

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-3
December 16, 2014
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Pat Keon

Commissioner Vince Lago

Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Interim Police Chief, Edward Hudak

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-3 [Start: 3:05:26 p.m.]

Audit of Uniform Crime Reporting Presentation

Mayor Cason: We're going to move now, we're going to do first H-3 and then we're going to do F-3. Chief, long day.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Yes, sir. Good afternoon, everybody. On the agenda item is a report from our --

Mayor Cason: Don't leave, don't leave; we don't have a quorum.

Commissioner Keon: OK. I'll wait until they get back.

Mayor Cason: If we could let Frank, Commissioner Quesada know that he can come back.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Mayor Cason: Go ahead, Chief.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor, Commissioners. We do have a quorum, right?

Mayor Cason: Yes, we have a quorum.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Before we actually get into the report and your questions, I just wanted to state for the record that we've been a lot of things in my first 95 days of what we've been doing within the Police Department. I just wanted to touch on a few things for the viewers, as well as yourselves. You know, our new focus is to develop a strategy to be proactive in multi-dimensional in community with the communication in mind, and to better serve our agency as well as the community. To do this, I think we must embrace and master the communication technologies, such as social media. The police communication strategies that focus on crime prevention can have a significant influence on the crime rate. I think you've seen this. This is only the beginning of our crime prevention and passed in the report that we presented as far as the numbers. We've also started our PSA (Public Service Aides) rather effectively, I believe. We also need to communicate with the essential audiences made up of people and groups who can give credibility to the local Police Department's goal: Community leaders, neighborhood leaders, public interest groups, the Chamber, the BID (Business Improvement District), crime watch, faith group, but most importantly, our employees. The Department must reach out to every member of the community if they expect to be successful in creating and sustaining a sense of safety, which I believe was our marching orders. The media itself as to this has changed. The traditional news media is no longer the primary source of news information. We cannot relinquish the custody of telling the Coral Gables Police Department's real story. To that end, our audiences are more fractured. Due to this communication explosion, it's harder to put the message out without the gains of some kind of attention due to the digital age. Working with the Manager's Office in the comprehensive program as far as what we're doing with our social media, we believe we can create more multiple platforms to get our messages out, whether it be TV (television), newspapers, radios, especially the Internet. More Americans right now get their news from the Internet than any newspaper or radio, and three-fourths of those people that are actually on their, study show, actually help create the news and spread the news and give us information. Sites like Facebook and Twitter have continued to evolve in the social sites that work interactively with police departments, and I believe we are going in that way, working with the Manager's Office and in tune what the entire City's doing with the app as far as our City communications, and we need to be in front of that to continue which way we're going. The news has become more participatory, and I believe we've seen that in the last three months as some of the statistical data that I've given you is that a lot of our cases, including the ones today, was because of calls and people making calls to us where we're able to effectuate arrests and change those statistical numbers. Finally, before we talk specifically about the report, is community policing model, which I believe in, is building relationships and solving problems, relationships like take the time and continual reinforcement to the individual citizens and our stakeholders. We started working on rebuilding the trust that was questioned back in September. Crime is an important measure of police effectiveness, but it is not the only one. Crime is far more a complex phenomenon than statistics can really portray. Individual's experiences have a profound distortional effect on the perceptions and especially about crime. How the media

covers the crime also influences people's perceptions. I would submit to you, the strongest and most lasting impressions about police come from personal and family member contact with the police and the stories that they tell their people. This is a strategy that we've changed within the Police Department. I see any crisis, not that this was a crisis. But I see any crisis as an opportunity to reevaluate, correct, and explain. In other words, the inoculation effect to help better our community, prepare for what lies ahead, as far as any kind of incident, to rebrand the Coral Gables Police Department. We do not want to ignore crisis or hunker down, but we monitor it and we will continue to change. I believe in the Police Department as throughout the City. As we have started to do is we do what we say and we say what we do. So with that, I would open up for any other questions you have. We've quite frankly, I know that we kind of gave numbers on what the report says, and I want to thank Assistant Chief Miller, who's actually out of the City today, for a 4.55 percent, from the statistical basis, from the UCR is exceptional, as far as an error rate is concerned. There was many classifications. And as I've stated in the memo, we are going to continue doing business very succinctly. We have a wonderful manager, civilian manager, Jessica Wotherspoon, who has done a phenomenal job with the resources that she's had. We are now going to centralize the information we put out in raw data. As I've stated from the beginning of my interim appointment, we're going to continue to do things in a very specific way and look at things in a totality. Five to seven days after the end of the month, we can look from year to year. I would submit to you that looking at the pattern and trends, that we are trending in the right direction, understandably so, that our goal is zero. My goal is zero from the Police Department. So every one of those numbers is a victim, I understand that. I think the officers understand that. But as far as the statistics are concerned, there has been no discernible manipulation on the way we report things. They get over-reported. They get under-reported. But the bottom number stays the same. Those peaks and valleys, as we have said before, that crime is going to spike, depending on when it is and depending on what that is taken, contributes to whatever the perceptions may be. I believe that the deployment practices that we're doing now in working with the Manager's Office previous and now and given the resources that had been allowed to us, we continue to make people feel safe, which is the perception that our crime rate is going in a direction that we want to. Our participation, as I've stated, from the residents has been nothing short of phenomenal; people looking out for one another. The positions or I should say, the programs that had been instituted by this body give us the ability to respond faster, and we have put more eyes on the street, working through the holidays. I believe we're going to be happy, and I'll come back, obviously through the Manager, when we get to our regular annual report of the raw data first and what we've tracked, not to what we have put out to FDLE (Federal Department of Law Enforcement), as well as the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigations), and we'll look at what we've done. But again, I would never say anything other than we are trending overall in the right direction. That's statistics, that's the feeling of safety, that's the reports that I'm getting back from the officers on the street.

Mayor Cason: Well, Chief, I want to congratulate you on what you've done in these 95 days. You've pointed out how important it is for citizens, if they see something, to call in, because we have, what, a hundred and -- on the books, 191 police officers.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: On the books, we are about 176 right now.

Mayor Cason: But we have 220 miles of streets and 18,500 homes and dwellings, so you all can't do it all yourself; you need to have people to call in if they see anything that's suspicious. You don't profile; you can't, but you can stop somebody if a resident calls, and that's lead to a number of high-profile arrests. And I think also continuing to work with Katherine Fernandez-Rundle's office in terms of making sure that when you catch these gangs, that they stay in jail. That's, again, very important. And again, I think that we've offered you all the resources that I think you need. If you ever need more, let us know where, because I think there's a disposition to do whatever we can to help you and your men and women make progress toward this goal of zero.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: And we had planned discussions with the Manager when we get in, as far as strategize about how where we're at, what we're going, what we're looking for in the future, and as far as looking at how our hiring is going. I know we've talked about different issues about where we see ourselves in three years, five years, to get to what's on the books. So, I mean, and my priorities as far as an agency have not changed. Where we need to hire, we're working hard with HR (Human Resources), with the Manager's Office. Some of the things that we've done already with both recruiting bonuses for the officers is a continual, perpetual movement to get back as close as we can. The most proudest part I've got so far in the 95 days is the interaction with the officers and the residents who have been calling us and responding to that and using our resources to our best benefit.

Mayor Cason: Will you be able to maintain the tempo of patrol cars on the streets? And you'll be using some overtime for that. Is there any reason not to believe that you won't be able to keep this up?

Interim Police Chief Hudak: No. I mean, through earmarking, if you will, of the salary savings that were in those allocated positions -- and that is a separate line item that we worked with with Finance we'll continue to do that for the visibility. Again, I had a conversation with Major Padroso just yesterday at staff that our numbers as far as the com stat, and I know you all get those on Wednesdays, and this is kind of the phenomenon that we had talked about previously. When we just change the hours of occurrences, the numbers of burglaries will change. So that's kind of the misnomer that, you know, we are now going to centralize everything we put outside. What the Commission gets, what we look at is where within those days, let's say we're looking at schools. We'll have an increase in auto burglaries because some victims or people had been victimized dropping people off to school; they leave their purses in there; the windows get smashed. So we're going to target that. We're looking at those numbers. As far as, you know, what the conversation that Major Pedroso and I had this week was that I can't quantify for you or anybody else what the visual presence of a police officer does. There is one thing I can do. I can quantify that the person that lives in that area is feeling safer seeing the marked unit, so that's why we're deploying and I can't tell you what it's preventing, but I can tell you from looking at last week's number's that our burglary task force, which is funded through the salary savings, we're seeing a decline of incidents. We're able to respond. We're stopping, I don't want to say stalking, we're stopping the individuals, but we're actually out there proactive. I think the officers are doing it. Right now our deployment through budgeted overtime is through the holidays. People, you know, on the Mile; people will be having visitors and that's our focus for right now. So to answer your question, I would say we have what we need right now. Again,

this is an evaluation process that goes with the City Manager's Office in balancing everything else out and we'll continue to do that.

Mayor Cason: Great.

Commissioner Quesada: Quick question for you. I was looking at the memo that you created, and I was looking at the FBI audit, and I just want to clarify something, because we got a concern and you alluded to it, and I just want to ask a direct question. You wrote and you bolded it in the first paragraph, the second page of your memo, and it's independent filings, FBI report, a weighted error rate of just four and a half, 4.55 percent. And then also the last paragraph of the first page of your memo dated December 4, it says that of the 3,500 offenses reviewed, there were 121 classification errors; there were 38 over-reported; 4 under-reported; and 79 inaccurately reported. So there were concerns that some of the information we were getting was not a hundred percent accurate. Considering that there was a four and a half percent error rate, which you bolded, so it makes me think that that's a very low error rate. So the information that we are getting is accurate, it's correct. There's no misleading or information of any kind?

Interim Police Chief Hudak: No, sir, not at all. And again, I defer to Chief Miller, as well as I spoke with the auditors myself because I didn't know what those numbers are. It's 4.55 percent error rate is according to the auditors is outstanding. And again, the inaccurate or the over-reported/under-reported does not change the number. It changes the classification.

Commissioner Quesada: Understood.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: So, again, and that's for the part-one crimes as far as not so -- the under-reporting, if you look at specifically it was brought up as burglaries.

Commissioner Quesada: Yes.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: There was only two that I believe that were under-reported, the residential burglaries. And we actually get into the explanation of what is a... I mean, I can get into it, but a burglary versus, of a curtilage versus a theft is whether your lawn mower is parked on your yard and stolen, that's a burglary of a curtilage. If it's on the sidewalk, it's a theft.

Commissioner Quesada: Also, another concern we had was including the numbers of attempts, so just because the criminal doesn't get away with it, obviously, we wanted to know those numbers as well, as far as, I don't want to say vulnerability, that's not the right word, but as far as opportunities or instances of potential crimes.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: And that's where we factor into what you get every two weeks, which is our com stat. I call them mid-management meetings. So as those numbers continue to go out every week, and as we see that, we'll deploy those burglary task force individuals. The SIT team officers as we need to. We'll put them in those areas. If we see some attempts, which goes back to originally, call us. I mean, you know, the vehicle burglaries, car hopping, just trying the doors. Some people don't want to call us about that, but when we start getting those phone calls, we know where people may be preying on those different areas.

Mayor Cason: I thought one of the most interesting things was on the page from the John Darbis of Florida Law Enforcement when he said the findings did not reveal any under-reported burglary offenses. I think that was the impetus for this whole audit.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Correct. That was our direction, specifically targeting the community's requests, the Manager's request, as well as the direction from the Commission.

Commissioner Quesada: You know, I saw it in your report. I just wanted to make sure, you know, we discussed it here.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Yeah. I mean, again from a statistical standpoint, a 4.55 percent error rating is outstanding with and I have to say absolutely no errors on part 2 crimes, you know, down the line. So I'm comfortable with the transparency that we have been reporting this to from the Department and looking at it from a historical perspective. Again, I believe some of the issues that we got into was how the Department was giving statistics from different people within the organizations. We have changed that. I believe that's why it's part and parcel to say that, you know, we have a civilian individual who is extremely bright, along with her personnel, that will give out the data and only that person. So whoever else wants to come to a conclusion, they can, but we're going to give it out in parameters and we will spell out if it's asked a certain way. It's total transparency and I believe in the past, different people may have compiled reports, and that was something I don't think the Department could defend, and I don't think it's appropriate.

Commissioner Keon: I think sometimes when there is criminal activity that seems to target a certain area or certain neighborhood, although it may not be the overall numbers for burglaries and the City may not have gone up during that period, but when it seems that they all seem to be happening in a particular area, it makes it feel as though, and the conversation is that there is, you know, much more crime because of the concentration of activities that usually seem to be related to a specific group of people. They're not a bunch of different people committing those crimes. They seem to be a group of people that are committing crimes in a particular area. Is that the case?

Interim Police Chief Hudak: That is correct. I mean, again, we see spikes, and as the officers have said and I have said, we're going to have spikes. That's why I don't think reporting statistics necessarily gives us an adage, but as we've seen in the past, it's a select group of the City gets victimized, so to speak. We use our statistical data, those raw numbers, to deploy there. That does not take away and since the appointment, we've talked to the south individuals in the City as well, and as we've said, no matter what happens, no matter what statistics we say, if your house gets broken into, it's a thousand percent. So, you know, that's the way we're going to respond to it. Do we have a crime problem? If the citizens think that we have a crime problem in their neighborhood, then we do, real or perceived.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: I think we can put to bed, through the audit, that the statistics were wherever documented or I'm sorry, or augmented, changed, or anything else like that, the reporting of the raw numbers is concise. And I believe, if anything else was done, there was a change in the parameters of of a dynamic nature.

Commissioner Keon: I know when I read the weekly crime stats that come out, it still seems to be quite a few burglaries and a lot of car thefts or thefts on cars still seem to occur close to 8th Street. Is that still?

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Yes. There's a lot of reports to 8th Street. I would say a lot of those attempts, a lot of the individuals walking through, again, because of the densely populated area.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: If you look to the south end, it's a complete different way of patrolling...

Commissioner Keon: It's because of the number of people.

Interim Police Chief Hudak:...because we strictly, we only have two areas down, so we anticipate that area. We work and we're going to continue to work well with other jurisdictions up there. And as that task force works during the day, when we have something at night, the midnight shift officers, and we're going into our next schedule. We're going to have some more resources put on midnights to continue to work that area, but I would submit to you that the north end groups in the last three months have really become very cohesive, have really started to call us. So we've seen our calls for service go up, which is very good for us because as they see somebody suspicious, they're calling us and we're continuing to respond.

Commissioner Keon: I know if I drive through there at night, that whole area seems a little bit darker, although there is a lot of lights, I mean, you know, street lights. The canopy in the City is fairly thick in that north end, so the light isn't really penetrating the canopy to really light the front of homes or to light, you know, the sidewalks or the streets and whatever else, and I think it's an opportunity for us to look at, and I know we've talked before on the poles that FP&L (Florida Power & Light) has up where there is a street light. You know, there is the ability to put a second light on that pole that is actually, you know, lights the walkway or lights the street, and so you, you know, don't lose all of the value of that light because of the canopy, because your only lighting the top of the trees and not the street and the sidewalk. Do you think we could, do you think that would help? Would it make a difference or no?

Interim Police Chief Hudak: I believe it does. I mean, the lighting up there is -- I mean, that is part of the beauty of Coral Gables, is its canopy. And I believe there's some areas. I think, working with the Manager's Office as we've historically done, as the officers ride around and see those things, those are something that we can collectively work with Public Works, with the Manager, and with FP&L to see some of those areas that we've identified almost preemptively before some of the residents do to try and get that in there. I mean, we have made arrests

because people have called at 2, 3 o'clock in the morning, you know, three or four subjects' car hopping. Again, I think the engagement of the north end has contributed to drive the raw numbers, and the officers' response has been...

Commissioner Keon: Can we look into, the additional light fixture on an existing pole that lights the...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We'll work with Public Works. Sometimes FP&L does not allow that, because they're maintaining the pole, but we'll look at options to get that done.

Commissioner Keon: OK, thank you.

Mayor Cason: If I could mention that one of the Commissioners has to leave at 4 and it's also a religious holiday today. I think there's four things we need to get done, if we can.

Commissioner Keon: OK.

Mayor Cason: Thank you, Chief. Appreciate it.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: No problem.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you

Commissioner Lago: Great work. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Great work, so far.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Wonderful. Thank you.

[End: 3:27:43 p.m.]