

## REQUEST OF COUNCIL FOR FURTHER FUNDING OF MFEC/P&R SECURITY CONTRACT

**TO:** City Council via Procurement Management Department

**FROM:** David Stonehouse, MFEC Director

**CC:** Brad Keen, Acting Director, Parks & Recreation Department; Tim Roth, Deputy Director, Parks & Recreation Department

**RE:** Request for Additional Funding

**DATE:** January 7, 2025

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**THE ASK:** For the Council to approve additional funds for \$55,000 to further fund our current Security Contract at the Event Center (presently funded in the amount of \$99,000) specifically to provide additional coverage for the Parks & Recreation side through the remainder of the contract which expires in late October of 2025.

### INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- 1) We have included the City Manager's approval (at the end of this document) with his endorsement by way of signature for us to move forward with this enhanced security request.
- 2) Please know that staff from both MFEC & Parks will be actively working with Procurement beginning this March to rebid what has been to date, two 1-year contracts (recently re-bid in early June of '24 and awarded/executed on August 13, 2024) for a future 3-year contract with the proper funding requirements in place.

**JUSTIFICATION:** The original and current Security Contract was initially sought after, approved, and put into place by MFEC staff in the fall of 2022 (with the support and approval of P&R). However, it was done so more tailored and conducive to the normal operating hours of "the building in general."

The present hours of Security coverage are Monday-Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm and Saturdays (for P&R) 9:00 am – 6:00 pm. The funding we are requesting will provide additional coverage through the P&R evening hours of 5:00 pm - 10:00 pm Monday through Friday, and on Sunday 9 am- 6 pm.

After the recent contract renewal was sought and awarded, it became apparent there were noticeable gaps in our coverage that could be exploited or, were simply left without the Security presence needed. Recently, there have been a handful of incidents that have taken place near the end of a Security shift or worse, after the shift was completed that day. One incident began with a fight that broke out between 2 adults and then escalated to a group of family teenagers resulting in a sizeable brawl. This started right at the end of that day's shift, however, Security while preparing to leave, was still here to respond and began to manage the situation until PSL PD could respond.

This, along with other incidents that have taken place "after-hours" has exposed necessary lapses in our Security coverage that we are now attempting to address this fiscal, and permanently hereafter.

The enhanced coverage adds the necessary Security for the hours the P&R facility is open while protecting its patrons along with the added goal of removing staff from the role of "first responders" when these types of incidents arise which we know through our combined experience is inevitable. Our primary goal is to protect citizens and staff from having to be involved physically in any way other than alerting on-site Security and/or contacting PD.

**OVERALL EXPENDITURES:** with the additional ask of \$55K, we anticipate the overall annual cost for this service to be approximately \$155,000.00 from the 24/25 budget. This overall cost is already and will continue to be a shared expense between MFEC, Parks & Rec, and the Fitness Facility which is also located within the Event Center.

**ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND:** During the year and a half since a Security presence was established at the Event Center (with the endorsement of PSL PD), it has proved to be an overwhelming success in that the overall incidents where PD needed to be involved have decreased considerably. The same can be said for similar types of incidents on the exterior of the property, as well as in the lobby and Parks & Rec side of the building which have also seen a dramatic reduction in unpleasant confrontations along with the needed enforcement and reporting of known trespassers. Moreover, our Security provider has dramatically reduced the need for City staff members to be involved with managing these types of incidents (and the risk of harm that comes with that), thereby leaving these problematic situations to trained professionals in Security and de-escalation practices.

Ultimately, this service will continue to provide some level of security/safety not only for the residents who frequent the facility but also for the staff that work here and provide an increased level of protection for City Property as well.

Additionally, this effort overall will continue to address a variety of incidents that we have had direct knowledge of and/or that staff have had to manage solely before the arrival of a Security presence such as but not limited to:

- Managing homeless people (some of which have demonstrated to be high/drunk and aggressive) who frequent our Lobby and other areas of the Event, P&R Facility, and City Center exterior property.
- Habitual trespassers throughout the entire facility, both interior and exterior areas.
- Routine vandalism to the outside stage and restrooms. In one case a fire was intentionally set in the outside women's restroom requiring a response from the Fire Dept.
- Exclusive to the MFEC Parking Garage: the use and sale of illegal drugs; unwanted sexual activity in cars and stairwells; highly aggressive behavior with gangs of teen bike riders and/or skateboarders who were often displaying threatening behavior to City residents using the garage for parking or exercise; drag racing throughout the upper levels; vandalizing lights/fire extinguishers and excessive amounts of litter strewn throughout the parking facility.
- Managing multiple altercations within the Parks & Rec side.
- Enforcement of our limited handicapped parking spaces.

The additional funds we are requesting will extend the blanket of coverage we presently have to address all the periods of time when we know the public will be here accessing the P&R facility side as well as the MFEC during both groups' business hours.

For City Events, PD coverage is provided. For Private Events on the MFEC side, PD details are paid for by the client/renter of the Event based on estimated crowd size and/or if alcohol will be served. The funds that have already been approved and the additional being requested will not be used for either of those two scenarios.



## PARKS & RECREATION

**TO:** Jesus Merejo, City Manager

**THRU:** David Graham, Assistant City Manager  
Kristina Ciuperger, Deputy City Manager

**FROM:** Brad Keen, Acting Director, Parks & Recreation Department **BRK**  
David Stonehouse, Director, MIDFLORIDA Event Center **DS**

**RE:** Additional Security at the MIDFLORIDA Event Center

**DATE:** November 5, 2024

Approved  
12/17/24  
[Signature]

### Background

Keeping in compliance with the City Council's Strategic Goal #1, Safe, Clean, and Beautiful, The MIDFLORIDA Event Center Department and Parks & Recreation Department are requesting to enhance the security presence at the MIDFLORIDA Event Center. The initial security implementation has successfully reduced incidents, especially in high-risk areas like the garage. However, recent incidents have revealed coverage gaps during late hours, raising concerns about the safety of staff and patrons.

Currently, staff members report concerns about their safety, particularly during late-night closures of the garage. The present security schedule (Monday-Friday 8 AM-5 PM / Saturday 9 AM-6 PM) does not cover all operating hours, resulting in vulnerability after security shifts end.

### Recent Incident

A recent altercation involving patrons at the gym, just as the security shift ended, emphasized the need for extended coverage. While our security guard intervened successfully, a delayed response could have led to a more serious incident. This underscores the necessity for continuous security coverage during all operational hours.

### Proposal for Improvement

To enhance safety and operational efficiency, we propose the following measures:

1. **Extended Security Hours:**  
Aligning security coverage with facility operating hours, particularly during evenings, will ensure a secure environment and timely incident response.
2. **Single Main Lobby Entrance:**  
Restricting access to the main lobby entrance, with closure of secondary entrances, will allow for better monitoring and control.
3. **Patron Check-in & ID Requirements:**  
Requiring check-ins at the main desk and valid ID presentation upon entry will help in maintaining accurate records and assist law enforcement if needed.
4. **Improved Staff Communication Tools:**  
Equipping additional staff with 2-way radios will improve communication with security, allowing for faster responses to any situation.

#### **Cost-Sharing Proposal**

The cost of extending security is estimated by All Florida Security Services at \$1,020.00 per week, totaling \$53,040 annually for 34 additional weekly hours. We propose a cost-sharing arrangement between our department and the MIDFLORIDA Event Center Department to manage these expenses. Internal budget adjustments may offset a portion of these costs, reducing the financial impact.

#### **Request for Approval**

With your approval, we would like to proceed with securing additional pricing for the enhanced security services and initiate a cost-sharing discussion with the MIDFLORIDA Event Center Department. This approach will allow us to implement these necessary safety enhancements collaboratively and responsibly.

Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to reach out for further discussion.

Cc: Caroline Sturgis, Director, Office of Management & Budget  
Kelly Boatwright, Acting Assistant Director, Parks & Recreation Director  
Tim Roth, Deputy Director, Parks & Recreation Department  
Larry Lankow, Recreation Manager, Parks & Recreation Department  
Anne Stadius, Recreation Manager, Parks & Recreation Department