

Joint City of Gainesville/Alachua County Staff Proposal for the Transition of Fire Rescue Services in the Fire Station 19 Service Area

The City of Gainesville is responsible for the provision of fire rescue services within the City's corporate limits and Alachua County is responsible for the provision of fire rescue services in the unincorporated area of the County. In 2009, the City annexed property in the SW 20th Avenue corridor that included Alachua County Fire Station 19. Since the annexation, Alachua County has continued to be the primary provider of fire rescue services for the Fire Station 19 service area including the area that was annexed into the City. The City desires to be the primary provider of fire rescue services in the City and seeks to transition this responsibility from the County to the City. Based on direction from the City Commission and County Commission, City and County staff have been meeting to plan the transition of fire rescue services.

City and County staff recommend the following provisions be included as amendments to the Fire Services Assistance Agreement (FSAA). If necessary, some of the provisions can be incorporated into a new and separate Interlocal Agreement. The recommendations provide for a temporary suspension of the payments provided by the FSAA to allow a transition period for the County to construct a new fire rescue station while providing some interim fiscal relief to the City. Upon transition of service provider, the City and County would resume paying each other as provided by the FSAA.

Proposed Transition Plan

- The City and County will temporarily amend the FSAA by suspending "Section 5 Method of Payment" to make the FSAA a non-compensatory agreement for a two year period with an optional one year extension, effective October 1, 2014.
- The City and County will provide the option of extending the temporary amendment suspending FSAA payments for a third year if by September 15, 2016, the County has a location identified or purchased, obtained appropriate land use and zoning, completed design, approved construction funding and is poised to commence construction of a new fire station "D" as identified in the Alachua County Fire/EMS Master Plan.
- The City and County agree to transition fire rescue service responsibility at Fire Station 19 from the County to the City effective October 1, 2016. If the option for a one year extension suspending FSAA payments for a third year is exercised, the transition of fire rescue services will be effective on October 1, 2017 or upon completion/operation of the new fire rescue station, whichever occurs first.
- The County will retain ownership of Fire Station 19 and agrees to allow the co-location of Gainesville Fire Rescue units' at Fire Station 19 as long as the facility is in use as a fire or rescue station. The County will relocate the Fire Station 19 engine and crew upon the effective date of the transition of fire rescue services.
- The County and City will work together to assure the smooth transition of fire rescue services including potential building modifications in advance of the effective date of the transition of fire rescue services. The City and County will entertain future discussions to explore co-location opportunities at other stations.
- The FSAA will automatically revert to a compensatory agreement on the effective date of the transfer of fire rescue service responsibilities. This will be on October 1, 2016 unless the option is exercised to suspend FSAA payments for a third year which will result in the FSAA reverting to a compensatory agreement on October 1, 2017 or upon completion/operation of the new fire station, whichever occurs first.