



DATE: December 6, 2021

MEMO TO: Jessica Vealitzek, Chair
Operations Committee

Julie Simpson, Chair
Finance Committee

FROM: John Tannahill
Director Public Safety

REQUEST: Provide policy direction regarding Membership and Participation in Lake County Special Investigations Group.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION SUPPORTED: Organizational Sustainability.

FINANCIAL DATA: No financial impact.

BACKGROUND: The District's Public Safety Department has participated in the Lake County Gang Crimes Unit on a part-time basis for many years to assist in gathering information about gang activities in Lake County, which was beneficial to the District. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that governed the District's involvement in the Gang Unit has expired, and a new MOU has been provided to the District by the Lake County Sheriff's Office for the District's approval. However, the Gang Unit has changed its mission and has been renamed the Special Investigations Group (SIG). The focus has changed from intelligence gathering to investigations of drug trafficking, weapons violations, and money-laundering under the guidelines of the Federal High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program. This new focus, however laudable, provides little, if any, benefit to the District.

Staff and attorneys for the District's Risk Pool, PDRMA, are concerned that the District, if it signs the MOU and continues to participate in this unit, is taking on wider operational risk (e.g., more potential for violent encounters, more direct and offensive interaction rather than defensive interaction with individuals) and legal risk (e.g., outsized judgments in police tort and Section 1983 cases, increased workers' compensation exposure, exposure to liability from the group's investigations) with no additional insurance coverages, indemnifications, or other sources of protection from the Sheriff's Office or other sources.

In addition, the Sheriff's Office recently requested a greater District staffing commitment to the SIG. The District currently has a sergeant assigned to the SIG on a part-time basis (2 – 3 days/week). The Sheriff would like the District to assign an officer to the SIG on a full-time basis. Even if participation on the SIG was beneficial to the District, the Public Safety Department simply does not have the resources available to commit an officer to SIG full-time, without seriously impacting its level of service in the preserves.

Staff is seeking policy direction on whether the District should participate in the Lake County Special Investigations Group.

REVIEW BY OTHERS: Executive Director, Chief Operations Officer, Director of Finance, Corporate Counsel.