.
- The mayor allegedly demanded editing/altering or re-recording of the video.
- IT policy prohibits altering public records; records are released as they exist.
- Employee C expressed concern about future retaliation and updated his LinkedIn indicating potential departure.
- Employee C took approximately three days leave following the incident.
- HR did not document the incident.
- After consulting with the City Attorney, HR was advised to disregard the incident.
- HR relied solely on Employee C's statement that he did not wish to pursue action.

HR Failure to Document a Reported Hostile Interaction

- HR was informed of the incident.
- No written statement was requested.
- No internal memorandum was created.
- No written record exists of discussion with the Interim City Manager.



- City Attorney failed to properly advise HR regarding Ricardo Employee C incident.
- Employee subsequently took stress-related leave.

Recruitment Process Irregularities and Perception Risk

Four finalists were identified:

1. Marlene Monestine
2. Darwin Williams (appointed)
3. Rasha Cameau
4. Ricardo Mendez
 - Two candidates interviewed remotely from private locations.
 - Two interviewed onsite at City facilities.
 - The mayor used his own questions during public interviews.
 - Interview format evolved over several days.
 - Public notice parameters shifted.

Governance Instability and Power Vacuum

- “Power vacuum”
- “Crisis after crisis”
- Frequent leadership turnover
- Strong personalities
- Pressure from elected officials during recruitment
- Organizational instability

Ethics and Fraud Hotline Oversight Gaps

- Hotline launched in September 2024.
- Created under direction of City Manager and City Attorney.
- Reports allegedly routed to City Attorney and City Manager.
- HR is uncertain whether HR receives reports.



- No metrics or performance tracking are known.
- No reports known to HR.

Staffing Vacancies and Recruitment Pressure

- Approximately 70–80 full-time vacancies reported during interim period.
- 57 hires since June 2025.
- Interim City Manager Plotkin approved new hires after requests from the CFO and relevant department directors.

Employee I:

Unapproved or Questionable P-Card Charges

- Employee I maintains custody of three P-cards assigned to Mayor and Commission.
- Employee I inherited approximately three years of unreconciled transactions.
- Charges periodically appeared that were not authorized.
- Employee I was required to retroactively investigate and justify transactions to prevent card suspension.

Specific Example – Flowers Purchase:

- Approximately \$200+ charged for flowers for an event honoring the Clerk of the City of North Miami.
- Charged to the North Miami Beach Mayor and Commission P-card.
- Employee I was unaware of the purchase when it occurred.
- She was later informed the Mayor had requested the purchase.
- She testified the expenditure did not benefit the City of North Miami Beach.
- She indicated the purchase did not align with proper public purpose use.

Mayoral Travel and Reimbursement Concerns



International Business Travel

- The Japan trip was approved by Commission via emergency agenda item.
- Employee I did not prepare the Mayor's travel arrangements.
- She later became aware of airfare upgrades costing several thousand dollars.
- She testified such upgrades were not pre-approved by the Commission.
- She stated policy requires use of the lowest reasonable airfare consistent with GSA standards.
- She indicated she would not have approved reimbursement for upgraded airfare.

Administrative Interference and Commission–Manager Governance

Employee I described conduct by the mayor that removed her from normal workflow, directed communications through intermediaries, and created operational disruption.

- The Mayor allegedly instructed others that she was not to communicate with him.
- She was bypassed in matters within her assigned administrative responsibilities.
- She reported exclusion from workflow relating to Mayor-directed matters.
- She described a January 2026 Commission meeting incident involving dramatic public conduct by the Mayor, which she perceived as intimidating.

Dual Employment and Time Accountability Concerns – Mayoral Aide

- The Mayor's aide reportedly works full-time for the City of North Miami.
- Simultaneously works approximately 29 hours per week for North Miami Beach.
- Reported weekend hours (8 hours Saturday and Sunday) plus weekday hours.
- Employee I observed communications during times suggesting potential overlap of municipal employment.



- Questions raised regarding disclosure, time reporting accuracy, and possible overlap of compensated hours.

Workplace Climate and Retaliation Risk

- Employee I reported fear of retaliation if she filed a complaint.
- She expressed lack of confidence that complaints against the Mayor would be addressed impartially.
- She considered filing a police report due to concerns about future mischaracterization of interactions.
- She reported being told informally, “it’s the Mayor,” when raising concerns.



CONCLUSION

The interviews conducted produced allegations, documentation, and firsthand accounts indicating potential violations of the City of North Miami Beach Charter and procurement policies by elected officials, most notably involving direct actions by Mayor Joseph which will require further investigation to determine if any Charter violations occurred.

The cumulative effect of these alleged practices listed above places the City of North Miami Beach at substantial legal, financial, and ethical risk, warranting immediate corrective action, policy enforcement, and potential Charter-level review of all North Miami Beach employees and elected officials.

It is the recommendation of this Firm that further investigation covering additional staff is needed to finalize this report and present the final report to the State Attorney's Office, the Florida Commission on Ethics, and Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics, for review of any potential City of North Miami Beach Charter and/or criminal violations.

All audio recordings and documentary materials are securely kept in the investigation file located at the ALGO Law Firm.



CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

- ***June 11, 2025*** – Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) feasibility study initiated
- ***June 18, 2025*** – Interim promotion of Rahmani and Monestime
- ***September 29, 2025*** – 2nd Budget Public Hearing
- ***October 15, 2025*** – Mayor Travel memo from Interim City Manager Andrew Plotkin
- ***December 10, 2025*** – Cybersecurity assessment for NMB Water
- ***December 16, 2025*** – Committee on Ethics Investigative Subcommittee Statement of Alleged Violations
- ***January 14, 2026*** – CIO Ricardo Employee C Leave
- ***January 20, 2026*** – Marlene Monestime Quarterly Gift Disclosure
- ***February 11, 2026*** – Shereece George Depusoir Memo to City Manager Darvin Williams



OFFICIAL RECORDS

1. Emails pertaining to feasibility study for a new Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP)
2. Emails pertaining to cybersecurity for water plant
3. Email from CFO Rahmani to himself regarding Budget Public Hearing
4. Memo dated February 21, 2025, procedure for reporting fraudulent activity
5. Emails regarding AECOM and WWTP
6. Documents pertaining to Figgers vendor
7. Documents pertaining to Building Fund
8. Documents regarding lobbyists
9. Documents regarding Special Events
10. Fiscal Year 2025-2026 proposed budget
11. Personnel Transaction Form for Tarik Rahmani and Marline Monestime
12. Documents pertaining to Mayor's travel to Japan
13. Documents pertaining to City Wide Texting Project
14. Quarterly Gift Disclosure form for Marline Monestime
15. Ricardo Employee C timecard inquiry
16. Emails pertaining to Reporting Fraud Hotline
17. Memo to City Manager Williams from Sherece George Depusoir
18. New hires document from HR during Interim City Manager
19. Committee on Ethics Investigative Subcommittee Statement of Alleged Violations



Prepared by:

Signed by:

0660E766BDD241C...

Franklin Roig

DocuSigned by:

27F17CFC87D34AD...

Norberto Hernandez