

Agenda Item: 1.b

Meeting Date: October 23, 2025

MEMORANDUM

To: City Commission

Through: Jennifer K. Bramley, City Manager

From: Sue Bartlett

Date: 2025-10-16

Subject: Recognition of our First Responders, including Public Works Professionals, on Oct 28, 2025, National First Responders Day.

Presenter(s): Michael L. Handoga, MS, CFO, Fire Chief; Clayton "Clay" Watkins, P.E., Engineering & Utilities Director; and Suzanne "Sue" Bartlett, Public Works Director

Staff Recommendation: Commission to present a proclamation acknowledging First Responders, including Public Works Professionals, and celebrating the National First Responders Day October 28, 2025.

Strategic Themes: GOOD GOVERNANCE

Boards & Committees: N / A

Budget Impact: None

Past Action: None

Next Action: Commission Presentation of National First Responders Day Proclamation.

Attachments: [A. National First Responders Day 2025 - letter.pdf](#)

Background: Public Works is often referred to as "the silent arm of public safety" - a critical force that operates behind the scenes, typically without fanfare or public recognition. Yet, when disaster strikes, Public Works professionals are among the first to respond and the last to leave. Whether facing hurricanes, floods, or infrastructure failures, they work tirelessly alongside law enforcement, fire, and EMS professional to protect lives, restore essential services, and ensure the safety and functionality of our communities.

Their contributions span a wide range of emergency support: clearing debris to allow emergency vehicles access, restoring water and sewer systems, managing stormwater to prevent or

minimize flooding, and stabilizing infrastructure to prevent further damage. These efforts are not only operational - they are life-saving.

In 2003, President George W. Bush issued Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD-8), which formally recognized Public Works personnel as first responders. This landmark directive acknowledged their indispensable role in emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. Further affirmation came in 2019, when the U.S. Senate passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 15 (S.Con.Res.15), expressing support for the designation of October 28, 2019, as Honoring the Nation's First Responders Day. Importantly, Public Works professionals were explicitly included in this recognition, alongside law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services.

Law enforcement, fire, and EMS are often the most visible faces of emergency response, while Public Works remains a steadfast partner - quietly ensuring that roads are passable, utilities are restored, and communities are safe. Their work is foundational to the success of all other emergency operations, and their recognition as first responders is well earned and well respected.

As such, staff hereby recommends the Commission recognize our First Responders on Oct 28, 2025, National First Responders Day, via the attached proclamation, as noted herein.