

Memorandum



Date: August 26, 2013

To: Honorable Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa
And Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Carlos A. Gimenez 
Mayor

Subject: Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department

The Fire Rescue Department has worked closely with my staff and the Office of Management and Budget to reduce the projected \$15.3 million dollar deficit in the FY 2013-14 Fire Rescue budget by identifying efficiencies and eliminating funded vacant positions. Despite their efforts, the Department is still faced with a \$5.3 million dollar shortfall which translates to our need to close three (3) fire suppression units and layoff 59 uniform firefighters. There are no other options within the constraints of the current budget and millage rate.

An opportunity that is available to us is applying for a Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant administered by the United States Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS/FEMA). This two year grant requires no County matching funds and will allow the Fire Department to continue providing the current level of fire suppression and emergency rescue services in our community, eliminating the need for layoffs or unit closures.

The Fire Chief will be applying for this grant prior to the August 30, 2013 deadline however; the grant award is not expected until after the start of the fiscal year. While I am confident that the Fire Department has developed a reasonable plan that will succeed and avoid service reductions and firefighter layoffs, we must plan for the possibility that we will not receive SAFER funds. I am therefore directing the Internal Services Department to finalize the layoff list for the 59 firefighters that would be impacted. While we intend on retaining these personnel past the start of the coming fiscal year, we will need to issue layoff notices no later than October 7, 2013 in accordance with County Rules to make the October 28, 2013 deadline for layoffs if we do not receive SAFER funds.

c: Robert A. Cuevas, Jr., County Attorney
Office of the Mayor Senior Staff
Charles Anderson, Commission Auditor
Fire Chief David Downey, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department