

MIAMIBEACH

NO. LTC # **446-2017**

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: August 29, 2017

SUBJECT: **THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS UNIT (PSCU)**

This purpose of this Letter to Commission (LTC) is to inform the Mayor and City Commission of an administrative transfer of operational and administrative oversight with respect to PSCU.

When I first joined the City in 2013, PSCU was overseen by the Police Department. During my first year, my concerns with the performance of PSCU combined with concerns regarding leadership of the department led me to transfer oversight to the Department of Emergency Management. I knew that someday I would revisit whether that was the right place for PSCU, but at the time I felt it was the right way to proceed.

Under Charles Tear's leadership, we were able to stabilize the unit and enact some improvements. I recognize that public safety communications operations are difficult and concerns about these units are commonplace throughout the state. Consequently, it has not been an easy process, including challenging labor management issues, but Chuck and his team have done their best. There have been some performance issues raised in recent months, however, and I certainly want to make sure our first responders are getting the best support services possible.

In response to these concerns, therefore, I tasked Fire Chief Virgil Fernandez approximately one month ago to conduct an assessment of PSCU and prepare a series of recommendations. I received a first draft of the report last Friday, which identifies various short comings and makes a series of recommendations. The report concludes that all issues can be remediated with the implementation of the proper plan and I know that Chief Fernandez feels that it is quite conceivable, over time, to achieve national certification for PSCU as is the case with both our Fire and Police Departments.

In order to achieve these results, I have directed Chief Fernandez, Director Tear and Chief Oates to work on a transition plan that will result in the turnover of administrative oversight of PSCU to the Fire Department, effective October 1. Daily operational oversight would be through an executive director that would be responsible to Chief Fernandez and Chief Oates, or their respective designees. The goal is to make sure that each Department gets what it needs from PSCU. In the meantime, Director Tear can focus on the emergency management function to make sure our City is as ready as possible to mitigate against and recover from natural and manmade disasters. As the events in Texas show, you can never be too prepared.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.