



Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners

Office of the Commission Auditor

Legislative Analysis

**Health, Public Safety & Intergovernmental
Committee**

April 15, 2010

2:00 P.M.

Commission Chamber

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**Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners
Office of the Commission Auditor**

**Legislative Notes
Health, Public Safety & Intergovernmental Committee
Meeting Agenda**

April 15, 2010

Written analyses and notes for the below listed items are attached for your consideration:

Item Number(s)

2(F)

If you require further analysis of these or any other agenda items, please contact Guillermo Cuadra, Chief Legislative Analyst, at (305) 375-5469.

Acknowledgements--Analyses prepared by:
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**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSION AUDITOR**



Legislative Notes

Agenda Item: 2(F)
File Number: 100865
Committee(s) of Reference: Health, Public Safety & Intergovernmental Committee
Date of Analysis: April 14, 2010
Type of Item: Funding of Fire Rescue Station 15

Summary

This resolution establishes the County policy to fund the full-time operations of Miami-Dade Fire Rescue (MDFR) Station 15, located on Key Biscayne.

In addition, this resolution directs the County Mayor or his designee to fund such operations for the balance of FY 2009-10 from within appropriations to MDFR by making the necessary adjustments within such appropriations to effectuate this policy, and to submit a written report at the next scheduled Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting after the effective date of this resolution to inform the BCC of such actions.

Background and Relevant Legislation

Historically, MDFR Station 15 has operated as both a part-time and full-time station. According to Administration, from 1982 to 2005, MDFR Station 15 operated as a part-time fire rescue station. Then in 2005, it became a full-time station, housing one (1) fire-engine requiring four (4) firefighters when in operation.

In December of 2009, MDFR Station 15 full-time fire services were discontinued due to budget cuts.¹ The station reduced its hours to 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursdays through Mondays. Firefighters, who were stationed to work at Station 15, were reassigned to other stations throughout the County and the fire-engine became part of the surplus inventory.

Currently, there are three (3) firefighters assigned to Station 15. When Station 15 is not in service, South Miami fire-rescue responds to emergency calls. Station 15 receives approximately 300 calls a year.

¹ Key Biscayne Times, December 26, 2009.

Policy Change and Implication

This resolution proposes the restoration of MDFR Station 15 to a full-time fire rescue station. According to Administration this would mean increasing the firefighters assigned to Station 15 from three (3) to eighteen (18) and returning the one (1) fire-engine that is currently part of the surplus inventory.

Budgetary Impact

In order to fund a full-time operation at Station 15, this resolution proposes the following:

- Elimination of the MDFR Internal Affairs unit - \$1.29 million (cost per year to fund);
- Closing of the Cafeteria: \$130,000 (cost exceeding revenues);
- Closing of the Wellness Center - \$818,000 (FY 2009-10 budget).

The revenue stream of the Wellness Center is complex in that it is composed of public funding, payments from private insurance, worker's compensation claims, and funding for services from other governmental agencies such as the City of Miami and the Drug Enforcement Administration. In FY 2007-08, the total revenue for the Wellness Center was \$1,749,042 with an additional \$694,641 of in-kind services from Miami-Dade County.²

Comments / Questions

The MDFR Internal Affairs Bureau

The MDFR Internal Affairs Bureau (Internal Affairs) is tasked with impartially investigating customer complaints, whether internal or external. This bureau reviews all complaints with the main objective of gathering the facts to determine the disposition of the complaint. This bureau also tracks all complaints of a less serious nature delegated to MDFR personnel for investigation.³

There are a total of 7 personnel assigned to Internal Affairs: five (5) Investigators, one (1) Supervisor, and one (1) Administrative Sergeant.

Over the last three years, Internal Affairs has handled over 800 investigations.⁴

Prior to this item going before the BCC, the Office of the Commission Auditor will provide information regarding best practices for internal affairs in large fire departments.

The Wellness Center

The Wellness Center is located at the MDFR headquarters, 8000 N.W. 21st Street, Miami, Florida; and is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. It is managed by the MDFR through the Wellness Manager and is staffed with 14 positions (11 County positions and 3 University of Miami positions).

² Metro-Dade Firefighters Wellness Center Business Plan Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010, dated January 9, 2009.

³ www.miamidade.gov/mdfr/inside_org_chief.asp

⁴ Letter - MDFR Director Herminio Lorenzo to IAFF Local 1403 President Dominick Barbera, dated Dec. 29, 2009.

The Wellness Center, a not-for-profit organization, was created as part of the Fire Service Joint Labor Management Wellness-Fitness Initiative, to improve the quality of life of all uniformed fire personnel.⁵ According to MDFR⁶, the Wellness Center is a partnership between MDFR and the International Association of Firefighters Union, Chapter 1403 (IAFF Local 1403 Firefighters Union).

During FY 2007-08, the Wellness Center provided the following services⁷:

- 283 Pre-employment medical evaluations;
- 1,339 annual physicals for firefighters;
- 1,520 Private patient appointments as the primary care center for MDFR firefighters and their dependents;
- 1,168 rehabilitation and physical therapy sessions as a Workers' Compensation Center; and
- 228 Exercise stress tests as a Fitness Center.

Other jurisdictions that have instituted Wellness Centers include San Diego, Phoenix, Los Angeles County, New York City, Seattle, and Indianapolis.⁸

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⁵ Metro-Dade Firefighters Wellness Center Business Plan Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010, dated January 9, 2009.

⁶ www.maimidade.gov/mdfr/inside_org_admin.asp

⁷ Metro-Dade Firefighters Wellness Center Business Plan Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010, dated January 9, 2009.

⁸ The City of San Diego Manager's Report No. 05-010, dated January 7, 2005