



Legislation Text

File #: ID#20-8663, **Version:** 1

SUBJECT/RECOMMENDATION:

Approve a Memorandum of Agreement (Agreement) between Bob Gualtieri, as Sheriff of Pinellas County, Florida (Sheriff) and the City of Clearwater Police Department to establish a Pilot Co-Responder Program to handle mental health related calls for service and authorize the appropriate officials to execute same.
(consent)

SUMMARY:

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), one in five Americans are affected by mental illness each year. Annually, the Clearwater Police Department responds to at least 1,400 calls for service which involve issues related to mental illness. 20% of the fatal police shootings in the United States involve a subject with mental illness. Police officers are routinely tasked with being the first responder to persons involved in mental health crisis but have limited options to address long-term, reoccurring issues that generate repeat calls for service and disrupt neighborhoods and businesses.

The Clearwater Police Department proposes establishing a co-responder model to respond to in-progress calls and conduct follow-up on calls involving persons suffering from mental illness. Two co-responder teams will be created with each including a Clearwater Police Officer paired with a Crisis Response Specialist provided in the Agreement by the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office. The two police officers necessary for this program will be provided from the Police Department's existing resources.

The costs of the two Crisis Response Specialists are \$143,200 (\$71,600 each). The department will be billed quarterly for the work performed in the previous quarter and will not be responsible for payment if the positions are vacant for more than two weeks.

APPROPRIATION CODE AND AMOUNT:

If approved, a first quarter budget amendment will establish special program P2101, Mental Health Co-Responder Team, recognizing a transfer of \$143,200 from General Fund reserves.

USE OF RESERVE FUNDS:

Funding for this agreement will be provided by a first quarter budget amendment allocating General Fund reserves in the amount of \$143,200 to special program P2101, Mental Health Co-Responder Team. Inclusive of this item if approved, a net total of \$1,057,652 of General Fund reserves has been appropriated by Council to fund expenditures in the 2020/21 operating budget. The remaining balance in General Fund reserves after the 8.5% reserve is approximately \$34.7 million, or 22.8% of the current General Fund operating budget.