



MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor David Dermer and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: January 30, 2007

SUBJECT: **VEHICLE ASSIGNED TO POLICE CHAPLAIN**

The purpose of this LTC is to advise you of the discontinuation of a City vehicle to one of the Police Chaplains. Currently, the Police Department has six (6) Chaplains, Rabbi Pinchas Weberman, Rabbi David Weberman, Rabbi Shaya Weberman, Pastor Robert Fountain, Reverend Garth Thompson and Father Manuel Soler. Rabbi Pinchas Weberman currently is the only Police Chaplain who has a take home City vehicle assigned.

While City records are not abundant on the assignment of a City vehicle to Rabbi Pinchas Weberman, it appears that the practice of assigning a take home vehicle dates back at least to 1994 under then City Manager, Roger Carlton. At least at that time and we believe many years earlier, a City vehicle was assigned to Rabbi Pinchas Weberman. At that time the Rabbi was also the designated kosher inspector for the City, which likely affected the vehicle assignment.

The Kosher inspector assignment ended in the mid 1990's; however, the vehicle remained assigned to Rabbi Pinchas Weberman.

Over time that a City vehicle has been assigned to Rabbi Pinchas Weberman, the vehicle has routinely been replaced, serviced, fuel and insurance provided for the vehicle. Further this vehicle has been used for personal purposes as well as in the performance of duties as a Police Chaplain.

In a detailed review of all City assigned vehicles that is being undertaken in order to develop a consistent and comprehensive City policy on this subject, it became apparent that the vehicle assigned to Rabbi Pinchas Weberman is the only one of its kind within the entire City fleet. No other private citizen/cleric or non City employee or volunteer, has an assigned take home vehicle provided by the City.

The assignment of the City vehicle to Rabbi Pinchas Weberman clearly poses a number of public policy issues associated with financial support of one specific individual and religion where no other individuals, religions or non-profit entities are afforded the same privilege.

In addition to the public policy concerns raised by the assignment of this City vehicle, the historic practice of Police officially utilizing the services of Rabbi Pinchas Weberman, or other Chaplains who have not been assigned a vehicle, are infrequent and are not in any way indicative of the value associated with the provision and operating costs associated with the City vehicle. At most, a Chaplain, and not always the same one, will be called to assist a few times a year.

As the current assigned vehicle for Rabbi Pinchas Weberman is a deadlined vehicle (meaning that the vehicle has been fully depreciated by the City and has already been removed from active City service. Deadlined vehicles are typically used for less intensive City uses and not in front line or safety departments until the vehicle is completely worn out.) and not in regular City service, it has very little value to the City. The vehicle as deadlined and very near the end of its useful life cycle will be donated to the Temple with which the Rabbi is associated in order to assist the Rabbi with transitioning from a City vehicle to his own vehicle. The residual value of the vehicle is approximately \$2,000 and that donation will be made under authority granted to the City Manager by the City Commission and City Code in section 2-315 of the Code of Ordinances.

Per the requirements of section 2-315 of the City Code, the auction value of the vehicle, a 1999 Ford Crown Victoria, is \$2,000 or less, the vehicle is in operable condition however the exterior is marred in many areas and the interior is worn. The vehicle is declared surplus stock. The entity to which the vehicle will be donated is a not-for profit organization that serves a charitable purpose within the community. The intended use of the vehicle is to continue to provide transportation for Rabbi Pinchas Weberman for the remainder of the useful life of the vehicle, said time which is unknown. The donation and intended use serves the best interests of the City as it will end the practice of a City provided vehicle and expense for a purpose no longer appropriate, and that the donation will allow the Rabbi and his temple to adequately plan for the expenses to be associated with this transition and to continue to provide charitable services to the community without the need for interruption associated with the funding and ultimate replacement of the City vehicle necessitated by the City action.

Once the donation is made, all operating costs associated with the vehicle will be immediately discontinued. Items such as fuel, repairs and insurance will not be provided at City expense.

Rabbi Pinchas Weberman is being notified directly of the change in this assignment. If you have any questions or require any further information, please feel free to contact me or Assistant City Manager Robert C. Midaugh.

Thank you.

JMG/RCSam

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