



City of Gainesville Agenda Item Report

File Number: 2023-891

Agenda Date: September 21, 2023

Department: Gainesville Police Department

Title: 2023-891 Meridian Behavioral Healthcare and City of Gainesville Cooperative Agreement for Co-Responder Team (B)

Department: Gainesville Police Department

Description: Requesting City Commission approval for the Meridian Behavioral Healthcare and City of Gainesville Cooperative Agreement for the Co-Responder Team that provides clinician/mental health services.

Fiscal Note: The cost of each Clinician is \$84,313 per year. The total cost for two Clinicians is \$168,626 per year. There is an additional \$4,050 per year one-time cost for laptop, cellular phone, tactical vest, and smart phone as needed. Thus, the maximum cost per year for FY23 and FY24 is \$172,676, and the total for the two years will not exceed \$345,352. This will be funded by the Gainesville Police Department General Fund budget.

Explanation:

The Co-Responder Team (CRT) is a partnership between the Gainesville Police Department and Meridian Behavioral Healthcare. The first GPD Co-Responder Team was established in April 2018. In August 2020, the City Commission approved two additional Co-Responder Teams at GPD, with the City/GPD funding the mental health clinician component and contracting with Meridian to provide those services.

Each Co-Responder Team consists of a sworn uniformed police officer deployed with a Master's level mental health clinician to respond to individuals with mental health and substance abuse concerns at their point of crisis. The Team members are committed to providing mental health services. They regularly attend community outreach events, provide training internally and externally, and maintain statistics through monthly, quarterly, and annual reports.

The information captured by the Co-Responder Teams is not being compiled by any other single entity within the City of Gainesville. This data is utilized by local stakeholders including the Gainesville Fire Rescue Para-medicine Program, Code Enforcement, Shands, Shands VISTA, Eldercare, Grace Marketplace, Alachua County Crisis Center, Victim Services, Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program, and the State Attorney's Office.

The Co-Responder Team has since expanded to four officers, providing seven-day coverage and availability.

Strategic Connection:

- ☐ Goal 1: Equitable Community
- ☐ Goal 2: More Sustainable Community
- ☐ Goal 3: A Great Place to Live and Experience
- ☐ Goal 4: Resilient Local Economy
- ☒ Goal 5: "Best in Class" Neighbor Services

Recommendation: The City Commission authorize 1) the City Manager and/or designee to proceed with entering into the Cooperative Agreement with Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Inc., and 2) execute the Cooperative Agreement, subject to review and approval by the City Attorney as to form and legality.