

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: December 2, 2024

TITLE: REFERRAL TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS POTENTIALLY MOVING THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION (“PSCD”) FROM UNDER THE AUSPICE OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT BACK TO THE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

RECOMMENDATION

The current structure of the Public Safety Communications Division (PSCD) under the Fire Department has demonstrated significant success and efficiency. Florida Statute 365.171 mandates a cohesive statewide emergency communications plan that provides citizens with rapid access to public safety agencies, which our current structure effectively supports. Additionally, the PSCD has achieved triple ACE accreditation twice, demonstrating compliance with rigorous standards set by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED). Disrupting this structure by moving the PSCD back to the Police Department could undermine these accomplishments and lead to inefficiencies and diminished service quality. Defining response assignments is the responsibility of each agency’s Medical Director, Fire Dispatch Review Committee, Police Dispatch Review Committee and Steering Committee, which are integral to maintaining high standards. Therefore, it is recommended to maintain the PSCD under the Fire Department to ensure the highest level of emergency service for the community.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

Since its transition to the Fire Department in 2018, the Miami Beach Public Safety Communications Division (PSCD) has achieved remarkable successes, including filling approximately 95% of its budgeted positions and obtaining triple ACE accreditation twice, placing it among the highest-performing emergency dispatch agencies globally. The PSCD's integration within the Fire Department has led to enhanced training programs, better resource management, and a balanced approach to handling police, fire, and medical emergencies. This collaborative effort between the Police and Fire Departments has been instrumental in achieving high standards of service.

ANALYSIS

1. Advantages and Disadvantages of Potentially Moving the PSCD from the Fire Department Back to the Police Department
 - a. Advantages:
 - i. Managing Directors' Schedules: This move would allow for better management of directors' schedules.
 - ii. Management of Radio Communications Equipment: The Police Department would have centralized management of Police Department radio communications spare equipment, radio contracts, and tower sites.
 - iii. Increased Office Space: Freeing up office space at the Fire Headquarters would be a benefit.

iv. Police Management of Personnel: The Police Department would assume responsibilities such as yearly evaluations, disciplinary hearings, and deploying off-site staff to back up the center.

b. Disadvantages:

i. Resource Allocation: Reallocating resources, including radio communications staff and equipment, may impact other critical areas.

ii. Proven Success: Since 2018, the PSCD has achieved significant success under the Fire Department, including Tri-accredited Center of Excellence in police, fire, and medical disciplines for demonstrating compliance to the highest level of standards. Disrupting this successful structure could negatively impact service quality.

2. Various Protocols and Procedures of the 9-1-1 Call-Taking Process

a. State of Florida Regulatory Framework:

i. Florida Statute 365.171 mandates a cohesive statewide emergency communications plan to provide rapid access to public safety agencies.

ii. The NENA Standard for 9-1-1 Call Processing requires the establishment and maintenance of operational standards for call-taking protocols, including training, certification, and compliance. Section-3 (Page-14)

iii. Quality Assurance Program implemented to improve the call taker's performance and call answering processes that are based on their agency's SOPs and the NENA and the APCO call taking standards.

b. Current Process:

i. Structured Protocols: 9-1-1 operators follow structured protocols to assess situations and provide pre-arrival instructions for various emergencies.

ii. Information Gathering: The policy in place to determine which protocol would be used is based on the answer to the Case Entry question, "Tell me exactly what happened." Any remaining information gathered, or pre-arrival instructions given to caller conducted by 9-1-1 operators (call-takers) are after emergency personnel are dispatched.

· Incident address

· Phone number

· "OK, tell me exactly what happened?"

iii. Dispatch Process: Immediately after or while the callers are providing the answer to the "OK, tell me exactly what happened?" question, the 9-1-1 operators forward each newly created incident via the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) software system to the intended police or fire dispatcher.

3. How Priority Dispatch Protocols Affect the Reporting of Other Incident

a. The International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) has developed a separate Chief Complaint Protocol for handling the Medical Priority Dispatch Protocol (MPDS), Police Priority Dispatch Protocol (PPDS), and Fire Priority Dispatch Protocol (FPDS). Each protocol has a series of questions and pre-arrival instructions that will determine the nature and severity of the emergency, ensuring that the correct resources are dispatched and that the correct instructions are provided prior to the arrival of emergency personnel.

b. The Fire Department and Police Department independently review and update their own protocols to address any inefficiencies and improve caller experience, without compromising the quality of emergency response.

c. The International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) is the most advanced, flexible, scientifically driven police/fire/ems dispatching protocols with approved Questions and Instructions that can be turned on or off by Fire or Police.

4. Police Calls for Service Types – CAD Signals – Status and Responses Policy – PROQA questions –

a. First instituted on May 05, 2018 and has been updated eighteen (18) times since being created.
i. These updates are always reviewed and finally approved by the Police Chief designee (Deputy Chief).

b. The Police Department executive staff members along with Public Safety Communications Division personnel attended twenty-three (23) meetings to review, change, and implement the Emergency Police Dispatch (EPD) protocols and corresponding pre-arrival instructions.

c. Each of these twenty-three (23) meetings were at least one-hour long, some lasted multiple hours, and were attended by police personnel appointed by the Chief of Police. These police personnel included a Police Sergeant, Police Lieutenant, Police Captain, FOP President, Patrol

Operations Major, Assistant Chief, and Chief of Police.

i. All twenty-three (23) meeting minutes are available for review.

d. No fire department personnel directed Police Department operations or direct Police Dispatcher policies.

e. All changes/approvals were presented to the Police Chief for final approval.

f. The Public Safety Communications Division is responsible for the implementation of the new police policy changes and assuring continuous adherence of the new practices by 9-1-1 operators, dispatchers, supervisors, and quality assurance personnel.

5. Fire and EMS Calls for Service Types – CAD Signals – Status and Responses Policy – PROQA questions –

a. This policy was first instituted on May 02, 2018 and has been updated eleven (11) times since being created.

i. These updates are always reviewed and finally approved by the Fire Chief designee (Deputy Chief).

b. The Fire Department executive staff members along with Public Safety Communications Division personnel attended twenty-four (24) meetings to review, change, and implement the Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) and Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD) protocols and corresponding pre-arrival instructions.

i. All twenty-four (24) meeting minutes are available for review.

c. These twenty-four (24) minutes were each at least one-hour, some were multiple hours long.

d. The Fire Department continues to meet quarterly to address call for service questions and updates as needed.

e. No Police Department personnel directed Fire Department operations/policy.

f. All changes/approvals were presented to the Fire Chief for final approval.

g. The Public Safety Communications Division is/was responsible for the implementation of the new fire policy changes and assuring continuous adherence of the new practices by 9-1-1 operators, dispatchers, supervisors, and quality assurance personnel.

6. Feedback Mechanisms:

a. The International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED) provides an avenue to request changes to the protocols through the official International Academy of Emergency Dispatch website.

i. After final approval of the proposed change the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch then calls for the International Cultural Committees of the Council of Standards to formally review the new protocol for all language and cultural-based nuances before the protocols are officially released in all languages in the different countries where they are utilized.

b. While protocols can vary, the Miami Beach PSCD has tailored its approach to best meet the needs of its community, achieving excellent results and high levels of accreditation and recognition through collaboration from the Police and Fire Department executive staff.

i. Mechanisms are in place to gather feedback from residents and continuously improve the call-taking process to ensure a positive experience for callers.

7. Use of "Priority Dispatch" Sole Source is Public Safety Answering Points

a. Utilization of Priority Dispatch Protocols: Several municipalities within Miami-Dade County utilize Priority Dispatch protocols, including the Emergency Police Dispatch (EPD), Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD), and Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) protocols. These protocols are part of a globally recognized standard employed in over 4,080 communication centers across 59 countries and translated into 30 different languages.

i. Accreditation Status: While many centers use these protocols, not all pursue accreditation. The Miami Beach Public Safety Communications Division (PSCD), for example, has achieved triple ACE accreditation, 1 of 13 world-wide demonstrating compliance with the highest standards set by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch (IAED).

· The Miami Beach Public Safety Communications Division was first triple accredited in the 2020-2021 cycle and then re-accredited in the 2023-2024 cycle.

b. Comparative Analysis:

i. Other Accredited Centers in Florida:

· Miami Dade County (EMD) L9007-0/26 10/1/2021- 9/30/2026

· Manatee County Sheriff's Office (EPD)

- Sarasota County Sheriff's Office Emergency Operations Bureau (EFD, EMD)
 - St. Cloud Communications (EFD, EMD, EPD)
 - City of Miami Beach (EFD, EMD, EPD)
- ii. No other agency in Miami Dade County or Broward County currently use any other product. The City of Miami Beach Commission approved and adopted the use of the Priority Dispatch protocol system in Year-2018 (Resolution 2018-3543)

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

NA

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?
(FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

The Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on .
See BIE at: <https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notice/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

NA

CONCLUSION

NA

Applicable Area

Citywide

Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?

Yes

Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?

No

Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481, includes a principal engaged in lobbying? No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s):

Department

Fire

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)

Condensed Title

Discuss PSCD potentially moving from under the auspice of the FD to PD.