



Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners

Office of the Commission Auditor

Legislative Analysis

**Health, Public Safety & Intergovernmental
Committee**

March 18, 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**

March 18, 2010

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

Item Number(s)

2(C) Substitute
2(D)
2(E)

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:
Elizabeth N. Owens, Legislative Analyst

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSION AUDITOR**



Legislative Notes

Agenda Item: 2(C) Substitute
File Number: 100618
Committee(s) of Reference: Health, Public Safety and Intergovernmental Committee
Date of Analysis: March 16, 2010
Type of Item: Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP)

Summary

This resolution directs the Mayor or his designee to collaborate with the necessary affected parties to develop and submit a plan to the Board of County Commissioners (Board) that improves the current PSAP call center system throughout Miami-Dade County.

This substitute differs from the original in the following manner:

- Requires the Mayor or his designee to develop and submit a plan that improves and/or augments the current PSAP call centers, instead of a plan that unifies the system;
- Changes the Boards intent to exploring the possibility of delivering emergency services to County residents from the closest available public safety asset, instead of implementation;
- Requires an analysis of the following:
 - how to best improve the current system,
 - how the plan will affect the emergency response to citizens,
 - what infrastructure and resources are available for implementation, and
 - what additional resources, if any, are needed; and
- Requires a delineation of the actions needed and a timeline for the implementation of the plan.

Background and Relevant Legislation

PSAPs are call centers responsible for answering emergency requests for fire, police and ambulance services to ensure that the appropriate rescue personnel, equipment and resources are dispatched. There are approximately 6100 primary and secondary PSAPs in the United States.¹

¹ The National Emergency Number Association (NENA) website: <http://www.nena.org/>

History²

Since 1973, the State of Florida has been updating and building advanced technology in emergency 911 systems, implemented by the counties, to serve its citizens and visitors in emergency situations.

In May 1997, 911 was established statewide. As of September 20, 2005, Wireline Enhanced 911 "E911" services provide PSAPs with the telephone number and the caller's address in all 67 counties.

As of March 31, 2008, all counties report Wireless E911 Phase I and Phase II completion. Phase I service provides the call-back number and the location of the cell site. Phase II provides the capability to receive the call-back number and the location information (latitude and longitude) provided for the cellular caller from the service provider.

Comments

In January 2010, a bicyclist was fatally struck by a car while cycling on the Rickenbacker Causeway. This tragic incident raised concerns among members of the BCC about response times of emergency rescue and the implementation of an integrated dispatch radio system.

Prepared by: Elizabeth N. Owens

² Florida e911 website: http://dms.myflorida.com/suncom/public_safety_bureau/florida_e911

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
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Legislative Notes

Agenda Item: 2(D) and 2(E)
File Number: 100499 and 100501
Committee(s) of Reference: Health, Public Safety, and Intergovernmental Committee
Date of Analysis: March 16, 2010
Type of Item: Collaboration of Fire Department Duties
Prime Sponsor: Commissioner Carlos A. Gimenez
Co-Sponsor: Commissioner Sally A. Heyman – Item No. 2(E)

Summary

Item No. 2(D) directs the Mayor or his designee to contact the Cities of Hialeah and Miami in order to find ways for the Miami-Dade County Fire Department’s (MDFR) Hazardous Materials Unit and the Fire Department of those cities to work cooperatively in an effort to save money, be more productive in the use of available resources and to enhance response to hazardous materials incidents in all of Miami-Dade County.

Item No. 2(E) directs the Mayor or his designee to work together with the City of Miami in the use of the County’s and the City’s fireboats in an effort to save money, be more productive in the use of available resources and to enhance response to marine incidents in all of Miami-Dade County.

Background and Relevant Legislation

Fire rescue services are delivered to Miami-Dade County residents and visitors by MDFR, which serve the unincorporated areas of the County and 30 of the 35 municipalities. In addition, five municipalities operate fire rescue departments: City of Coral Gables, City of Hialeah, Village of Key Biscayne, City of Miami Beach, and City of Miami. Each fire rescue department responds primarily within its corresponding service territory, except for limited agreements for automatic aid and mutual aid.¹

¹ County Manager Memo dated August 26, 2008.

Miami-Dade County Hazardous Materials Bureau²

The Hazardous Materials Bureau provides administrative and operational support through hazardous materials response training, community planning, and resource management. The team consists of a Hazmat Battalion Chief, a Hazmat Specialty Unit, four Hazmat Suppressions, and a Hazmat Medical Unit.

The Hazardous Materials Bureau also facilitates the administrative aspects of community planning for operations personnel. This process ensures that the reporting guidelines are recorded and available for response planning purposes. These plans assist Incident Commanders by understanding the occupancy hazards present during routine response and provide pre-planned solutions during an emergency.

The Hazardous Materials Bureau coordinates mitigation resource management so that there is comprehensive equipment maintenance and a replacement program in place. This administrative oversight ensures efficient equipment allocation and distribution to operations personnel.

Furthermore, the Hazardous Materials Bureau will continue to actively participate in the Regional Domestic Terrorism Task Force and respond as a state asset.

City of Miami Hazardous Materials Team³

The City of Miami's Hazardous Materials Team was started around 1978. It was the first in Miami-Dade County. The Team started as the Special Tactics Team that was analogous to a Police SWAT team. As the team evolved, the fire service became increasingly involved with chemicals and hazardous materials and was renamed the Hazardous Materials Team.

The Hazardous Materials Team specializes in the mitigation of incidents involving hazardous materials or suspected unknown hazardous materials. The team responds to all suspicious material calls, as well as spills, leaks, and breaches of vessels containing potentially dangerous chemicals or unknown substances.

Following the September 11th attacks, the Hazardous Materials Team has become vital in the community. The team has been intensely involved in the preparation for responses to incidents involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

City of Hialeah Hazardous Materials

The Hialeah Fire Department had its beginnings when the City of Hialeah was incorporated in 1925. It has since grown to its present size and stature as an ISO rated Class 1 Fire Department, serving a residential population of over 236,000.

Service to the City is provided by approximately 250 personnel who deliver fire protection, emergency medical service, water rescue, hazardous materials response and inspection services in the Southeast. In addition, they have volunteer who support the community.

² Information provided by MDR Hazmat Bureau.

³ http://www.miamigov.com/Fire/pages/Divisions/ERD_Special_OPS.asp

Miami-Dade County Marine Services⁴

MDFR's Marine Services maintains a 24-hour response capability for incidents occurring on Miami-Dade beaches and shorelines, as well as those occurring in our numerous bodies of water, including the ocean, bays, lakes, canals and other waterways.

Although Miami-Dade County has two (2) fireboats, only one is in commission. Fire Boat #2 was originally budgeted and scheduled to be placed in service during the fourth quarter of fiscal year 08-09. The service was cancelled due to budget reductions that were projected for the current fiscal year. The boat is currently unstaffed at the Port of Miami and is used as a backup Fireboat when the 50 foot fireboat is in need of repair, training and an additional Fireboat during large events such as Columbus Day.⁵

Water-related emergencies are handled through three specialized areas of marine services:

- Marine Operations
 - Fire rescue personnel in this bureau are trained and ready to respond to any emergency requiring accessibility via watercraft capable of handling both fire and medical rescue incidents. This area is home to MDFR's fireboat fleet.
- Dive Rescue
 - This area is responsible for the training and certification of the department's Rescue SCUBA Divers and Skin Divers, and maintains all dive rescue equipment and supplies found on every MDFR frontline unit.
- Ocean Rescue
 - This area of MDFR's marine services provides lifesaving emergency response on Miami-Dade County's public beaches with professional lifeguards.

Comments

Possible Areas of Savings

- Construction and facilities maintenance cost due to the current separate marine service assets; and
- Training for Hazmat members;
- Sharing of vehicle fuel and maintenance costs; and
- Consolidation of property taxes.

Possible Areas of Concern

- Satisfaction level of residents who feel that their needs are better met by their individual city's service providers; and
- Equity if the tax rates are not uniformed – therefore, residents paying higher property taxes will be paying more for their service.

In 2008, the following ballot question was put before the electorate of Miami-Dade County:

To amend the Home Rule Charter and to require that the BCC provide a uniform, countywide system of fire protection and rescue services for all incorporated and unincorporated areas of

⁴ http://www.miamidade.gov/mdfr/emergency_special_marine.asp

⁵ Information provided by MDFR Marine Services.

the County with the exception of the cities of Miami, Miami Beach, Hialeah, Coral Gables, and Key Biscayne which may provide for their own fire and rescue protection services.

According to the County Attorney's Office, the County was enjoined by Court Order from tabulating, releasing, or certifying the election results because the Court found the ballot language misleading.

Prepared by: Elizabeth N. Owens