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Guzman named new Chief of Police for Miami Springs

TOM CURTIS, The Miami Herald

The Miami Springs council met for the final time in 2014 last Monday night (Dec. 8) and they wished everyone, "Happy Holidays," but there was very little business conducted. Councilman Jaime Petralanda was absent and the meeting was over in an hour.

However, there was still time for it to come out that Captain Jon Kahn will serve as acting police chief.

Two days later, this past Wednesday, Dec. 10, City Manager Ron Gorland named a permanent chief when he selected Armando Guzman. Guzman will begin his duties as the new Chief of Police of Miami Springs on Monday, Jan. 5.

Also at Monday's meeting, the fiscal year-end "unaudited" numbers were presented to the council for review.

Although Pete Baan remains the official Miami Springs police chief until the end of December, his last day on the job was last Friday (Dec. 5) and he will be "on vacation" for the rest of 2014.

Gorland alone made the decision on Baan's successor, picking Guzman over three other candidates, Thomas Cannon, Rafael Hernandez and Van Toth .

Guzman is currently the Chief of Public Safety for Miami Dade College Kendall Campus and is a veteran of more than 30 years with the Miami Police Department, attaining the rank Captain.

"The one person that I believe to be the best candidate to meet our challenges has accepted my offer to become the Miami Springs Police Chief, effective January 5," said Gorland on Wednesday.

There was consideration that Kahn get the job full-time, but Gorland decided to go outside the department to replace Baan. The fact that Kahn was in the DROP program and his retirement date in the near future contributed to Gorland's decision. But that does not mean Gorland does not trust Kahn in the interim.

"I have the utmost confidence in Captain Jon Kahn; he has been a great asset to our police department for many years," Gorland said Monday night. "He is the perfect 'cop's cop' and will do an outstanding job during this interim period."

Although Gorland waited two more days before naming the chief, he wanted it known that there will be a final background check to be done on Guzman. Initial "no embarrassment" background checks had already been completed on the "final four" by the firm **Pat Franklin** Investigations. The same firm will complete a more exhaustive background check on Guzman.

Kahn will remain acting police chief until Guzman takes over, after all the "t's" are crossed and the "i's" dotted on the contract with the new Miami Springs' chief of police.

The council then turned its attention to the final numbers for fiscal 2013-14, which ended on Sept. 30 but will not be official until next year, after the city's auditing firm does its job. But Finance Director William

Alonso did have good news to report to the council Monday night.

"The city ended the year with a surplus of \$571,310, increasing the reserve balance to over \$4.2 million," said Alonso. "It is the first yearly increase in the reserves since 2009 and a long way from where we were in 2003, when the fund balance was just \$853,000."

Alonso went on to explain that revenues for the year were over budget by \$157,157 and total expenditures were down by \$414,148, as departments did not spend 100 percent of their budgets. As an example, the police department was \$214,000 under budget, due to vacant positions and lower-than-expected operating costs.

The final audited statement for 2013-14 will be completed in the next 30 days by the city's audit firm, Alberni, Caballero & Fierman. It will be presented to council in late January or early February.

IN OTHER NEWS, THE COUNCIL:

â€¢ Presented the Yard of the Month Award for December 2014 to Diane and Vernon Burkhart at 480 S. Royal Poinciana Blvd.

â€¢ Approved unanimously on first reading an ordinance providing the city with discretion regarding parking in the Public Property District.

â€¢ Approved unanimously a resolution amending the civil infraction code and civil penalties for violations of placing loose trash prior to 24 hours of pick-up by the city (\$100) and failure to return receptacles to the interior of properties within 24 hours of pick-up by the city (\$100).

â€¢ Approved unanimously the limited-term renewal of the operational Food & Beverage agreements for the Miami Springs Golf and Country Club with Carlos Santana of Miami Springs Country Club F & B Inc. until October 2017.