

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-2
June 9, 2020
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena
Commissioner Jorge Fors

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Police Chief, Ed Hudak
Assistant Police Chief, Hajir Nuriddin
Internal Affairs Commander, Rudy Gonzalez
Human Resources Director, Karla Green

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-2 [9:58 a.m.]

A discussion regarding the steps our Coral Gables Police Department and City Administration will take to continue self-evaluating and implement policies that combat structural racism and incentivize just policing practices.

(Sponsored by Commissioner Mena)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have another item on the agenda, G-2. Commissioner Mena has put it on the agenda, a discussion regarding the steps for Coral Gables Police Department and City Administration will take to continue self-evaluating and implement policies that combat structural racism and incentivize best policing practices. Commissioner Mena, the floor is yours.

Commissioner Mena: Thank you, Mayor. I appreciate it. Just to dovetail on what was just said, I've had several conversations with Chief Hudak and the City Administration about the events last Saturday and about how well they were handled. And I can't agree more with everything that was just said. I also want to applaud Chief Hudak for the conversations that he's had with me after the fact about this item. And effectively, the conversation is that if we just let Saturday stand as a great exercise and a great constructive dialogue between our police department and the individuals who were protesting and we don't do anything more, that that's not enough; that while that was an excellent show of leadership, we can't just rest on our laurels. I know that our City and our Police Department do everything in their power to exercise the best judgment and implement the best practices, and I know that as a City Administration and City leadership, we always try to give them all the tools available to do that. With that said, we're seeing in this country following the killing of George Floyd that there is an incredible amount of anxiety of concern from the general public about issues of race and about policing practices in communities throughout the country. And while it would be easy to say that cities like the City of Coral Gables, you know, are not epicenter of some of this racial tension and to allow other cities to face this issue, you know, while we continue with our existing practices, I think it's incumbent upon us to do more than that. And it's my expectation that we engage in an introspective process, that our Police Department take -- make efforts and take measures to evaluate what we do now, what is working best, what are best practices throughout the industry and to continue to evolve. And speaking with Chief Hudak, I know he understands that. We all -- you know, this discussion, as a result of all the events that are transpiring throughout the country, we've all been engaging in conversations on a daily basis, very difficult conversations, very provocative conversations, conversations that maybe many of us haven't had before, and I think that's healthy. While some have tried to politicize the issue a bit and focus on, you know, some of the looting and rioting, we all agree that we can't accept violence.

At the end of the day, what we have to discuss is why these events happen and what we can do from a policy perspective because that's our role to make sure that these things don't happen in our city, and to perhaps be a model for other cities to emulate. Because we have the resources to implement policies that enable us to be in the best position to be prepared for these issues and to address them. So, I put this item on the agenda so that we can begin a conversation on these issues. I don't expect to restructure or do anything today as far as voting on any item. I want to start a dialogue. I want to hear from Chief Hudak and his team. You know, I highlighted some issues that I'd like to hear about from what we do in the terms of hiring, training, early intervention and disciplinary issues. You know, we all talk about our CALEA accreditation, and I know that there's things that go into that accreditation process that are an important evaluation of our policies and practices, but I also don't want this just to be a presentation of how well we do in all the things. And I do earnestly believe we do a lot of these things well. I also want it to be a conversation of where do we go from here, what do we do next, and how do we ensure that we continue to protect the rights and the civil liberties of people of all races and ethnicities in our community. And so that's the motivation for this. Again, I'd like to hear from Chief Hudak and his team. And I just want to make sure that everybody out there in our community, including our own employees, know that we take this with the utmost seriousness. That just because this didn't happen in Coral Gables doesn't mean that we don't have an obligation and a moral imperative to look in the mirror and make sure that we're doing everything possible to avoid this kind of event in our community in the future. So, with that said, I'll turn it over to -- with the Mayor's permission, I'd like to turn it over to Chief Hudak so he can address some of the items and then maybe we can engage in some discussion.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Chief.

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner, we would just like to take five minutes to go over quickly what the City's doing. We have our HR Director for a very brief presentation, and then turning it over to Chief Hudak to deal with police, as you just mentioned, if possible.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead.

Human Resources Director Green: Good morning, everyone. Good morning. Can you hear me?

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Human Resources Director Green: Karla Green, with the Human Resources Department. I have prepared a short presentation on the procedures that are followed citywide in support of our commitment to diversity, equality and non-discrimination. We feel that it is important for everyone to know that the City is committed to maintaining a discrimination-free workplace. And although the City's leadership is responsible for the overall administration of the policy, however, the implementation and continued support is the responsibility of each employee, supervisor, department head and administrator and full cooperation is required from all City employees. What you're about to see is how the City supports all of our departments, including police. And at the end of the presentation Chief Hudak will transition the conversation to the Police Department's policing practices. So, we can play -- I have the presentation. If you can share, Billy. The City of Coral Gables takes a comprehensive approach to making the City diverse and inclusive in all areas, including City employment, City vendors, City programs, services and activities. The City values the diversity of all of its employees, residents and visitors and welcomes all interested participants in its programs and services and activities regardless of race, color, national origin, and all other characteristics protected by law. The City is committed to complying with all federal, state and local non-discriminatory law. In regards to City employment, in order to provide exceptional services, you must begin with the workforce. All City employees must adhere to the City's policy on equal employment opportunity and affirmative action prohibitions against discrimination and harassment. This policy is found under the City's rules and regulations, Rule 27. The policy states that the City is an equal opportunity employer, whereby all employment decisions as listed in this presentation shall be made without regards to any of the legal statuses protected under federal, state and local laws. Listed here are actions the City takes pursuant to the policy in order to promote fairness and diversity. The actions taken include all employees are

provided with the policy at time of the onboarding process. The policy is accessible on the City's intranet and all employees are required to receive training on the policy. Supervisors have an open dialogue regarding the policy with their employees. All supervisors, managers, directors have open-door practices for employees to feel comfortable in reporting or discussing possible discriminatory practices or violations of our policies. Assessment of management practices are conducted periodically. We often communicate with our teams. Training and development opportunities are provided to all employees. Annual reviews of City policies and standard operating procedures are conducted. Performance counseling and evaluations are also performed on a yearly basis. Enforcing policies and procedures is a team effort. All supervisors and managers are required to apply the principles outlined in the policy and decisions are made based on objective non-discriminatory criteria. All personnel share the responsibility of meeting the objectives and ensuring compliance with the policy as provided and acknowledged by each employee. Any employee who feels the City's policies have been violated or who has questions about a possible violation knows to contact the employee's supervisor, department head or Human Resources to file a complaint. If an employee violates the policy, the employee is subject to disciplinary action, and when applicable, additional training is provided. In regards to City vendors and contractors, the City established an administrative order which states the City vendors and contractors entering into an agreement or contract with the City shall not subscribe to any personnel policy which permits or allows the promotion, demotion, employment, dismissal or laying off of any individual due to any of the listed characteristics protected by law. All City contracts and lease agreements shall contain a clause on equal opportunity as listed in this presentation. Violations of the above are not tolerated and are immediate grounds for termination of the agreement or contract. When it comes to City programs, services and activities, the City does not tolerate any form of prescribed discrimination in any of its programs, services or activities. Further, the City does not tolerate any form of retaliation directed against an individual who complains of discrimination or who participates in any investigation concerning discrimination. The City has appointed an ADA/Non-Discrimination Coordinator to assist and provide information to interested individuals. If residents or visitors feel they have been discriminated against or denied access to City programs, services or activities, they may file a complaint with the City's ADA/Non-Discrimination Coordinator. The

procedure for filing a complaint along with all of the City's policies promoting equal access to all of its programs, services and activities are accessible on the City's website. Thank you for viewing the overall City's practices on diversity, equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Chief, you wanted to say a few words?

Police Chief Hudak: Yes, sir. First of all, to Commissioner Mena's point and my conversations with the Manager and with all of you, either individually or collectively, and everything I've said to our officers is this: the day that we stop learning in this job is the day we need to get out of it because things change all the time. Racism is real. Racism may, in my opinion, be -- it is systemic across the country. I don't believe it's systemic in law enforcement; however, it does exist in law enforcement. And we have to, as leaders, put things in place to make sure we can identify it and address it when it is our time to do so. But our officers deal with racism on the street every day, not necessarily their own. To that end, I want all of my command staff people that are on this to make sure that their cameras are showing them because this is a group presentation, although we will keep it to the minimum. I want you to hear from our staff, and we had, you know, the major that's over the Training Division, the Tech Services Division, who's also in charge over the technology and where we're going. I have the major over Intelligence and Criminal Investigations, who does unbiased investigations, Major Medina. I have the major for Patrol Division, which handles our group -- boots on the ground; however, it also does the training part for our new officers and sets the expectations every day for our FTO Program. Major Lawrence handles the traffic enforcement side, but also the specialized enforcement side, and gets together with groups on a regular basis to plan protests, but also to have a safety environment. Finally, the last two people, but they'll be the first up, is Commander Rudy Gonzalez is in charge of the Internal Affairs Section, who handles all of the complaints that come into the department. And to start off the conversation, if you will, from staff is Assistant Chief Nuriddin, who may be new to the City, but she has been a veteran of law enforcement throughout the country and been exposed to (INAUDIBLE). So, at this time, I will turn it over to Assistant Chief Nuriddin.

Assistant Police Chief Nuriddin: Thank you, Chief. Good morning, Mr. Mayor and members of the Commission. I just want to first comment real quickly that the results that the Chief spoke about in regards to the positive results that were received after the protest, those are things that don't just happen. Those, in my opinion, are reflective to what our department has been doing prior to a critical incident. And I think it's important that we reflect on that as why, you know, everybody, departments across the country have policies, have procedures in place. They have anti-bias policies in place, but yet they still had uprising and not very peaceful protests in their city. So, I believe that the results that we attained is a direct reflection of, number one, the commitment of the officers of this department, the commitment to the community, the community relations that we have, most importantly, and the training and accountability mechanism that we currently have in place. So, I want to very briefly, kind of give you an overview of some of the things that we have been doing in the organization. And as the Chief referred to the fact that I've only been here about four months, but I can guarantee you, in over 30 years of experience in policing, and having had the opportunity to work with a numerous amount of police departments across this country on the state and federal level, that I believe what we are doing is above and beyond what the average police department is doing across the country. So, when you think about what we're doing, I believe some of the challenges that most departments in the City have in reducing the racism that we, as the Chief spoke about, that's already (INAUDIBLE) in our country, how do we reduce that overflow from coming into our organization? I think it starts with our recruitment and selection process. The vetting process that we have in place is one that I've never seen, not just within my former agency, but I have numerous colleagues across the country that they don't have this type of process. And what I mean by that, we all know that the normal procedures required by FDLE that you're going to do a background, that there's an examination, numerous written exams, polygraph, psychological evals. We know those are mandated and standard. But what is not mandated that many of us may not be aware of that (INAUDIBLE) one-on-one conversations with those candidates in that vetting process that consists of not just the Chief, myself, and the majors and the background investigators, but also, a CALEA assessor. There is also an HR director, a Labor director that goes over each -- every aspect of that candidate's background to ensure they not only have the educational background and qualify passing some of

the exams, but I think more importantly, we look at -- to see where their moral compass is at. Do they have the moral qualifications to be a good fit in this organization as well as the law enforcement as a whole. And with that, of course, the training continues after they complete their academy and (INAUDIBLE) process. And they're constantly monitored. I heard the Commissioner speak about accountability mechanisms. I think that is one of the second-most important aspects that in law enforcement we have to have because as we listened to the outcry across the country, people believe that law enforcement officers aren't being held accountable. I think we take that very serious here because, again, insuring that they're accountable to the policies and procedures and protocols and accreditation that we have in place, to be very honest, is not enough. We have to model that. It has to be in very much real time, and I think that's what we do here in order to ensure that they are held accountable. And sometimes people will say, well, you have training, you have all these things in place, you have technology, you have early warning systems in place, but you know, it's not enough. It's not measurable. But I would say it is measurable because the way you measure it is the result that we have here in Coral Gables, the lack thereof of citizen complaints, the lack thereof of -- we're below minimum when it comes to use of force incidents. We have, in just this past year, over 748 incidents of -- I should say of arrests, and yet only 13 incidents of use force. And I will try to share very quickly my screen on that so you can see that. I think the host has to allow me. Maybe when -- Commander Gonzalez, when you speak, but right now I'm not allowed to share my screen, but what I wanted to share with everyone that we -- as I stated, last year we had over 748 arrests. Of those arrests, only 13 of them resulted in use of force. And with a department that has over 68,000 calls for services, that is way beyond the norm. And just to give you an idea by looking at some of the benchmark cities surveyed for 2019, looking at the average cities of our size, they average 155 incidents reports of use of force. A hundred and twenty of those are inclusive of bodily force being used and 27 of those are impact weapon. That's not even including the additional 120 reported cases of them utilizing the taser. And that's with just an average of 75 calls for service. And when you look at those benchmark cities across the country with two of them being in West Palm Beach and Broward County, I can guarantee you the numbers tell us what we're doing is right. So, with that said, to kind of give you an idea again the mechanism that we have and the complaint processes that we

have, you would say most departments have that. Commissioner spoke about what are we doing going forward. I think it's continuing looking at it and examining those processes, ensuring that the training that we have in place on a biased-based policing that continues. And one more thing quickly, I want to add that I know for a fact that this department has done that I see across the country that's not mandated, that the Chief implemented, that there is in-person teaching that we conducted last year with all first line and above and plan to continue to have that in-person teaching on implicit bias, on the importance of inclusion. I think that as we move forward, looking at that, I believe most citizens simply want -- when they have a contact with law enforcement officers, to make sure, number one, that we are providing them a voice; number two, that we make sure that we impartial our decision making. They want to make sure that we're fair with them, and that most importantly, that we can be trusted and transparent in our (INAUDIBLE). So, I think those are some of the key things that we implement inside our organization that allows us to receive the training -- and I should say that allowed us to receive the results that we attained during that process. Again, you don't get those type of results at the last second. Those became as results from what we had been doing already historically and the relationships that we have already established here in the City that set the tone. And again, I believe we are modeling the way, not just here in our county, but across the country, as well as globally on how -- what you're supposed to do prior in having any type of form of civil unrest. With that, I will turn it over to Commander Gonzalez, if you have additional details you'd like to provide. He needs to be unmuted.

Police Chief Hudak: So, we may be having a technical difficulty with Commander Gonzalez, but I can talk to what this is. Commissioners...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: He has been unmuted, Chief.

Internal Affairs Commander Gonzalez: Can you hear me now?

Police Chief Hudak: Yeah, there you go. Go ahead, Rudy.

Internal Affairs Commander Gonzalez: Alright, I apologize. Technical difficulties with this laptop. Good morning, everyone. Thank you for having us. As you guys know, the Internal Affairs Section is charged with dealing with all citizen complaints, reviewing them, processing them, investigating them and putting them forth to the command staff. But other than that, we're also the depository for pertinent personnel data such as use of force, discipline, counseling, vehicle accidents, et cetera. We are the -- we've been charged with maintaining the department's early identification and intervention program, which has been created in order to identify problematic officers and deal with them before they become an issue. This is something that has been around departments for several years now. But looking at our agency, we have ten benchmarks that we review in the early warning system, things like use of force, complaints, vehicle crashes, things of that nature, are all taken into consideration. And then we have a catch-all, which is four -- a combination of any four indicators within a 90-day period, which would lead to an alert. These alerts are then forwarded to the officer's chain of command, to his frontline supervisor, where he has a one-on-one counseling session with the officer to address the concerns that we might have as an agency, and then followed by a 30-day monitoring period. After that concludes, we then have a sit down with the -- as a command staff and the officer's immediate supervisor and discuss the issues that caused the alert and anything we can do as an agency, such as maybe the officer needs some outside counseling or some training concerns that have come about, and we address that in that nature to try and avoid these things. Just to throw an example at you, I know Assistant Chief Nuriddin told you that we had over 60,000 calls for service last year. We had ten complaints last year; five of them were citizen complaints, five were internal. We had five officers alert in the early warning. As an agency, we -- you know, coming from Miami-Dade County and dealing with the amount of complaints that we had over there a year, I'll tell you that we look good as an agency. Can we get better? Absolutely, we can always get better. But you know, we have -- we average 1.7 percent -- our use of force to arrests averages 1.7 percent, which is very, very low. And that says a lot about our officers, the training they receive and the way they conduct themselves out there on the street.

Police Chief Hudak: Thank you, Commander. Commissioners, we can talk about this and we can have more in-depth conversations about what we do. You know, like I said, the rest of the command staff is on in case any other questions come up. As you can see, I believe the Coral Gables Police Department has an accountability mechanism in place from top to bottom that starts with me and goes all the way down to the first-line officer, and it is inbred in our culture and it continues to be. We have to learn from our history as well. Congressman Frederica Wilson will tell you that the 5000 Role Models, which is one of probably the most prolific intervention in a young black man's youth, started in Coral Gables. It started here at Gables High in Black History Month in 1995 between a physical fight of black students, black male students and the Police Department on Le Jeune Road. From that started the 5000 Role Models here in Coral Gables, and we continue to be a part of that program forever. That is the mantra that is set. Now, to the Mayor's -- the Vice Mayor and Mayor's point, and Commissioner Mena's point, my proposal last night to - - or yesterday to the City Manager was, we're never going to stop resting on our laurels and we can always do better because we still have to have our safeguards in place to protect us against the racist thoughts that may come from other people that we have to deal with and also help identify our implicit biases as human beings, not just police officers. To that end, I believe from the technology standpoint, we have taken every step we possibly could, from the latest tasers to the BolaWrap, to looking at any other kind of intervention strategies that we can do and less lethal. I believe our practices of how we take care of our homeless population, our mentally ill is something that the police department takes on, and unless we change direction as a city, is something we will continue to take on. In closing, I believe going forward, everything that we have compiled for you and we give you every year, because we are a nationally accredited with excellence police department, those can't be empty words. And Alex Roffe is on the call, our CALEA Accreditation Manager, who we brought back to make sure we continue -- we follow the rules and we are in place. Going forward, I proposed this: I have three recommendations that were given to me for somebody to review our policies, to review our practices. This threesome of great individuals is somebody that I believe from all walks of life, both here locally and a national expert. So, Bob Martinez has agreed, Jared Davis has agreed, and Dr. Geoffrey Alpert, who is a sociologist and criminologist known throughout the world in South Carolina, has agreed to review all of our

policies, all of our practices, and make recommendations as a panel to you all in the future. I proposed this to the Manager. He has allowed me to engage with the individuals, which I did late last night, to continue to look at what we are doing and how we can do it better. I have no intention of resting on our laurels. I believe the officers within the agency have bought in. I have seen first-hand on the discipline side that officers will not tolerate other officers abusing their authority and violating their oath. And to that end, it is my job and the Manager's job obviously to take definitive action and discipline our officers that need be. We have done that; we will continue to do that. The union understands those positions, and as long as we abide by all the rules and regulations and laws of the state of Florida that officers are entitled to, that discipline will continue in a fair and impartial fashion. So, with that, again, my staff's open, if you all have any questions. We're available as well as the rest of the command staff so directed.

Commissioner Mena: Chief, this is Commissioner Mena. First of all, so one of the things I was going to ask you about was specifically about having some sort of third-party independent evaluation, so I'm very glad to hear that you assembled those three individuals. I know Bob Martinez and Jared Davis personally, and I know they're extremely distinguished gentleman. For those who haven't read Mr. Davis' opinion piece in the Miami Herald from a couple days ago, it was incredibly poignant and moving. And so, I couldn't think of a better person to evaluate our policies in that respect. I don't know Dr. Alpert obviously, but I understand he has a good reputation within the law enforcement community for these types of issues, so I'll defer to you on that. But the important thing is that we have independent people looking at these policies and making sure that we're doing everything we can. One of the things I wanted to ask you about, Chief, you know, one of the things that's been brought up is about law enforcement departments throughout the country, but in our case, I guess, you know, throughout South Florida, having uniform use of force policies. I don't know if, frankly, if that's the case locally, and I was hoping you might address that. The other thing -- the other two things I'll just bring up now, and then I'll turn it back to you. Assistant Chief Nuriddin mentioned implicit biased training, if I heard correctly. I think she said that...

Assistant Police Chief Nuriddin: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Our officers currently engage in that, or if she was saying that we would engage in that. In either event, we should -- you know, I'd like to recommend that to the City Manager as something, frankly, that everybody who works in the City, can engage in. I've attended seminars on implicit bias a couple years ago, and it's very insightful. It demonstrates to you things that you may not be conscientious of. And from that perspective, it's a very sort of awakening type of training that brings to light things that people may not be mindful of currently, so I recommend that to the City Manager across the board, if it's not something you already do. And then the last thing, Chief -- and I don't know how much we can get into this today. I know it's a more complicated subject and maybe it's something we can have another day; if not, we can talk about it today, either Miriam or Raquel, whoever it is. But you know, one of the items that is being discussed nationally as an item of importance of collective bargaining is what sort of policies are in place as a result of collected bargaining agreements between the unions and cities. And so to the -- I'll be curious to hear your thoughts on that, and what, if anything, we're doing to investigate and to address any issues that might arise from that.

Police Chief Hudak: So, to answer your first question on the use of force policies, I believe you'll find in South Florida, a lot of our use of force policies mirror each other with very few exceptions on when it is. I think in a bigger conversation which is taking place throughout the country right now is some of those use of force policies don't exist. You know, they go by state statutes where any fleeing felon -- ours, in Coral Gables, is much more restrictive than that. It kind of spells it out. I believe in talking over the last week or so to my colleagues throughout the country, you know, there is going to be a national use of force directive. And I believe what we're all waiting for on the police side is who are the focal point people for Black Lives Matter, for those organizations, because we have enough organizations on our side. But what I do believe is the conversations we're looking at now is really between police departments and the groups to address the issue.

So, I do believe there will be a national one. There is an eight great steps -- because I'm not familiar with the whole warning before firing, that's not something that -- until it's explained to me more what that means. But in our use of force policy, the announcing, the de-escalation is ingrained in everything that we have done, and we continue to train on a regular basis. The one proposal that I do have to all the elected officials is because we train so much, I would welcome you all, and really, I kind of implore you all to come out to our training that we do annually and know what it feels like, the hair on the back of your neck to walk up and stop a car in the middle of the night. And we do this as part of our training. I welcome all of you to walk in the shoes, and we do have less lethal guns, if you will, shock vests to know what it feels like in a simulated shoot out. This is all the stuff that the police department does. And when we do that, we also put in those biased-based triggers to see what will happen. Obviously, it's a controlled environment, but I do invite our elected officials to come join us in a training day. And when we finish the new building, we'll be able to do it there as well. Your second part on the implicit bias-ness, I believe we all have implicit bias. I have it. We all need to address it. I do believe it's not just in our department, but throughout our city. Yesterday, I put a video out to the employees to make sure that black and white employees are talking amongst themselves to understand what they're facing both at home and national because this is -- has an effect on us as a police department. We have gone from interrupting people's dinners because they're not wearing masks to something as critical as racism in the United States because of the ill actions of people thousands and thousands of miles away, and that takes its toll on police officers. But we do have systems in place to make sure that we can take care of our own within the department. I do say, Commissioner, that my recommendation to the Manager will be the same thing, that we have an ongoing training with HR and Labor, which we do, because it is a good look at yourself. And we can't fix a problem unless we see it ourselves as well, so you know, going forward on that, we have taken appropriate steps. I believe the employees, if you will, that want to remain anonymous and critique us, whether it be on social media, blogs or whatever, I'm okay with that because I believe -- and we have seen in this department -- that our officers, our officers have notified their supervisors and done the right thing because they will not tolerate the abuse of somebody. Police officers, by our oath, have the ability to take people's constitutional freedoms away, only police officers. And that right now is the focal

point of the racism debate. And it's not really a debate. It is across the country. And we are going to be the ones that have to solve it from the police side, and I believe our department, my fellow employees in this department, are ready to address it here and for all those who visit because that's our charge and we all took an oath to do that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Chief. I want to make very, very clear that this item was placed on the agenda by Commissioner Mena as a discussion to inform our residents and whoever else is on the call as to what our police -- our very fine, very respectful, very -- following instructions, following orders, following procedures, police department is doing. This in no way, in my opinion, reflects on the performance of our police department in the past or our opinion of our police department for which I personally have the greatest admiration. Any further discussion on this matter? I think we should go on. Any further discussions?

Vice Mayor Lago: If I may, Mayor, just very briefly. I just wanted to commend Commissioner Mena for putting this item on the agenda. I think these are discussions that are important, that are very healthy. The thought and the concept of inclusion is something that shouldn't be an afterthought. It's something that should be at the forefront of everything that we do in this community. So, I wanted to make sure I mentioned Commissioner Mena for having the courage to put this on the agenda today. I also had the privilege of attending the protest, which was a very peaceful protest. And I think it was peaceful as a result of the individuals that attended that demonstrated that -- or individuals who wanted their voices to be heard. The Police Department did an incredible job. And I also -- I echo the sentiments of the Mayor, along with our IT Department, and it was a moment where we were able, all of us that were there, 22 police chiefs, along with the reverend, to have a moment of solidarity. And more important, something that I think that we need to do a lot more of is we need to listen. As a community, all -- you know, in reference to everyone that's engaged in our community, no matter your background, your race, sexual orientation, we need to take a moment to take a step back and understand that sometimes we do have bias. Sometimes we do have impressions from a very young age. But that we take that moment to sit back and listen, we could always find an answer on how to resolve these issues.

So, I just wanted to put that on the record because I think it's important to give credit where credit is due, especially in some very difficult moments that we're facing in our country today. I think we're in a better position today than we were 40, 50 years ago. And I think that if we go out there and we have these discussions in the spirit of inclusion and we listen to everyone that's involved or affected, I think that we'll continue to evolve, to evolve into a community that's in a much better position today in the future than it is today. So, with that being said, I just want to say thank you to Commissioner Mena for putting this on the agenda. And these are discussions -- these are tough discussions that we need to continue to have, and I look forward to more discussions because I have a lot of questions. I don't know if it's appropriate right now to have these discussions here. I think we need to sit down, have sunshine meetings in regards to, you know, how effective is a trial board. Do we need to have a Civil Service Board, like the City of Miami and other municipalities in Miami-Dade County and throughout this country have. There are...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Pending issues that we haven't addressed in our own community. For example, the 14 police women and the closure of that case that has been pending since July 19, 2017 under a previous administration. But those are issues that we need to address, and I look forward to sitting down with the Chief, my colleagues and our new Assistant Chief, who I had the pleasure of meeting the other day, and having a real discussion on how we close the door and how we give those women the necessary closure after a long and painful assault on their background, an assault on their careers, their dedicated careers here in the City of Coral Gables. And I think that we -- that they deserve and we should give them closure in regards...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Vice Mayor, I would implore you to stay on the subject.

Vice Mayor Lago: It is -- this is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And that is a subject for a different...

Vice Mayor Lago: This is on the subject.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: For a different...

Vice Mayor Lago: This is on the subject. So -- Mr. Mayor, and I would appreciate -- and if Commissioner Mena thinks this is not on the subject, you know, I leave it up to him. He's the sponsor on the item. So, I just want to say thank you on that and I look forward to having more conversations on the issue.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Fors: Mayor, if I may very briefly.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Please.

Commissioner Fors: I think enough can't be said about how the Police Department and the City Administration handled the protestors -- or the protest, the peaceful protest. I think we've said about -- enough about it today. But I did want to put on the record, by the same token, I commend the protesters and the organizers of the protest as well for embracing our efforts and our extended hand to collaborate and facilitate a peaceful protest that's starting a productive dialogue, and I just wanted to mention that on the record as well.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you very much. And we'll go on to the next item, which is the consent agenda.

Vice Mayor Lago: Mayor.

Police Chief Hudak: Just one question to the Vice Mayor. I just wanted clarification. Since we are continuing to follow up on those issues as far as the internal -- but I want to make it very clear to everybody who's listening. I mean, we are talking about an internal attack on our officers, and we know that. Whether we can identify who those people are is yet to be determined, but those same people that hide behind anonymity within the police department or the City are more than likely worried about this bigger conversation that we're having about accountability, and that's how we deal with it. So, I agree with you. I mean, the one thing that bothered me more than anything else was those 14 officers that were drug into that because of a nefarious person from within the organization, and we've identified that and we will have an answer for you as quickly as possible.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Very good.

Vice Mayor Lago: And by the way, I just wanted you to -- if I may, Mayor. And I appreciate your comments, Chief. You're straight on point. You're not answering to this Commission. You're answering to those women who deserve -- you have, you know, women who have served this community with dignity. You know, and it pains me -- and I know it pains this Commission as a whole to see that continue to linger. I know it's a current investigation. It's a second investigation as a matter of fact, but this Commission -- and I was looking for the records. I didn't have enough time yesterday evening when I made the public records request. This has been going on for some time, and I know that investigations take time, but I just wanted to put that on the record because, again, at the end of the day, they've been -- they've dedicated their lives to this community, and I want to make sure that they know that -- it's not me; it's not Vince Lago. It's the Commission as a whole who stands with them.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, that should be a subject for another day, Vice Mayor. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Mena: Mayor.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And we'll go on...

Commissioner Mena: Mayor.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Mayor, one quick -- one -- I'll be very quick. One final request I just have. What I'd like to do, Chief Hudak, is for our next in-person Commission meaning -- because some of these discussions -- you know, the Zoom meeting is helpful, but hopefully we'll be back in Chambers soon. And what I'd like to do is to put on that agenda a follow-up item to this. And basically, if you could please be prepared to come back at that time, whether it probably be a few weeks from now or a month from now, and address sort of what you've done in the interim. Maybe you've already convened that three-person committee to start evaluating. Maybe we've set up some training. You know, let's continue the discussion on that day in person, which I think will be even more productive. But I'd like to ask you to please be ready for that, and I'd like to instruct the Clerk to please put that on the agenda for the next in-person meeting that we have.

Police Chief Hudak: Commissioner, we'll be prepared to give you updates, and I think we should probably do an update with you all. I mean, Major Pedroso is on. We're looking at the other technologies that are out there that we have been beta testing, as well as what we've looked at. I believe we could give status updates, but my goal to you all would be to do a workshop in the sunshine, as the Vice Mayor said, with that panel of three people, so they can explain to you in person what they think and how we go forward. I know there's conversations about de-funding and independent review panels. I do believe I would want you all to have the information from a third party's -- or the threesome, if you will, to tell you exactly what they think about what we should do and where we should go.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Well, let's put it on the agenda for the next in-person meeting.

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner Mena -- I'd just like to say one thing, Mayor. That we will look at the implicit bias training from a citywide perspective. One of the things I'm very proud of our city is that we do not -- our HR Department, our hiring department, our hiring is never based on any type of racism and it's something that we look at the individual who are good people, and that means that they exist from all races and all religions and every other -- and we try to be as diverse as possible. So, I will look into the implicit bias training and report on that at the next Commission meeting.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very, very much.