



MINUTES OF THE CITY OF MIRAMAR COMMISSION WORKSHOP

March 21, 2024

3:00 P.M.

A workshop of the Miramar City Commission to discuss International Protocol & Business Etiquette was called to order by Mayor Messam at 3:09 p.m. on Thursday, March 21, 2024, in the City Commission Chambers, Town Center, 2300 Civic Center Place, Miramar, Florida.

ROLL CALL/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upon call of the roll, the following members of the City Commission were present:

Vice Mayor Alexandra P. Davis (Left at 4:17 p.m.)
Commissioner Maxwell B. Chambers
Commissioner Yvette Colbourne

Upon call of the roll, the following members of the City Commission were absent:

Mayor Wayne M. Messam
Commissioner Winston F. Barnes

Members of staff present in the Commission Chambers:

Debon Campbell, International Government Affairs Officer
U. Desmond Alufohai, Workshop Facilitator
Shannon H. Eisenhut, Guest Speaker
City Attorney Michelle Austin Pamies (late 3:45 p.m./left 5:05 p.m.)
City Clerk Denise A. Gibbs
Deputy City Clerk Narva Barrett-Forbes
Executive Assistant to the Mayor Edna LaRoche
Legislative Aide Lucie Tondreau
Legislative Aide Safoy Braham

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: I'd like to turn the session over to Debon Campbell, who is our intergovernmental affairs manager.

International Government Affairs Officer Debon Campbell and the protocol team gave a PowerPoint presentation on the subject item, as detailed in the backup, highlighting the following:

- The subject workshop would review proper protocol, as it related to international trips, visiting delegations, decorum in public, and stage presence
- Adhering to such protocol, as the City expanded its interaction with foreign entities was crucial to ensure aligning with diverse cultures, and preventing inadvertent offenses
- City staff engaged in numerous protocol and business etiquette training sessions, some of whom would soon receive certification
- A review of workshop facilitator, Mr. Alufohai, credentials was provided in the backup; he worked as a leader in the international community for over 30 years; he was currently the director of protocol in the International Division for the Miami Aviation Department.

Workshop facilitator U. Desmond Alufohai continued the presentation as follows:

- The first trainings were conducted with staff in October 2023, and the second would be upcoming.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: So you attend our events to see what we're doing wrong?

MR. ALUFOHAI: No, no. It's not about what you're doing; we talk about protocol; it's not about what you're doing wrong, but right.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Okay.

Mr. Alufohai continued:

- The training was to avoid the City being embarrassed, to avoid faux pas
- He taught such classes for 13 years at such places as Miami-Dade College, at municipalities, businesses that traveled abroad, etc.
- There was a need for protocol, decorum; it was a universal concept with regard to how people treated each other in the business world, at home and abroad
- The subject training was to illustrate what was universal and accepted
- Particularly foreign guests coming to the City, it was not their first stop in their foreign travels, and they were used to high level protocol
- The protocol material covered: presidents, official ranking; official guide; names, titles, and salutations, as people took their titles very seriously, so in official settings it was important to know their titles, and pronounce their names correctly, as well as their country's sovereign name; signing ceremonies; official toasts; flag etiquette, and national anthem

- Presenter Shannon Eisenhut, a Florida resident, worked for the U.S. Department of State Diplomatic Security Service, receiving numerous accolades for her exemplary work. Her work included providing international protocol and business etiquette training for organizations.

Shannon Eisenhut, Regional Director of the Office for Missions, U.S. Department of State, remarked the Office of Missions was created to support the entire foreign consul corps that were accredited in the U.S. The head office was in Washington, D.C., with six regional offices around the country; there were 26 consulates located in the U.S., with her office being the largest of the six, with 91 consulates, along with 226 honorary consuls, along with rendering support to other international organizations. She continued the presentation:

- A failure to adhere to proper foreign protocol could quickly escalate into an incident, possibly impacting Americans overseas
- Diplomacy immunities between foreign entities were based on reciprocity
- The only country with permanent representation in South Florida with full immunity was Morocco
- Protocol lived and breathed through everything done by the U.S. Government, whether it was for meals, emails, in-person dialog, etc.
- It did not matter if a government was local, county, state, or federal; the actions of elected officials and their staff represented the U.S.; every interaction was dictated by protocol and by policy
- Diplomatic immunity did not mean a dignitary committing a crime was above a country's laws; the U.S. did not waive prosecution of a crime due to diplomatic immunity.

COMMISSIONER CHAMBERS: This is Miramar elected officials. Where do we fall in terms of diplomat, or traveling overseas for the City?

MR. ALUFOHAI: We will talk about that when we get to presidents. Go ahead.

MS. EISENHUT: I was just going to say, I know you say, "Oh, we're just Miramar." Don't say that. All of Florida, and all of the region, has such a high profile, and maybe they're not physically present here, like we don't have a consulate here, but I can't tell you how many people transit through here; they have families here; they have business here. And it's not just the 90 consulates, it's -- like I said, it's every single country. And I know a lot of people are saying: Well, Miami is the gateway to the Western Hemisphere. Well, I've got Türkiye, I've got Sierra Leone, I have Morocco now. We are the home, and the gateway to the entire world, so maybe they want to come and meet with city officials; maybe they want to come to FBI Headquarters for a meeting, and have a briefing; maybe they want to go shopping at Pembroke at the stores. You never know when somebody is going to come through, and what's going to happen, that's why I really enjoy doing this to get out there, because let's say you think it might not happen, but it's that one-percent

chance that something is going to happen, and you're going to be like, "Oh, my gosh. I'm glad I know this."

MR. ALUFOHAI: And that is why we are looking for -- when I do this for municipalities, we advocate that they should have somebody on staff who understands those protocols, because as a city, you don't have your own foreign policy. There's one U.S. foreign policy, so we have to be sure that we do not contradict the United States policy, whether when you go abroad to speak abroad, or when those individuals come from international; we have to maintain. For instance, I'll give you two examples. When the sanctions about Russia happened, I received a call from the Office of the Governor to take down the -- from the U.S. Department of State to take down the Russian flag from the airport. So whether my best friend is from Russia or not, that's not for me to say. The United States policy is that, because of the war in Ukraine, all Russian flags should be removed from flying anywhere in the U.S., so that's an example. So that's why you have to be in tune as a city to understand all these things that go on. They continued the presentation:

- A video was shown as an example of not if, but when something could happen to a city, and what should be done; having a diplomatic passport did not automatically mean someone had diplomatic immunity if they committed a crime in the U.S.; there were categories of immunity assigned to certain diplomats; not everyone working in the consulate had diplomatic immunity; anyone going through a criminal process had to remain in the U.S. until the proceedings were completed; their embassy must give the U.S. assurances they would remain in the country
- Outreach and training were conducted for local, county, state, and federal law enforcement, but it was difficult to keep up with the staff turnovers; there were also multiple diplomatic identifications: passports, driver's licenses, identification cards, tax card, etc.; diplomats in Florida could not hold a Florida driver's license
- Whenever any diplomatic issues arose, it was important to call the State Department Missions Office for guidance
- The City needed to remain aware of how to handle interactions with diplomats
- In situations involving law enforcement, the onus was on a diplomatic to declare their foreign status, and submit identification so this could be verified
- There were a wide variety of ways to address dignitaries, as it was based on the protocols of the particular country.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: There's no level of diplomatic anything for us when we travel?

MS. EISENHUT: No. Unless you are an accredited -- you'll have a blue U.S. passport --

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: How do you get accredited? That's what I want to ask you.

MS. EISENHUT: You have to actually work for the U.S. Department of State, or a governmental agency, and if you are assigned to a foreign country. So, let's say for

instance -- I'll just say, all of the various U.S. Embassies I worked at; so in Bagdad, we had a very large embassy, so I had all kinds of governmental agencies that were there. Everybody has a certain accreditation compared to like a smaller embassy, but you have to be accredited, and declared with that country, whatever host nation that you're working in. But, like I said, regardless of whether you're accredited or not, you're still a representative of the U.S. Government, and we have to remember that.

Mr. Alufohai continued the presentation:

- Protocol was practiced by everyone in the areas of their life, whether it was going to church, a child's birthday, etc.
- Definitions for protocol in the official sense: Legal, whereby countries signed treaties/agreements for dealing with each other; for example, a foreign embassy on U.S. soil was considered a part of the foreign nation, and the U.S. could not go onto the property without expressed permission, and vice versa
- The diplomatic definition of protocol referred to the set of rules, procedures, ceremonies, etc. both parties adhered to
- The City could set up its own official protocols; that is, ground rules related to how the City should operate, and how things should be done, etc.
- Protocols were the general code of etiquette and procedures within a particular group or entity; it could be based on long-established code on such matters as who sat where, who spoke first, etc.; protocols long existed for centuries in all areas of human life; they were usually implemented to avoid embarrassing social encounters, that is, how you behave in front of guests, ensure encounters did not place parties in disrepute
- The Institute for Civility in Government stated civility was more than just about politeness; it was about disagreeing with respect; unfortunately, incivility in government, and elsewhere in the U.S. had grown to the extent that 93 percent of Americans agreed that incivility was a problem; 50 percent of Americans anticipated a U.S. civil war was coming soon based on many having no interest in facts when they conflicted with their truth; many have lost faith in their elected officials, with some 61 percent believing that Congress was selling their votes for cash, and 60 percent thought they were doing a very poor job
- The City should establish its own protocols for formal interactions at various levels.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: They have to find out what kind of -- they probably had insurance, but it didn't cover him abroad. That's the issue, exactly, having insurance that doesn't cover you abroad.

MR. ALUFOHAI: Correct.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Because I know this lady now, she's in England right now. She went there -- somebody that I know who knows that person. Now she's trying to get out of England, because her insurance doesn't cover her when she's in England, and they're

trying to get her back **(unintelligible 1:01:49)**, because the **(unintelligible 1:01:50)** are going to be too high. There is insurance you can get when you travel --

MR. ALUFOHAI: So there is travel protection -- which is your luggage with the airline. There's medical travel insurance. So under -- this is when they're on official duty now. So the City has to include it up to if they have to be evacuated.

CITY CLERK GIBBS: So that's something HR would have to do when you all are going on your missions.

MALE SPEAKER: So that's something the City should pay for.

CITY CLERK GIBBS: If they're acting in their capacity, their official capacity. So when you all go on missions, HR has to make sure that you have coverage.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: Pay that extra coverage for that time. And you get the **(unintelligible 1:02:50)**.

MR. ALUFOHAI: I'll give you my email; I can show you the one that we have. I will send you a travel policy, it's the business class aspect. We looked at the United Nations; they do any flight that is nine hours and above, including transit **(unintelligible 1:03:56)** business class. The U.S. Government does 14 hours, which is inclusive of transit; anything above that is an automatic business class. With Miami-Dade, it is now, maybe five hours. Broward just did their own as well. I will send everything to you, so you can - - because, truth be told, these mission leaders cannot fly from here to thine kingdom come without **(unintelligible 1:04:35)**.

CITY CLERK GIBBS: I know HR recently updated the per diem, but I don't know, as far as the travel policy, when you're going abroad.

MR. ALUFOHAI: We use different **(unintelligible 1:05:24)** in Miami-Dade.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: How are they doing it in Miami-Dade County now?

MR. ALUFOHAI: The one that Paula sent me --

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Who gets first class?

MR. ALUFOHAI: Based on the hours -- regardless, based on the number of --

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: The hours that you stayed on the plane.

MR. ALUFOHAI: Correct.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: So it's five hours or more in Miami?

MR. ALUFOHAI: For Miami-Dade.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: What's Broward's?

MR. ALUFOHAI: Broward, I have to check, because I know Paula just sent that to me.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: But five hours or more, what happens?

MR. ALUFOHAI: If you flight is five hours or more, it's automatic business class.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Okay. Yeah, that's good, especially since they're making the airplanes tighter, and tighter.

VICE MAYOR DAVIS: We want to follow what other people are doing, in terms of that level of status in the company.

COMMISSIONER COLBOURNE: Yeah. Absolutely.

Mr. Alufohai resumed the presentation:

- With deciding protocol, the order of precedence/pecking order in deciding who spoke, who spoke first, etc.; the same applied to where visiting dignitaries stood, or sat; where the American flag should be placed; etc.
- Four notable protocols to be aware of with regard to the role of the host; 1) identify the host of an event, after which the other protocols fell into place; 2) the place of honor stated the highest ranking guest should be seated/positioned to the right of the host at all times, and the next highest ranking guest should be seated/positioned to the left of the host; 3) as the host, the best courtesies should always be extended to visiting dignitaries, regardless of the venue; 4) the principle of reciprocity should be adhered to
- Lower ranking officials were presented to higher ranking officials; staff members were presented to elected officials within the city departments
- The most important dignitary was the last to speak; lower ranking officials spoke before higher ranking officials
- An elected official had a mandate, and they were sworn in the were given authority; a commissioner elect, or mayor elect has no authority until they were sworn in; former officials had no authority to do anything in the name of the city, and were treated as a regular member of the public;
- When the governor of a state was functioning in their state, they were the highest ranked elected official, as compared to when they functioned in the Capitol; while the Governor can appoint a representative for the state at the Senate on Capitol Hill level; the Senate cannot appoint a governor to a state
- Failure to recognize the proper ranking of visiting dignitaries, elected officials, and other representatives in order to prevent causing insults to the persons in those positions

- To avoid the possibility of misconduct, it was best to avoid touching, as in many cultures touching seen as inappropriate
- Spouses of a government official was accorded the same rank, and they should be seated accordingly, they were not to be placed separately, unless the spouse held a separate official position, in which case they should be placed where they should be according to the rank of their official position; in the event of the latter, the host should confirm with the government official's spouse if they wished to be seated separately
- With regard to the official rights of a spouse of a government official, the standard was to defer to the U.S. Office of Protocol, going with the way the U.S. treated spouses
- The position of the first lady/wife of the president of the U.S. was not addressed in the Constitution, as it was a ceremonial position with no formal role in the federal government; this was used as the de facto precedence for protocol with regard to spouses of governmental officials during official visits
- Not all countries have strong delineations for governmental officials as the U.S. did for the federal, state, county, and local levels of government; this could be challenging when conducting official international visits
- Protocol for salutations were important in addressing the dignitaries; that is, the order of stating title, names, etc. of the dignitary
- An ambassador appointed by the leader of a country was a high ranking dignitary, as they were appointed to represent their entire nation in the designated capacity
- An ambassador and a high commissioner were equivalent positions
- Countries were known to change their name, flag, national anthem, etc.; it was important to stay abreast of these changes for correct protocol; the protocol designee of a city could contact the stateside consul for the visiting country to confirm whether or not there were any changes to avoid protocol embarrassment
- Other nuances to be aware of included being sensitive when using the official name of a country according to the current preference of that country, and not use an outdated name; proper placement of flags of the host and guest countries
- At dining events for visiting dignitaries, there was a myriad of protocols to consider, including seating, place settings, number of courses, etc.; one way to avoid faux pas in seating was to place names and titles on chairs and/or tables to reserve the appropriate seating for dignitaries; simply putting a "reserved" or "VIP" sign was insufficient, as this was too open to differences in interpretation
- When toasting an official, the person who was being toasted remained seated, while the host of the event would invite all others to stand for the toast; after the toast, if the person being toasted wished to speak, then everyone else would sit down, while they stood up to speak
- It was appropriate to present gifts to visiting dignitaries; when doing so, consider how they would be transported; it was possible to be creative when considering the types of gifts; with regard to gift giving, if a group of dignitaries were visiting, it was important to know the rank of all the dignitaries when considering what gifts to give each; the primary gift should be given to the highest ranking official, etc.;

the same gift should not be given to all members of the group if they are of differing ranks; numbers had meanings in different cultures, and this could affect the number of gifts given to a dignitary

- The protocol for flag placement should be properly researched for correct placement; the same applies for the playing of national anthems at a multinational event
- Protocol officers were very important; they ensure the governmental entity they worked for adhered to appropriate protocol when hosting dignitaries at all levels of government, whether domestic or international; protocol education was a continuous process.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Denise A. Gibbs, MMC
City Clerk
DG/cp