

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item G-5**  
**June 28, 2022**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Vince Lago**

**Vice Mayor Michael Mena**

**Commissioner Rhonda Anderson**

**Commissioner Jorge Fors**

**Commissioner Kirk Menendez**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**

**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Deputy City Attorney, Cristina Suárez**

**Police Chief, Ed Hudak**

**Public Speaker(s)**

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Agenda Item G-5 [2:56 p.m.]

Report from Police regarding school safety activities and preparations.  
(Sponsored by Commissioner Fors)

Mayor Lago: Moving on to G-5 and then I-5 after.

Commissioner Anderson: G-5.

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City Commission Meeting

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Agenda Item G-5 - Report from Police regarding school safety activities and preparations.

Police Chief Hudak: Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor, members of the Commission. Chief Hudak for the Police Department. We are here today to talk about our operational plans in general for school safety. As all of you know, school safety is among the top priority of law enforcement throughout the country. All of us watched in horror on several occasions throughout our country, not to mention obviously so close to home with Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Because of that, the State of Florida kind of leads the way in how we respond to police -- or how police respond, I should say, to school shootings. We have a presentation quickly about what we have in place and what we do. First of all, the State of Florida created a felony law of a second degree under the statute for people who threaten to kill, do great bodily harm, injure, or mass shooting, any act of terrorism in any way. What this allows us to do from the law enforcement side is go after or prosecute and pursue people who make idle threats -- who they may think are idle threats -- through social media platforms. What we do is we are engaging conversations with children in their school about what this law is and what it does, and they become informed about the social media they use, which is why now you know, as we've discussed before, we have a cybercrimes detective within the department that works with other areas to track these down as quickly as possible and intervene. The other thing that we have, since the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Act, they created the Office of Safe Schools in Florida, which is Fortify Florida. It's a bunch of tools that we use in law enforcement. It also requires -- as you know, this body has approved in years past SROs, a School Resource Officer at each school. That still continues that day before the School Board Police Department was ever going to ramp up. And really, there's about 400 officers now in the School Board Police Department. We were covering those schools with our officers as well. We do safety assessments in the public schools. We have done that both through talk with PTAs, but also having our officers in some of those schools, along with the school resource officers of Miami-Dade County. They also have a Behavioral Threat Assessment Unit, which we defer to the Miami-Dade School Police Department to assess those students that are attending. The #It'sNoJoke awareness campaign was aimed at the students addressing the school threats. Believe me, some of these cases that we have seen here were really not somebody who was of a mind to do harm, so we continually try and drive that message home early in the school system that the children understand that these

kind of threats are in fact felonies and create a very drastic response from law enforcement. We could go on to talk about the primary goals of the office through the state, the prevention, the intervention, and the emergency preparedness and planning of schools, which we work with our partners of all the schools. And I'm talking in general now of Miami-Dade schools, but this also applies to all the charter schools that we have. These are the schools within the Miami-Dade for public schools. What they've come up with now is not so much as an active assailant instead of an active shooter. Again, there can be a lot of different ways that schools can be breached, the safety of the school can be breached. It's not just a firearm, so we have a lot of these protocols are in place already. We do have partnered -- and we'll talk a little bit about SaferWatch. You all know that company as somebody that we partner with. They are now one of the State sponsors or State-approved panic button alerts. To that end, this company that we've partnered with are also going to provide the panic alarm system for our employees here in the building. That's going to be a direct connect right to the Police Department. Obviously, we have already identified from a lot of the major schools our reunification areas. As you've always heard me say, anything that's happened throughout the country has happened in Coral Gables at one time or another. And the reason why we train as hard as we do is because when it happens, we need to be ready, and we have trained historically with a lot of these schools. Most recently, Temple Judea, we have been out there. I know some of you got phone calls. The SWAT team was actually practicing there. That was something that was obviously sanctioned, but also to give us situational awareness. We do have the Youth Resource Unit detectives that work out of our Criminal Investigation Section. Right now, we have one sergeant and four detectives that are assigned to all juvenile crimes here. Their goal is to prevent and control delinquent and criminal activity of youths, maintain programs and strategy of intervention. They are spearheading conversations with students and parents and encourage them to provide information when indicators are observed. Another part of that right now is we have our summer PAL programs that are going on with the students. We're able to mold them early on in the ways of safety through sport, and we also have a very successful Police Explorer Program that is run through these detectives. Detective Azcuy, as you see here, is responsible for Coral Gables Prep, two locations, because it's a little unique, 105 Minorca and 39

Zamora, Banyan Day School, Crystal Academy, and St. Phillips Episcopal, which also has an off-duty officer around the clock, so that is part of her responsibilities. Detective Chavez has Washington Carver Elementary. We also kind of lean over to the middle school as well, even though that jurisdictional issue is a little different. But it goes back to how long enforcement responds to these kind of threats. He also has Granada Day School, Ponce de Leon Middle School, which also has a school resource officer assigned, as well as security on campus at all times. Riviera Day School, which is a private school, has a Coral Gables off-duty officer, the KLA Schools in Coral Gables, which is 4573 Ponce de Leon Boulevard is also on his rotation in the mornings, and Temple Judea, which has a permanent off-duty officer when school is in session and other things that go on as far as the congregation and their events. Detective Antonio Miguelez is St. Theresa's Catholic School. They also have off-duty officers present there. The Growing Place Preschool on Coral Way, the International Christian School on Velarde, Coral Gables Senior High School. He is one of the SROs on campus, as well as a Miami-Dade officer on campus at all times. And Coral Gables Congregational Early Childhood Center on De Soto. Detective Sotolongo has West Lab, St. Thomas Episcopal, along with an off-duty, Somerset Gables Academy, along with an off-duty. Gulliver has an off-duty on campus as well as traffic and security guards. International Studies Prep Academy on Madruga has security guards and SROs on campus from Miami-Dade County. And the University of Miami School -- Canterbury School, UM Police has their panic buttons there as well. Our public information officer, Officer Kelly Denham, who you all know, has performed several school safety assessments. She has done all of these that are listed here, where we have gone on to active shooter drills. She continues to stay on top of these schools. We visit them every year. And the Uniform Patrol has recently acquired breaching tools for supervisors. You know, tragically, we learn in law enforcement how to do things better. Not necessarily through Uvalde, but other places. Here's one thing that I can assure you. When we acquire all these tools that we're talking about, there is not a door that we're not going to be able to get into immediately. We train cohesively with all of our members, but as well as all the other police departments throughout Miami-Dade County. And it could be an officer from this jurisdiction, an officer from Miami, an officer from School Board, we are going to go.

We have made that very clear. It is clear in our rules and regulations and the expectations are set by the officers that there is a distinct difference between a barricaded subject and an active assailant. And if that is in fact the case, it doesn't make a difference who goes there. You're never going to hear me make a decision to hold up or to go. That is not my role in these situations. We have trained this, and we have written our policies that if there's life-threatening actions going on, we are going to go in. Our training on the proper use of the tools will come from the SWAT team. And our SWAT team has -- once again, they can take it a little bit farther if we have to, but their techniques and our officers can use the explosive hydraulic devices that we use to gain entry into some of these areas. Our Threat Mitigation Investigation Division continues on a regular basis. As you all heard this morning, by 7:15 this morning, our Threat Assessment Unit was working, along with the cybercrimes, to identify the individual who threw out some very vile pieces of literature throughout the City. We do the same work every time we get one of those school threats. We've identified students within hours that use -- on social media with a paint gun. The University of Miami student -- on several occasions, we've had students express some kind of concerning thoughts about the University of Miami. It's an immediate unified response, both to campus, but also identifying the person and isolating them as quickly as we can. The Specialized Enforcement Division, along with everyone else, puts together an operational plan, beginning and end. I won't distribute this because it is kind of confidential information. But my office, through now Assistant Chief Hanlon, we do an operational plan for the most vulnerable times of the year, beginning and end. Everything that is done is laid out ahead of time, not just traffic, which is a big concern, but it's also our operational plan. Every beginning and end of year, these plans are on file. The second part that we put together -- and you all have a copy, and I'll leave a copy with the Clerk -- is we amended our best practices manual for use in private schools. This is something that we use in all of the schools that we have, all of the private schools. I touched basically on everything that should be done. It's kind of a lessons learned that we've seen throughout, but we're very proud of the work that our detectives put together on that and revising that as well. Technology. So, the SaferWatch App. You've all heard me say SaferWatch a few times where somebody can stream things to us livestream. SaferWatch, as I said, is now a panic button for teachers and students that

only works when they're on campus. So, we are going to have reality of seeing what is going on in those classrooms. And I know a lot of chiefs will tell you sometimes IT is a stumbling block. I got to tell you, I brag about our IT people and what we come up with. And I know sometimes it gets beyond us from cops of what we're doing, but the ability to partnership with IT and bring in these platforms that help us is something remarkable. The "See Something, Say Something" is just the bottom -- it's almost like the golden rule. If you see something that doesn't look right, or the hair on the back of your neck stands up, by all means, you should call us. As I talked about the mobile panic button, which is going to be supplied right to the 911 Center, we can turn those on. And SaferWatch 911 is the ability for anybody calling 911, we're going to know exactly where they're at, including the attitude of what floor they're on. As we continue to grow as a city vertically, we know that's going to affect our response times. We can get to a building, but it may take us minutes to get to where we're going to be. You get to a school, and it might take us minutes to find out where we're going to be. This technology that we have in place that we're going to flip the switch for coming up on a pilot basis is something that we are extremely proud of because it's going to lessen our abilities to take any kind of decisive takeaway actions. The last thing that we're going to do, and I wanted to announce to you all -- I know I've talked to some of you independently about it -- is how can we do better. Through our IT, we're partnering with a company called Bond. We are going to announce this on Friday. Again, as we put out today that we're going to set the press, imagine having a piloted drone available to fly out and give us situational awareness within two minutes anywhere in the city where the officers can see this. When, again, I say cutting-edge technology, this is it. We will have two people on a roof around the clock, and when we need them to go on not just these kind of calls, but everything else, they're going to be able to fly a drone and we're going to be able to see it within two minutes. It has a thermal camera. It can help us in fire. We can actually see inside the side of buildings. Now, before everybody starts calling you all or me, these are mission-specific flights. We are not patrolling. We are not looking for things. It doesn't record tags. It will be controlled by us. It'll be controlled by us. We will fly the routes of the road, so we're not going to be flying and hovering over people's backyards, unless there's something specific. I do believe this is going to be a game

changer, where we have a helicopter without having a helicopter and having that ability to fly over the water, to fly over the mangroves when we're looking at things like that. So, this is something else to help put eyes over sight of a school. Before the officers even get there, we know where to go. You're going to be able to see where that door entered, where that person came in, and we're going to be in right behind them. So, we're excited to partner with them. We're going to see. We may have to come back after the pilot and say, "Hey, this is a budgetary decision of what we want to continue," but we will be the first ones that I'm aware of in the State of Florida for sure that is handling it like this, where we have not automated but people on the roof actually doing that, so we're partnering with both community and everything else. I didn't go into great detail on what we do and how we approach these, but we have a history of doing this. In 2007, we did the first Operation Sandbox, which was a multitude of people. There were 500 role players at the University of Miami just to work on different scenarios that we created there. We continue to do that. So, we are as prepared as I think we can be today. Tomorrow technology may change, and if that changes, you know, through the Manager, we bring that forward and we go forward. And as was said this morning, it's -- the only reason why we are as good as we are in Coral Gables is because of the quality of the employees that we hire, and they all understand. And if they don't, they also understand that they won't be working here, and there's a history of that within the department as well. So, with that, I open up for any questions.

Mayor Lago: Chief, first off, very impressive as always, and I think you hit the nail on the head when you talk about redundancy efforts. And this is an effort to continue to improve on the quality of life for the residents and make sure that we prioritize and put public safety number one. I mean, that's all I have to say about the issue, and we will continue to spend the necessary dollars to make sure that our community's as safe as possible. And you can't compromise, for example, on our school safety. I mean, there is no compromising. To remind everybody out there who forgot because there hasn't been an incident, thank God, in any City schools, your Commission was the first commission in Miami-Dade County, myself and the Vice Mayor, we were on the Commission back then. We actually pushed for that legislation with the Manager. We require that our police

officers, through your leadership, be in every school before Miami-Dade County was working on the resources. It was a significant lift, obviously, after Parkland, and was able to deliver on an officer and a resource officer in every school. We didn't even take the chance. We didn't even think about it twice. It wasn't an issue about money. Yes, it did put pressure on our budgets, but at the end of day, you can't put a price on public safety. So, again, I think it's a great -- this is spectacularly well done. I mean, this is just a testament to the City's commitment and how we do things the right way, and everyone wants to emulate the City of Coral Gables, so congratulations to you and to the Manager.

Vice Mayor Mena: Just to dovetail off that. One of the things that -- sorry. Just to dovetail on that, one of the things that we invested in -- to the Mayor's point -- that I'd just like to get an update on at some point. It doesn't need to be right now, but we can talk about it prior to the next meeting. you know, one of the things was the public safety building, and one of the components of that what was the top floor of that building, which was supposed to be, you know, a state-of-the-art training facility. We saw recently with, you know, what happened in Uvalde, you know, and people have different opinions of that, but bottom line is, you know, we want to make sure that we have the best training facilities and everything, and we invested in that. I know there's been some delays in getting that operational, but when can we expect to sort of see that?

Police Chief Hudak: Well, somebody's going to think you and I set this up. If you all want to join me tomorrow afternoon at about 3 o'clock, we finally have all the kinks out, and we have the 300 degree simulator in one room, a driving simulator in another room.

Vice Mayor Mena: Great.

Police Chief Hudak: And tomorrow we have somebody coming in from out of town, just to kind of run them through that. So, yes, the indoor gun facility helps us hone our skills on a regular basis. The simulator, because of what we put together, is just short of three-quarters of a million



dollars, and you will -- your blood pressure will raise. You will see the active shooter scenarios, and tomorrow afternoon, we're running -- I welcome you all to please come over, join us to see that, and that's the repetitive part of our training. Because of this Commission's action, Commissioner Fors and the Manager, because he's been trying to throw me as a jujitsu doll for a while, we have three jujitsu classes three times a week. We started off -- at my request that we started off voluntary, and we have seen more and more people, more and more officers start to become more confident in their abilities to not. So, you know, just starting off, opening up has made us better officers.

Mayor Lago: Chief, that -- and I'm sorry to interrupt you, but that -- I think that training is forthcoming because my staff told me about it, and I asked them to please put me down for that.

Police Chief Hudak: Right.

Mayor Lago: I think it was like a six-day course or six afternoon -- maybe I...

Police Chief Hudak: Yeah, that's...

Mayor Lago: Have the days wrong.

Police Chief Hudak: The six-day course is what we give to students that are going away for the first time, for ladies only, where we have what used to be...

Mayor Lago: Ladies only. I'm here.

Police Chief Hudak: A RedMan...

Mayor Lago: I'll take it. Listen, I'll take it.

Police Chief Hudak: It's not quite the way it was supposed to come out.

Mayor Lago: I'll take it.

Police Chief Hudak: But...

Mayor Lago: I'll take it.

Police Chief Hudak: Right now, those classes...

Mayor Lago: I just don't want --

Police Chief Hudak: (INAUDIBLE)...

Mayor Lago: I got to be ready to grapple with Fors because he...

Police Chief Hudak: No, see, that's...

Commissioner Fors: As an open invitation.

Police Chief Hudak: Mayor, I'll go...

Commissioner Fors: Anybody that wants to wrestle, let me know.

Police Chief Hudak: I'll go to that class with you because I don't want to go with...

Mayor Lago: Now, I can't...

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Police Chief Hudak: The Manager and Mr....

Mayor Lago: I can't go, you know, head to head with -- toe to toe with Fors before I get at least some training.

Police Chief Hudak: Right. No, but those six-day classes are what the department puts forward with teaching active resistance.

Vice Mayor Mena: That's good.

Police Chief Hudak: And they really get to beat up a cop because we put the RedMan suits on, and the women have at it.

Mayor Lago: The whole point...

Police Chief Hudak: My daughters...

Mayor Lago: The whole point is to be able -- like you said before and we had this discussion -- is to minimize the type of force that sometimes causes someone to lose their life.

Police Chief Hudak: Yes.

Mayor Lago: And Commissioner Fors, like you mentioned, has been at the forefront of pushing that along with the Manager. They both have a background in jujitsu, in wrestling, and I think it's critically important that before you draw your gun -- you may have to one day at the end of the day. And police officers have that discretion, and they have that training. But you want to be able to disarm somebody and do the best that you can to not put yourself in that position.

Police Chief Hudak: Right. And the driving simulator is another one.

Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Police Chief Hudak: They're actually making it for our streets. So, I know the Risk Manager's going to be very happy because we can kind of reduce our accidents, but that's another thing where we have scenarios where the officers drive to a call in progress like they would, and we take them out of the simulator and put them right into a movie theater. And you know, for what -- for the VR or the virtual reality things, it is an amazing time. What that center does is allow us to train regularly instead of taking people offline. So, with the current shift deployment of having 10 hours, I can afford to take people out for two hours without any kind of lessening of our coverage and have them go through the training, shower up, go to work, and we have that (INAUDIBLE). So, we are very proud of that. It has worked wonderfully, and we're really kind of looking forward to making this the norm on how to train like that.

Mayor Lago: Well, thank you, Chief. I appreciate the presentation. As I said before, you know, very professional as always. And we'll look forward to seeing the innovation.

Police Chief Hudak: Appreciate it. Thank you for the support.

Vice Mayor Mena: Thank you.

Commissioner Menendez: Can we get his statement on a loop, just repeated over and over and over?

Mayor Lago: Yeah, I think it's great.