

MEMORANDUM

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(28)

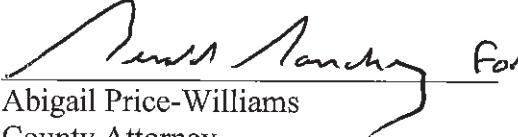
TO: Honorable Chairman Esteban L. Bovo, Jr.
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

DATE: November 7, 2017

FROM: Abigail Price-Williams
County Attorney

SUBJECT: Resolution urging the and
Florida Legislature to provide
funding for the Veterans
Court in the Eleventh Judicial
Circuit in and for Miami-Dade
County

The accompanying resolution was prepared and placed on the agenda at the request of Prime Sponsor Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz.


Abigail Price-Williams
County Attorney

APW/cp

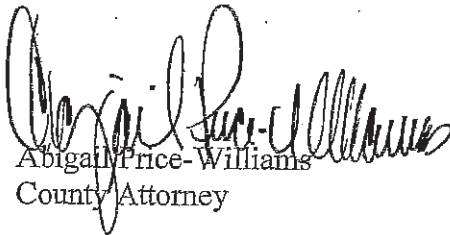


MEMORANDUM

(Revised)

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and Members, Board of County Commissioners

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Please note any items checked.

- "3-Day Rule" for committees applicable if raised
- 6 weeks required between first reading and public hearing
- 4 weeks notification to municipal officials required prior to public hearing
- Decreases revenues or increases expenditures without balancing budget
- Budget required
- Statement of fiscal impact required
- Statement of social equity required
- Ordinance creating a new board requires detailed County Mayor's report for public hearing
- No committee review
- Applicable legislation requires more than a majority vote (i.e., 2/3's ____, 3/5's ____, unanimous ____) to approve
- Current information regarding funding source, index code and available balance, and available capacity (if debt is contemplated) required

Approved _____ Mayor
Veto _____
Override _____

Agenda Item No. 11(A)(28)
11-7-17

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION URGING THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE TO
PROVIDE FUNDING FOR THE VETERANS COURT IN THE
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE
COUNTY

WHEREAS, on May 15, 2012, this Board adopted Ordinance No. 12-37 creating the Military Affairs Board and charging the Military Affairs Board with the responsibility to “[a]dvocate on behalf of military personnel in Miami-Dade County regarding . . . incarceration,” among other things; and

WHEREAS, in furtherance of this mission, the Military Affairs Board, working cooperatively with federal and state partners, initiated and undertook efforts to establish a Veterans Court in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit in and for Miami-Dade County (“Veterans Court”); and

WHEREAS, these federal and state partners included the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Miami Veterans Health Administration; the Eleventh Judicial Circuit; and the South Florida Behavioral Health Network; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the Veterans Court was established and, through the date of this resolution, has considered 140 veterans for disposition of their criminal charges through the program, 21 of which have been accepted into the program; and

WHEREAS, given existing staffing levels and funding, and considering the needs of veterans in the Miami-Dade County area, which are considered high-risk and high-need, the Veterans Court program is at capacity with 21 veterans; and

WHEREAS, additional funding is necessary so that the Veterans Court can hire the staff necessary to increase the program's capacity, such as an intake specialist, case managers, and urinalysis technician, and make arrangements for housing veterans in need, either as transitional housing or for in-patient treatment; and

WHEREAS, the County has provided funding in support of the Veterans Court; and

WHEREAS, specifically, the Military Affairs Board provided \$75,000.00 in funding to the Veterans Court, which it leveraged as matching funds to obtain a \$350,000.00 grant for the Veterans Court from the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance; and

WHEREAS, in addition to federal and County funding, the Florida Legislature appropriated \$150,000.00 in non-recurring funds during the 2017 legislative session; and

WHEREAS, although it is a program in need of additional resources, the Veterans Court is a promising program; and

WHEREAS, one of the first graduates of the program, a 35-year-old veteran struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse who was charged with fighting a police officer, described the program one that "will help a lot of other veterans"; and

WHEREAS, that veteran is now an engineering student at Miami-Dade College and remains sober; and

WHEREAS, the County has not only invested funding in the Veterans Court, but has also provided the judicial system with additional tools necessary to ensure the program's success; and

WHEREAS, for example, the Veterans Court is modeled after similar courts throughout the nation and endeavors to provide specialized services tailored to meet veterans' unique needs, including veteran-on-veteran mentoring, all with the objective of assisting veterans encountering the criminal justice system with their healthy reintegration into civilian life, reduced likelihood of recidivism, and receipt of proper mental health care; and

WHEREAS, the approach to ensuring the success of the Veterans Court is holistic, embracing action by both the Military Affairs Board and this Board, beginning with Resolution No. R-774-14 which this Board adopted on September 3, 2014; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. R-774-14 resulted in the redesign of the arrest forms used by law enforcement throughout Miami-Dade County to identify veterans at the time of arrest; and

WHEREAS, the Military Affairs Board and this Board also have taken steps to ensure that veterans who are not identified at the time of arrest are identified at the time of booking into the jail, and provided with literature informing them of the benefits available to incarcerated veterans under applicable laws, which this Board adopted on September 3, 2014, through Resolution No. R-773-14; and

WHEREAS, in addition to undertaking efforts to ensure that veterans are identified at the time of arrest or booking, the Military Affairs Board ensured that the Veterans Court was modeled after the most successful programs in the nation by observing the functioning of those programs and engaging in dialogue with those officials who organize and manage the programs; and

WHEREAS, through these information exchanges, the Military Affairs Board determined that a mentorship program, designed to work hand-in-hand with the Veterans Court, was crucial to the Veterans Court's success and, as such, the Military Affairs Board used its broad network within the military community to recruit, and encourage other entities to recruit, volunteers to serve as veteran mentors; and

WHEREAS, in addition to federal and local efforts, this Board would like to urge the Florida Legislature to continue its support of the Veterans Court by appropriating additional state funds to the Miami-Dade County Veterans Court during the 2018 session,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA, that this Board:

Section 1. Urges the Florida Legislature to provide funding for the Veterans Court in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit in and for Miami-Dade County.

Section 2. Directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Governor, Senate President, House Speaker, the Chair and Members of the Miami-Dade State Legislative Delegation, and the Chief Judge of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit.

Section 3. Directs the County's state lobbyists to advocate for the funding indicated in Section 1 above, and authorizes and directs the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to amend the 2018 State Legislative Package to include this item.

The Prime Sponsor of the foregoing resolution is Commissioner Jose "Pepe" Diaz. It was offered by Commissioner _____, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner _____ and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

Esteban L. Bovo, Jr., Chairman
Audrey M. Edmonson, Vice Chairwoman
Bruno A. Barreiro
Jose "Pepe" Diaz
Barbara J. Jordan
Jean Monestime
Rebeca Sosa
Xavier L. Suarez
Daniella Levine Cava
Sally A. Heyman
Joe A. Martinez
Dennis C. Moss
Sen. Javier D. Souto

The Chairperson thereupon declared the resolution duly passed and adopted this 7th day of November, 2017. This resolution shall become effective upon the earlier of (1) 10 days after the date of its adoption unless vetoed by the County Mayor, and if vetoed, shall become effective only upon an override by this Board, or (2) approval by the County Mayor of this Resolution and the filing of this approval with the Clerk of the Board.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HARVEY RUVIN, CLERK

By: _____
Deputy Clerk

Approved by County Attorney as
to form and legal sufficiency.

MAG

Miguel A. Gonzalez