

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

From: Arthur H. Sorey, III, Interim City Manager



Date: December 16, 2015

RE: PROPOSED RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH MIAMI, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT, IN SUBSTANTIALLY THE ATTACHED FORM, WITH THE NEWLY SELECTED CITY ATTORNEY, OR IN THE ALTERNATIVE, PROVIDING ANY AND ALL OPTIONS TO FILL THE POSITION OF THE CITY ATTORNEY; AUTHORIZING THE INTERIM CITY MANAGER TO DO ALL THINGS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THE DECISION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL IN FILING THE POSITION; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND FOR ALL OTHER PURPOSES.

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**BACKGROUND**

Special Meeting called by Mayor Smith Joseph, D.O., Pharm.D. to discuss the proposed employment agreement, in substantially the attached form, with the newly selected city attorney, or in the alternative, providing any and all options to fill the position of the city attorney.

**ATTACHMENT(s)**

Resolution  
Contract

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH MIAMI, FLORIDA, APPROVING THE PROPOSED EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT, IN SUBSTANTIALLY THE ATTACHED FORM, WITH THE NEWLY SELECTED CITY ATTORNEY, OR IN THE ALTERNATIVE, PROVIDING ANY AND ALL OPTIONS TO FILL THE POSITION OF THE CITY ATTORNEY; AUTHORIZING THE INTERIM CITY MANAGER TO DO ALL THINGS NECESSARY TO EFFECTUATE THE DECISION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL IN FILING THE POSITION; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE AND FOR ALL OTHER PURPOSES.**

**WHEREAS**, on November 24, 2015, the Mayor and Council of the City of North Miami (“City”) selected Valria C. Screen, Esquire, for the position of City Attorney; and

**WHEREAS**, the newly selected City Attorney has submitted a proposed employment agreement, in substantially the attached form, for consideration by the Mayor and City Council; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Section 14 of the North Miami Charter, the City Council shall have the power to appoint and remove the City Attorney; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and City Council desire to fill the position of City Attorney, in a manner most advantageous to the City.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT DULY RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH MIAMI, FLORIDA:**

**Section 1. Approval of Agreement.** The Mayor and City Council of the City of North Miami, Florida, hereby approve the execution of an employment agreement with the City Attorney, in substantially the attached form.

**Section 2. Authorization of Interim City Manager.** The Interim City Manager is hereby authorized to do all things necessary to effectuate the decision of the Mayor and City Council, in filling the position of City Attorney.

**Section 3. Effective Date.** This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by a \_\_\_\_\_ vote of the Mayor and City Council of the City of North Miami, Florida, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2015.

\_\_\_\_\_  
DR. SMITH JOSEPH  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
MICHAEL A. ETIENNE, ESQ.  
CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM  
AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
ROLAND C. GALDOS, ESQ.  
INTERIM CITY ATTORNEY

SPONSORED BY: CITY ADMINISTRATION

Moved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Vote:**

Mayor Smith Joseph, D.O., Pharm. D.  
Vice Mayor Carol Keys, Esq.  
Councilman Scott Galvin  
Councilman Philippe Bien-Aime  
Councilman Alix Desulme

\_\_\_\_\_ (Yes) \_\_\_\_\_ (No)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Yes) \_\_\_\_\_ (No)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Yes) \_\_\_\_\_ (No)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Yes) \_\_\_\_\_ (No)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Yes) \_\_\_\_\_ (No)

**EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT  
BETWEEN  
THE CITY OF NORTH MIAMI, FLORIDA  
AND VALRIA C. SCREEN**

**THIS EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT** (the "Agreement" or "Contract") is made and entered into on January 19, 2016 (the "Effective Date"), between the CITY OF NORTH MIAMI, a municipal corporation ("CITY"), and Valria C. Screen ("CITY ATTORNEY").

**RECITALS**

**THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH MIAMI** ("COUNCIL" OR "CITY"), desires to employ Valria C. Screen as the CITY ATTORNEY of the CITY, and Valria C. Screen desires to accept such employment under the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth below.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in consideration of the mutual covenants and agreements contained herein, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

1. **Appointment of the CITY ATTORNEY**

Pursuant to Sections 84 and 85 of the CITY Charter, the COUNCIL of the CITY OF NORTH MIAMI, appoints Valria C. Screen as the CITY ATTORNEY effective November 24, 2015, (the "Appointment Date"). The CITY ATTORNEY shall commence employment with the CITY on \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, (the "Start Date").

2. **Duties**

The CITY ATTORNEY shall perform the functions and duties as set forth in Section 85 of the CITY Charter, ordinances, regulations, rules, policies and standards, and to perform other associated and legally required duties and functions as the COUNCIL shall direct from time to time. The CITY ATTORNEY agrees to perform all such functions and duties faithfully, competently, professionally and promptly to the best of her ability. The CITY ATTORNEY shall perform such duties on an exclusive and full-time basis for the CITY, and shall not engage in any outside employment for compensation without COUNCIL approval.

3. **Term**

The term of this Contract shall be for three (3) years, commencing on January 19, 2016 (the "Term Date"), and ending on January 18, 2019. Any renewal of this contract shall occur within the final sixty (60) days of the expiration of this Contract.

4. **Termination and Severance**

Nothing in this Contract shall prevent, limit or otherwise interfere with the absolute right of the COUNCIL to terminate the services of the CITY ATTORNEY at any time, with or without cause. This Contract may be terminated by the COUNCIL upon sixty (60) days written notice to the CITY ATTORNEY, and a duly adopted Resolution of the COUNCIL, which notice shall specify the effective date of termination which shall not be less than sixty (60) days from the date said written notice is given. In the event that the CITY ATTORNEY voluntarily resigns, then she shall give the COUNCIL at least sixty (60) days written notice in advance, unless the parties agree to waive such notice.

(A) Any termination of this Contract without “cause”, as defined below, shall entitle the CITY ATTORNEY to (i) payment of all accrued, unused, longevity, vacation and sick leave at the rate of pay in effect at the time of termination and (ii) twenty (20) weeks severance, in compliance with Section 215.425(4)(a), Florida Statutes.

(B) If the CITY ATTORNEY voluntarily resigns her position, the CITY ATTORNEY shall be entitled to payment of all accrued, unused, longevity, vacation and sick leave at the rate of pay in effect at the time of termination but shall not be entitled to any severance payment unless otherwise agreed to by both parties.

(C) In the event, the CITY ATTORNEY is terminated for cause, which shall be defined as fraud or conviction of a criminal offense involving moral turpitude, the CITY ATTORNEY shall not be entitled to any severance payment.

5. **Annual Base Salary**

(A) The CITY ATTORNEY shall be paid at a rate set forth in the Classification and Pay Plan of the CITY, as may be amended from time to time, payable in weekly installments on the same dates as other employees of the CITY are paid. The initial rate shall be One Hundred Eighty Thousand Dollars and 00/100 (\$180,000.00) per year commencing on January 19, 2016, (the “Start Date”). If the Classification and Pay Plan does not provide for automatic yearly cost of living adjustment, the CITY ATTORNEY shall receive an automatic yearly cost of living adjustment in the amount of three (3) percent of her annual salary on the date of the execution of this Contract.

(B) The CITY agrees to determine any merit adjustment in annual salary and/or benefits upon performance, at least once annually, during the CITY’s annual budget process. If merit increases are provided to general employees, the CITY ATTORNEY shall be entitled to the same merit increases.

6. **Deferred Compensation**

In lieu of enrollment in the CITY’s pension plan, the CITY agrees to pay ten (10) percent of the CITY ATTORNEY’s annual base salary into her individual ICMA Plan or deferred compensation plan, which shall be in addition to the base salary.

7. **Automobile and Communication Equipment Allowance**

The CITY ATTORNEY shall receive Seven Hundred Fifty Dollars and 00/100 (\$750.00) per month as an automobile allowance. The CITY ATTORNEY shall receive One Hundred Fifty Dollars and 00/100 (\$150.00) per month as a cellular telephone allowance. If automobile or cellular telephone increases are provided to other employees, the CITY ATTORNEY shall be entitled to the same increase.

8. **General Expenses**

The COUNCIL recognizes that certain expenses of a non-personal nature are incurred by the CITY ATTORNEY and agrees to provide a monthly expense equivalent to that provided to individual members of the COUNCIL.

9. **Health Dental and Life Insurance**

The COUNCIL agrees to provide health, dental and life insurance for the CITY ATTORNEY and her family on the same basis as provided to other unclassified Administrative Staff of the CITY.

10. **Disability Insurance**

The COUNCIL agrees to provide disability insurance for the CITY ATTORNEY at the benefit level provided to other unclassified Administrative Staff of the CITY.

11. **Sick, Annual and Holiday Leave**

The CITY ATTORNEY shall accrue sick, annual and holiday leave at the same frequency as other unclassified personnel of the CITY, but without accrual caps or other limitations. The CITY ATTORNEY shall, upon resignation, termination or death, receive the cash value of one hundred (100) percent of accrued annual leave and fifty (50) percent accrued sick leave. Upon commencing employment, the CITY ATTORNEY shall be credited with four (4) weeks of annual leave.

12. **Dues and Subscriptions**

The COUNCIL agrees to pay the reasonable and customary professional dues and subscriptions of the CITY ATTORNEY necessary for continued professional participation, growth and advancement, including national, state and local professional associations, as shall be approved in the annual CITY budget.

13. **Professional Development**

The COUNCIL agrees to pay the reasonable and customary travel and subsistence expenses for the CITY ATTORNEY's travel and attendance for the continued professional participation, growth and advancement including national, state and local professional associations,

seminars, conferences and meetings customary to the position of CITY ATTORNEY, as shall be approved in the annual CITY budget.

14. **Indemnification**

The CITY shall defend, hold harmless and indemnify the CITY ATTORNEY against any tort, professional liability claim or demand or any and all other legal action, whether groundless or otherwise, arising out of an alleged act or omission occurring in the performance of the CITY ATTORNEY's duties. The CITY will litigate, compromise, or settle any such claim or suit and pay the amount of any settlement or judgment rendered. The CITY, or its insurance carrier, will provide legal representation for the CITY ATTORNEY acceptable to the CITY ATTORNEY, for any and all claims, proceedings or lawsuits, whether groundless or otherwise, related to or arising out of the CITY ATTORNEY's affiliation with the CITY. Nothing, however, is intended to provide indemnification for any act of the CITY ATTORNEY which is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to constitute a crime under the laws of the State of Florida or the United States. This indemnification shall survive the termination of this Agreement.

15. **General Provisions**

(A) The provisions of this Agreement constitute the entire understanding between the parties. Only the representations and understandings contained herein shall be binding upon the CITY and the CITY ATTORNEY. No other representations or understandings are binding on the CITY and the CITY ATTORNEY unless contained in this or a subsequently adopted Agreement.

(B) Upon the CITY ATTORNEY's death, the CITY's obligations shall terminate except for:

- i. Transfer of balances of the CITY ATTORNEY's retirement or deferred compensation plan;
- ii. Payment of accrued leave balances in accordance with Section 11 above;
- iii. Payment of all outstanding hospitalization, medical and dental bills in accordance with the CITY's insurance policies and contracts for the CITY ATTORNEY;
- iv. Payment of all life insurance and disability benefits; and
- v. Provision of such other benefits the CITY has with respect to its unclassified employees generally.

(C) No alteration, modifications or amendments to the terms of this Agreement shall be effective unless contained in writing and executed by the CITY and the CITY ATTORNEY.

(D) The CITY and the CITY ATTORNEY each waive the privilege of jurisdiction and venue and agree that any litigation involving this Agreement shall take place in the appropriate state court, in and for Miami-Dade County, Florida.

(E) The CITY shall afford the CITY ATTORNEY the right to participate in any other benefits or working conditions as provided for to administrative and senior management employees of the CITY.

16. **Severability**

Should any provision of this Agreement be declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, the same shall not affect the validity of the Agreement as a whole, or any part, other than the part declared to be invalid.

17. **Effective Date of Agreement**

This Agreement shall become effective on the Effective Date.

18. **Construction**

Both parties have substantially contributed to the drafting and negotiation of this Agreement and this Agreement shall not, solely as a matter of judicial construction, be construed more severely against one of the parties than the other.

19. **Waiver**

No express or implied consent or waiver by a party to or of any breach by the other party in the performance by such other party of its obligations under this Agreement will be deemed or constructed to be a consent or waiver to or of any other breach or dealt in the performance by such other party of the same or any other obligations of such other party hereunder. Failure by any party to complain of any act, or failure to act or to declare the other party in default, irrespective of how long such failure continues will not constitute a waiver by such party of its rights hereunder. The giving of consent by a party in any one instance will not limit or waive the necessity to obtain such party's consent in any future instance.

20. **Notices**

Unless otherwise provided herein, all notices or other communications hereunder shall be in writing and shall be deemed to have been received (i) when delivered personally by hand to the recipients or when transmitted by facsimile or email to the recipient (with telephonic confirmation by the sender to the recipient), (ii) one (1) business day after mailing by overnight courier, or (iii) three (3) days after mailing by United States registered or certified first class mail (postage prepaid).

21. **Representations and Warranties**

(A) No prior obligations. The CITY ATTORNEY represents and warrants to the CITY that she is free to accept employment with CITY as contemplated herein, and she has no other prior obligations or commitments of any kind, written or oral, to any person or entity which would in any way interfere with her acceptance, or the full performance of her obligations and

responsibilities, or the exercise of her best efforts and judgment to her employment hereunder.

(B) Ability. The CITY ATTORNEY represents and warrants to CITY that she is fully qualified and possesses the requisite skills and experience to perform her duties as set forth herein.

(C) Licenses. The CITY ATTORNEY represents to the CITY that she possesses the necessary license to practice law in the State of Florida and is in good standing with the Florida Bar and shall maintain such license and good standing during the term of this Contract. Any revocation or suspension of the CITY ATTORNEY's license to practice law in the State of Florida shall be considered termination for cause.

[SIGNATURE PAGES FOLLOW]

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the CITY and the CITY ATTORNEY have caused this Agreement to be executed as of the day and year first above written.

COUNCIL/CITY:

CITY OF NORTH MIAMI,  
a Florida municipal corporation

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Smith Joseph, D.O., Pharm. D.

Attest:

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michael A. Etienne, Esq.  
City Clerk

Approved as to form and legal sufficiency:

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Roland C. Galdos, Esq.  
Interim City Attorney

CITY ATTORNEY:

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Valria C. Screen, Esq.