

MIAMI BEACH

COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: May 7, 2025

TITLE: DISCUSS THE POTENTIAL FUNDING FOR FY 2026 TO EXPAND THE MARINE PATROL UNIT TO DETECT AND DETER CRIME AND QUALITY OF LIFE OFFENSES IN BISCAYNE BAY.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration considers that the addition of a second Marine Patrol Unit squad would enhance enforcement of waterway violations of City ordinances as well as local, state, and federal laws. However, in light of recent priority commission directives and the immediate inability to readily fill police officer vacancies, the Administration recommends tabling the creation of a second squad for a future budgetary process.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

At the October 30, 2024 City Commission Meeting, at the request of Commissioner Alex Fernandez and later co-sponsored by Commissioner Joseph Magazine, the Mayor and City Commission approved a referral (C4 Q) to the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee ("FERC") to discuss the potential funding for FY 2026 to expand the Marine Patrol Unit to detect and deter crime and quality of life offenses in Biscayne Bay.

ANALYSIS

The Miami Beach Police Department's Marine Patrol Unit consists of one (1) sergeant and five (5) police officers responsible for patrolling the City of Miami Beach's jurisdictional waterways, which cover nearly 2,000 waterfront properties and approximately 12 square miles of ocean. The unit is composed of a fleet of seven (7) vessels with the capability to actively patrol and take maritime enforcement measures. Expanding the Marine Patrol Unit to incorporate a second squad composed of six members will undoubtedly enhance the Police Department's coverage area and improve enforcement of livery violations, derelict vessels, loud music and uniform boating citations and allow for a more efficient response to water emergencies.

On any given day, three (3) Marine Patrol officers are on-duty with staggered hours to maximize coverage. Enlarging the unit would not only allow for officer overlap, but also for multiple areas to include Star Island, Biscayne Bay, Palm and Hibiscus Islands, Belle Isle, and Venetian Islands to be covered simultaneously. The additional resources would also help address commission priorities including derelict vessel monitoring, jet ski thefts, and residential burglaries, among others.

Notwithstanding, recent City Commission mandates to assign officers and resources east of Indian Creek, to an ATV squad on the beach, to bike patrol on Ocean Drive and to high visibility details across the city and most recently with emphasis to the commercial corridors should take precedence. The Police Department is actively recruiting and training police officers to fulfill budgeted positions and hopes to reach a fully staffed department within the next couple of years. Because the current Marine Patrol configuration is resulting in high enforcement numbers

(see chart below), even with a renewed commission focus on water-related incidents, the Administration considers that mandated, higher priority needs as outlined should be given precedence. Nevertheless, if funds are still available after the necessary initiatives are filled, the Administration welcomes exploring the expansion of the Marine Patrol Unit.

Marine Patrol Arrests by Officer

January 1, 2024 – November 8, 2024

Adult Arrests	Juvenile Arrests	Count
16	0	16
22	0	22
4	0	4
2	0	2
7	0	7
4	1	5
55	1	56

Marine Patrol Monthly Citations 2024

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	Total
21	18	245	108	130	110	175	185	150	110	1252

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed breakdown for the Marine Patrol Unit budget enhancement request of **\$1,290,000** for Year One, which does not include applicable pension costs that would be incurred commencing in Year Two, is as follows:

- One (1) Sergeant:
 - approximate salary of \$146,000 (includes pay allowances, health insurance, and Medicare)
 - approximately \$98,500 for equipment
- Up to five (5) Officers:
 - approximate total salary of \$572,000 (includes allowances, health insurance, and Medicare)
 - approximately \$473,500 for equipment

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing, the Administration recommends expanding the Marine Patrol Unit to a second squad at a later time in order of ongoing commission priorities. Once officer recruitment has leveled and Indian Creek, ATV squad, bike patrol and high visibility directives have been filled, the Miami Beach Police Department readily welcomes exploring the expansion of the Marine Patrol Unit.

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

Police/Budget

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Alex Fernandez

Co-sponsor(s)

Commissioner Joseph Magazine

Condensed Title

Potential Funding for FY 2026 to Expand Marine Patrol Unit