

RESOLUTION NO. ____-21

A RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMUNICATIONS CENTER EMPLOYEES AS FIRST
RESPONDERS

WHEREAS, the bill “911 Saves Act” (H.R. 1629) was introduced at the Federal level in 2019 to require Director of the Office of Management and Budget to review the Standard Occupational Classification System and move Public Safety Telecommunicators from the classification of “Office and Administration Support Occupations” to “Protective Service Occupations” elevating them from clerical workers and recognizing them as first responders; and

WHEREAS, the bill has since stalled leading many states and local governments to take independent action to recognize their public safety telecommunicators as first responders rather than wait for a declaration at the national level; and

WHEREAS, the Colorado Springs Public Safety Communications Center is comprised of over 100 employees who serve this city 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; just as our law enforcement officers, firefighters, and EMS workers do. These telecommunicators make the same personal sacrifices as their peers by leaving their families, friends, and the comfort of their homes to save lives, protect property, and ensure the safety of this community during emergency events; and

WHEREAS, Colorado Springs has faced numerous high profile tragedies over the years such as the New Life shooting, Waldo Canyon and Black Forest Fires, Halloween shooting, Planned Parenthood shooting, multiple hostage situations, and most recently a deadly massacre at a family birthday party. The 911 call takers along with the police and fire dispatchers were there for every incident; and

WHEREAS, they are the first link in the public safety chain and the first to be on scene through the phone. They provide Emergency Medical, Police, and Fire dispatch instructions that save lives. Their trauma is not from the visual perspective but rather the auditory perspective and is just as real as their counterparts in the field; and

WHEREAS, the role of the Public Safety Telecommunicator has evolved tremendously over the years and will continue to do so. It is a highly skilled, highly technical position that takes six months to a year of training. They are well beyond simply recording an address and sending help; they talk callers through delivering babies, performing CPR, administering Narcan and detecting a stroke. They talk to suicidal subjects, homicidal subjects, or sometimes just listen to a tragedy unfold on an open line.

WHEREAS, on the dispatch side, they are tasked with prioritizing multiple priority calls, directing and tracking upwards of 30 officers at a time and ensuring their safety. They dispatch fire and police by location to provide the quickest response. They work complex multi-company, multi-agency incidents and navigate several different software systems simultaneously to accomplish their tasks; and

WHEREAS, the last fifteen months, throughout the pandemic, their role as first responders has become even clearer as they reported for work each day despite the risk to their health and personal safety. With no ability to work from home, as a truly clerical position could, they fulfilled their duties and ensured the calls for help would be answered and responded to. The safety protocols put in place, in addition to the many procedural changes, made their jobs challenging but they persevered; and

WHEREAS, the Homeland Security Act of 2002 defines first responders as individuals who in the early stages of an incident, are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment; and

WHEREAS, we ask that you support in recognizing the invaluable service telecommunicators provide for our community and to join other Colorado communities in this movement to reclassify public safety telecommunicators to a category that more accurately reflects the nature of their work.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLORADO SPRINGS:

Section 1. The City Council, Staff and Leadership would like to acknowledge Public Safety Communication Center employees as First Responders.

DATED at Colorado Springs, Colorado, this day of July, 2021.

Council President

ATTEST:

Sarah B. Johnson, City Clerk