



MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # *131-2014*

LETTER TO COMMISSION

RECEIVED
2014 APR 22 AM 11:34
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: April 22, 2014

SUBJECT: Progress Report for the Public Safety Communications Division (PSCD)

The purpose of this Letter to Commission (LTC) is to provide an update on the progress of the initiatives and changes made in the Public Safety Communications Division (PSCD) since February 2014.

When critical needs in service, staffing, operations and equipment in the Public Safety Communications Division were identified, I placed the responsibility of this division under Charles Tear, the City's Emergency Manager in February 2014. He developed a plan to first evaluate the issues affecting the Communications Center, and to then move forward with short-term initiatives to address the most vital concerns.

I have requested that he and the Communications Center staff provide regular status updates so that you and I can stay informed of the activities and progress in this division. This LTC accompanies the first of those periodic reports.

One thing that became clear is that before hiring a new PSCD Director, as originally intended, we needed to assess, in-depth, the problems facing the division. Much of the last two months has been spent in that effort, as evidenced in the attached report. We have restructured the division by designating an Administrative Manager and an Operations Manager. Both of these positions are currently reporting directly to the Emergency Manager for the time being. We have identified issues with technology, protocols and training, and are beginning to address those issues.

Unfortunately, the biggest difficulty we have encountered is filling the many vacancies in the division. In the last six months, we have interviewed over 30 applicants, but only two of those applicants successfully completed the Police Department background process, which took approximately six months. We are working closely with the Human Resources Department to address and expedite the hiring process.

Never one to mince words, I am disappointed that some at the City have not embraced the effort to fix a serious problem, and have instead sought to throw roadblocks in our way, including reaching out to the media. We worked closely with FDLE to address allegations that we were trying to do an end-around on State law. We entered into an agreement with FDLE that assured that control of criminal justice information would remain with the Police Department and that persons hired by PSCD would continue to meet Police standards. After many years where neither the State nor the County ever audited our 911 unit, all of a sudden both agencies were calling for audits, including a surprise visit on the same day we were hosting the multi-agency exercise at the Convention Center and City Hall. I am not much of a believer in coincidence, but I welcome scrutiny since it will only help us to be better.

This week is National Telecommunicators Week, established in 1991, to recognize all public safety communications professionals who provide a vital link to the public safety services on which Americans rely every day. I have seen what our dispatchers do on a daily basis and I have great respect for what they do. It is clear to me that going above and beyond the call of duty is not the exception, but rather the rule to the way they operate each and every day as the frontline personnel providing excellent public safety to the first responders, residents and visitors of Miami Beach.

As you review the progress report you'll see that many benchmarks have already been reached in a short time. Keep in mind that, although great strides are being made to enhance conditions and resources, the dispatchers and communication professionals in our Communications Center have one of the most demanding jobs and are the vital connection to the public in times of emergencies. While we continue with the process of improvements, I hope these periodic status reports will provide important insight into one of the most critical public safety divisions in the City.

Attachment: PSCD Status Report As Of April 17, 2014

MIAMIBEACH

City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, www.miamibeachfl.gov
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Emergency Manager Charles Tear

FROM: Communications Manager Clarise R. Ferguson

DATE: April 17, 2014

SUBJECT: Progress report for the Public Safety Communications Division (PSCD)

- The EM Director and Communications Managers are conducting regular site visits both announced and unannounced, to the Public Safety Communications Division.
- Attended Roll Call briefings in the Public Safety Communication Division.
- EM Tear accompanied Mayor Levine on a site visit and tour of the Public Safety Communications Division.
- Commissioner Mickey Steinberg visited the Communications Center.
- Initial meeting conducted with EOC staff and PSCD Management to introduce everyone and begin the planning and documentation of the process of transition.
- Preliminary individual meetings were conducted with employees of the PSCD to identify areas needing attention for transition.
- Contracted with NTB Group and REP Incorporated to complete an assessment of the policy, practices and technology of the Public Safety Communications Division. The areas to be studied include: People, Training, Environment, Culture, Operations and Technology.
 - (Chart Attached)
- Continue regular meeting with Budget Director and staff.
- Initiated regular bi-weekly meetings with the Human Resource Director to address the most notable concerns of the division.
- In the process of streamlining and updating the hiring process to transition to the City hiring process from the Police Department.
- Established collaborative communications meetings with other City departments.
- Preliminary meetings with Police command staff to identify areas needing attention. Identified full transfer date of October 1, 2014.
- Requested and received permission to hire two key staff members.
 - Financial Analyst to handle Budget, Grants and Finance Specialist.
 - Management Consultant to handle Technology, Communications Systems and Training Specialist.
- Regularly scheduled meeting are conducted with Communications Managers and the Emergency Manager.
- Communications Manager Jennifer Hall Jenkins is attending Command Officer Development (CODC) Training to ensure she is equipped for her current and future managerial tasks and to provide staff development.
- Preliminary process began to create employee recognition program.
- Public Safety Communications Division employee Amy Brusco participated in a recognition ceremony attended by Police Department and Emergency Operations Personnel.
- Public Safety Communications Division employees participated and were recognized during a City organized recognition ceremony. Communications Managers and Emergency Management employees were in attendance for support.
- The Public Safety Communications Division Personnel and Management participated in a major full scale multi agency exercise "Operation Render safe" providing an interface with outside agencies for potential career development, lessons learned and training opportunities.

- Kick off meeting was conducted for the selection of a new P25 capable radio system.
- Identified members for the executive and user committee for the selection of the new radio system.
- Clarified roles for the Communications Managers by assigning positions as Administration and Operations
- Communications Manager Clarise Ferguson will be responsible for the Administrative Functions of the Public Safety Communications Unit.
 - The administrative functions will include the Hiring, Recruiting, Training and overseeing the technology staff. She will be instrumental on the executive committee for the new P25 Radio System. She will liaison with City and external departments, such as the current radio administrators for the Police and Fire Departments.
- Communications Manager Jennifer Hall Jenkins will oversee the communications center operations to include staffing, evaluations, commendations, and discipline as well as the daily operation of the center.
- Began discussions with both CWA and GSA to ensure the involvement of the employees bargaining units in the transition.
- In the process of re-establishing the Labor Management Meetings.
- Began conversations with college and universities to initiate Telecommunicator academies.
- Approval received for Part time dispatch positions.
- PSCD Supervisor Staff meeting held.
- Began the review and rewrite of the Unit Policy and Procedures.
- Participated In a preliminary Communications Center audit conducted by Miami Dade County.
- Scheduled to participate in the State of Florida 911 Coordinator audit of Florida Communications Centers.
- Scheduled to participate In a site visit to be conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement
- Completed the Public Safety Communication Division files and records for the CMB Fire departments accreditation process
- Completed the Public Safety Communication files and records for the CMB Law Enforcement CALEA Accreditation process.
- Completed and returned the 12-13 E911 Audit report to Miami Dade County.
- Continued to meet weekly and participate in Active Collaboration with the Fire Department to address dispatch protocol and procedures.
- Memorial Day Weekend (MDW) Communications meeting held to coordinate the distribution of resources, and ensure functional interoperable communications with outside agencies, such as Miami Dade County, FHP, ICE and other municipalities participating in MDW 2014.
- Met with City Clerk's office to create new public records process.
- Staffed the Communications Center for the busy two months Spring Break Season.
- Dispatched 24,620 Police Calls for Service during Spring break
- Dispatched 4229 Fire Calls for Service during Spring break.
- Answered 60, 509 telephone calls to include 911 calls.
- Staffed an additional Police Channel throughout the Spring Break Season.
- Purchase request submitted for CritiCall pre employment testing software.
- Executed new user agreement between the City and the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.
- Exploring programs to develop a new process to route the non emergency, non essential telephone inquiries to a new non emergency function.