



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
CONFERENCE MEETING

#18-0735

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM, City Manager

DATE: July 10, 2018

TITLE: Discussion on School Resource Officer Program

For many years, the School Resource Officer Program (SRO) was managed through a mutually agreed upon partnership between the municipalities and the School Board of Broward County (SBBC). The municipalities staffed various schools within their respective jurisdictions and were partially funded by the SBBC. There were sporadic increases to the funding provided by the SBBC over the years, but the percentage covered by the SBBC actually decreased due to the increased cost to fully fund a police officer. In Fort Lauderdale, the current funding of less than \$47,000 per officer covers just over 30%. This varies from city to city; however, the SBBC provides the same dollar amount per officer to each municipality. There has not been an increase to this amount in approximately one decade. The current annual agreement expires on June 7, 2018.

Earlier this year, new legislation was enacted that clearly put the responsibility to staff every public and charter school with a SRO by the beginning of the next school year on the SBBC, to include funding the program. The School Board of Broward County has three options to staff the schools:

1. School Marshals: Armed school employees that undergo certain testing to be deemed eligible and minimum training requirements that the Sheriff's Office would be responsible for. Superintendent Runcie stated he does not support this option.
2. Contract with the various municipalities or the Broward Sheriff's Office for staffing and funding to provide the SROs in every school: The City of Fort Lauderdale is currently experiencing over 30 vacancies in the police department and would have to add approximately 25 additional officers to staff every school. Even if an agreement on this option was reached, it would take several years to have the trained officers in place at the schools. Several other Broward municipalities are in the same position as the City of Fort Lauderdale.

3. Staff the program with certified law enforcement officers employed by the School Board: The SBBC currently has its own police force but does not have adequate staffing at this time to meet the statutory requirement. The SBBC could expand their own police force and could divide the available funding amongst these officers. This would resolve their claim they do not have the funding to fund the municipalities at 100%. Their argument that they do not currently have the adequate staffing and the time frame to implement the staffing mirrors the City of Fort Lauderdale's concern. It was suggested to SBBC officials they should consider the option of temporarily enacting the School Marshall Program until they have an adequate compliment of police officers to staff the schools. This option should also be considered if the SBBC and the City come to the agreement that the Fort Lauderdale Police Department will eventually staff the schools with officers to allow the time necessary to recruit, hire and train the additional officers and still be in compliance with the state law.

An agreement has been submitted to the City for the seven (7) middle and high schools within the City's municipal jurisdiction. Funding has been increased to \$52,000 per SRO.

The City has been informed that the SBBC will hire "Armed Safe School Officers" for the remaining schools in the City. SBBC has begun recruiting for these positions (job description is attached). The City has not been informed of the plan for compliance with the new law if these positions cannot be timely filled.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – Current School Resource Officer Agreement

Exhibit 2 – Legal Opinion of Florida Sheriff's Association

Exhibit 3 – Armed Safe School Officer Job Posting

Exhibit 4 – Florida Today article about Brevard Public Schools Security Guards

Prepared by: Rick J. Maglione, Chief of Police

Department Director: Rick J. Maglione, Chief of Police