



COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: September 11, 2024

TITLE: A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, ACCEPTING THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE ("PSNQLC"), MADE AT ITS JULY 10, 2024 MEETING, TO ESTABLISH AFTER-HOURS LIVE ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS OUTREACH SERVICES.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends approving the Resolution.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

On May 15, 2024, at the request of Commissioner Fernandez, the Mayor and City Commission (City Commission) referred an item to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee (PSNQLC) to request the Administration to explore and provide options for live assistance for homeless outreach services during afterhours.

In 2022, the Administration implemented Commissioner Fernandez's MBCARES signs suggestion in highly concentrated areas to promote accessibility to homeless services. These signs included information on the main line for homeless outreach, the walk-in center location, and the website. This initiative has been instrumental in raising awareness and connecting individuals experiencing homelessness with necessary services.

Expanding on the City's ongoing efforts to assist persons experiencing homelessness, there is an opportunity to improve phone coverage for the homeless services main line 305-604-4663 during evening off-hours. Currently, the Homeless Outreach Services Team responds to calls during regular working hours from 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Additionally, while conducting street outreach, the City's extended outreach team transfers calls to a city cellphone on Thursdays and Fridays from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM and on weekends from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

Additionally, outside of regular and extended office hours, concerns are often reported to the police non-emergency number for assistance, managed by the Fire Department's Public Safety Communications Division. Upon receiving these calls, staff dispatches an officer who, depending on the situation, can subsequently reach out to the Police-Homeless Resource Sergeant or New Hope CORPS, a contracted provider for after hours outreach.

The expansion of live assistance guarantees the public's round-the-clock access to report homelessness, demonstrates the City's commitment to providing comprehensive support services, and improves the ability to inform the Mayor and City Commission's decision-making process with further data collection.

At the July 10, 2024, PSNQLC meeting, the PSNQLC recommended establishing live assistance for Homeless Outreach Services during afterhours.

ANALYSIS

In response to the need for continuous support for homeless services, the Administration is set to implement a strategic collaboration involving the Office of Housing and Community Services, the Information Technology (IT) Department, and the Fire Department's Public Safety Communications Division. This initiative aims to enhance our after-hours support by rerouting calls from the homeless services main line to the City's non-emergency number.

The IT Department has already conducted a thorough exploration of the technological requirements necessary for rerouting calls outside of regular working hours. We have successfully addressed technical and operational challenges to ensure that this transition will be both smooth and effective.

Additionally, the Public Safety Communications Division has completed a feasibility assessment and confirmed its capability to manage the anticipated increase in call volume. We are now moving forward with the development and implementation of a protocol designed to assist dispatchers in efficiently handling and responding to homelessness-related calls during after-hours.

To support this transition, the Office of Housing and Community Services will provide specialized training for dispatchers in the Public Safety Communications Division. This training will ensure that dispatchers are well-equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to address calls related to homelessness effectively. Furthermore, we will make certain that the Police-Homeless Resource Sergeant and the New Hope CORPS are prepared to offer assistance as needed when contacted through this process.

To ensure the continued effectiveness of the rerouted call process, we will establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system. This system will allow us to collect and analyze data, which will help us make informed decisions about any necessary adjustments and improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

No fiscal impact at this time.

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?

(FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

If applicable, the Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on:

See BIE at: <https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notice/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

N/A

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends that the Mayor and City Commission approve the attached resolution establishing the expansion of the live assistance for homeless outreach services afterhours.

SUPPORTING SURVEY DATA

According to the 2023 Miami Beach Community Survey, 29 percent of survey responders cited efforts to address homelessness as one of the major categories of City services most important for the City to provide. Additionally, the Mayor and City Commission identified the need to address homelessness by continuously evolving and innovating services to help those wishing to end their personal homelessness as a key management objective in the City's 2019 Strategic Plan Through the Lens of Resilience.

Applicable Area

Citywide

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

No

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

Housing and Community Services

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)

Mayor Steven Meiner
Commissioner Joseph Magazine

Condensed Title

Approve Expansion of Live Assistance for Homeless Outreach. (Fernandez/Meiner/Magazine)
HCS