Board of County Commissioners
Leon County, Florida

Fire Rescue Services Workshop

Tuesday,
October 20, 2026
3:00 p.m.

Judge Augustus D. Aikens, Jr. Courthouse
County Commission Chambers, 5th Floor
301 S. Monroe St. Tallahassee, FL 32301

The media and the public can access the meeting in real time on Comcast channel 16, the Leon County Florida channel on Roku, the County's Facebook page, YouTube channel, Twitter and County web site.

Leon County
Board of County Commissioners

Notes for Workshop
Agenda Item #1

Leon County Board of County Commissioners

Workshop

October 20, 2026

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Vincent S. Long, County Administrator
Chasity H. O'Steen, County Attorney

Title: Workshop on Fire Rescue Services

Review and Approval:	Vincent S. Long, County Administrator Chasity H. O'Steen, County Attorney
Department / Division Review:	Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator Shington Lamy, Assistant County Administrator
Lead Staff / Project Team:	Chad Abrams, Chief of Emergency Medical Services Roshaunda Bradley, Director, Office of Management and Budget

Statement of Issue:

As requested by the Board, this workshop item presents the results of the comprehensive evaluation conducted by Fitch & Associates to review the current model of fire rescue services provided by the City of Tallahassee in the unincorporated area and assess models that would provide a comparable level of service (Attachment #1). The item also provides the results of the billing, collection, and funding analysis conducted by Alfred Benesch & Company (Attachment #2) on the fire rescue services assessment and fees.

Fiscal Impact:

This item has no immediate fiscal impact. The Fitch Report recommends the County pursue a concurrent dual track process to guide and inform the Board's ultimate determination of the fire rescue services model for the unincorporated area of the County into the future. Either an Interlocal Agreement Model or a County Fire Services Model will come with fiscal impacts estimated in this item. The fire rescue services assessment is anticipated to continue to be utilized as the funding mechanism to cover the costs of the model ultimately selected for the provision of the services.

Staff Recommendations:

Provided on the following page.

Staff Recommendations:

Option #1: Accept the Fire Rescue Service Study conducted by Fitch & Associates, LLC. (Attachment #1).

Option #2: Accept the Analysis of the City's billing, collection, and funding conducted by Alfred Benesch & Company (Attachment #2).

Option #3: Authorize the County Administrator to pursue a concurrent dual track process that includes the following:

a. Renegotiate with the City of Tallahassee on a new Interlocal Agreement for Fire Rescue Services consistent with the provisions recommended by Fitch & Associates.

b. Develop an Implementation Plan for the adoption of a County Fire Services Model as proposed by Fitch & Associates.

Executive Summary

The County contracted Fitch & Associates (Fitch), an industry-leading consulting firm for public safety and emergency medical services, to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the current model of fire rescue services provided by the City of Tallahassee (City) in the unincorporated area and assess models that would provide a comparable level of service. The Executive Summary provides an overview of fire rescue services in the unincorporated area and recent developments that led the County to engage Fitch. Further presented is a summary of the Fitch Report including key findings and observations, process of evaluating models, and the recommendation developed that will inform and guide the Board's ultimate determination of the fire rescue services model for the unincorporated area of the County. Additionally, the findings of the analysis conducted by Alfred Benesh & Company (Benesch) on the fire rescue services assessment and fee billings, collections, and funding are highlighted.

Overview of Fire Rescue Services and Recent Developments

Pursuant to section 125.01(1)(d), Florida Statutes, counties are authorized, but not required, to provide fire protection services. The County has contracted with the City for the delivery of fire rescue services in the unincorporated area for more than three decades. In 2009, the County and City adopted the first countywide fire rescue assessment study to establish a dedicated funding source for the provision of services. The County and the City entered into the Interlocal Agreement Regarding the Provision of Fire and Emergency Medical Services ("Interlocal Agreement"). The Interlocal Agreement is currently under its Sixth Amendment for Fiscal Years (FY) 2024-2028 (the Third Term).

Pursuant to section 197.3632(9), Florida Statutes, the funding of fire rescue services through a dedicated special assessment is a common approach used by local governments throughout Florida. The assessment and fees are charged on residential, commercial, industrial/warehouse, and government properties for fire rescue service in both the City and unincorporated areas. The fire assessment is required to be methodically and legally defensible, tying the cost of the service to the benefit of the individual property.

In general, a special assessment is imposed on non-governmental land that derives a special benefit from a service. A special benefit directly ties the cost of the service to the property benefiting from the service and is thereby not a tax. For a special assessment to be considered valid, it must satisfy a two-pronged test: (1) the services at issue must provide a special benefit to assessed property, and (2) the assessment must be apportioned based on a lawful formula and applied uniformly. The methodology of determining the proper apportionment is typically created and supported by a rate study from a consultant.

The Third Term and Dispute

In 2023, the City and County hired a consultant, Accenture LLC (Accenture, formerly "Government Services Group"), to conduct the Third Term Rate Study, to calculate the rates to be imposed to provide fire rescue services countywide for five years, FY 2024 – FY 2028 (the Third Term). The flat rates were based on an average of the estimated costs the City provided to the consultant to provide fire rescue services during the five-year period. The Third Term Rate Study

was agreed upon by the City and the County within the Sixth Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement and also adopted in the County's and City's respective rate resolutions.

In January 2025, 15 months into the current term, the City notified the County that the assessment rates were expected to be insufficient to cover the costs for providing fire rescue services, thereby resulting in a budget deficit. The City projected the need to increase the fire assessment rates an estimated 20-25% at that time citing the non-payment for services by Leon County Schools (LCS) and the adoption of a new collective bargaining agreement with the firefighters' union. The County and City contracted with Accenture to conduct the formal financial review (ultimately referred to as the 2025 Unadopted Rate Study) of the Fire Service Fund including an analysis of the estimated increases to the Tallahassee Fire Department's (TFD) planned expenditures. The County also tasked Accenture with conducting a financial review of the TFD current and out-year budgets to identify any new expenditures which were not contemplated in the 2023 Fire Assessment Study and to provide an analysis of available Fire Service Reserve Funds that could be utilized to offset any potential rate increases.

The review completed by Accenture (the 2025 Unadopted Rate Study) calculated a 22% increase of the assessment and fee rates based on TFD expenditures submitted by the City for the remaining three years of the Third Term. The expenditures included costs contemplated in the Third Term Rate Study, which had grown beyond the City's cost projections for the five-year period and new costs provided by the City. The costs previously contemplated in the Third Term Rate Study that experienced significant inflationary cost increases included:

- Firefighter compensation under the latest collective bargaining agreement - $4.3 million;
- Construction cost for a new fire station (Station 17) - $17 million; and
- Expansion of Fire Station 15 - $2.6 million

The new costs that were <u>not</u> contemplated in the Third Term Rate Study included:

- Additional staffing to improve the TFD ISO rating - $8.5 million; and
- Unbudgeted debt service payments for fire rescue service - $2.5 million

The County proposed to the City a 17% increase to the assessment and fees as a good faith effort to resolve the matter and avoid the formal dispute resolution process. The County's proposal would have provided additional funding for firefighter compensation, construction expenses for a new fire station, the expansion of an existing fire station, and the unbudgeted debt service payments. The County's proposal excluded the new costs associated with obtaining a higher ISO score. The City did not accept the County's proposal.

In accordance with the Interlocal Agreement, the County initiated the dispute resolution process to resolve the disagreement on the proposed rate increases through binding arbitration. However, in the course of preparing for arbitration, the County Attorney opined that based on case law an arbitration panel does not have the authority to compel the County to implement a rate increase.

For FY 2026, the Board voted to maintain the fire rescue services assessment and fees at the current levels. Inconsistent with the Interlocal Agreement and the Third Term Rate Study, the City

Commission voted to unilaterally increase its assessment and fees ranging from approximately 8.48% to 31%, depending on the property type for properties within City limits. The City Commission also voted to terminate the Interlocal Agreement at the end of the current term on September 30, 2028, as documented in a letter from the City Manager to the County Administrator (Attachment #3).

The Board authorized the County Administrator to initiate a competitive solicitation process to retain a consultant to evaluate fire rescue service alternatives and current delivery model. At a subsequent meeting, the Board approved the contract award to Fitch, an industry-leading consulting firm for public safety and emergency medical services and highest ranked respondent to the competitive solicitation. Fitch was contracted to evaluate the current model of fire rescue services provided by the City in the unincorporated area and assess models that would provide a comparable level of service.

The Board also authorized the County Attorney to retain a consultant to conduct a review of the administration of the fire assessment and fees to determine whether billing, collection, and funding issues resulted in a revenue shortfall in the Fire Services Fund. As presented in the following section, the County Attorney engaged Benesch to conduct the review.

Benesch Findings

In October 2025, the County contracted with Benesch, which has for the past 35 years specialized in funding studies for local governments, including fire rescue services assessment programs and other funding studies throughout Florida, to conduct a review of the billing, collection, and funding of the fire rescue services assessment and fees. Over the past year, Benesch has analyzed various aspects of the fire rescue services assessment and fees including the City's and the County's methodology used to calculate the fire rescue services assessment and fees; the amount of the rates imposed and charged by the City and County; the amount of projected and actual billing and collections (revenue); the City's fire rescue services budgets; the existence of shortfalls in collections due to exempt properties and, potentially, inconsistent and underbilling; deficiencies associated with additional debt service issued and the associated principal and interest payments for same that were not authorized in the Third Term Rate Study or approved by the County; and, whether the City used any other permissible revenue sources to fund any revenue shortfalls besides the Fire Services Reserve Fund.

As presented in its Report (Attachment #2), Benesch's primary findings determined that in both FY 2024 and FY 2025 (the first two years of the current five-year term), the City had a shortfall in revenues ranging between approximately $15.8 million and $21.2 million. The lost revenue would likely have been sufficient to cover the City's requested increase to fund fire rescue services and forgo the need to increase the assessment and fees. The primary components of the revenue loss were due to the following:

- The City not utilizing the five-year flat rate rates calculated in the Third Term Rate Study
- Inconsistent billing practices and implementation

- Using "negative" billing entries, possibly also including for nonpayment of fire rescue service assessments on utility accounts by LCS, but also due to other unexplained and unknown reasons
- Overall receipts of actual fire assessment revenue were lower than the amount billed by the City, and the amount anticipated in the City's own projected budget.

The County and City use different methods of collection for the fire rescue services assessment and fees. The County collects the fire rescue services assessment through the tax bill, using the uniform method of collection authorized pursuant to section 197.3632, Florida Statutes. Until October 1, 2025, the City collected the fire rescue services assessment in incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County that had a City utility account, and through direct bills. As of October 1, 2025, the County ceased its authorization for the City to collect its fire rescue services assessments in the unincorporated areas through its utility billing. The City collects the fire rescue services fees on governmental property, including those located within the unincorporated areas of the County, through its utility billing or direct billing. Benesch reports that most local governments utilize the uniform method of collection through the tax bill to impose and collect the fire rescue services assessment. Billing through the utility bill can be more difficult to bill and collect and may result in inconsistencies in billing and collection.

The Fitch Report (Attachment #1) also found the use of the uniform method of collection through the tax bill yields more consistent and reliable revenue compared to collection through utility bills. As later described, the Fitch Report presents recommendations for the potential of a new agreement with the City with requirements for greater transparency and accountability that would mitigate the deficiencies identified in the Benesch findings.

Fitch Key's Findings and Observations

Over the past 10 months, Fitch has been engaged in a comprehensive evaluation of fire rescue services to review the current model of fire rescue service provided by the City in the unincorporated area and assess models that would provide a comparable level of service. This included:

- Over 70 site visits and meetings with public safety stakeholders;
- Review of more than 44,000 calls;
- Analysis of over 69,000 structures (homes, businesses, etc.); and
- Examination of approximately 18 million Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) data points

These efforts resulted in more than 20 findings and observations utilized to develop the recommendation in the Fitch Report.

Key findings and observations include:

- The current fire rescue services model is properly resourced with the appropriate level of fire stations, personnel, and apparatus that are highly reliable and result in response times of less than 13 minutes for 97% of calls in the unincorporated area, consistent with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) standards.

- Curable deficiencies in the current Interlocal Agreement—including the absence of common financial safeguards—have limited the County's ability to ensure financial transparency and accountability that have contributed to recent disagreements with the City.
- Any renegotiated Interlocal Agreement with the City should include provisions that specifically address deficiencies of financial transparency and accountability.
- The County has sufficient time to establish a County Fire Services Model by October 1, 2028 (the end of the current agreement).
- A County Fire Services Model would require an automatic aid agreement with the City to effectively replicate a comparable service level and minimize impact on property insurance premiums for residents.
- The uniform method of collection through the tax bill for the fire assessment remains the most effective funding mechanism for fire rescue services due to its reliability as a sustainable revenue source and protection from ongoing property tax reform efforts.
- The County's collection of fire rescue services assessment through a non-ad valorem special assessment is a widely adopted practice by local governments and yields more consistent and reliable revenue than utility billing utilized by the City.

Fitch Evaluation of Fire Service Models

In evaluating models for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area, Fitch's analysis was guided by the following core strategic priorities:

- **Service Delivery Excellence**: Ensuring optimal response times, specialized capabilities, and uncompromised public safety outcomes.
- **Fiscal Sustainability**: Optimizing resource allocation, identifying cost-efficiencies, ensuring long-term budgetary viability, and minimizing impacts on property insurance premiums to residents.
- **Operational Scalability**: Building a flexible framework capable of adapting to future demographic shifts and geographic growth.
- **Jurisdictional Alignment**: Enhancing inter-agency cooperation and minimizing friction.

As a result, Fitch focused on three primary areas for evaluating the current level of service and developing recommendations for delivery models for fire rescue services: cost, service level, and Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating. The costs were evaluated to project annual operating expenses for the current service model and alternative models. Service levels were evaluated to ensure models provide response coverage, capacity, and operational performance comparable to the current model. The ISO rating, which is an independent statistical rating used by the property and casualty insurance industry, was considered due to the associated impact that changes to service delivery models can have on the cost and the availability of property insurance for residents. The evaluation process was essential to the development of Fitch's recommendation for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area.

Fitch Recommendation: Pursue A Concurrent Dual Track Process

Based on the evaluation of models, Fitch recommends that the County pursue the following concurrent dual track process for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area which will guide and inform the Board's ultimate determination of the fire rescue services model for the unincorporated area of the County into the future. This will ensure that the Board is provided with the information necessary to adopt a viable fire rescue services model by the end of the current term (September 30, 2028). The concurrent dual track process includes the following:

1. *Renegotiate with the City on a New Interlocal Agreement* – Fitch has developed specific provisions strongly recommended for a new interlocal agreement that would increase financial transparency and accountability, strengthen revenue stability for fire operations, and ensure continuity of fire rescue services for the unincorporated area.
2. *Establish a County Fire Services Model* – Fitch has determined that the County has sufficient time to establish an independent County Fire Services Model and presents a model that would provide a comparable level of service in the unincorporated area.

Interlocal Agreement Model

Fitch's analysis found that the current fire rescue services model is highly effective with response time in the unincorporated area regularly consistent with industry standards. The primary deficiencies exist in the current Interlocal Agreement which Fitch has determined are curable. This option preserves the existing level of service in the unincorporated area, with approximately 97% of calls receiving a response within 13 minutes or less. It avoids the startup costs associated with establishing a new fire rescue service. Additionally, it would not impact property insurance costs or coverage for residents.

In reviewing the current Interlocal Agreement, Fitch found it lacks financial and performance safeguards commonly included in fire rescue service contracts in other communities and limits the County's ability to ensure financial transparency and accountability. This has contributed to recent disagreements between the County and City. Fitch identified ten (10) provisions strongly recommended for inclusion in a new interlocal agreement. These provisions would provide for greater fiscal transparency and accountability. The provisions would also strengthen revenue stability for fire operations and ensure the continuity of service in unincorporated Leon County in the event the new interlocal agreement ends. Each provision is described further in the item. The provisions include:

- Annual Fire Budget – require the City submit the fire budget annually to the County to ensure transparency, provide consistency with adopted rate studies, and proactively identify potential impacts to the fire rescue services assessment and fees. This will allow the County to identify and address with the City inconsistencies related to the collection of the assessment fees as found in the Benesch Report.
- Fire Services Reserve Fund – enhance the Fire Services Reserve Fund at an adequate level to address modest deviations to the annual fire budget due to revenue shortfalls, unexpected expenses, or cost increases. Use of the reserve fund would continue to require approval of the County Administrator and City Manager.

- Extraordinary Cost Provision – in the event the Fire Services Reserve Fund is insufficient to address revenue shortfalls, require Board and City Commission approval to increase the fire rescue services assessment and fees prior to the expiration of a rate term to prevent a protracted dispute resolution process. If an agreement is not reached, then the fire rescue services assessment and fees do not change.
- Annual Independent Audit of Fire Services Fund – require the City conduct an annual independent audit attestation of the Fire Services Fund to ensure assessment and fee revenues are appropriately collected and expended for fire rescue services operations. This provision will identify instances of under billing and under collection as identified in the Benesch Report.
- Long-term Master Agreement – adopt a long-term agreement (10-15 years) to provide for stability and predictability of fire rescue services for residents countywide.
- Rate Studies – conduct rate studies every three (3) years rather than the current five (5) years providing greater budget certainty and eliminating mid-term rate adjustments.
- Termination/Expiration Provision – require at least three (3) years notice to terminate or not renew the agreement to provide sufficient time for the County to implement an alternative model for fire rescue services.
- Capital Asset Provision – enhance the capital asset provision that ensures the County receives capital assets (i.e., stations, vehicles, equipment, etc.) in the event of termination or expiration of the agreement.
- Performance Measures and Reporting Standards – establish agreed upon standards for response time, unit type, staffing, ISO, etc. in the unincorporated area to ensure a high-performance level of fire rescue services.
- Formal Reopener Clause – include a provision that limits mid-term renegotiation of the long-term agreement to changes in federal and state law that impact fire rescue services delivery to prevent frequent amendments and preserve a sustainable level of service.

In addition to the provisions recommended by Fitch to address curable deficiencies in the existing agreement, Fitch also found that the County's method of collection through the non-ad valorem assessment yields more consistent and reliable revenue than utility billing utilized by the City.

County Fire Services Model

Fitch's recommended dual track process also includes the County pursuing the establishment of a County Fire Services Model. According to Fitch, the County has sufficient time to establish a County Fire Services Model by the end of the current Interlocal Agreement (September 30, 2028). Based on its evaluation, Fitch developed a County Fire Services Model that would provide a comparable level of service and minimal impact to property insurance premium for residents. The County Fire Services Model would consist of the following:

- The County acquisition of six stations (stations 10-15), vehicles, and equipment from the City in accordance with the Interlocal Agreement.

- An increase of 80 County full time equivalent (FTE) positions to maintain the same level of personnel and shifts for fire units at the six stations.
- A County ISO rating reduction from Class 3/3X to Class 5/5X which could modestly impact insurance premiums for unincorporated properties.
- Approximately $30.1 million in projected startup costs for the acquisition of fire stations, vehicles, equipment, and initial personnel expenses.
- For the first 2-3 years, operating costs for the County Fire Services Model are projected to be higher than the Interlocal Agreement Model. This could result in a higher fire assessment rate for residents in the unincorporated area.
- Over time, operating costs for the County Fire Services Model are projected to be lower than the Interlocal Agreement Model.
- Requires an automatic aid agreement with the City to ensure the closest unit responds to a call for service. This would minimize impact on response time and potential increases to property insurance premiums for residents in the unincorporated area and City.
- Without an automatic aid agreement with the City, the County would need to construct multiple fire stations in order to replicate response time and minimize impact to property insurance for residents.

Upon Board authorization, County staff, in coordination with Fitch, would develop an implementation plan for the proposed County Fire Services Model. The implementation plan would detail the organizational structure, recruitment process, financing, capital acquisition, asset transfer, and other critical actions required to be executed prior to operation. The following timeline sets forth the process by which an implementation plan would be developed.

Timeline

As recommended by Fitch, the following timeline contemplates that the County would pursue renegotiation with City on a new interlocal agreement (Interlocal Agreement Model) and the establishment of a County Fire Services Model on a concurrent dual track. Upon Board authorization, the County would pursue the Interlocal Agreement Model for 90 days. During this period, County staff would engage the City to renegotiate a new interlocal agreement that incorporates the specific provisions recommended by Fitch.

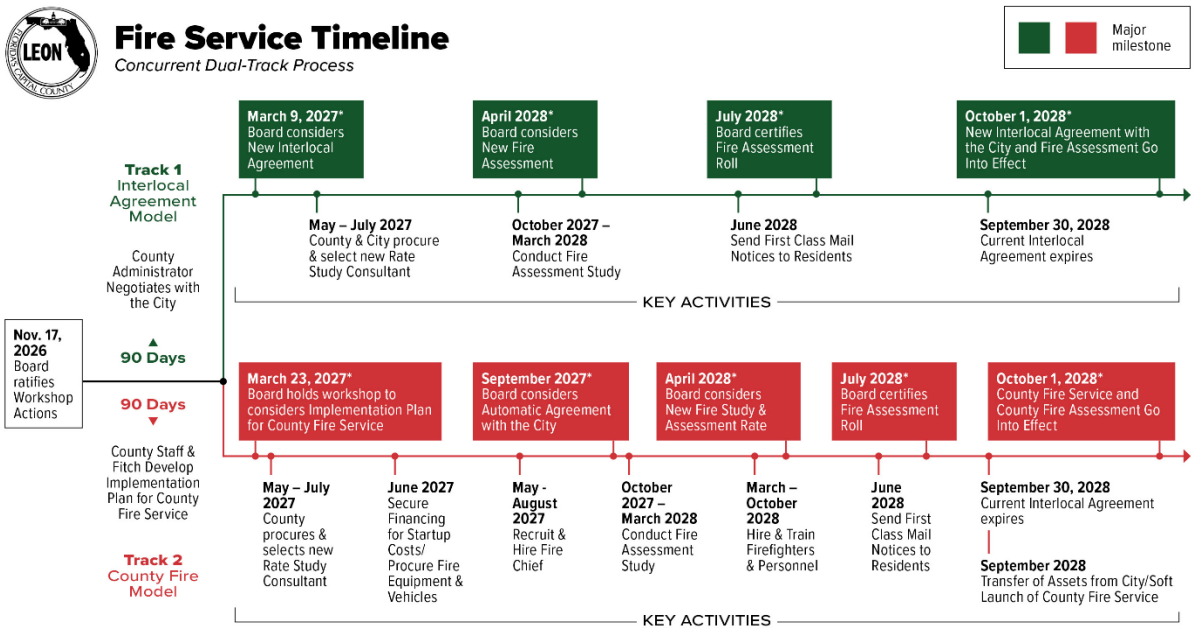
Simultaneously, during the same 90-day period, County staff would develop an implementation plan for the County Fire Services Model. This implementation plan would include all action items required to establish a County Fire Services Model by the end of the current agreement (September 30, 2028). Fitch would provide technical assistance with the development of the implementation plan.

Chart #1 illustrates the timeline of the concurrent dual track process with major milestones and key activities that would occur for each track. The outcome of the renegotiations including a potential new agreement would be presented to the Board at its March 9, 2027, meeting. At that time, the Board could approve the agreement, provide additional direction on the agreement for

further renegotiation with the City, or schedule a workshop to consider the implementation plan for the County Fire Services Model.

The workshop would be scheduled for March 23, 2027. During the workshop, the Board would consider and provide direction on the organizational structure, financing options, capital acquisition, and other required actions in the implementation plan to establish the County Fire Services Model by October 1, 2028.

Chart #1. Concurrent Dual Track Timeline for Fire Rescue Services



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Report and Discussion

Background:

As requested by the Board, this workshop item presents the comprehensive evaluation conducted by Fitch to review the current model of fire rescue services provided by the City in the unincorporated area and assess alternative models that would provide a comparable level of service (Attachment #1). The item also provides the analysis conducted by Benesch (Attachment #2) on the funding, billing, and collection of the fire rescue services assessment and fees.

History of Fire Rescue Services in Unincorporated Leon County

Section 125.01, Florida Statutes, authorizes, but does not require, counties to provide fire protection services. In 1988, the County began contracting with the City for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area through an interlocal agreement. Through the Tallahassee Fire Department (TFD), services include fire suppression, vehicle extractions, structural collapse rescues, hazard material response, and basic and advanced life support.

In 2009, the County and City adopted the first countywide fire rescue assessment study establishing a dedicated funding source to fund all assessable costs for fire rescue services. The assessment provides revenue assurance for the provision of fire rescue services. In Florida, the funding of fire rescue services through a dedicated assessment is a common approach used by local governments. The fire assessment is methodically rigid and legally defensible. It directly ties the cost of the service to the property benefiting from the service.

In general, a special assessment places a charge on land that derives a special benefit in addition to the general benefit to the public. A special benefit directly ties the cost of the service to the property benefiting from the service and is thereby not a tax. For a special assessment to be considered valid, it must satisfy a two-pronged test: (1) the services at issue must provide a special benefit to the assessed property, and (2) the assessment must be properly apportioned. This method of assessment ensures funding transparency to the property owner being assessed. The methodology of determining the proper apportionment (calculating the amount of the rate) is typically created and supported by a rate study from a consultant. Certain properties, depending on classification and ownership, such as property owned by Federal and the State governments and school boards, are charged a governmental fire rescue services fee.

The fire rescue services assessment and fees were first implemented by the County and City in Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 based upon the agreement of the City and the County in the Interlocal Agreement to charge residential, commercial, industrial/warehouse, and government properties for fire rescue services in both the City and unincorporated areas of the County. Under the Interlocal Agreement, the flat assessment and fee rates are imposed for a five-year period to ensure a consistent flat fee for certainty to property owners. The assessment and fees are developed as a joint rate study conducted by a third-party consultant (Accenture) for consideration and adoption by the Board and City Commission.

City Request for Mid-Term Rate Increase

In April 2023, the Board and the City Commission both approved the results of the current fire rescue assessment study (Third Term Rate Study) which was agreed upon by the City and County to be implemented as it was incorporated into the Sixth Amendment to the Interlocal Agreement. The Sixth Amendment increased the assessment and fees 21% for residential properties and extended the Interlocal Agreement for an additional five years (FY 2024 through FY 2028) (Third Term). The rates went into effect on October 1, 2023, and were based on the City's estimated costs at that time to provide fire rescue services for five years (FY 2024 – FY 2028). As will be discussed later in the Analysis, the City did not implement the flat rates from the Third Term Rate Study.

On January 14, 2025, 15 months into the Third Term, the County received a letter from the City stating that the current assessment rates were expected to be insufficient to cover increased costs identified by the City for the remaining three years of the Third Term. The City projected the need to increase the fire rescue services assessment and fees by an additional estimated 20-25% across all property types and, at the time, attributed the requested adjustment to non-payment for services by LCS and the adoption of new collective bargaining agreement with the firefighters' union.

The County's Response to the City's Request

Upon receipt of the letter, County staff engaged the County Attorney's Office and scheduled meetings with City counterparts to gather additional information and assess the potential use of the Fire Services Reserve Fund. The County and City contracted with Accenture, which had performed the Third Term Rate Study, to conduct the formal financial review of the Fire Service Fund including an analysis of the increases to TFD's planned expenditures. The County also tasked Accenture with conducting a financial review of TFD's current and out-year budgets to identify any new expenditures which were not contemplated in the 2023 Fire Assessment Study and to provide an analysis of available Fire Service Reserve Funds that could be utilized to offset any potential rate increases.

The review completed by Accenture (the 2025 Unadopted Rate Study) calculated a 22% increase of the assessment and fees based on TFD expenditures submitted by the City for the remaining three years of the Third Term. The expenditures included costs contemplated in the Third Term Rate Study, which had grown beyond the City's cost projections for the five-year period and new costs provided by the City. The costs previously contemplated in the Third Term Rate Study that experienced significant inflationary cost increases included:

- Firefighter compensation under the latest collective bargaining agreement - $4.3 million;
- Construction cost for a new fire station (Station 17) - $17 million; and
- Expansion of Fire Station 15 - $2.6 million

The new costs that were <u>not</u> contemplated in the Third Term Rate Study included:

- Additional staffing to improve the TFD ISO rating - $8.5 million; and
- Unbudgeted debt service payments for fire rescue service - $2.5 million

The County proposed to the City a 17% increase to the assessment and fees as a good faith effort to resolve the matter and avoid the formal dispute resolution process. The County's proposal would have provided additional funding for firefighter compensation, construction expenses for a new fire station, the expansion of an existing fire station, and the unbudgeted debt service payments. The County's proposal excluded the new costs associated with obtaining a higher ISO score.

On June 11, 2025, the City Commission did not accept the County's compromise. As directed by the Board and consistent with the Interlocal Agreement, the County initiated the dispute resolution process in an effort to resolve the disagreement on the rate increase through binding arbitration. In the course of preparing for arbitration, the County Attorney opined that based on case law, an arbitration panel does not have the authority to compel the County to implement a rate increase for two primary reasons. First, the Third Term Rate Study was incorporated into the Interlocal Agreement through the Sixth Amendment, so any increase to the fire assessment and fees requires mutual agreement between the County and City. A judge or arbitration panel cannot compel a party to amend an agreement. Second, the determination of the amount of an assessment is a legislative function which cannot be usurped by a judge or an arbitration panel.

On August 12, 2025, the Board voted to maintain the fire rescue services assessment and fees at the current levels. At that time, the Board also authorized the County Attorney to retain a consultant to review the City's billing and collection records to analyze whether the City under collected, and/or underfunded the Fire Services Fund and/or Fire Services Reserve Fund. Subsequently, the County Attorney engaged Benesch.

On September 3, 2025, inconsistent with the Interlocal Agreement, the City voted to unilaterally increase the fire rescue services assessment and fees (between approximately 8.48% - 31% for properties within City limits) in phased graduated amounts, to collect additional funds for the remainder of the Third Term (FY 2026 – FY 2028). However, the rates imposed by the City, beginning in FY 2026, are not supported by either the Third Term Rate Study or the 2025 Unadopted Rate Study.

City Notice of Termination and County Contract with Fitch

On September 17, 2025, the City Commission voted to terminate the Interlocal Agreement at the end of the current term on September 30, 2028. On September 22, 2025, the County received a letter from the City regarding its intent to terminate the Interlocal Agreement on September 30, 2028 (Attachment #3).

On September 23, 2025, the County Administrator notified the Board of the letter from the City regarding the termination of the Agreement. The Board authorized the County Administrator to initiate a competitive solicitation process for contractual services to evaluate models that would provide comparable level of service to meet the community needs and identify the most cost-effective options for fire rescue services in unincorporated Leon County. Consistent with the terms of the Interlocal Agreement, the County Attorney issued a letter to the City on September 26, 2025, requesting the cost of the assets (stations, vehicles, and equipment) that the County would acquire from the City upon termination for the Agreement.

On December 9, 2025, the Board approved the contract award to Fitch, an industry-leading consulting firm and highest ranked respondent to the competitive solicitation. Fitch was contracted to evaluate effective and cost-efficient models for fire rescue services in unincorporated Leon County and to analyze the existing delivery service.

City's Revised Position on Termination of the Agreement

On June 3, 2026, the City responded to the September 26, 2025, letter from the County Attorney. The City stated that its intent was to end the Interlocal Agreement upon its expiration on September 30, 2028, rather than terminate it. The Interlocal Agreement requires the City to sell specific assets to the County including stations, vehicles, and equipment upon termination of the Agreement. The change in the City's position would jeopardize the County's ability to acquire the assets. The Interlocal Agreement allows either Party (County or City) to unilaterally terminate the Agreement for cause, based upon a material breach. On July 14, 2026, the Board authorized the County Attorney to terminate the Interlocal Agreement for cause to preserve the County's right to acquire the assets. The assets would be necessary for the establishment of a County Fire Services Model. It is the County's position that the City materially breached the Interlocal Agreement in at least two ways: 1) the City imposed phased rates rather than the flat rates provided in the Third Term Rate Study, and 2) the City unilaterally increased the fire rescue services assessment and fees beginning in FY 2026. The City disputed that it breached the Agreement.

On September 15, 2026, the Board authorized the County Attorney to initiate the dispute resolution process to confirm the City's breach of the Agreement through binding arbitration. Confirmation of the City's breach would authorize the County to terminate the Agreement for cause and acquire the assets. The dispute resolution process is expected to take approximately 4 – 6 months. The County Attorney provides the Board with regular updates on the process

Workshop on Fire Rescue Services

At the September 15, 2026 meeting, the Board also scheduled the Workshop on Fire Rescue Services. The purpose of this Workshop is to present the comprehensive evaluation conducted by Fitch on effective and cost-efficient alternative models for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area and to analyze the current delivery model provided by the City. The Board will also receive the results of the financial analysis conducted by Benesch.

Analysis:

The Analysis section presents the essential elements of the comprehensive evaluation conducted by Fitch which resulted in its recommendation of a concurrent dual track process that will guide and inform the Board's ultimate determination of the fire rescue services model for the unincorporated area of the County into the future. The Analysis section includes:

- An overview of current fire rescue services delivery model that served as the foundation for Fitch's evaluation including fire operations, the impacts to ISO ratings and property insurance to residents, and the fire assessment utilized to fund provision of services.
- A summary of the Benesch Report including detailed findings on the administration of the fire rescue services assessment and fees by the City and opportunity to improve financial

transparency and accountability with the provisions recommended by Fitch to be included in a new interlocal agreement.

- Analysis of the comprehensive evaluation conducted by Fitch including cost analysis of the models recommended for the concurrent dual track process and additional recommendations for the fire rescue services assessment, EMS, and VFDs.
- Timeline of next steps to pursue the concurrent dual track process that will afford the Board the opportunity to exhaust its options of renegotiating with the City on a new interlocal agreement while simultaneously developing an implementation plan that thoroughly identifies all decisions and actions required to establish a County Fire Services Model.

Overview of Current Fire Rescue Services in Unincorporated Leon County

Fire Operations – Tallahassee Fire Department and Volunteer Fire Departments

Through the Interlocal Agreement with the City, fire rescue services are provided by TFD throughout the County, including in the unincorporated area. Services include fire suppression, vehicle extractions, search and rescue and hazard material response. TFD owns, manages, and operates 16 fire stations with approximately 80 vehicles and apparatus and more than 320 personnel providing fire protection countywide. This includes five (5) stations (Stations 10-15) located in unincorporated Leon County. However, TFD operates a fully integrated system with stations geographically distributed to respond countywide. As further presented in Fitch's findings, due to the configuration of the County/City boundaries and station proximities, approximately 51% of calls responded by TFD in the unincorporated area originate from fire stations within City limits. Additionally, TFD's response times in the unincorporated area are less than 13 minutes for 97% of calls, consistent with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) standards.

In addition to TFD, the County has six (6) independent volunteer fire departments (VFDs) with seven (7) fire stations that provide critical firefighting and medical response service primarily in the rural areas of Leon County. VFDs support the response of TFD with fire suppression of structure, vehicle and wildfires; vehicle extractions; and hazardous disaster response. The County has a long history of providing support to the VFDs through direct funding allocations from fire assessment revenue. The financial support provided by the County includes funding for vehicle maintenance; workers compensation, vehicle, and liability insurance coverage; firefighting-related training programs; utilities and maintenance at VFD stations; radio communication equipment; and volunteer recruitment activities. Additionally, the County has actively coordinated with the VFD, TFD, and other stakeholders to establish wells and ground-level water tanks on County property and federal lands to expand water supply in rural areas and enhance fire response by the VFDs.

Section Highlights:

- Fire rescue services are provided by TFD and augmented by the six VFDs in the unincorporated area.
- TFD's response times in the unincorporated area are less than 13 minutes for 97% of calls, consistent with CFAI standards.

- Approximately 51% of calls responded by TFD in the unincorporated area originate from fire stations within City limits due to the geographical distribution of TFD stations.

ISO and Property Insurance

The current fire service model provides a community benefit through the Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating for Tallahassee-Leon County which can help lower property insurance premiums for residents. ISO is an independent statistical rating and advisory organization that serves the property and casualty insurance industry. ISO collects information on a community's public fire protection and analyzes data using its Fire Suppression Rating Schedule to assign public protection classifications from 1-10. Class 1 represents the best fire protection and Class 10 indicates that there is no qualifying fire protection in the area.

The ISO rating for the Tallahassee-Leon County community is currently classified as Class 3/3X. The Tallahassee-Leon County ISO rating exceeds the national average. Only 18% of communities nationwide are classified as 3/3X or lower. Properties located within five road miles of a responding fire station and within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant are classified as Class 3. Properties within five road miles of a responding fire station but more than 1,000 feet from a fire hydrant are classified as Class 3X. Premiums for these properties may be higher than for those within 1,000 feet of a hydrant but remain significantly lower than properties beyond five road miles of a responding fire station. ISO classifies properties located more than five road miles from a responding fire station as Class 10, reflecting slower response times and greater potential fire loss, which generally results in higher property insurance premiums.

The County actively engages and coordinates with local utility providers (City and Talquin Electric Cooperative) to install fire hydrants in the unincorporated areas where appropriate water infrastructure is available to improve fire response and the ISO rating for residents. Since 2016, the County has invested more than $800,000 and installed 117 fire hydrants. Due to the geographical distribution of TFD stations, augmentation of VFD stations and County investments to install fire hydrants, approximately 95% of structures (residential, commercial, etc.) in unincorporated areas are classified as Class 3 or 3X.

Section Highlights:

- The ISO rating for Tallahassee-Leon County is classified as Class 3/3X which exceeds the national average.
- Since 2016, the County has invested more than $800,000 and installed 117 fire hydrants to improve water supply for fire response and lower property insurance rates for residents.
- Approximately 95% of structures in the unincorporated area are within five road miles of a fire station and have an ISO rating of Class 3 or 3X.

Fire Rescue Assessment and Fees

The County and City utilize a countywide fire rescue services assessment and fees as the dedicated funding source for the provision of services. The funding of all assessable costs for fire rescue

services through a dedicated assessment and fees is a common approach used by local governments throughout Florida. This funding method is legally defensible as it directly ties the cost of the service to the property benefiting from the service. In order for the funding method of the special assessment to be valid, it must satisfy a two-pronged test: (1) the services at issue must provide a special benefit to the assessed property, and (2) the assessment must be properly apportioned. The fire rescue assessments levied in the unincorporated area are collected by the County. With the exception for a small portion of funding for the VFDs, the revenues collected are remitted to the City.

The County and City use different methods of collection for the fire rescue assessment and fees. For non-governmental property within the unincorporated areas, the County collects the fire rescue services assessment through the tax bill, using the uniform method of collection consistent with Florida Statutes. The City collects the fire rescue services assessment through its utility billing system or by direct bills. For governmental properties, including those located within the unincorporated areas of the County, the City collects the fire rescue services fee through its utility billing system or by monthly or quarterly direct billing. For non-governmental properties in the incorporated area, the City collects fire rescue services assessments on residents' utility bills.

Prior to October 1, 2025, the County authorized the City to collect the fire rescue services assessment on non-governmental property within the unincorporated area of the County that had a utility account. On September 15, 2025, the Board adopted an ordinance to collect the fire rescue services assessment for all nongovernmental properties in the unincorporated areas through the tax bill. As reflected in the findings and observations for both Fitch and Benesch, the collection of fire rescue services assessments and fees through a non-ad valorem assessment is a widely adopted practice in local communities and yields more consistent and reliable revenue than utility billing utilized by the City.

The first fire rescue assessment study was completed in 2009, and associated assessment rates were enacted in FY 2010. Rates for residential properties are classified by two zones. The zones are generally based on proximity to two or more fire stations. Zone 1 represents properties within five miles of two fire stations and Zone 2 represents properties more than five miles of two fire stations. Most residential properties in the unincorporated area (80%) are classified as Zone 2.

There have been three rate studies since the establishment of the fire rescue assessment and fees. Table #1 reflects the residential assessment rates (this does not include the City's unilateral rate increase). The increases are primarily driven by TFD's budget over a five-year period. On average, the assessment rates have historically increased 17.7% with each new fire assessment study.

Table #1: Residential Fire Assessment Rates

	FY 2010	**FY 2016**	**FY 2024**
Zone 1	$179	$201	$245
Zone 2	$161	$185	$223

The assessment rates are based on the City's estimated costs for fire rescue services for a five-year period and are a fair apportionment among benefited properties. Following the City's January 2025 request for a mid-term increase to the current assessment and fees, the Board in August 2025, authorized the County Attorney to contract with Benesch to conduct an analysis on the fire rescue services assessment and fee billing, collection, and funding.

Section Highlights:

- The fire rescue services assessment is a common approach used by local governments throughout Florida to fund all assessable costs for fire rescue services.
- According to both Fitch and Benesch, the collection of fire rescue services assessments through a non-ad valorem special assessment yields more consistent and reliable revenue than other methods of collection.
- The residential assessment rates have historically increased 17.7% with each new rate study.

Benesch Report

On August 12, 2025, the Board authorized the County Attorney to retain a financial consultant to conduct a review of records to analyze whether the City under collected, and/or underfunded the Fire Services Fund and/or Fire Services Reserve Fund.

Over the past year, Benesch has analyzed various aspects of the fire rescue services assessment and fees including: the methodology used to calculate the fire rescue services assessment and fees; the amount of the rates imposed and charged by the City; the amount of billing collections (revenue); the City's budgets; existence of shortfalls in billing collections due to exempt properties, underbilling, or under collection; and whether the City used any other revenue sources to fund said shortfall, such as transfers from other accounts.

Benesch reviewed the City's records (to the extent they were provided) for fire rescue services billings, collections, and funding. At the outset, it is important to note that Benesch is not a forensic accounting firm. Further, the information Benesch had to evaluate was limited to somewhat sparse documentation the City produced in response to public record requests. The City was not overly forthcoming in providing information about its collection and billing practices and declined to respond to a request by the County Attorney to conduct a joint financial audit. On September 26, 2025, the City attempted to tell the County that the County failed to properly assess multiple properties (Attachment #4). The County asked Joint City-County GIS staff to review the records from the City involving 439 properties. Joint City-County GIS staff's analysis revealed that contrary to the City's assertions, the City had failed to update its annual billing records for at least 225 properties and improperly billed over 150 properties. On October 17, 2025, the County Attorney's Office asked the City to correct its accounting and demonstrate that it had transferred funds into the Fire Services Fund sufficient to correct the billing deficiencies attributable to the City. To date, the City has not responded to this demand. Further, the County invited the City to open its accounting books and to participate in a comprehensive and complete audit of all areas of concern to ensure accurate and consistent billing for all eligible properties and mutual agreement

to take whatever measures are necessary to ensure the Fire Services Fund and Fire Services Reserve Fund are made whole (Attachment #3). The City refused to participate.

Additionally, during the evaluation of the billing and collection data, Joint City-County GIS staff assisted in providing analysis, at times, of the records produced by the City. Also, one billing file received from the City did not include bills from a portion of FY 2024 as the City advised it switched billing systems and the files did not convert, and it was cost prohibitive for the County to obtain the data in another form from the City, so some of the analyses from Benesch are concluded differently depending on the limitations of timeframes for the data sets.

Benesch Primary Findings

Primary findings of Benesch's study show that in FY 2024 and FY 2025 there was a shortfall in revenues ranging from approximately $15 million to $21.2 million, which would have mitigated the additional $11.5 million in expenses identified in the 2025 Unadopted Rate Study. The estimated shortfall in City revenue collections is based upon several findings by Benesch:

- Approximately $3.8 million, due to the City failing to impose the five-year flat rate for FY 2024 and FY 2025.
- Approximately $5.4 million, due to the City's "negative" billing entries for FY 2025.
- Approximately $6 million for FY 2025, or $12 million for two fiscal years, was under-collected by the City.
- These figures do not include the findings related to instances where the amount the City billed does not match the rates imposed and other inconsistent billing practices, including the application of the exemption for places of worship on property owned by a religious institution.

The City's Failure to Impose Proper Rates

The Third Term Rate Study provided flat rates for the various types of properties and zone (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial). The intent behind the flat rate was not only to provide consistency to property owners being assessed, but also to meet the special benefit and fair apportionment test to have a valid special assessment. The rates were calculated based upon the five-year average budget submitted by the City to Accenture. The rates were intended to collect an amount more than the average budget in the early years of the Third Term to offset potential increases in the budget in the latter years of the Third Term. The City did not impose the five-year flat assessment and fees as calculated in the Third Term Rate Study. Instead, the City imposed a phased set of rates. This difference in the amount of the rates for FY 2024 and FY 2025 is shown below for Zone 1 in Table #2 (Table A-1, from the Benesch Report).

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Table #2

Fire Services Assessment Rate Comparison; FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25 (Zone 1)

Land Use	Unit	FY 2023/24 ZONE 1		City/ County Ratio	FY 2024/25 ZONE 1		City/ County Ratio
		County[1]	City[2]		County[1]	City[2]	
Residential							
Residential	per unit	$245.39	$238.14	97.0%	$245.39	$241.71	98.5%
Commercial							
Commercial <1,999	per bldg	$384	$355.61	92.6%	$384	$369.76	96.3%
Commercial 2,000 - 3,499	per bldg	$768	$710.02	92.5%	$768	$738.28	96.1%
Commercial 3,500 - 4,999	per bldg	$1,344	$1,241.63	92.4%	$1,344	$1,291.04	96.1%
Commercial 5,000 - 9,999	per bldg	$1,920	$1,773.22	92.4%	$1,920	$1,843.80	96.0%
Commercial 10,000 - 19,999	per bldg	$3,840	$3,545.24	92.3%	$3,840	$3,686.34	96.0%
Commercial 20,000 - 29,999	per bldg	$7,680	$7,090.47	92.3%	$7,680	$7,372.67	96.0%
Commercial 30,000 - 39,999	per bldg	$11,519	$10,634.49	92.3%	$11,519	$11,057.74	96.0%
Commercial 40,000 - 49,999	per bldg	$15,359	$14,179.73	92.3%	$15,359	$14,744.09	96.0%
Commercial 50,000 - 59,999	per bldg	$19,198	$17,723.75	92.3%	$19,198	$18,429.16	96.0%
Commercial 60,000 - 69,999	per bldg	$23,038	$21,268.99	92.3%	$23,038	$22,115.50	96.0%
Commercial 70,000 - 79,999	per bldg	$26,877	$24,813.02	92.3%	$26,877	$25,800.58	96.0%
Commercial 80,000 - 89,999	per bldg	$30,717	$28,358.26	92.3%	$30,717	$29,486.92	96.0%
Commercial 90,000 - 99,999	per bldg	$34,557	$31,902.28	92.3%	$34,557	$33,171.99	96.0%
Commercial 100,000+	per bldg	$38,396	$35,447.51	92.3%	$38,396	$36,858.32	96.0%
Industrial/Warehouse							
Industrial/Wh <1,999	per bldg	$63	$40.05	63.6%	$63	$49.07	77.9%
Industrial/Wh 2,000 - 3,499	per bldg	$125	$80.10	64.1%	$125	$98.16	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 3,500 - 4,999	per bldg	$218	$140.17	64.3%	$218	$171.77	78.8%
Industrial/Wh 5,000 - 9,999	per bldg	$311	$198.82	63.9%	$311	$243.64	78.3%
Industrial/Wh 10,000 - 19,999	per bldg	$621	$397.64	64.0%	$621	$487.27	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 20,000 - 29,999	per bldg	$1,242	$795.27	64.0%	$1,242	$974.53	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 30,000 - 39,999	per bldg	$1,863	$1,192.91	64.0%	$1,863	$1,461.80	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 40,000 - 49,999	per bldg	$2,484	$1,590.54	64.0%	$2,484	$1,949.05	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 50,000 - 59,999	per bldg	$3,104	$1,988.19	64.1%	$3,104	$2,436.32	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 60,000 - 69,999	per bldg	$3,725	$2,385.82	64.0%	$3,725	$2,923.58	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 70,000 - 79,999	per bldg	$4,346	$2,783.46	64.0%	$4,346	$3,410.85	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 80,000 - 89,999	per bldg	$4,967	$3,181.09	64.0%	$4,967	$3,898.11	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 90,000 - 99,999	per bldg	$5,587	$3,578.73	64.1%	$5,587	$4,385.38	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 100,000+	per bldg	$6,208	$3,976.37	64.1%	$6,208	$4,872.65	78.5%
Government							
Government	per sq ft	$0.267	$0.267	100.0%	$0.267	$0.267	100.0%

1) Source: *3rd Term Rate Study*, Table 16 and Table 19. Leon County adopted via Resolution No. 23-11. See Appendix C of this report for a copy of the *3rd Term Rate Study*.
2) Source: City of Tallahassee; FY 2023/24 rates provided were based on the annual increases shown in Fire Assessment Resolution No. 23-R-19, Section 6 (B)

While individually the amount of the differing rates may seem small, the cumulative total has a great impact. As a result of using phased rates for FY 2024 and FY 2025, the City collected approximately $3.8 million less than projected in the rate study had it imposed the flat rates in the first two years of the five-year term. Table #3 (Table 2 from the Benesch Report) shows the calculation of the impact of the City's failure to impose the flat rates.

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Table #3

Revenue Loss Estimate Due to Phased Implementation

Period	Expected Gross Revenue at 5-Yr Flat Rates[1]	Expected Gross Revenue w/City Phased Rates[2]	Difference[3]	Percent[4]
FY 2023/24	$51,448,000	$48,977,000	-$2,471,000	-4.8%
FY 2024/25	$51,448,000	$50,158,000	-$1,290,000	-2.5%
Cumulative Shortfall			**-$3,761,000**	-7.3%

1) Source: Appendix A, Table A-3 (rounded to nearest $1,000), which shows figures from the Sensitivity Analysis based upon the imposition of the 5-Year Flat Rates.
2) Source: Appendix A, Table A-4, which shows the figures from the Sensitivity Analysis of the City's adopted rates for FY 2023/24, and Table A-5, which shows the figures from the Sensitivity Analysis of the City's adopted rates for FY 2024/25 (all figures rounded to nearest $1,000)
3) Calculation of expected gross revenue with City rate (Item 2) less expected gross revenue at 5-Year Flat rates (Item 1)
4) Calculation of the difference (Item 3) divided by the expected gross revenue at 5-Year flat rates (Item 1)

Negative Billing

The City's billing records included many "negative" billing entries for FY 2025 with a total of $5.4 million "negative" bills. For this aspect of the review, Benesch reviewed several data files: 1) the City's utility billing file, which included monthly and quarterly billing of governmental and non-governmental property for calendar years 2024 and 2025 (as opposed to FY) (showing the amount billed by the City); 2) the County's non-ad valorem fire rescue services assessment roll for FY 2025 (showing the amount billed by the County); and 3) the City's fire rescue services expenditures and revenues for FY 2023 through FY 2025 (showing the actual collections by the City and the County).

Of the $5.4 million "negative" billing entries in FY 2025, approximately, $4.6 million is related to properties owned by Leon County School Board (LCS). This appears to have been when the City "wrote off" the unpaid fire rescue fees from LCS for several prior years (since approximately 2021). However, this figure alone does not account for all of the "negative bills." As noted by Benesch, when asked for clarification, the City provided an explanation that "negative" billing entries were for negating or correcting a bill. However, that explanation does not fully explain the situation as there were many instances of various properties identified by Benesch owing more than they should have paid or owing an amount that did not match the imposed rates.

In Table #4 (Table 4 from the Benesch Report), a summary is provided of the categories and totals of negative billing entries found in the City's utility billing records.

Table #4

City Fire Assessment Billing Summary; FY 2024/25

Period	Positive Billings	Negative Billings
FY 2024/25	$47,474,947	-$5,377,782
Additional Detail for Land Uses with Negative Billings		
0100 - Single Family Residential	$12,448,533	-$1,828
0200 - Mobile Homes	$778,436	-$293
0300 - Multi-Family(10 or More Units)	$7,560,615	-$1,321
0400 - Condominia Improved	$1,113,634	-$18
0700 - Miscellaneous Residential	$21,068	-$335
1100 - Stores, One Story	$1,308,309	-$10
1600 - Community Shopping Centers	$1,553,352	-$30,350
1700 - Office Buildings/Nonprof/One	$937,853	-$47
1800 - Office Buildings/Nonprof/Multi	$2,241,628	-$1,063
2800 - Mobile Home Parks	$372,620	-$3
4000 - Vacant Industrial	$13,211	-$1,173
4800 - Warehousing, Distribution	$816,000	-$30
7100 - Churches	$422,871	-$61,298
7400 - Homes for the Aged	$202,709	-$357
8000 - Vacant Governmental	$30,208	-$127,027
8300 - Public County School	$29,351	-$4,611,998
8600 - County	$535,623	-$10,481
8700 - State	$1,941,320	-$44,482
N/A - Land use could not be determined	$3,615,658	-$485,668
Total for Parcels w/o Negative Billings	$11,531,948	$0
Total	**$47,474,947**	**-$5,377,782**

Source: City of Tallahassee; "N/A" is for billings that could not be joined to the Leon County parcel database through an address match.

Also, if the City wrote off the fire rescue services fee owed by the LCS, then the City was required to pay into the Fire Services Fund the amount not collected from the LCS out of another source of funds, such as its General Revenue, in order to comply with the fair apportionment requirement of the special benefit test for special assessments. Despite public requests for documentation of such fund transfers, no documentation was provided by the City that it covered the unpaid fees from LCS from another permissible source. In fact, the opposite occurred, and the City used the amount of the unpaid fees by LCS to serve as a basis to increase the amount of the assessment and fees for all other payers.

Under Collection by the City

The FY 2025 net billings (charges) for both the City and County total approximately $51.5 million. The County collected approximately 98% of the amount billed for FY 2025. As noted by Benesch, the City only collected approximately 88% of the amount billed. For a two-year period of time, this totals approximately $12 million in under collection by the City.

As part of Benesch's review, the actual collections were also analyzed. As shown in Table #5 (Table 5 from the Benesch Report), the total amount billed was compared to the total amount collected by both the City and the County in FY 2025.

Table #5

Fire Assessment Billings Versus Actual Collections

FY 2024/25

Source	FY 2024/25
Tallahassee Billings[1]	$47,474,947
Leon County Billings[2]	$4,000,069
Total FY 2024/25 Billings	**$51,475,016**
Total FY 2024/25 Revenue[3]	**$45,544,029**
Difference (Rev. less Billings)	-$5,930,987
Percent Difference	-11.52%

1) Source: Table 4; City of Tallahassee "positive" billings for FY 2024/25
2) Source: Leon County tax roll billing for FY 2024/25
3) Source: City of Tallahassee (Appendix A, Table A-7) Fire assessment revenues collected by Leon County are included in this total.

The Interlocal Agreement requires that if either the City or the County collects less than 95% of the amount billed on behalf of that party for the fiscal year, that Party is responsible to remit that amount of funds into the Fire Services Fund to meet the 95% minimum. Based upon these findings, the City should be required to cover the difference in its under collections.

Fire Station 17 and Related Debt Service

The Third Term Rate Study contemplated that Fire Station 17 would be built and operational by the end of 2023, and the construction costs were included in the calculations for the flat rates. In April 2023, it was estimated that construction of Fire Station 17 would cost approximately $17 million. In 2024, the City issued bonds for $27 million, an additional $10 million for the construction of Fire Station 17, that the County did not approve or agree to. Benesch calculated that the costs associated with the increase of the issuance of bonds includes $6.7 million of interest.

However, in 2025, the City attributed the need to increase the fire rescue services assessment and fees partially due to an increase in the costs to construct Fire Station 17. Further, the City Commission agenda materials indicated the construction cost for Fire Station 17 had increased to $34 million. A specific construction cost break-down was not included in the 2025 Unadopted Rate Study. However, Benesch determined that $1.5 million of the proposed $11.5 million budget increase in the 2025 Unadopted Rate Study was for debt service related to Fire Station 17, which would seemingly relate to the additional bonds issued, actually in 2024. To date, the City has not built Fire Station 17.

Utility Billing Inconsistencies

Benesch noted inconsistencies in the City's data due to the City's method of collection via the utility bill. In reviewing bills for 2024 and 2025, Benesch, and Joint City-County GIS staff, observed that some properties were billed the City's phased rates, some were billed less, others more, and some properties were missing months of billing. Benesch surmised that some of the missing billing months could be due to pauses in utility service for a variety of reasons. Benesch provided examples of three residential properties in Zone 1. Of these three properties, they were underbilled by $182.59, $99.20, and $107.14 during the calendar year 2024, using the City's phased rates. However, under the flat rates from the Third Term Rate Study, these three properties were underbilled by $189.00, $105.61, and $113.55. Given the sheer volume of utility customers and billing records, Benesch was unable to specifically quantify the budgetary impact attributable to the inconsistencies on the utility bills. Additionally, Benesch and Joint City-County GIS staff observed that the land use classifications of property by the City is not always consistent with the classifications by the Leon County Property Appraiser, which also results in inconsistent billing rates imposed. Further, Joint City-County GIS staff observed that the City's billing data contained numerous invalid addresses and parcel numbers which made it nearly impossible to determine and attribute accurate billings to a particular parcel. Benesch also noted that since utility bills are billed to and sometimes paid by tenants as opposed to property owners, the collection of payment may not always be consistent. In the Third Term Rate Study, Accenture also cautioned on the use of the utility bill as the method of collection.

Benesch noted that most local governments use the uniform method of collection through the tax bill to impose and collect their fire rescue assessments and fees.

Religious Institutions

Under section 170.201, Florida Statutes, permits a municipality to offer an exemption for property owned or occupied by a religious institution and used as a place of worship or education. The City and the County have created the exemptions. Benesch reviewed the billings for several religious institutions but could not find a consistent method of application for determining the exempt portions of the properties. For example, the City's billing records showed several religious institutions were billed for all structures while other religious institutions were exempted for either a portion or all of their property.

When an exemption is offered and applied, however, the City would be responsible under the Interlocal Agreement and Florida case law to contribute the amount to cover the exemptions from another source of funds, as the loss of revenue from the exemption cannot be shifted to other paying property owners. Despite public records requests, the City did not produce evidence that it transferred funds from another source to cover the funding of the exemptions for religious institutions.

Benesch noted that it did not have a sufficient level of detail available from the City's billing records and the Leon County Property Appraiser to verify the application of the exemption or to quantify the budgetary impact.

Governmental Property Inconsistencies

Benesch and Joint City-County GIS staff reviewed the City's billing records regarding various governmental properties, City, County, State, and Federal, which are billed a fire rescue services fee. Aside from LCS receiving a write-off of approximately $4.6 million, other governmental properties appeared to have received inconsistent application of the fee. A few examples from the Benesch Report for FY 2024-2025 are as follows:

- The City of Tallahassee Airport should have been charged $156,341.58, but were only billed $27,023.64. This resulted in a difference of $129,317.94.
- The Leon County Health Department should have been charged approximately $4,900, but was only billed $2,700. This resulted in a difference of approximately $2,200.
- The Florida Department of Law Enforcement should have been charged approximately $84,000, but was only billed $55,000. This resulted in a difference of approximately $29,000.

Joint City-County GIS staff provided an extensive analysis of governmental properties. Other notable examples of inconsistent billing include:

- City Hall should have been charged $74,760, but was only billed $51,531. This resulted in a difference of $23,229.
- Tallahassee Police Department should have been charged $26,902.39, but was only billed $2,680.20. This resulted in a difference of $24,222.19.

In addition to Benesch, as noted above, Joint City-County GIS staff analyzed the City's billing records related to governmental property, and neither could ascertain the exact or logical methodology employed by the City to calculate the fire rescue services fees based on the available information. Further, Joint City-County GIS staff noted that the City's billing data include invalid addresses and parcel numbers which complicated the comparison and process, and at times, makes difficult and "impossible" to attribute appropriate billings to a particular parcel. Again, Benesch and Joint City-County GIS staff were unable to quantify the impact of the imposition and collection of the fire rescue services fee.

"Bad Debt"

The City submitted an increase of $1.22 million for its Bad Debt budget category in the 2025 Unadopted Rate Study when compared to the budget in the Third Term Rate Study. According to the City, the bad debt expenses related to a contractor hired by the City to pursue utility bill collections, which includes a portion of the fire rescue services assessment. The County has sought explanation and sent public record requests to the City for documents to explain the basis for the increase and its relation to the increase of the fire rescue services budget. However, as of the date of this item, the City has not produced sufficiently clarifying information or documentation.

Budget Transfers

As discussed throughout this item, any shortfalls in revenue due to numerous reasons, such as exemptions or underpayment, must be paid and covered from a revenue source other than fire

rescue assessment revenues. Despite public records requests to the City, the City has not produced evidence of such transfers from other sources.

In reviewing the City's actual collections for FY 2025, the City transferred approximately $6 million from the Fire Services Reserve Fund to balance its budget. Under the Interlocal Agreement, if there is a shortfall in the Fire Services Fund, the County Administrator and City Manager determine whether Fire Services Reserve Funds should be released to cover the deficiency. Notably in FY 2024 – FY 2025, neither the County nor the County Administrator approved the transfer of $6 million from the Fire Services Reserve Fund.

Conclusion

In summary, based upon Benesch's review of the billing, collection, and funding of the Fire Services Fund, Benesch concluded that there was a shortfall in revenues ranging from approximately $15 million to $21.2 million for FY 2024 and FY 2025, which would have covered the City's proposed budget increase of $11.5 million identified in the 2025 Unadopted Rate Study, to account for the City's fire rescue services budget deficit. Due to limitations of the data received from the City, Benesch was unable to quantify the certain impacts to the Fire Services Fund budget as it relates to issues such as inconsistent billing practices, religious institutions exemptions, and the application of the fees for governmental properties. None of the documentation provided by the City evidences that it transferred funds from other sources of General Revenue to cover its deficiencies or exemptions.

As presented in the following section, in evaluating the current fire service model, Fitch found that the operation and delivery of fire rescue services in the unincorporated area to be highly effective and reliable. The primary deficiencies exist in the current Interlocal Agreement which lacks financial and performance safeguards that limits the County's ability to ensure financial transparency and accountability as demonstrated by the Benesch Report. As part of the concurrent dual track process, Fitch has identified several provisions that are strongly recommended for inclusion in a new interlocal agreement with the City that would provide greater transparency and accountability and mitigate the deficiencies identified in the Benesch findings.

Fitch's Comprehensive Evaluation of Fire Rescue Services

Over the past ten (10) months, Fitch has been engaged in a comprehensive evaluation to review the current model of fire rescue services provided by the City in the unincorporated area and assess alternative models that would provide a comparable level of service. The following highlights the methodology; findings and observations; evaluation of alternative models, and recommendation.

Methodology – Stakeholder Engagement, Data Collection, and Analysis

Fitch's methodology employed a combined approach of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the current service model. This included review of the Interlocal Agreement and all subsequent amendments; all fire rescue assessment studies; City Fire Department budgets over the past five years; ISO, VFD, and state response reports; and all County and City ordinances and resolutions related to fire rescue services. Additional data collection and analysis conducted by Fitch included:

- Comprehensive analysis of fire rescue services and funding models in all 67 counties
- More than 70 site visits and meetings with County Commissioners, County staff, Volunteer Fire Chiefs, and other public safety stakeholders
- Assessment of more than 44,000 TFD calls (including 11,000 in the unincorporated area) for fire and emergency medical response
- GIS analysis of approximately 69,053 structures (homes, businesses, etc.) in the unincorporated area for station locations, fire unit travel time, fire hydrant coverage, and insurance rating exposure
- Extensive review of 18 million unit-response level Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) data points for response performance

Highlighted Findings and Observations

The site visits, stakeholder engagement, and data analysis conducted by Fitch yielded more than 20 findings and observations. The findings and observations include:

- The current service model is properly resourced with the appropriate level of fire stations, personnel, and apparatus that are highly reliable and result in response times of less than 13 minutes for 97% of calls in the unincorporated area, consistent with the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) standards.
- Approximately 71% of TFD calls in the unincorporated area were related to medical first response (i.e. basic life support, advanced life support, etc.). This is consistent with national trends that indicate medical first response or "EMS-type" calls are the majority of responses made by fire departments.
- Due to the configuration of the County/City boundaries and geographical distribution of TFD stations, the majority (51%) of calls responded by TFD in the unincorporated area originated from fire stations within City limits.
- The Tallahassee-Leon County community ISO Class 3/3X rating exceeds the national average significantly helping lower property insurance premiums for residents. Only 18% of communities nationwide are classified as 3 or lower.
- The VFDs are an essential component of the unincorporated fire response system, supplementing the TFD response with manpower, fire equipment, and water supply.
- Curable deficiencies in the current Interlocal Agreement—including the absence of common financial safeguards—have limited the County's ability to ensure financial transparency and accountability that have contributed to recent disagreements with the City.
- The County has sufficient time to establish and operate a County Fire Services Model for the unincorporated area prior to the termination of the current Interlocal Agreement (September 30, 2028).
- Any renegotiated Interlocal Agreement with the City should include provisions that specifically address deficiencies of financial transparency and accountability in the current agreement.

- A County Fire Services Model would require an automatic aid agreement with the City to effectively replicate a comparable service level and minimize impact on property insurance premiums for residents.
- The Fire Assessment remains the most effective funding mechanism for fire rescue services due to its reliability as a sustainable revenue source and protection from ongoing property tax reform efforts.
- The County's collection of fire rescue services fees through a non-ad valorem assessment is a widely adopted practice in local communities and yields more consistent and reliable revenue than utility billing and other methods of collection.

Fitch Evaluation of Alternative Fire Service Models

In evaluating alternative models for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area, Fitch's analysis was guided by the following core strategic priorities:

- **Service Delivery Excellence**: Ensuring optimal response times, specialized capabilities, and uncompromised public safety outcomes.
- **Fiscal Sustainability**: Optimizing resource allocation, identifying cost-efficiencies, ensuring long-term budgetary viability, and minimizing impacts on property insurance premiums to residents.
- **Operational Scalability**: Building a flexible framework capable of adapting to future demographic shifts and geographic growth.
- **Jurisdictional Alignment**: Enhancing inter-agency cooperation and minimizing friction.

As a result, Fitch focused on three primary areas for evaluating the current level of service and developing recommendations for alternative delivery models for fire rescue service: cost, service level, and ISO rating. The costs were evaluated to project annual operating expenses for the current service model and alternative models. Service levels were evaluated to ensure alternative models provide response coverage, capacity, and operational performance comparable to the current model. The ISO rating was considered due to the associated impact that changes to service delivery models can have on the cost and the availability of property insurance for residents. The evaluation process was essential to the development of Fitch's recommendation for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area.

Fitch Recommendation: Pursue A Concurrent Dual Track Process

Based on the evaluation of alternative models, Fitch recommends that the County pursue the following concurrent dual track process for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area which will guide and inform the Board's ultimate determination of the fire rescue services model for the unincorporated area of the County into the future. This will ensure that the Board provided with the information necessary to adopt a viable fire service model by the end of the current term (September 30, 2028). The concurrent dual track process includes the following:

1. *Renegotiate with the City on a New Interlocal Agreement* – Fitch has developed specific provisions strongly recommended for a new interlocal agreement that would increase financial transparency and accountability, strengthen revenue stability for fire operations, and ensure continuity of fire rescue services for the unincorporated area.
2. *Establish a County Fire Services Model* – Fitch has determined that the County has sufficient time to establish an independent County Fire Services Model and presents a model that would provide a comparable level of service.

The concurrent dual track process affords the Board the opportunity to exhaust its options of renegotiation with the City while simultaneously developing an implementation plan that thoroughly identifies all decisions and actions required to establish a County Fire Services Model. This ensures that the Board is equipped with the information necessary to adopt the optimal fire rescue services model by the end of the current term (September 30, 2028). The following details the two tracks.

Interlocal Agreement Model

This option maintains service level, carries the least risk to cost, and does not impact property insurance for residents. In reviewing the current Interlocal Agreement, Fitch found that it lacks financial and performance safeguards commonly included in fire rescue services contracts in other communities and limits the County's ability to ensure financial transparency and accountability. This has contributed to recent disagreements between the County and City. Fitch identified ten (10) provisions that are consistent with best practices and strongly recommended for inclusion in a new interlocal agreement. These provisions would provide for greater fiscal transparency and accountability. The provision would also strengthen revenue stability for fire operations and ensure the continuity of service in unincorporated Leon County in the event the new interlocal agreement ends. The provisions include:

- Annual Fire Budget – require the City submit the fire budget annually to the County to ensure transparency, provide consistency with adopted rate studies, and proactively identify potential impacts to the fire rescue services fee. The City would submit a detailed fire budget that includes operating and capital costs by March 1 of each year to the County. According to Fitch, this provision is very common in other Florida communities that coordinate on the funding of fire rescue services. This would also be consistent with other budgets that the City submits to the County. Currently, the City submits annually to the County proposed budgets for the Planning Department, the Consolidated Dispatch Agency, Animal Shelter, and 800 MHZ Radio System. In addition, this will allow the County to identify and address with the City inconsistencies related to the collection of the assessment fees as found in the Benesch Report.
- Fire Service Reserve Fund – enhance the Fire Service Reserve Fund at an adequate level to address modest deviations to the annual fire budget due to revenue shortfalls, unanticipated expenses, or cost increases. The Reserve Fund currently collects surplus funds in the initial years of a rate study term for anticipated expenses in the latter years. Aligned with other local communities, Fitch recommends that the County and City establish a reserve fund balance of between 20% - 30% of the annual fire budget to address unanticipated revenue shortfalls and/or expenses. Establishment of a reserve fund is an

assessable cost and therefore would be funded through the fire assessment. Additionally, use of the reserve fund would continue to require approval of the County Administrator and City Manager.

- Extraordinary Cost Provision – in the event the Fire Reserve Fund is insufficient to address revenue shortfalls or unexpected expenses, then the extraordinary cost provision would elevate consideration of a rate study for a mid-term increase of the fire assessment rate. If agreement is not reached by the Board and City Commission, then the fire rescue assessment would not change. According to Fitch, extraordinary cost provisions are common elements for fire rescue services agreements to quickly resolve fiscal deficiencies and prevent a protracted dispute resolution process.
- Annual Independent Audit of Fire Service Fund – require the City to conduct an annual independent audit attestation of the Fire Service Fund prepared by an independent auditor to ensure fee revenues are appropriately collected and expended for fire operations. The third-party audit attestation would be submitted no later than six (6) months following the end of the fiscal year. This provision will identify instances of under billing and under collection as identified in the Benesch Report.
- Long-term Master Agreement – In alignment with the fire assessment rate studies, the current agreement is established to expire every five (5) years. The agreement has frequently been amended to incorporate new rate studies and for other fiscal adjustments. Fitch recommends that the County and City adopt a long-term master agreement (10-15 years) to provide for stability and predictability of fire rescue services for residents countywide. The agreement would include all provisions (annual fire budget submittal, extraordinary cost provision, etc.). The periodic rate studies would not impact the term.
- Rate Studies – conduct rate studies every three (3) years rather than the current five (5) years to provide greater budget certainty, ensure financial stability for fire operations, and mitigate the need for mid-term rate adjustments.
- Termination/Expiration Provision – require at least a three (3) year notice to terminate or not renew the agreement. This would provide sufficient time for the County to plan and implement a County Fire Services Model. This provision would include detailed steps and a timeline for the transfer of assets to the County. The long-term agreement would automatically renew for an additional 10-15 years if notice is not provided three years prior to termination.
- Capital Asset Provision – establish a capital asset provision that ensures the County receives capital assets in the event of termination or expiration of the agreement. The provision would require the County to receive Stations 10-15, including station furnishings, equipment and vehicles at no cost. Currently, the agreement provides the County with the option to acquire Stations 10-15 only upon the termination of the agreement and not the expiration. This provision ensures the continuity of service for unincorporated Leon County should the Master Agreement end.
- Performance Measures and Reporting Standards – consistent with other local communities, establish agreed upon standards for response time, unit type, staffing, ISO, etc. in the unincorporated area to ensure high-performance level of fire rescue services. The City would provide the County quarterly reports on the performance measures.

- Formal Reopener Clause – include a provision that limits mid-term renegotiation of the long-term agreement to changes in federal and state law that impact fire rescue services delivery to prevent frequent amendments and preserve a sustainable level of service. The County and City would be required to mutually approve renegotiated changes to the agreement.

In addition to the provisions recommended by Fitch to address curable deficiencies in the existing agreement, Fitch also found that the County's method of collection through the non-ad valorem assessment yields more consistent and reliable revenue than utility billing utilized by the City.

County Fire Services Model

Fitch's recommended dual track process includes the County pursue the establishment of a County Fire Services Model. This would ensure the provision of fire rescue services in the unincorporated area should a new agreement with the City not be reached. According to Fitch, the County has sufficient time to establish a County Fire Services Model by the end of the current agreement (September 30, 2028). Based on its evaluation, Fitch developed the County Fire Services Model that would provide a comparable level of service and minimal impact to property insurance premium for residents. The model would consist of the following:

- Pursuant to the Interlocal Agreement, the County would acquire six stations (stations 10-15), vehicles, and equipment from the City upon termination of the agreement for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area.
- Maintain the same level of personnel and shifts for fire units at the six stations resulting in an increase of 80 County FTE positions.
- As a new fire rescue services, the County ISO rating is projected to be classified as a Class 5/5X (from Class 3/3X) which could modestly impact property insurance premiums for unincorporated residents.
- The projected startup cost is approximately $30.1 million for the acquisition of fire stations, vehicles, equipment, and initial personnel expenses.
- For the first 2-3 years, operating costs for the County Fire Services Model are projected to be higher than the Interlocal Agreement Model. This could result in a higher fire assessment rate for residents in the unincorporated area.
- Over time, operating costs for the County Fire Services Model are projected to be lower than the Interlocal Agreement Model.
- An automatic aid agreement with the City would be required to maintain comparable response levels and minimize potential impact on property insurance premium for residents in the unincorporated area and the City.
- An automatic aid agreement between the County and the City ensures the closest fire station/truck responds to a call regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.
- Without automatic aid, thousands of structures (i.e., homes, business, etc.) in the unincorporated area and the City could be adversely impacted with higher response times and increased property insurance premiums.

Cost Comparison of Fire Rescue Services Models

The operating costs for each model were evaluated to determine estimated annual expenses for fire rescue services beginning in FY 2029 when the current interlocal agreement ends. Revenue necessary to support the operating costs of each model would be collected through a fire assessment following a required study. The following includes a summary of projected costs for each model over a five-year period beginning in FY 2029.

Interlocal Agreement Model: Under the current five-year rate study, the County pays $12 million annually for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area through revenue generated from the fire rescue services assessment and fees. Fitch estimates that costs would increase to an estimated $18.8 million annually over five years (FY 2029 – FY 2033). The costs are based on TFD expenditures for personnel, station/vehicle maintenance, and other associated expenses. Fitch evaluated the actuals of TFD's budgets for the past five years and projected budget through FY 2028 to calculate a year-over-year growth of 7%. However, actual operating costs for TFD would be based on the City's budgetary decisions.

County Fire Services Model: Based on Fitch's analysis, the estimated annual operating costs for the County Fire Services Model is $18.7 million over five years (FY 2029 – FY 2033) which is approximately equivalent to the Interlocal Agreement Model. The operating costs for the County Fire Services Model are expected to be higher than the Interlocal Agreement Model the first 2-3 years of the five-year period, however costs would be lower in the latter years. This is primarily due to Fitch's estimated annual growth rate of 4.4% for the County Fire Services Model based on CPI-U which is utilized by the County and other governments to forecast the cost of personnel, goods, and services year-over-year. Similar to the Interlocal Agreement Model, the operating costs for the County Fire Services Model include personnel, station/vehicle maintenance, and other associated expenses. The operating cost would also include debt service payments for the majority of startup costs that would be incurred prior to FY 2029.

The County Fire Services Model projects approximately $30.1 million in startup costs for the acquisition of fire stations (10-15) from the City, vehicles, and equipment as well as initial expenses for hiring personnel. According to Fitch's analysis, the County would begin acquiring capital assets such as vehicles and equipment later this fiscal year. Revenue to support the $30.1 million startup cost is not available in the County budget and would require the issuance of long-term debt. Preliminary evaluation by the County's bond counsel determined that approximately $21 million of the expenses would qualify for tax-exempt bonds. The annual debt service payments associated with borrowing the $21 million would be incorporated in a rate assessment study. The County's general reserve fund would be utilized for the remaining $9 million in expenses that do not qualify for tax-exempt bonds.

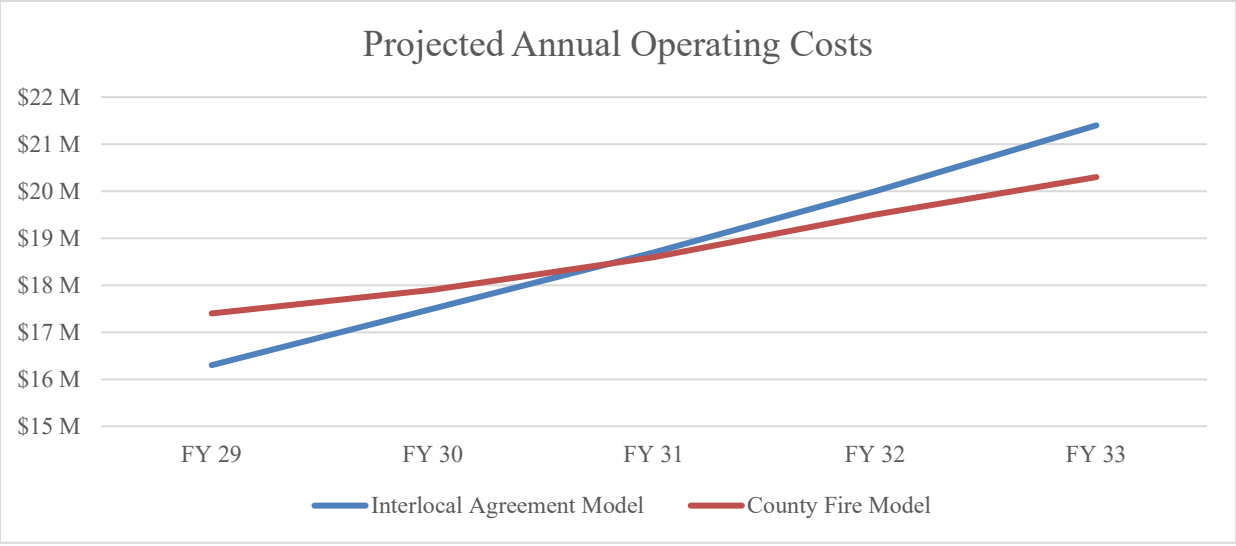
As mentioned earlier, the County Fire Services Model is based on the utilization of six stations for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area. Importantly, in its evaluation, Fitch determined that an automatic aid agreement would be required for a comparable level of service that maintains response times and minimizes impact to property insurance premiums or coverage for residents. An automatic aid agreement ensures the closest fire station/truck responds to a call regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.

Without an automatic aid agreement, Fitch found that response times would be longer and ISO ratings would be significantly impacted resulting in potential increases to property insurance premiums for residents or loss of property insurance coverage. The County would be required to construct an additional station (a total of seven) to replicate response times which would increase the startup cost to an estimated $47.3 million. However, a seven-station model without an automatic aid agreement would continue to significantly impact the County's ISO rating and property insurance premiums for residents. In order to replicate response time and minimize impact to property insurance for residents, the County would be required to construct multiple stations with startup costs of approximately $95 million.

Automatic aid agreements are common in communities served by multiple fire and emergency medical response providers. The agreements carry an additional cost in some communities. The cost of an automatic aid agreement is not contemplated in the projected annual operating budget prepared by Fitch. An automatic aid agreement for the County Fire Services Model would be subject to negotiation with the City in order to establish service terms. This could increase the model's annual operating costs.

Graph #2 reflects the projected operating costs as presented for the County Fire Services Model. The graph provides a comparison of the Interlocal Agreement Model and the County Fire Services Model over a five-year period following the end of the current agreement. As shown, operating costs for both models would be relatively similar. As reflected in the projections provided in the item and Fitch Report, the County would benefit from a more conservative approach to operating services in the unincorporated area which could result in slower annual growth compared to renegotiations with the City. As mentioned earlier, the County Fire Services Model does not include costs for an automatic aid agreement should the County be required to pay the City for responses in the unincorporated area. Additionally, the operating costs for the County Fire Services Model would be subject to future collective bargaining negotiations which would significantly increase expenses.

Graph #2. Projected Annual Operating Costs for Interlocal Agreement Model vs. County Fire Services Model



Fire Rescue Services Assessment for Alternative Models

The revenue necessary to support the operating costs for either model would be collected through a fire rescue services assessment following a required rate study. Following the completion of the concurrent dual track, the Board would select the most effective model for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area. Utilizing the operating cost for fire rescue services, a study would be conducted to establish the assessment rates. TFD expenses as described earlier would be the primary driver for the operating cost of the Interlocal Agreement Model. The cost of the County Fire Services Model contemplates similar expenses at a lower growth rate as well as debt services for startup costs.

Based on Fitch's projections, the fire assessment rates for both models would increase. A study would be conducted to determine the fire assessment rates. As mentioned earlier, the three rate studies have been conducted since 2009 for an average increase of 17% for residential properties. Additionally, as presented further in the item, Fitch recommends that the County evaluate alternative methodologies such as a tiered system as part of the next rate study. This would allow vacant properties to be captured when calculating assessment rate which would mitigate increases on residential properties.

Overall Comparison of the Interlocal Agreement Model and County Fire Services Model

Chart 2 provides a comparison of the pros and cons of the Interlocal Agreement Model and the County Fire Services Model. Each option has benefits and challenges that would be further evaluated and considered by the Board as part of the concurrent dual track process.

Chart #2 – Pros and Cons of Interlocal Agreement Model vs. County Fire Services Model

	Interlocal Agreement Model	County Fire Services Model
Pros	• Maintains existing service levels • Preserves existing ISO ratings • Avoids startup costs • Opportunity for new interlocal agreement with improved financial transparency and accountability	• Budgetary and operating control with the County • Potential for long-term cost efficiencies • Direct accountability for fire rescue services delivery and fees
Cons	• Operational and budgetary decisions remain primarily with the City • New agreement enhancements would require City concurrence	• Requires an automatic aid agreement with the City to maintain comparable level of service • ISO ratings may be lowered, impacting property insurance premiums for residents • Projected annual operating costs higher the initial years which could result in higher fire assessment for residents • Estimated $30.1 million in startup cost

Timeline and Next Steps

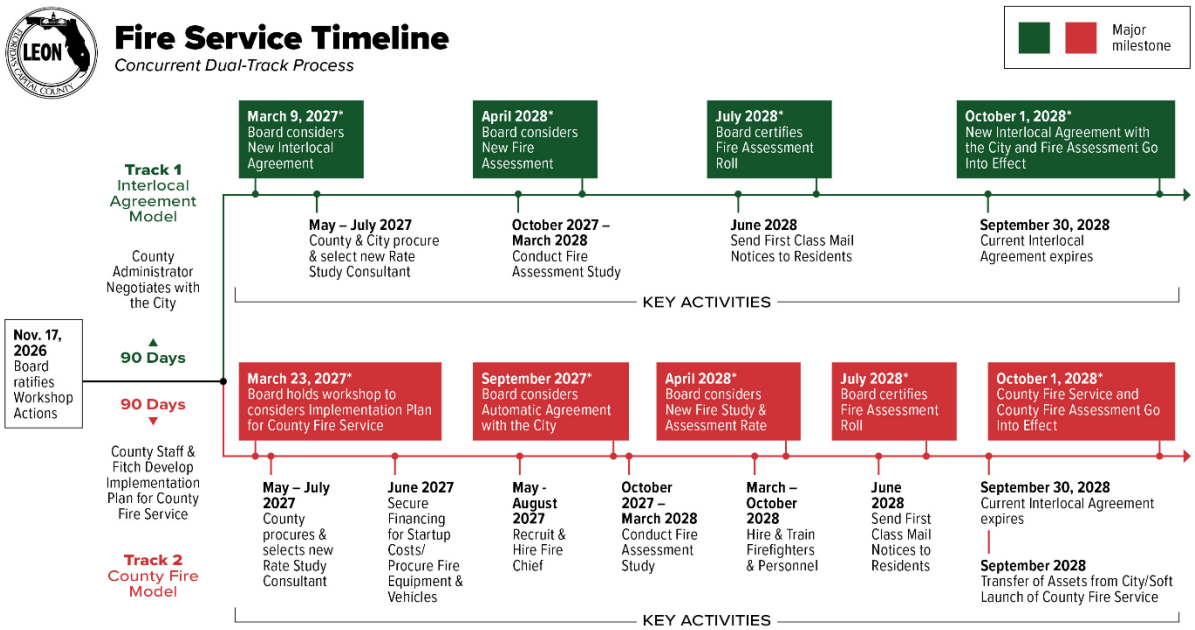
As recommended by Fitch, the following timeline contemplates that the County would pursue renegotiation with City on a new interlocal agreement (Interlocal Agreement Model) and the establishment of a County Fire Services Model on a concurrent dual track. Upon Board authorization, the County would pursue the Interlocal Agreement Model for 90 days. During this period, County staff would engage the City to renegotiate a new interlocal agreement that incorporates the specific provision recommended by Fitch.

Simultaneously, during the same 90-day period, County staff would develop an implementation plan for the County Fire Services Model. This implementation plan would include details on action items required to establish a County Fire Services Model by the end of the current agreement (September 30, 2028). Fitch would provide technical assistance with the development of the implementation plan.

Chart #1 illustrates the timeline of the concurrent dual track process with major milestones and key activities that would occur for each track. The outcome of the renegotiations, including a potential new agreement, would be presented to the Board at its March 9, 2027, meeting. At that time, the Board could approve the agreement, provide additional direction on the agreement for further renegotiation with the City, or schedule a workshop to consider the implementation plan for the County Fire Services Model.

The workshop would be scheduled for March 23, 2027. During the workshop, the Board would consider and provide direction on the organizational structure, financing options, capital acquisition, and other required actions in the implementation plan to establish the County Fire Services Model by October 1, 2028.

Chart #1. Concurrent Dual Track Timeline for Fire Rescue Services



Additional Fitch Recommendations

In addition to the concurrent dual track process the provision of future fire services in the unincorporated area, Fitch provides additional recommendations that would optimize funding for fire rescue services; reinforce the County's ongoing response to the growing demand of EMS; and strengthen the County's partnership with the VFDs.

- Explore adopting a fire assessment methodology that includes vacant lands. Currently, the fire assessment and fees apply strictly to improved residential, commercial, industrial/warehouse, and governmental structures countywide. Fitch recommends the County evaluate alternative assessment methodologies that would incorporate vacant lands into the assessment base. Implementing this approach would optimize revenue capacity and diversify the funding base while simultaneously mitigating future rate increases on residents. Alternative methodologies would be considered as part of the next fire assessment rate study.
- Continue investment in EMS. The majority of TFD responses in the unincorporated area (71%) are for basic and advanced life support services commonly provided by EMS. This is consistent with national trends which demonstrate that EMS-type calls are the majority of responses made by fire departments. According to Fitch, in its review of CAD data, the trend also reflects increased demand for County EMS, which experienced a 5.3% annual growth rate in call volume over the past five years. Therefore, Fitch recommends continued investment in County EMS which aligns with recent efforts of the County to build EMS capacity to meet growing service demands. Beginning in FY 2024, the Board adopted a plan to increase staffing for paramedics and EMTs annually for five years (through FY 2029). Since that time, the County has established more than 25 positions on ambulances to maintain current service levels and ensure adequate resources are available for increased call demands.
- Strengthen partnership with the Volunteer Fire Departments. VFDs are an essential component of fire response in the unincorporated area and regularly support TFD with fire suppression, vehicle extrication, hazardous rescues and other emergency services. Under both models, Fitch recommends continued utilization of the VFDs and identified opportunities to enhance the County's partnership with VFDs to strengthen their response capabilities through operations, equipment, recruitment, training, and water supply. County staff have been working with the VFDs to implement all recommendations developed by Fitch (Attachment #4).

The County will continue to invest in EMS and support the VFDs as identified in the additional recommendations provided by Fitch. Additional information on fire assessment methodology will be brought back to the Board for future consideration as part of the next fire assessment rate study. No further Board action on these additional recommendations by Fitch is recommended at this time.

Conclusion

Following notification from the City regarding its intent to terminate the current Interlocal Agreement for Fire Services at the end of the term, the County engaged Fitch to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the current models of service and alternative models that would

provide a comparable level of service. Over the past ten months, Fitch had over 70 site visits and meetings, reviewed more than 44,000 calls, analyzed over 69,000 structures, and examined approximately 18 million CAD data points resulting in more than 20 findings and observations.

Based on the evaluation of alternative models, Fitch recommends that the County pursue the following concurrent dual track process for fire rescue services in the unincorporated area which will guide and inform the Board's ultimate determination of the fire rescue services model for the unincorporated area of the County into the future. The concurrent dual track process includes the following:

1. *Renegotiate with the City on a New Interlocal Agreement* – Fitch has developed specific provisions strongly recommended for a new interlocal agreement that would increase financial transparency and accountability, strengthen revenue stability for fire operations, and ensure continuity of fire rescue services for the unincorporated area. The need for many of these recommended restructured interlocal agreement with the City is further supported by Benesch's findings.
2. *Establish a County Fire Services Model* – Fitch has determined that the County has sufficient time to establish an independent County Fire Services Model and presents a model that would provide a comparable level of service in the unincorporated area.

The concurrent dual track provides the Board the opportunity to renegotiate with the City while simultaneously developing an implementation plan to establish a County Fire Services Model. Upon Board authorization, the County would pursue the Interlocal Agreement Model for 90 days. During this period, County staff would engage the City to renegotiate on a new interlocal agreement that incorporates the specific provision recommended by Fitch.

During the same 90-day period, County staff would develop an implementation plan for the County Fire Services Model. This implementation plan would include all action items required to establish a County Fire Services Model by the end of the current agreement (September 30, 2028). Fitch would provide technical assistance with the development of the implementation plan. This option includes the County Attorney continuing to pursue dispute resolution, including through binding arbitration, for the County to obtain all assets it is due under the Interlocal Agreement, in order to establish a County Fire Services Model.

The outcome of the renegotiations, including a potential new agreement would be presented to the Board at its March 9, 2027, meeting. At that time, the Board could approve the agreement, provide additional direction on the agreement for further renegotiation with the City, or to schedule a workshop to consider the implementation plan for the County Fire Services Model. The workshop would be held on March 23, 2027. During the workshop the Board would consider and provide direction on the organizational structure, financing options, capital acquisition, and other required actions to establish the County Fire Services Model by October 1, 2028.

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Options:

1. Accept the Fire Service Feasibility Study from Fitch & Associates, LLC. (Attachment #1).
2. Accept the Analysis of the City's billing, collection, and funding conducted by Alfred Benesch & Company (Attachment #2).
3. Authorize the County Administrator to pursue a concurrent dual track process that includes the following:
    a. Renegotiate with the City of Tallahassee on a new Interlocal Agreement for Fire Rescue Services consistent with the provisions recommended by Fitch & Associates.
    b. Develop an Implementation Plan for the adoption of a County Fire Services Model as proposed by Fitch & Associates.
4. Board Direction.

Recommendation:

Options # 1, #2, and #3

Attachments:

1. Fitch & Associates, LLC's Fire Service Feasibility Study
2. Benesch Final Technical Report
3. September 22, 2025 letter from the City of Tallahassee Terminating the Agreement
4. September 26, 2025 letter from the City Attorney to the County Attorney
5. October 17, 2025 letter from the County Attorney to the City Attorney
6. Summary of VFD Recommendations and Leon County Actions

OCTOBER 2026

LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

EVALUATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENT AND DELIVERY OF FIRE SERVICES

Executive Summary

Purpose & Background

Why This Report Was Prepared

Although not mandated by law, Leon County has historically ensured that residents of the unincorporated area receive reliable fire protection. Today, the County receives fire services through a 2009 Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the City of Tallahassee. Under that agreement, the Tallahassee Fire Department (TFD) staffs and manages fire service delivery to the unincorporated county, and six volunteer fire departments supplement coverage in the more rural areas. Fire service is funded through a Fire Assessment Fee that is periodically revalidated, and countywide emergency medical services (EMS) are provided by Leon County EMS and funded through a separate countywide taxing unit (MSTU).

In 2023, the County and City adopted the most recent Fire Assessment Rate for a 5-year term. In 2025, 15 months into the agreement, the City notified the County that the revenue generated by the rate would be insufficient to operate fire services Countywide. The City requested a 22% increase of the assessment rate for the remainder of the term (FY2026-2028). The County offered a good faith compromise of a 17% rate increase, which was not accepted by the City. Ultimately, the County decided to maintain the fire service assessment rates. Subsequently, the City increased the rates to structures within the City limits and notified the County that it intends to terminate the Agreement on September 30, 2028.

As a result, the County issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to retain a consultant to evaluate alternative models and the current level of service being provided to the County. The County engaged Fitch & Associates to conduct the evaluation.

This executive summary presents, in plain language, what the study examined, what it found, and what it recommends. The full analysis behind every statement here is contained in the body of this report.

Who Is Fitch & Associates

For more than 40 years, Fitch & Associates has been a thought leader in the public safety industry - routinely authoring articles, research, industry surveys, and white papers, and regularly presenting at national and international conferences. The firm has provided similar planning and analysis services for more than 1,500 clients across all 50 states, including counties throughout Florida.

The consultants assigned to this project have spent their careers as fire service leaders with long histories in performance management, organizational optimization, risk assessment, and strategic assessment. The team includes experts from city and county administration as well as chief officers from career, combination, and volunteer fire service agencies - the same mix of perspectives found in the alternatives this study evaluates.

Executive Summary

How the Study Was Prepared

The findings in this report rest on several independent lines of analysis that were checked against one another, so that no single data source or point of view could drive the conclusions:

- **Five years of emergency response data.** The team collected five years (2021-2025) of computer-aided dispatch (CAD) records from Leon County, CAD and records management system (RMS) outputs from the City of Tallahassee, and EMS response data from Leon County EMS, more than 18 million independent data points - and reconciled the data sets against each other. In 2025 the system handled 44,284 incidents, of which 11,113 occurred in the unincorporated county.
- **Extensive GIS (mapping) analysis.** Station locations, travel times, density of development, hydrant coverage, and the insurance-rating exposure of all 69,053 structures in the unincorporated area were mapped and analyzed.
- **Interviews and on-site observations.** The team conducted interviews with County and City staff and key stakeholders, made direct observations at the fire stations, and completed two rounds of interviews with all six volunteer fire departments.
- **Document and financial review.** The 2009 ILA and its six amendments, the four fire assessment rate studies, and the fire services budget history were reviewed in detail. Funding and service models were also compared across all 67 Florida counties and five peer counties.

44,284	**69,053**	**67**	**>50**
2025 incidents analyzed	structures mapped	Florida counties compared	meetings with stakeholders
County, City & EMS records reconciled	*GIS insurance-rating analysis*	*funding & service models*	

Where data sets differed, the study deliberately used the most complete source available, so that any error would overstate - never understate - the community's needs. The result is a picture of the fire service system assembled from the City and County records, the geography of the county itself, and the people who deliver the service every day.

Executive Summary

Key Observations and Findings

The analysis produced many detailed results; the findings summarized here are those that most directly affect the decisions in front of the County.

What the 2025 Data Shows

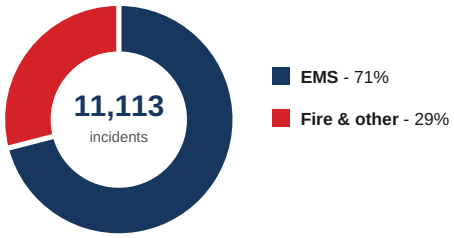
TFD operates 16 fire stations. Six of them - Stations 10-15 - are identified in the agreement as the "county" stations, but service into the unincorporated area is provided from across the entire system: every TFD station except Station 1 has territory in the unincorporated county where it is the closest station to an incident.

11,113
unique incidents in the unincorporated county in 2025

25%
of TFD's total call volume of 44,284

71%
of those TFD incidents were EMS calls; 29% were fire and other calls

51%
(5,677 incidents) answered from a station located inside the city



2025 incidents in the unincorporated county, by call type

Most requests for help in the unincorporated county are medical emergencies, not fires. And because the municipal boundary is irregular, the station closest to an emergency in the unincorporated area is often located inside the city - slightly more than half of all unincorporated incidents in 2025 were answered that way. These two facts shape every alternative examined in this study.

Response Times

Geographical analyses demonstrate that the staffed county stations (Stations 10-15) can reach 97% of all calls in the unincorporated county within a 13-minute travel time - the baseline historically recognized for rural areas by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). Including all 16 stations, the 2025 travel time into the unincorporated county was 12.7 minutes at the 90th percentile: faster in the developed areas near the city, slower in the outlying rural areas.



2025 90th-percentile travel times into the unincorporated county, from all 16 TFD stations

Executive Summary

The Partnership Has Worked - but the Agreement Is Showing Its Age

The collaboration between the two local governments under the current structure benefits both public safety and fiscal conservatism. Residents are served by a single, integrated system: the joint 911 center has dispatched the closest available unit for decades regardless of boundary, and one provider operates the stations, equipment, and personnel - avoiding the duplication that comes with two separate agencies serving the same community.

The Interlocal Agreement itself, however, has developed real deficiencies over time. The 2009 agreement has been amended six times, and its core obligations are now scattered across the original document, multiple exhibits, and those amendments - it must be reconstructed to be read, rather than simply read. More importantly, the agreement is missing basic financial and performance safeguards that a long-standing public safety contract should have:

- **No annual budget review.** There is no requirement for an annual fire services budget submission or a structured review process, so cost increases are not examined year by year.
- **No independent financial verification.** There is no requirement for an independent CPA to verify that fire assessment revenues are spent solely on fire services.
- **No reserve fund rules.** There is no minimum reserve level that triggers corrective action, and no maximum above which excess funds are returned to contracting authority.
- **No measurable performance standards.** The agreement does not define response time expectations, how they are measured, or how they are reported.
- **No extraordinary cost provisions.** The agreement does not provide a threshold for cost increases that would trigger an automatic reevaluation and mutual consent between the parties to the agreement.

Executive Summary

The System Is Stable and Properly Resourced

Every operational measure confirms a stable, resilient deployment: workload per unit is low, station reliability is high, and overlapping calls are infrequent. The system does not require immediate or short-term operational investment. The current deployment is appropriately resourced - capital assets are aligned with call volume and risk, and the number of personnel assigned to each apparatus and station (three to four firefighters) is reasonable and serves as the baseline for comparing alternatives.

The Volunteer Fire Departments Are Essential

The six volunteer fire departments (VFDs) are essential to the overall fire protection strategy in the unincorporated area. The county's large geographic expanse, with relatively few requests for service spread across it, makes those areas well suited for volunteer coverage that supplements the staffed stations. The VFDs remain part of the recommended system under every alternative in this study.

The Current Way of Paying for Fire Services Is Sound

The current approach - a fire assessment fee for fire services - is sound and should be continued, while retaining opportunities for improvement. This matters because of what may change in Florida: with potential changes to ad valorem (property) taxation and in consideration of the County's 10-mill property tax cap, an approach that preserves a fire assessment fee is advantageous. The fire assessment remains the best approach to funding, with recommended adjustments: considering a tiered assessment methodology under which currently excluded properties would contribute to fire readiness. The way the fee is billed by the County also follows standard Florida practice: communities commonly collect fire assessments on the property tax bill, which treats each property consistently, generally results in higher collection rates, and provides an established process for handling unpaid assessments. The City currently bills on the utility bill which is a unique approach in Florida. Our research found only one other jurisdiction using this approach.

Because of These Findings

The service residents receive today is strong. The most significant problems this study found are not operational - they are structural weaknesses in the agreement that governs the partnership, and the high public cost of duplicating the system without automatic aid if the partnership ended. Those findings frame the policy options that follow.

Executive Summary

Policy Options for the Board

How the Alternatives Were Evaluated

Based on the scope of work, staff and stakeholder interviews, statistical analysis of fire incident data, GIS analysis of the community, and on-site observations, the primary areas of focus for evaluating the current level of service and developing alternative service delivery models were identified as financial considerations, service levels, and ISO ratings.

Financial considerations were evaluated to assess the financial sustainability and resource requirements of the current system and potential alternatives. Service levels were evaluated to ensure that alternative models provide response coverage, capacity, and operational performance comparable to the current system. ISO ratings were considered because changes in fire protection capabilities and service delivery may affect the community's ISO classification as well as the availability or cost of property insurance for citizens. Several alternatives were tested, and two concurrent policy options emerged for the Board's consideration: renegotiating a modernized long-term agreement with the City (Option A), and establishing a county-operated fire department (Option B).

What is an ISO rating?

The Insurance Services Office (ISO) grades every community's fire protection from Class 1 (best) to Class 10. Insurance companies use that grade when setting property insurance premiums, so a weaker grade can mean higher insurance costs for homeowners and businesses. Tallahassee and the unincorporated county currently share a Class 3/3X rating earned by the combined city/county system.

Comparing the County-Operated Models

If the County were to operate its own fire department without automatic or mutual aid from the City, three configurations were examined - keeping the six current stations, adding a seventh, or expanding to ten stations to protect insurance ratings. The comparison below shows the trade-off each carries:

Models	Requires New Stations	Maintains Response Time Performance	Maintains ISO Rating
6-Station (current assets)	No	No	No
7-Station	Yes	Yes	No
10-Station	Yes	Yes	Yes

"Current assets" means the six existing county stations, Stations 10-15. Each added station increases cost: the more fully a county-only model protects response times and ISO ratings, the more expensive it becomes.

Executive Summary

Option A: Renegotiate a Long-Term Master Agreement with the City

Option A is to renegotiate the agreement with the City of Tallahassee. The analyses show this path carries the least risk to cost, no impact to service levels, and no impact to the ISO rating - residents keep the same stations, the same response times, and the same insurance classification, while the County fixes the structural problems this study identified.

Under Option A, renegotiation would not mean another amendment. The current amendment dependent agreement would be replaced with a single, fully restated, long-term master agreement that corrects each weakness identified in the findings and provides for greater fiscal transparency, accountability, and stability, while maintaining appropriate fire rescue services countywide:

- **An annual fire budget** - the City submits its projected fire budget to the County by March 1 each year, keeping budgets transparent and consistent with adopted rate studies.
- **A fire service reserve fund** - with a minimum fund balance of 20% and a maximum of 30% of the annual fire budget (most counties exceed the GFOA recommendation of 16.7%, with several between 20% and 30%), and use of the fund requiring approval of the County Administrator and City Manager.
- **An extraordinary cost provision** - the fire assessment fee cannot increase mid-term without both County and City approval; absent agreement, the fee does not change.
- **An annual independent audit** - verifying, within six months of each fiscal year-end, that fee revenues are properly collected and spent on fire operations.
- **A long-term master agreement** - a 10-15 year agreement with every service provision stated in the body of one document and exhibits limited to supporting materials.
- **Rate studies every three years** - rather than five, providing budget certainty and eliminating mid-term rate adjustments.
- **Three years' notice to terminate** - with continued City service during any transition, a timeline for asset transfer, and automatic renewal if notice is not given.
- **A capital asset provision** - Stations 10-15, including furnishings, equipment, and vehicles, convey to the County at no cost upon termination or expiration.
- **Performance measures and reporting standards** - agreed standards for response time, unit type, staffing, and ISO, with quarterly reporting to the County.
- **A formal reopener clause** - allowing mutually approved renegotiation of specific provisions mid-term (excluding the fire assessment fee, which the extraordinary cost provision governs).

Option A at a Glance

A fully restated, long-term master agreement with the City of Tallahassee carries the least risk on cost, preserves current service levels, and protects the community's ISO rating - while adding the annual budget submission, independent audit, reserve fund rules, and performance standards the current agreement lacks.

Executive Summary

Option B: A Six-Station County Fire Department with Automatic Aid

Option B is for the County to operate its own fire department with the six existing stations (Stations 10-15) and automatic aid in place. This path is more expensive up front: the County must purchase stations and apparatus, acquire all other equipment new, and hire leadership before the first day of service. Service levels would be close to today's: 83% of calls in the higher-density areas reached within 10 minutes and 92% of calls in the lower-density areas within 13 minutes - roughly a 7% reduction from current performance in the higher-density areas, described in this study as meaningful but manageable. The city and county would receive separate ISO ratings, but the overall impact would be minimal *provided automatic aid is in place*.

When a County Department Pays for Itself

The central fiscal analyses compare each configuration's recurring year-over-year costs against projected TFD costs from FY29 through FY41, inclusive of debt service. On that recurring basis, a county department becomes less expensive than continuing with TFD years before its start-up investment is fully repaid - and applying $9 million in cash from reserves toward start-up moves the break-over earlier:

County FD Configuration	Recurring break-over - no cash reserves	Recurring break-over - $9M cash from reserves
6-Station (Stations 10-15)	**FY33**	**FY31**

Year-over-year recurring costs versus projected TFD costs, FY29-FY41 (report pages 62 and 65). Recurring break-over excludes one-time start-up costs.

There is sufficient time to develop a comprehensive implementation plan covering the transition, organizational structure, human resources, financing, capital acquisition, and other critical preoperational activities ahead of a final decision on or before March 2027.

What is automatic aid - and why it must be in place

Automatic aid is a written agreement, made in advance, that the closest fire unit responds to an emergency regardless of which side of the city boundary it sits on - different from traditional mutual aid, which is requested case by case after an incident begins. Without it, the consequences are severe: the City has stated that in a separation it would not commit to responding into the unincorporated county, and properties more than five road miles from a county station would face a definitive ISO downgrade - approximately 14,000 structures, about 20% of all structures in the unincorporated area, with higher insurance premiums the likely result.

The Ten-Station Model: Protecting ISO Ratings Is the Most Expensive Path

To protect insurance ratings without the City's participation, the County would need to take over Stations 10-15 and add a minimum of four more stations - at least ten in total. This is the most expensive alternative and is not cost effective: roughly $94.9 million in start-up costs before FY29, more than three times the six-station model's, with annual operating costs $8-10 million a year higher. It would more closely mirror current service provisions (an estimated 7% difference) and improve response times to an 8-minute travel time for 90% of incidents - but the city and county would still be rated separately by ISO, and the new stations would duplicate coverage near existing city stations, in areas likely to be annexed by the City within 10 to 15 years despite a 50-year station life.

Executive Summary

Implementation & Next Steps

What Needs to Happen Next

Pursue Options A & B concurrently. There is time to negotiate a new agreement with the City as outlined in Option A while developing a detailed implementation plan for the operation of a six-station County fire department with automatic aid under Option B. This approach allows the County to negotiate an agreement with the City while fully preparing to operate a County fire department.

Keep the county-department option open by deciding on time. Standing up a county fire department by October 1, 2028 is operationally achievable, but it requires as much preparation time as possible - hiring leadership, purchasing stations and apparatus, acquiring equipment, and building the organization during a preparation "zero year." This work must begin no later than March 2027. While an earlier start in January 2027 is the most advantageous timeline, the March 2027 date must be viewed as the decision deadline. If the decision is deferred beyond March 2027, the October 2028 start becomes significantly more difficult to achieve and the County could face a significant gap in the provision of services to the unincorporated areas.

Major Milestones



** applies if the County chooses to operate its own fire department*

- **Now -** begin negotiations with the City on a fully restated agreement and develop an implementation plan.
- **January 2027 -** an earlier start in January 2027 is the most advantageous timeline for beginning county-department preparations.
- **March 2027 -** the decision deadline: the final County decision on whether to establish a county fire department must be made on or before March 2027.
- **FY28 ("zero year") -** if a county department is chosen: pre-operational preparation, including leadership hiring, station and apparatus purchases, and equipment acquisition.
- **October 1, 2028 -** county fire department begins operations (if that path is selected).

Executive Summary

Conclusion

Unincorporated Leon County is well served today. The system reaches 97% of calls within the rural response-time baseline, its stations and staffing are properly matched to workload and risk, and the way it is funded is sound. Those results are the product of a decades-long partnership between the County and the City of Tallahassee - a single, integrated system in which the closest unit responds regardless of boundary and the public pays for one set of stations, apparatus, and personnel rather than two.

What needs repair is not the service; it is the agreement behind it. The 2009 Interlocal Agreement has been amended six times and lacks the annual budget visibility, independent financial verification, reserve rules, and measurable performance standards that would let the County manage the partnership with confidence. The analyses also show that operating two independent systems without automatic aid costs the public more: with an automatic aid agreement in place, the two systems will be similar financially after start-up, but without an automatic aid agreement with the City, fully protecting residents' insurance ratings would require at least ten stations - the most expensive and least efficient path of all.

COSTS

Option A carries the least risk to cost. Option B requires start-up investment: recurring break-over by FY31-FY33 for six stations; a ten-station model is the most expensive and is not cost effective.

SERVICE LEVELS

Option A leaves service levels untouched - 97% of unincorporated calls are reached within 13 minutes today. Option B comes close - 83-92% coverage depending on configuration - by re-creating capacity that exists today.

ISO RATING

Option A preserves the Class 3/3X rating residents benefit from today. Option B means separate ratings - manageable with automatic aid; without it, about 14,000 structures face definitively weaker ratings and likely higher premiums.

The Decision Before the County

Both pathways are viable and the County should pursue both options concurrently. Option A - a fully restated, long-term master agreement with the City - carries the least cost risk and preserves current service levels and the ISO rating. Option B - a county-operated fire department - is achievable, reaching recurring break-over by FY31-FY33 for the six stations with automatic aid, with greater start-up investment and ISO exposure that automatic aid will manage. While negotiating with the City, a detailed implementation plan for Option B should be developed. The County's decision on a county-operated department is needed no later than March 2027 to keep both pathways open.

Analysis of Current Level of Service within the Interlocal Agreement

Overview of the Current Fire/EMS System Design

Leon County and the City of Tallahassee have historically provided fire services through an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) where the City of Tallahassee has provided the staffing and management oversight while both parties shared in the operational and fiscal costs of agreed upon facilities, capital, and operations associated with the provision in fire service to the unincorporated county residents. This is funded through a Fire Assessment Fee that is periodically revalidated, generally every five years.

Leon County, as the substate level of government responsible for the oversight of Emergency Medical Services (EMS), provides countywide Advanced Life Support (ALS) EMS first response and patient transportation to definitive care. EMS is funded through a countywide Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) that is adopted by both the City and County.

Recommendation

This collaboration between the two local governing bodies benefits both public safety and fiscal conservatism.

The current structure and methodologies of the fire assessment for fire services and the MSTU for EMS services is sound and should be continued.

EMS services are also supplemented by the city of Tallahassee's Fire Department (TFD) first response capabilities for assessment, treatment and assistance with patient transportation when needed. In 2025, EMS calls accounted for approximately 71% of all incidents. This collaboration between the two local governing bodies benefits both public safety and fiscal conservatism.

Readiness Model

In public policy, the costs for services that are in the public's interest, such as essential public safety services, are generally funded by the public. In this example, the Fire Readiness Fee and the MSTU revenues fund the readiness, or availability, of the fire and EMS components to respond to all-hazards including EMS. The cost of readiness includes the availability of the resources irrespective of how frequently the public requests services. Therefore, in a readiness model, the fire department has a more robust allocation of resources with capacity to respond to any citizen or visitor to Leon County as a public good or public interest. Readiness costs are typically higher costs due to limited opportunity for production.

Demand Model

In contrast, the utilization of patient transport services may be better categorized as an individual benefit. For example, Mrs. Smith's medical emergency, while very important, may not have a public utility as it is an individual benefit. Therefore, the cost for service is typically shared by the user of the service rather than solely from the public at large. This allows the ambulance to allocate resources more closely aligned with requests for service, thus providing a much better fiscal return on investment.

In combination, the public bears the burden of funding the system's availability for resources and the individual users bear the burden of the cost recovery (user fees) for EMS. The fire department's capacity to respond to EMS calls both by severity, and as a safety net when ambulances are resource constrained, allows the costs for transport services to be moderated and leverages the benefits of both models.

Revenue and Cost Recovery

The current structures and methodologies of a fire assessment for fire services and an MSTU for EMS services is sound and should be continued while retaining opportunities for improvement. However, periodic adjustments to the assessments should occur to ensure that the revenues and expenditures are well-aligned and in the public's best interest.

Assessing Current Fire Operations

Overview of Source Data
Data was collected from Leon County EMS (LCEMS) for the EMS only data. In addition, we were able to capture Fire related CAD data from the County as well as CAD and records management system (RMS) outputs from the City of Tallahassee. This was an iterative process of attempting to reconcile data and have the most complete picture of all activity of TFD as well as resources within the unincorporated county areas such as the volunteer agencies.

Ultimately, we utilized the most robust data set available. Overall, there was a good degree of alignment as there was only a 139 (9.6%) unique incident difference in data sets within 2025 . Therefore, we utilized the source with the most available data to make any planning assumptions. In other words, for planning purposes it is better to overstate the needs rather than understate them.

Observations

Understanding the challenges of defining performance within the unincorporated areas with the irregular municipal boundaries and the significant differences in development, current performance is defined as 10 minutes in the higher density areas and 15 minutes in the lower density areas of the unincorporated county.

TFD - All Calls within Leon County

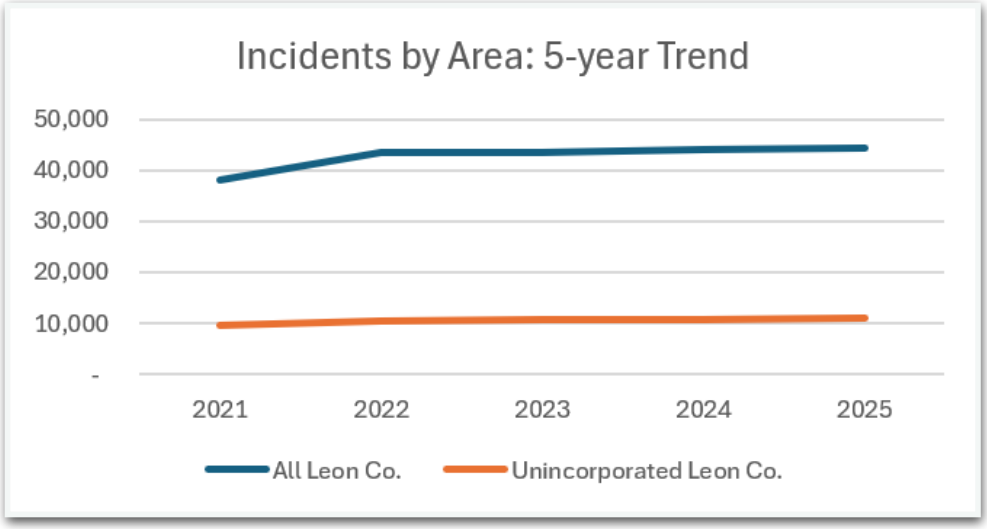
Program	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
EMS	25152	26569	28117	29921	31327
Fire	12369	16418	14828	13470	12348
Other	531	523	553	732	609
Total	38052	43510	43498	44123	44284
YoY Change	n/a	14.3%	0.0%	1.4%	0.4%

TFD - Calls within Unincorporated Area of Leon County

Program	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
EMS	7108	7296	7487	7916	8395
Fire	2460	3105	3082	2732	2601
Other	98	83	86	137	117
Total	9666	10484	10655	10785	11113
YoY Change	n/a	8.5%	1.6%	1.2%	3.0%

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Assessing Current Fire Operations

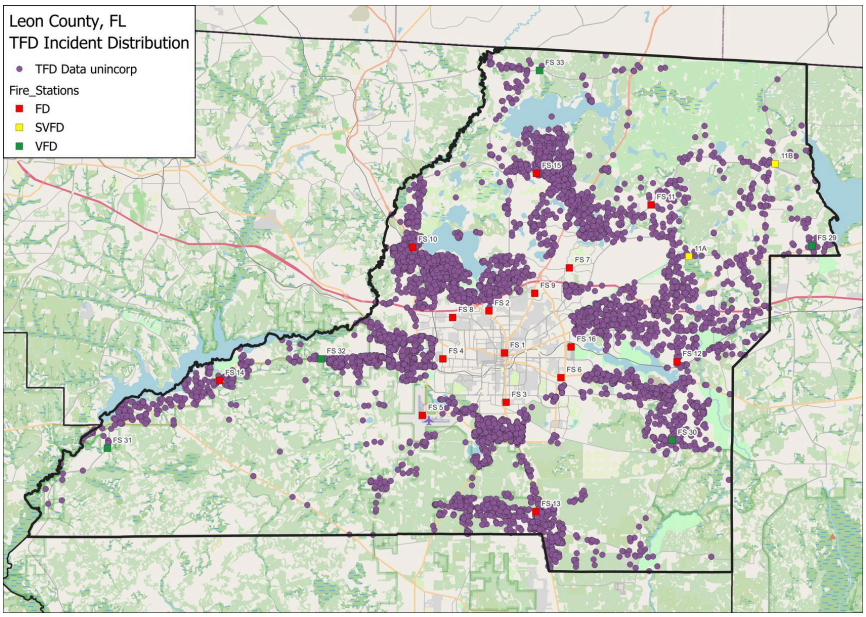


Observations

Understanding the challenges of defining performance within the unincorporated areas with the irregular municipal boundaries and the significant differences in development, current performance is defined as 10 minutes in the higher density areas and 15 minutes in the lower density areas of the unincorporated county.

2025 Performance Provided by TFD in the Unincorporated County

In 2025, there were 11,113 unique incidents that occurred in the unincorporated county areas. The unique incidents (calls) that occurred within the unincorporated county represented approximately 25% of the total call volume of 44,284.



Currently, TFD has 16 fire stations, of which Stations 10 - 15 are identified in the ILA as “county” stations. Including all 16 fire stations, TFD’s 90th percentile travel time was 12.7 minutes into the unincorporated county areas.

As demonstrated by plotting the incidents in the unincorporated county areas, a significant portion of the incidents are occurring within closer proximity of the municipal boundaries. Utilizing the Urban Service Area (USA) as a geographic bound, the estimated travel time within the USA from all 16 fire stations is 9.8 minutes at the 90th percentile. The travel time in the unincorporated areas outside of the USA was 15.5 minutes.

Understanding the challenges of defining performance within the unincorporated areas with the irregular municipal boundaries and the significant differences in development, current performance is defined as 10 minutes in the higher density areas and 15 minutes in the lower density areas of the unincorporated county.

Assessing Current Staffed Fire Operations

Tallahassee's current deployment in the unincorporated county areas are described here to establish historical baseline services and staffing. The stations identified as primarily responsible for unincorporated county areas are Stations 10-15. In interviews and direct observations of the stations, it is our understanding that the minimum staffing at each of the stations are three to four firefighters for a total personnel allocation of at least 20 firefighters each day, 24-hours per day and inclusive of the company officers (supervisors). It is also important to identify that TFD's deployment in the unincorporated areas should require approximately 68 full time equivalents (FTEs) to maintain a 20 person minimum staffing each day.

The resource allocation of capital assets is aligned with the call volume and risks, such as needing additional mobile water supply, wildland risks, or having bodies of water that may need safety services. The number of personnel assigned to each apparatus and station is a local policy decision, but it is reasonable and will be utilized as the baseline to compare alternative service models.

Observations

The current capital and human resource allocations for Station 10-15 are aligned with the call volume and risks and will not require immediate or short-term investments.

All measures indicate that the resourcing is appropriate and have low workload, low simultaneity, and high reliability.

Station Number	Apparatus	Responses	Busy Hours	UHU	Reliability	Simultaneity
10	Engine 10	1,116	357.4	4%	84.1%	7.6%
11	Rescue 11	412	183.4	2%	88.4%	6.0%
11	Tanker 11	420	101.6	1%		
12	Rescue 12	1,244	477.6	5%	88.8%	10.9%
12	Tanker 12	1,260	258.6	3%		
13	Rescue 13	986	391.8	4%	92.3%	8.4%
13	Tanker 13	990	293.3	3%		
14	Rescue 14	622	251.8	3%	97.7%	4.2%
14	Tanker 14/Boat 14/Polaris ATV 14	602	100.6	1%		
15	Engine 15/Brush Truck 15/Boat 15	1,670	604.8	7%	86.3%	11.6%

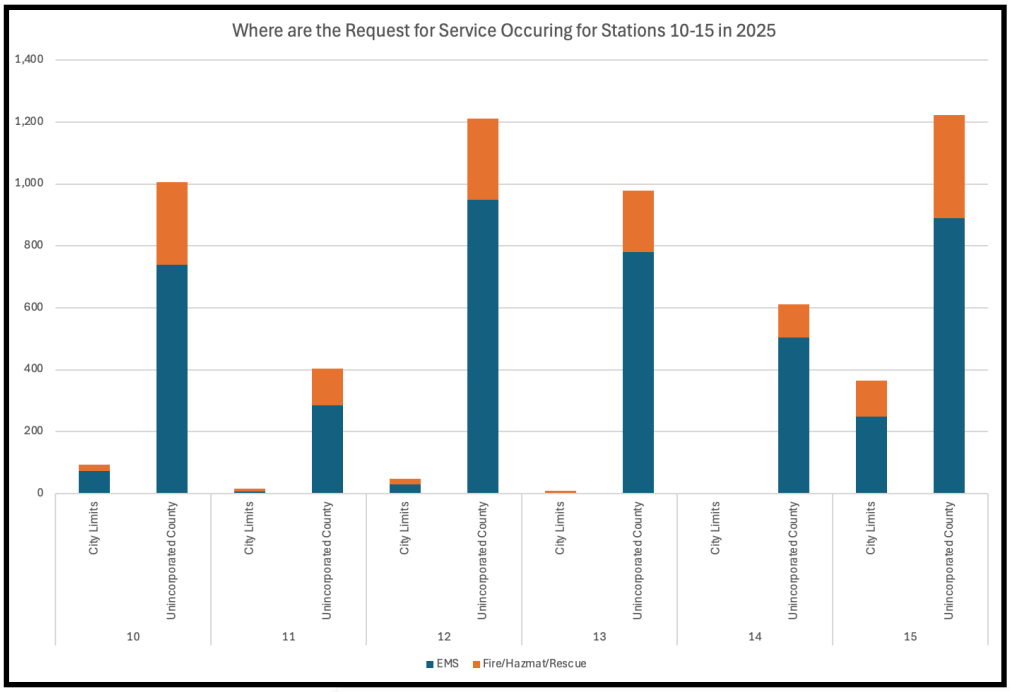
Referencing the table above, each station provides the assigned primary response apparatus, the total annual busy hours on calls, the unit hour utilization (UHU), station reliability, and simultaneity. UHU is measured as the total time on task for any 911 or emergency related activities. Station reliability is the percentage of time that a unit assigned to the station was in fact available and responded to the call. Finally, simultaneity is the percentage of times that a second or greater call occurred, or overlapped, the first call within the station's primary response area.

When evaluating the systems health, often referred to as system resiliency, all metrics for the current deployment demonstrate a low workload (UHU), relatively high reliability, and low simultaneity. This points to a very stable and resilient deployment that should not need any immediate or short term investment. In addition, if Leon County were to assume responsibility for providing fire services, policy options would be available to reduce the utilization for EMS incidents that will control growth in call volume or workload.

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Assessing County Station's Unique Calls

The previous analysis examined the totality of the performance envelope. These analyses evaluate the comparison of Stations 10-15, with respect to where the calls were occurring between the City of Tallahassee and the Unincorporated County areas.



Observations

Overall, the county stations responded to the unincorporated areas for the majority of the requests for service.

All measures indicate that the resourcing is appropriate and have low workload, low simultaneity, and high reliability.

Overall, the county stations responded to the unincorporated areas for the majority of the requests for service.

In 2025, Station 15 responded to the greatest number of incidents within the city limits. The majority of the requests for service were for EMS at 249 and 115 incidents were for fire/other incidents for a total of 364.

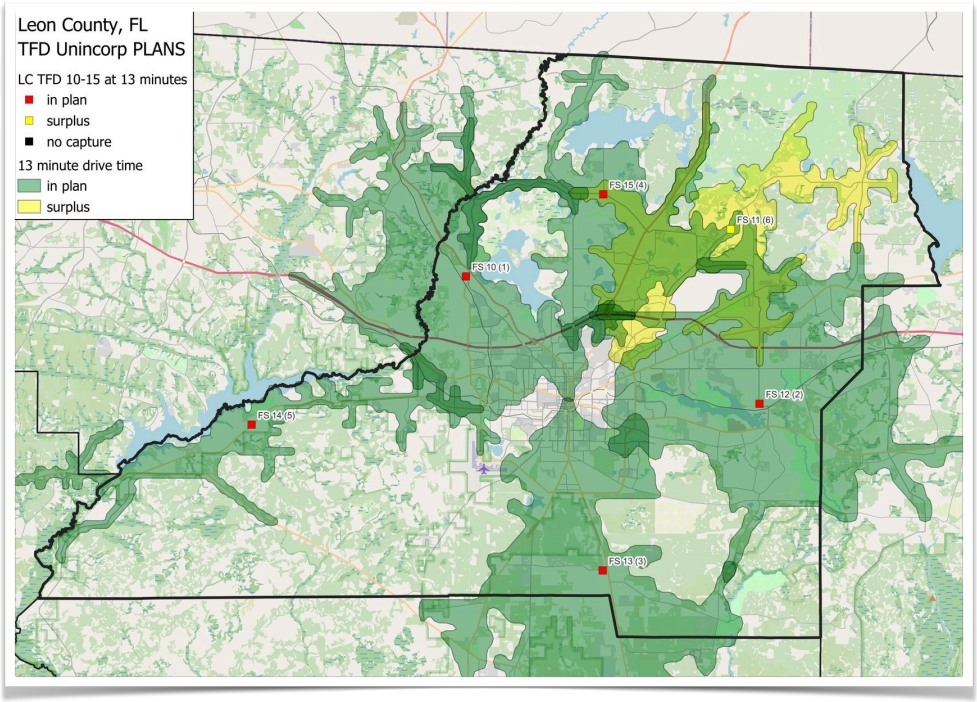
It is understood that these results could be influenced through local policy choices from TFD.

Station	Jurisdiction	EMS	Fire/Hazmat/Rescue	Total
10	City Limits	73	20	93
	Unincorporated County	739	268	1,007
11	City Limits	8	8	16
	Unincorporated County	285	118	403
12	City Limits	30	18	48
	Unincorporated County	950	260	1,210
13	City Limits	2	7	9
	Unincorporated County	779	200	979
14	City Limits	1	0	1
	Unincorporated County	504	108	612
15	City Limits	249	115	364
	Unincorporated County	890	332	1,222

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Assessment of the Current Staffed Deployment

The current staffed county fire station locations can cover 97% of all calls in the unincorporated county areas with a 13-minute travel time. The 13-minutes was chosen because the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) had historically recognized a 13-minute travel time as a baseline performance objective for rural areas. In addition, the fire service system in 2025 had a travel time to the unincorporated areas of 12.7 minutes, approximated at 13 minutes.



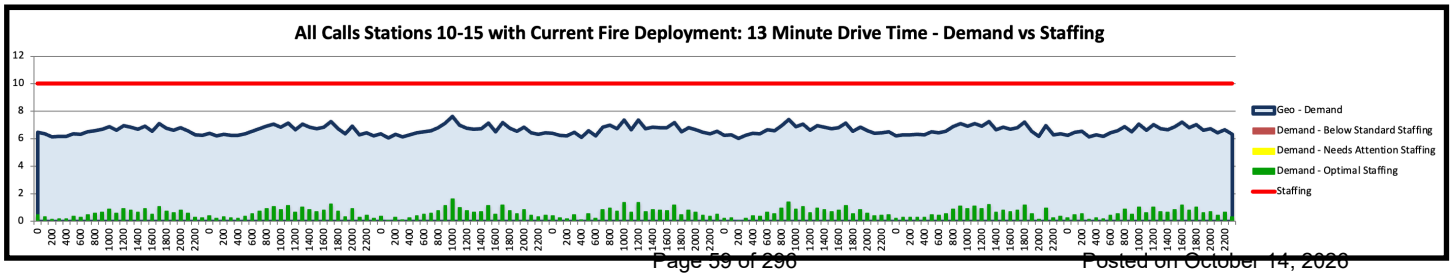
Recommendation

The all-hazards deployment is appropriately resourced to maintain response times that are aligned with the response time capabilities afforded by the number and locations of fire stations.

If the county were to become the provider of services, it is recommended to continue the current deployment.

Understanding that the average demand throughout the peak of the day, the geographic requirements to achieve the response time performance, and the unit availability, the current deployment of 10 resources across the 6 stations is appropriate. While the resources could technically reduce by one if only response time and availability was under review, the need for portable water supply necessitates all 10 resources.

The following staffing to demand assessment considers the current staffing to demand to meet a desired travel time with six stations, and the actual call durations throughout each day of the week. The RED line indicates the deployed resources and the BLUE line indicates the combined demand for both response time compliance and the demand for resources. Results demonstrate that the resources are sufficient to both respond to calls and to deliver the desired response times every day of the week.



Fire Services Feasibility Study

Fiscal Evaluation

An evaluation of the fire services budget history was completed. The fire service assessment was established in 2009 that funded the fire services for both the City of Tallahassee and Leon County. The City, and TFD, provided the management, staffing, and operations of the fire service delivery in the unincorporated county. Over the years, there has been a total of four rate studies intended to validate the rates and methodology for the fire assessment.

For illustrative purposes, the original budgets and budget projections for net expenditures are compared with the revised budgets as well as the associated assessable expenditures. Six years of data between FY 22-23 to FY 27-28 was examined, noting that the revised net expenditures and revised assessable values begin in FY 25-26 and transition from the 3rd rate study to the 4th rate study.

First, focusing on the TFD net expenditures, the Year-over-Year (YoY) increase was projected to be 3.1%. However, the revised net expenditures YoY increases over the same period between FY 22-23 to FY 27-28 was 7%.

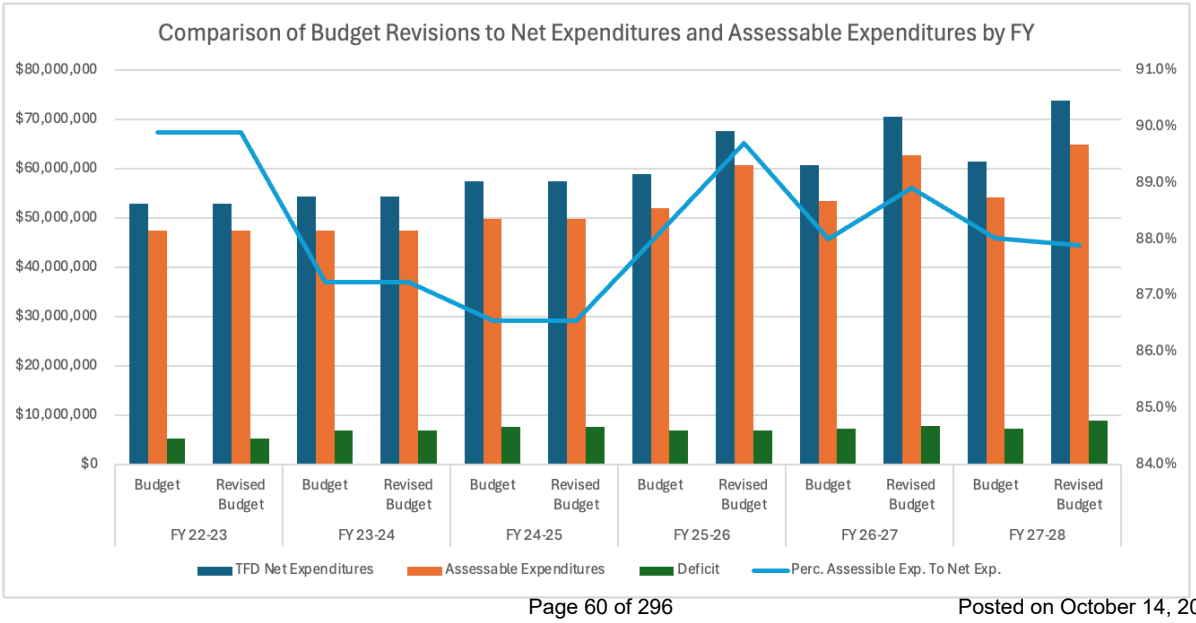
Observations

The 4th rate study completed identifies the source of the increased department expenditures were influenced by an updated collective bargaining agreement and costs associated with station construction.

The rate of growth is influenced by the timing of this study and local policy choices and investments in the fire department.

For reference, the CPI-U (Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers) for the calendar years 2022-2027 was estimated as a 3.8% average. The average was substantively influenced by the actual 8.0% experienced in 2022.

The relationship with the assessable values in each of the rate studies remained relatively constant over the evaluation period; calculated at -0.4% for both the original and revised CAGR.



Comparison of Select Florida Counties

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Comparison of Peer Counties in Florida

An analysis of the peer counties identified by the Leon County staff was completed. The counties of Wakulla, Osceola, Polk, Escambia, and Alachua Counties were compared with Leon County, FL.

Of the comparison counties, Leon County is the only combined city/ county department. Wakulla, Osceola, Alachua, and Polk Counties are all combined fire/rescue departments. Escambia County has separate fire and EMS programs. Finally, Leon County has a city/county based fire operation and an independent county EMS agency.

Leon County has a large geographic area, but lower than the comparative counties. With respect to socioeconomic and demographic variables, Leon County has one of the lowest median ages and also on the lower end of median household income.

Alachua County and Leon County's age and demographics are likely influenced by the large universities such as the University of Florida, Florida State University, and Florida A&M, respectively.

Observations

Of the comparison counties, Leon County is the only combined city/ county department.

Comparisons should be evaluated with caution as local policy choices such as risk tolerance, desired response time performance, and local fiscal policies influence system design and investments.

Overall, the comparisons of the counties highlight the limitations of broad comparisons. The size of the fire departments are dependent on a myriad of local policy choices that may consider risks, response time performance, and local fiscal policies. However, one distinct observation is that the ISO ratings were relatively consistent across the comparison communities.

Finally, the overall Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) scores were provided for each county. The SVI evaluates socioeconomic and demographic variables from the American Community Survey (ACS) to rate a communities vulnerability to recover from disasters.

	Florida County Fire/EMS Services Comparative Analysis					
	Comparison of Wakulla, Osceola, Polk, Escambia, Alachua, and Leon Counties					
Comparison Metric	**Wakulla County**	**Osceola County**	**Polk County**	**Escambia County**	**Alachua County**	**Leon County**
GEOGRAPHIC & DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE						
Geographic Area (sq miles, total)	736	1,506	2,010	875	969	702
Land Area (sq miles)	607	1,327	1,798	656	875	667
Population (2023 est.)	35,105	446,340	818,330	326,528	286,804	295,645
Population Density (per sq mi of land)	57.8	336.4	455.1	497.8	327.8	443.2
Median Age (years)	41.7	36.2	41.3	39.0	31.7	33.4
Median Household Income	$71,567	$67,967	$64,479	$60,308	$56,843	$60,781
FIRE & EMS SERVICE STRUCTURE						
Service Delivery Model	Combined Fire/Rescue	Combined Fire/Rescue	Combined Fire/Rescue	Separate Fire & EMS	Combined county Fire Rescue + separate municipal depts.	Consolidated City/County Fire (TFD); separate County EMS
Primary Fire/EMS Department	Wakulla County Fire Rescue	Osceola County Fire Rescue/EMS	Polk County Fire Rescue	Escambia County Public Safety (Fire) & EMS	Alachua County Fire Rescue	Tallahassee Fire Dept. (city + county); Leon County EMS
OPERATIONAL CAPACITY						
Number of Fire Stations (county dept.)	10	19	45	27	15	16
Career Personnel (sworn, approx.)	75	425	685	364	374	327
ISO PUBLIC PROTECTION CLASSIFICATION						
ISO PPC Rating (county dept., split class)	4/4Y	3/3Y	3/3X	4/4X	3/3X	3/3Y
ISO Rating Notes	Split: hydrant / non-hydrant areas	Improved rating from prior 4	Class 3 across most service areas	Class 3 within service area	Class 3 across most service areas	TFD Class 3 (urban core); split for outlying county
SOCIAL VULNERABILITY (CDC/ATSDR SVI 2022)						
Overall SVI Score (0–1 scale)	0.5631	0.7842	0.6915	0.7124	0.5847	0.6238
SVI Vulnerability Tier	Moderate-High	High	High	High	Moderate-High	Moderate-High

Counties with Municipal Fire Service Contracts

An evaluation the county public safety designs that include some element of a public safety deployment that includes a municipality providing services to the county was completed.

Of the 67 counties within Florida, a maximum of eight counties may qualify. Overall, it is clear that there are four counties that have only partial contractual relationships. In addition, Pinellas County has elected to outsource coverage to areas within the county that may be better served by a closer agency of record. Within Pinellas County these would be best described as islands of unincorporated areas.

Lee County provides the EMS services countywide, but has a robust independent fire district network that covers the fire protection services. Several municipalities also provide their own fire protection such as Cape Coral and Fort Myers.

Overall, the takeaway is that there is only a handful of the 67 counties that have any semblance of contracting services to municipal providers. However, Leon County appears to be in a very limited group of counties that could be considered as outsourcing all services to another agency.

Observations

Of the 67 counties within Florida, a maximum of eight counties may qualify as having some form of contractual relationship with municipalities for at least a portion of the unincorporated counties areas.

The Leon County system has substantive efficiencies in having a single provider solution in the location of stations, equipment, and personnel.

County	Fire Service Model	Contracts With City for Fire Services? (Yes/No/Partial)	City/Cities Providing Service Under Contract
Holmes County, Florida	Mixed - county funds multiple volunteer fire departments including those operated by cities/towns	Yes	Bonifay, Noma, Esto, Westville, Ponce de Leon (and others like Pittman, Gritney, Pine Log, New Hope)
Jackson County, Florida	County-operated fire/rescue department	Partial	City of Marianna
Hendry County, Florida	Mixed - contracts with city/cities plus volunteer fire departments and MSBU assessments	Yes	Clewiston (Eastern Hendry County Fire Services District via interlocal agreement and East Fire MSBU), LaBelle (county portion of fires budget)
Gilchrist County, FL	County-operated fire/rescue department	Partial	Fanning Springs, Trenton
Hillsborough County, Florida	County-operated fire/rescue department	Partial	Tampa (for specific unincorporated areas in New Tampa such as Pebble Creek, Cross Creek, Live Oak)
Leon County, Florida	Contracts with city/cities	Yes	City of Tallahassee
Pinellas County, Florida	Mixed - contracts with cities plus independent fire districts	Yes	Multiple cities including Belleair Bluffs, Clearwater, Dunedin, Largo, Oldsmar, Pinellas Park, Safety Harbor, Seminole, St. Petersburg, Tarpon Springs (at least 10 cities for 13 unincorporated areas)
Lee County, Florida	Independent fire districts	Partial	Cape Coral (Burnt Store MSTU area), Fort Myers (Maravilla MSTU area)

For counties that have large geographic areas with low population densities, contracting with municipal providers may be a sound investment. In Leon County's case, there are substantive efficiencies in having a single provider solution in the location of stations, equipment, and personnel.

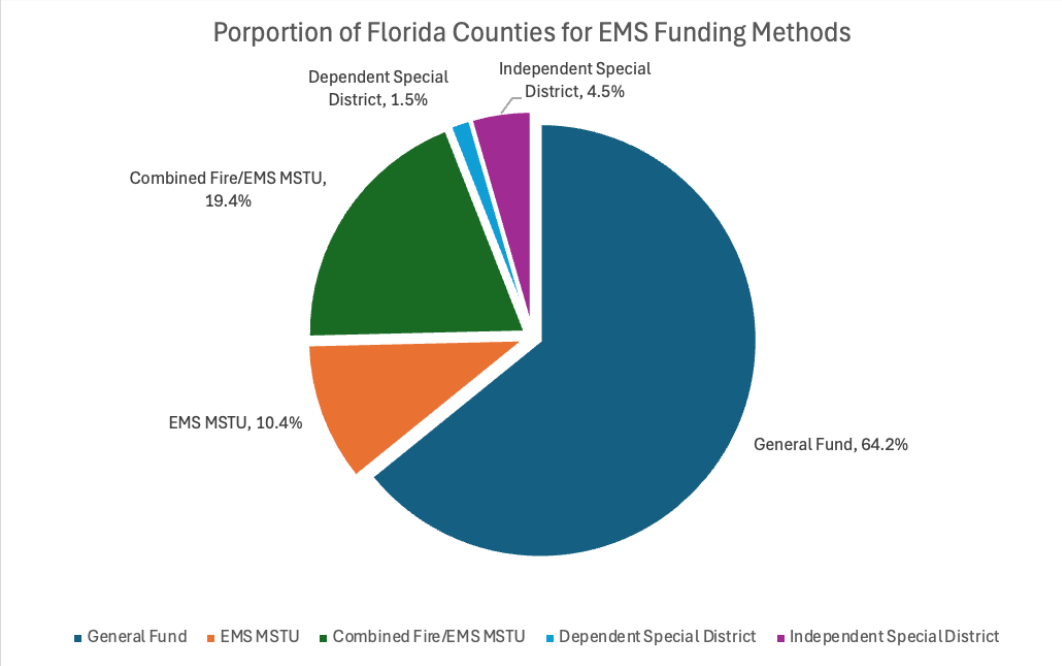
Fire Services Feasibility Study

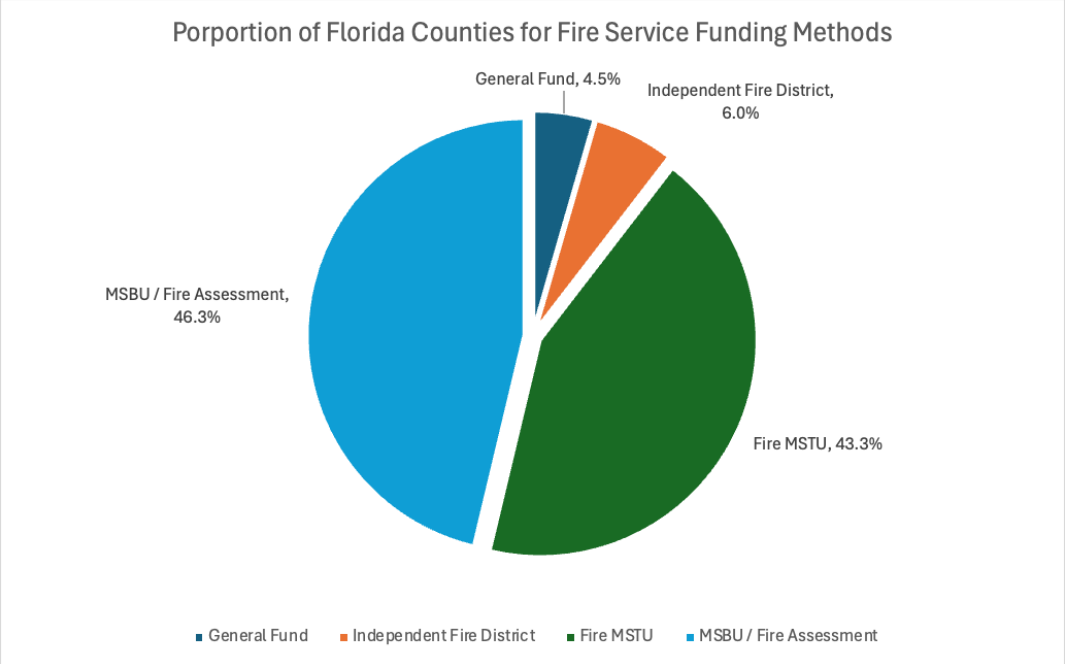
Comparison of County Funding for Fire/EMS

A high-level review of funding schema across all Florida counties was completed in an effort to provide some context on the general strategies utilized. The research may have some idiosyncrasies based on the nuance of whether the total county falls under the funding mechanism, portions, or where counties may reside in several funding categories. Irrespective of the limitations, the high-level review is beneficial.

For EMS funding, the vast majority (94%) is some form of general fund, EMS only MSTU, or a combined Fire/EMS MSTU. Therefore, consistent with the EMS limitations in MSBU's, these are ad valorem based taxing strategies.

For Fire Funding, countywide general fund revenue is less than 5% of the counties. There is a relatively even split between MSBU (46.3%) and MSTU (43.3%).





Five counties utilized both an MSTU and MSBU to fund fire protection.

The independent fire districts value is misleading as it pertains to countywide services. There are many independent fire districts that are sub-county geographic areas established by the state legislature that may fund themselves through a variety of methods.

Fire Services Feasibility Study

High-Level Review of Governance Options

A high-level review of typical governance models available for Florida Counties for the provision of fire and/or fire/EMS services is provided below. Overall, due to the potential changes to ad valorem taxing in Florida and the consideration of the Municipal and County 10-mill caps, governance models such as independent fire control districts, Joint Powers Authority (JPA) and other quasi-governmental strategies such as exist within Leon County's Consolidated Dispatch Agency (CDA), and any ILA that preserves an MSBU or Fire Assessment Fee approach would be considered advantageous.

#	Governance Model	Legal Basis	Governing Body	Independent Taxing Authority?	Counts Against County 10-Mill?	EMS Authority	Florida Example(s)
1	**Independent Special Fire Control District (FCD)**	Ch. 189 & 191, F.S.	Elected 5-member board (3-member by special act post-1997)	**Yes** — ad valorem to 3.75 mills + NAV assessments	**No** — separate levy per §200.001(4)	Full (with §191.009(2)(b) tradeoff for EMS assessments)	Greater Naples Fire Rescue, North Collier FCD, Estero Fire Rescue, East Manatee Fire Rescue
2	**Dependent Special Fire District**	§189.012, F.S. (4-prong test)	County BoCC or its appointees	Limited — millage subject to BoCC control	**Yes** — aggregated with county per §200.001(8)(d)	Subject to BoCC direction	Dorcas Fire District (Okaloosa, converted from independent in 2024)
3	**County Fire Department / Fire Rescue**	§125.01(1)(d), F.S.	County BoCC (direct)	Yes — county millage to 10 mills	**Yes** — counts against county cap	Yes (integrated fire/EMS via general fund)	Polk County Fire Rescue, Hillsborough County Fire Rescue, Orange County Fire Rescue
4	**Interlocal Agreement (ILA/IGA) — Service Contract / Mutual / Auto Aid**	§163.01(4)-(5), F.S.	Each member retains own body — no new entity	**No** — joint exercise of existing powers only	N/A — funded by parties' existing authority	Per each member's authority	Broward Regional Cooperative Fire/Rescue/EMS ILA; near-universal county-city auto-aid agreements
5	**Joint Powers / Separate Legal Entity Interlocal**	§163.01(7)(a)-(b), F.S.	Board appointed per agreement (quasi-governmental)	**No independent taxing authority** unless delegated; funded by member contributions	N/A	Per delegated authority	**Tallahassee–Leon County Consolidated Dispatch Agency (CDA)** — 911 dispatch for TPD, LCSO, TFD, Leon County EMS (tlccda.org)
6	**Consolidated / Regional Authority by Special Act**	Special act of Legislature, often under Ch. 191, F.S.	Per special act (typically appointed or hybrid elected board)	Yes — taxing authority defined by act	**No** (if structured as independent district)	Per special act	Greater Naples Fire Rescue (product of East Naples + Golden Gate merger); pending Iona-McGregor + Fort Myers Beach FCD merger (2026 HB 4013)

Observations

Other than a political desire for an independent agency from the County and City, the current structure (with recommended updates to the ILA) and combined with a non-ad valorem funding strategy should be sound and sustainable.

Other than a political desire for independence, the current structure of the Leon County and the City of Tallahassee is excellent with the opportunity to refresh the ILA to better articulate fiscal and operational transparency and to better define the relationships, conflict resolution, and other mechanisms to operate more nimbly as conditions change.

Evaluation of Fire Service Delivery Alternative Models

Alternative 1 -Opportunities for Improving the ILA

The current Interlocal Agreement (ILA) remains functional as a governing instrument, but it is no longer organized in a way that supports efficient administration, straightforward interpretation, or clean future revision. The agreement has been modified over time through a sequence of amendments that changed major operational and financial provisions while leaving much of the original framework in place. As a result, the present contract must be read across multiple documents and exhibits in order to identify the current operative terms.

The principal challenge is not the existence of individual provisions that cannot be administered. The challenge is that the agreement now depends on layered amendment history, scattered exhibit references, and partial conforming updates. The present agreement is still built on a four-section 2009 shell with critical obligations pushed into exhibits and then repeatedly modified by six amendments. This structure is now producing internal drift, historical provisions that no longer fit the current term, exhibit-incorporation problems, and operational/funding mismatches that a new ILA should eliminate rather than patch again.

The current ILA weaknesses center around five central themes:

1. The current ILA is financially complex but administratively under-specified. The agreement does not include an integrated annual budget article, effective extraordinary cost provisions, audit attestation requirements, funds-use restrictions, defined reserve policy, capital replacement rules, and formal re-opener mechanics.
2. The original fire assessment methodology has remained largely unchanged since 2010, limiting the full potential of the funding program.
3. The agreement is structurally fragmented. There is an over reliance on exhibits and multiple cross-sectional amendments creating too much legal architecture to leave in amendment form.
4. There are no performance based metrics to establish a defined level of service by which to manage the system with.
5. The current ILA mixes fire service delivery, EMS support, MSTU consent, ALS operational support, and historical volunteer provisions without separating those subjects cleanly.

Observation

The current ILA is dependent on layered amendment history, scattered exhibit references, and partial conforming updates.

This creates avoidable ambiguity in areas that should be clear in a long-standing emergency-services agreement, including current system configuration, exhibit control, financial administration, performance accountability, and transition planning.

Recommendation

Discontinue further patchwork amendment of the current ILA replace it with a fully restated agreement.

The result is a structure that creates avoidable ambiguity in areas that should be clear in a long-standing emergency-services agreement, including current system configuration, exhibit control, financial administration, performance accountability, and transition planning.

The recommended course is to discontinue further patchwork amendment of the current instrument and replace it with a fully restated agreement. A restated ILA would allow the parties to preserve the provisions they intend to keep, remove provisions that are purely historical, resolve internal inconsistencies, and place the current service, governance, funding, and asset framework into one integrated document.

Key Observations for Improving the ILA

O1 - Financial Administration
The funding framework has become more detailed over time, but the administrative controls have not matured at the same pace. The agreement relies on term-specific rate studies, amended payment provisions, reserve concepts, and shortfall language, yet it does not provide a fully integrated annual budget article, a comprehensive year-end attestation framework, or a clearly stated reserve policy. Additionally, several fiscal years appear to be without a correlated rate study (FY15, FY21-FY23). These factors reduce visibility and make it harder to identify issues before they require corrective action.

O2 - Scope of Services
The agreement states the general service relationship, but it does not present the current service model in one self-contained article. Fire services, ALS-related obligations, volunteer department integration, and associated support responsibilities must be pieced together from multiple provisions and exhibits. A countywide public-safety agreement should state the current service model directly and completely.

O3 - Governance
The Administrative Management Committee remains the central governance mechanism, but the governing language is concise relative to the complexity of the service relationship. The current agreement does not fully state decision rights, formal review processes, budget escalation procedures, or the operational governance pathways that would typically support a long-running intergovernmental service arrangement.

O4 - Agreement Structure
The current agreement is heavily dependent on amendment history. Core body sections remain relatively short, while many of the most consequential operative terms appear in exhibits or in later amendments. This configuration requires reconstruction for administration rather than a simple reading of the agreement.

O5 - Performance Accountability
The agreement requires service continuity and loosely links staffing and apparatus expectations to the applicable rate study framework, but it does not establish a clearly stated contractual performance standard for service delivery. The absence of defined performance standards limits the parties ability to evaluate the agreement against agreed metrics and recurring reporting standards.

O6 - Capital Assets and Ownership
The agreement contains asset and termination provisions, but those provisions remain anchored in an earlier structure and do not function as a current capital-management article. The current arrangement would benefit from a single article that states ownership, maintenance responsibility, replacement responsibility, and transition treatment for facilities, apparatus, equipment, and other funded assets.

O7 - Term, Termination, and Transition
The term provisions have been materially revised over time, and the current termination structure is narrower than the original agreement framework. In a long-standing service agreement, that makes it especially important to state renewal timing, renegotiation timing, continuity-of-service requirements, and transition procedures clearly. The current ILA does not present those concepts as a unified transition framework.

Key Recommendations for Improving the ILA

R1 - Annual Fire Budget

To ensure transparency, provide consistency with adopted rate studies, and proactively identify potential impacts to the fire service fee, require the City to submit the fire budget annually.

- The City would submit its projected fire budget to the County by March 1 each year.

R2 - Fire Service Reserve Fund

Establish a reserve fund at an adequate level to address modest deviations to the annual fire budget due to revenue shortfalls, unexpected expenses, or cost increases.

- Establish minimum and maximum levels for the Reserve Fund, anchored in best practice. The GFOA recommendation is a fund balance of 16.7% of the annual budget; however, most counties exceed the GFOA recommendation, with several counties between 20% and 30%. A minimum fund balance of 20% and a maximum of 30% of the annual fire services budget is recommended.
- Use of the Reserve Fund would require the approval of the County Administrator & City Manager (AMC).

R3 - Extraordinary Cost Provision

Require County and City approval to increase the fire assessment fee prior to the expiration of a rate term.

- If agreement is not reached, then the fire assessment fee does not change.
- This prevents the need for a protracted dispute resolution process.

R4 - Annual Independent Audit

Require an annual independent audit attestation of the Fire Service Fund to ensure fee revenues are appropriately collected and expended for fire operations.

- The audit attestation must be completed and submitted within six months following the conclusion of the fiscal year.

R5 - Long-Term Master Agreement

Adopt a long-term agreement (10-15 years) to provide for stability and predictability of fire service for residents countywide.

- The Master Agreement would include all provisions on the services being provided, the service area, the current system configuration, the role of the volunteer fire departments, and related obligations.
- Exhibits would be limited to supporting documents (i.e., maps, schedules, rates, etc.).

R6 - Rate Studies Every Three Years

Perform rate studies every three (3) years rather than five (5) years to provide budget certainty, ensure financial stability for fire operations, and eliminate mid-term rate adjustments.

Key Recommendations for Improving the ILA

R7 - Termination/Expiration Provision

Require at least three (3) years' notice to terminate or not renew the agreement to provide sufficient time for the County to implement an alternative model.

- The provision would also include a timeline for the transfer of assets to the County and require the City to continue to provide services during the transition period.
- The agreement would automatically renew for the same period (10-15 years) if notice to terminate or not renew is not provided.

R8 - Capital Asset Provision

Establish a capital asset provision that ensures the County receives capital assets in the event of termination or expiration of the agreement.

- Require Stations 10-15, including station furnishings, equipment, and vehicles, be conveyed to the County at no cost upon termination or expiration.
- This ensures the continuity of service for unincorporated Leon County.

R9 - Performance Measures and Reporting Standards

Establish agreed standards for response time, unit type, staffing, ISO, and related measures in the unincorporated area to ensure a high-performance level of fire service.

- The City would provide the County quarterly reporting on performance measures.

R10 - Formal Reopener Clause

Include a reopener clause that allows for the renegotiation of provisions in the middle of the long-term agreement.

- The County and City would be required to agree to reopen any specific provision for renegotiation; however, this would not include the fire assessment fee (already addressed through the Extraordinary Cost Provision).
- The County and City must mutually approve renegotiated changes to the agreement.

#	Area of Weakness	Priority	ILA Gap
1	Annual Financial Attestation / Audit	High	No independent verification that fire/EMS funds are used for respective services
2	Reserve Fund Min/Max Parameters	High	Fire Services Reserve Fund has no defined floor or ceiling
3	Annual Budget Submission with Cap	High	Multi-year rate studies become stale; shortfalls discovered late
4	Clarity and Usability	High	Structurally fragmented and overly reliant on Exhibits; blurred mix of provisions
5	Response Time Standards	High	No performance standard exists in the ILA
6	Fee Assessment Methodology	High	Methodology largely unchanged since 2010; possible suppression of revenue performance
7	Restore Unilateral Termination Right	High	Neither party can exit without the other's consent
8	Compensation Deductions for Non-Performance	Medium	No financial consequence for unit downtime
9	Unit-Level Specificity in Agreement	Medium	No clearly stated facility and unit inventory in ILA
10	Vehicle / Capital Replacement Provisions	Medium	ILA is silent on apparatus replacement funding
11	Staffing, Relief Multiplier / Overtime Controls	Medium	ILA doesn't address staffing methodology or overtime
12	Fiscal Non-Funding Language	Lower	No appropriations-contingency clause
13	Modernize Dispute Resolution	Lower	Current process escalates to binding arbitration

ILA Weakness-to-Correction Matrix

Five Central Themes of ILA Weaknesses	Supporting Observations	Corrective Recommendations
1. Financial complexity with insufficient controls The ILA lacks an integrated annual budget article, clear extraordinary cost provisions, audit attestation, fund-use restrictions, reserve policy, capital-replacement rules, and re-opener mechanics.	• **O3 Governance** - decision rights and budget escalation procedures are not fully stated • **O1 Financial Administration** - budget, attestation, and reserve controls are incomplete • **O6 Capital Assets and Ownership** - asset provisions do not function as a current capital-management article • **O7 Term, Termination, and Transition** - financial and asset transition duties are not unified	• **R1 Annual Fire Budget** - projected fire budget submitted to the County by March 1 each year • **R2 Fire Service Reserve Fund** - 20% minimum / 30% maximum fund balance; use requires AMC approval • **R3 Extraordinary Cost Provision** - no mid-term fee increase without County and City approval • **R4 Annual Independent Audit** - attestation within six months of fiscal year-end • **R10 Formal Reopener Clause** - structured, mutually approved renegotiation
2. Fire assessment methodology The original methodology has remained largely unchanged, limiting the funding program's ability to reflect current service, cost conditions, and full revenue potential.	• **O1 Financial Administration** - overreliance on term-specific studies and gaps between study periods reduce current financial visibility • **O3 Governance** - the agreement does not fully define annual review, approval, or escalation pathways	• **R6 Rate Studies Every Three Years** - budget certainty and no stale mid-term assumptions • **R3 Extraordinary Cost Provision** - eliminates unilateral mid-term rate adjustments • **R1 Annual Fire Budget** - annual submission keeps budgets consistent with adopted rate studies
3. Structural fragmentation Amendment layering, overreliance on exhibits, and cross-sectional revisions require reconstruction of the operative agreement.	• **O4 Agreement Structure** - operative terms are dispersed across the base agreement, amendments, and exhibits • **O2 Scope of Services** - the current service model is not stated in one self-contained article • **O7 Term, Termination, and Transition** - revised term and transition concepts are not presented as one framework	• **R5 Long-Term Master Agreement** - one 10-15 year agreement with all provisions in the body; exhibits limited to supporting documents • **R7 Termination/Expiration Provision** - clear notice, transition, and automatic-renewal terms • **R10 Formal Reopener Clause** - keeps the long-term agreement current without patchwork amendment
4. No defined performance framework The agreement does not establish contractually measurable performance metrics or a defined level of service.	• **O5 Performance Accountability** - service continuity and staffing are not tied to clear contractual standards and recurring reports • **O2 Scope of Services** - the service model is not stated directly enough to support consistent performance measurement	• **R9 Performance Measures and Reporting Standards** - agreed standards for response time, unit type, staffing, and ISO, with quarterly reporting to the County • **R5 Long-Term Master Agreement** - service model and system configuration stated in the body of the agreement
5. Intermingled program provisions Fire service delivery, EMS support, MSTU consent, ALS support, funding, and volunteer provisions are not cleanly separated.	• **O2 Scope of Services** - fire, ALS, volunteer, and support obligations must be pieced together • **O4 Agreement Structure** - related obligations are dispersed across sections, exhibits, and amendments • **O3 Governance** - interface and decision pathways are not fully defined	• **R5 Long-Term Master Agreement** - services, service area, system configuration, and volunteer roles stated directly and completely • **R8 Capital Asset Provision** - Stations 10-15, furnishings, equipment, and vehicles convey to the County at no cost upon termination or expiration • **R7 Termination/Expiration Provision** - continuity of service during any transition

Model Expenditure Comparisons and Assumptions for All Alternatives Two and Three

Model Expenditure Comps and Assumptions

- Two salary values were developed for comparison. One is solely focused on the City of Tallahassee compensation values and the other is the averaged compensation value among Wakulla, Escambia, and Alachua counties.
    - The TFD pay scale increases costs by around 3.2% across the various models.
- Burden rates were applied to each salary value to determine a total compensation cost. The burden rate accounts for typical fringe costs such as workers comp, FICA, pension, and health insurance.
    - Special risk / sworn burden rate: 0.51
    - General / civilian burden rate: 0.33
- The daily minimum staffing was evaluated at the current 3-4 FF/station practice.
- Leave was accounted for with a typical 3.4 staffing multiplier indicative of a 3-shift, 56-hour work week schedule.
- Year-over-year cost values were calculated with inflationary factors calibrated to each expenditure type. The aggregated average value is 4.4% YoY for the developed County FD Budget.
- The YoY growth for maintaining the current model is calculated at 7% taken from the adjusted budget summary provided by the county that combined the actual past budgets and the projected budget through 2028.
- Each model has a “Zero” year (Prior to FY29) to account for pre-operational preparation and costs.
- Year-1 is presented as FY29, the first operational year.
- Contingency funds were included as follows: 10% of budget prior to FY29, and 2% of budget in FY29.
- Capital items are depreciated annually in accordance within their established useful life value.
- The models assume the purchase of six (6) existing fire stations from the City, and the construction of a new staton for the seven station model.
- The models assume the purchase of depreciated apparatus from the City at Stations 10-14.
- The model maintains the annual fiscal support of the volunteer departments with FY26 as the baseline.
- The models assume that no other equipment, assets, materials, or tangible goods will transfer from the City to the County. Thus, all are assumed to require new acquisition.
    - Volunteer apparatus is also included.

FY28 Rates	6 Stations - Current Staffing		7 Stations - Current Staffing		Difference
Classifications / Roles	FTE Count	Total Comp	FTE Count	Total Comp	
Computer Systems Coordinator	0	$0.00	0	$0	$0
Fire Battalion Chief	4	$782,759.43	4	$782,759	$0
Fire Chief	0	$0.00	0	$0	$0
Deputy Chief	0	$0.00	0	$0	$0
Fire Financial Analyst	1	$142,125.94	1	$142,126	$0
Fire Inspector	2	$275,605.53	2	$275,606	$0
Fire Lieutenant	18	$2,258,341.53	21	$2,634,732	$376,390
Fire Engineer	18	$1,889,769.51	21	$2,204,731	$314,962
Fire Marshal	1	$214,677.56	1	$214,678	$0
Fire Rescue Public Information Officer	0	$0.00	0	$0	$0
Firefighter	32	$2,945,440.45	37	$3,405,666	$460,225
Logistics Technician	1	$105,649.78	1	$105,650	$0
Vehicle Mechanic	1	$105,649.78	1	$105,650	$0
Senior Administrative Associate	1	$91,117.43	1	$91,117	$0
Training Captain/Coordinator	1	$172,499.73	1	$172,500	$0
HR Generalist	0	$0.00	0	$0	$0
Total	**80**	**$8,983,637**	**91**	**$10,135,214**	**$1,151,577**

Model Expenditure Comps and Assumptions

As stated on the previous page, models with additional stations over those that currently exist assume the cost of a newly constructed fixed facility. The financial projections utilize new construction estimates to provide the most conservative fiscal liability projection. However, it should be noted that land acquisition, design, and construction can be a multi-year process in which costs can change significantly. Thus, the County may consider a strategy that utilizes temporary fire station facilities in the interim.

Temporary facilities provide a much more financially achievable implementation strategy for new station locations and at much shorter timeline. As noted, the leasing and development of land to accommodate temporary facilities can vary greatly, thus the cost estimates provided herein should be considered with caution.

Observation

The use of temporary facilities is a viable strategy should the County choose to expand the deployment model.

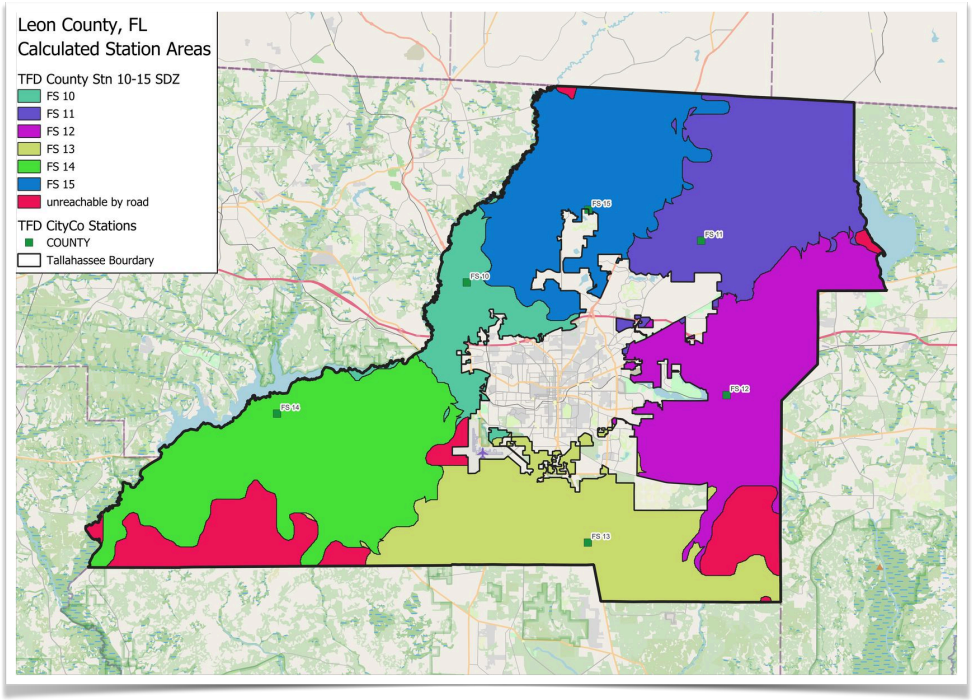
Given the significant number of variables in considering cost of new fixed or temporary facilities, estimates provided for context should be used with caution.

Fire Station Facility for up to six 24-hour Personnel	
Modular Temporary Structure	**Year 1 Est.**
Land Lease (Annual)	$30,000
Site Work and Utilities Hook-up	$265,000
Modular Delivery and Install	$45,500
Modular Lease (Annual)	$120,800
Apparatus Garage (open air)	$225,000
Generator Install	$21,000
Station Alerting System	$20,800
Estimated Total	**$728,100**
Permanent Fixed Structure	**Year 1 Est.**
Land Purchase (approx 1 acre parcel)	$500,000
New Fire Station construction (2-bay,6-personnel)	$10,000,000
Estimated Total	**$10,500,000**

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Alternative 2 - Assume Services from County Stations

The fire service system has operated seamlessly as a single provider system for decades. Because the city stations provide considerable response into the unincorporated county areas, and the irregular municipal boundaries, all calls within the unincorporated area had to be reapportioned to hypothetical stations zones based on proximity. In other words, Stations 10-15 were calculated to cover the entirety of the unincorporated county areas. The results are provided in the mapping below.



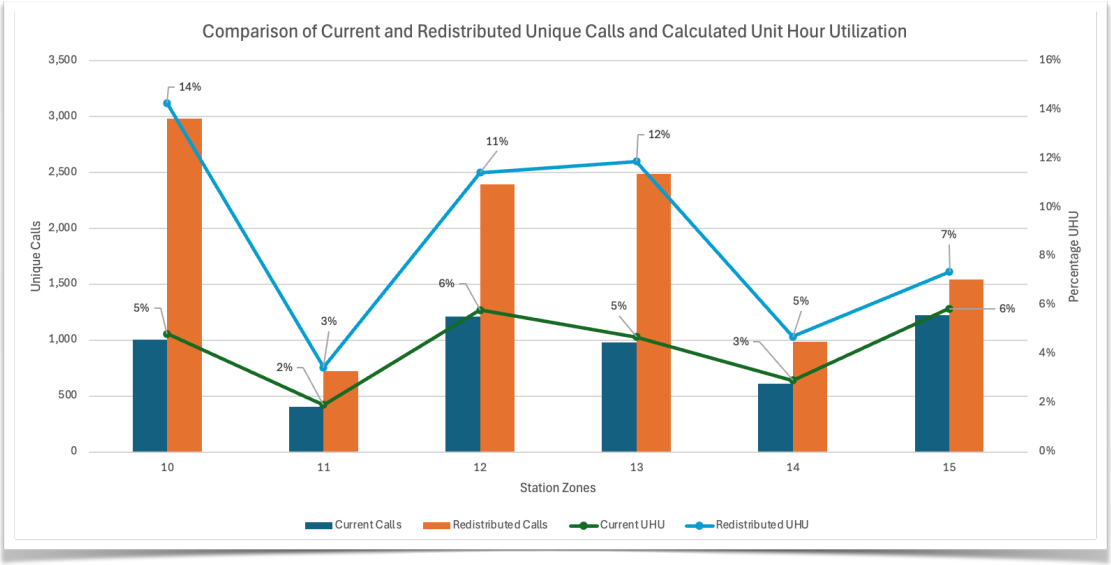
Recommendation

The current deployment has sufficient excess capacity to absorb the increased call volume and subsequent workload.

However, a strategy to reduce the need for reinvestment in single resource stations such as Station 10, it is recommended that LCEMS is sufficiently staffed to handle the EMS incidents and significantly reduce the over-reliance on large fire apparatus for lower acuity EMS incidents.

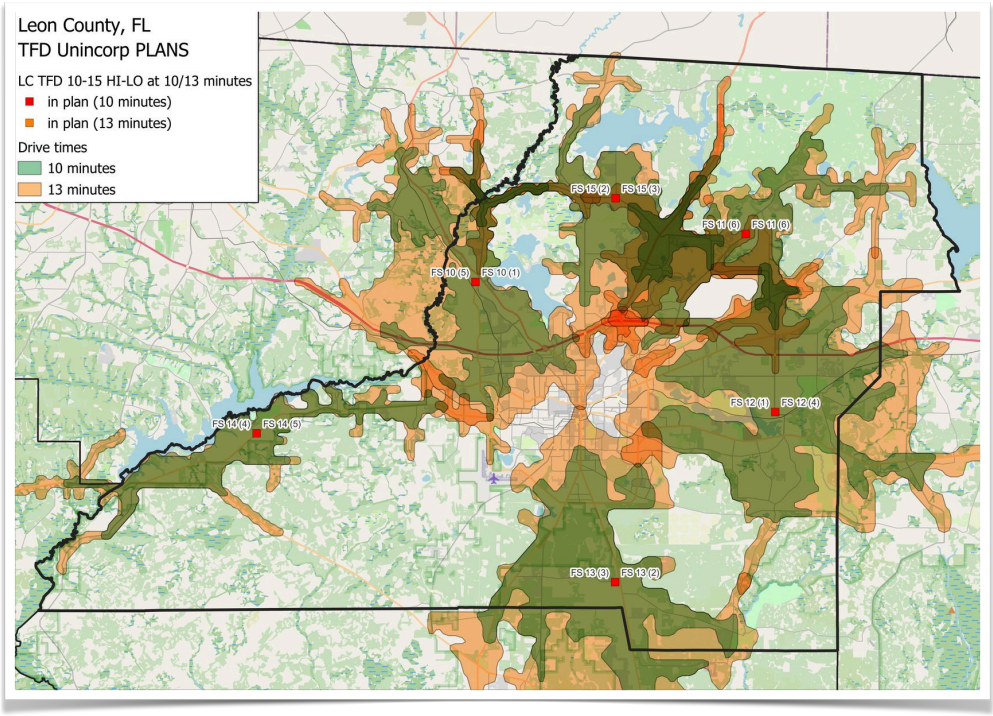
Similarly, all of the unique calls that occurred within the unincorporated county areas were redistributed to Stations 10-15. The figure below evaluates both the increase in call volume for each of the station areas as well as the respective unit hour utilization (UHU).

While the increase is substantive, the existing readiness capacity maintains the ability for the current resource allocation to absorb the increases.



Alternative 2 - Assume Services from County Stations

As discussed previously, there is a distinctly different density of development and the subsequent number of calls in the unincorporated county areas that should receive a service level more attuned to the risk. These will be referred to as the "high" density areas with a goal of 10-minutes. The "low" density areas would continue to receive a 13-minute travel time consistent with current performance.



Recommendation

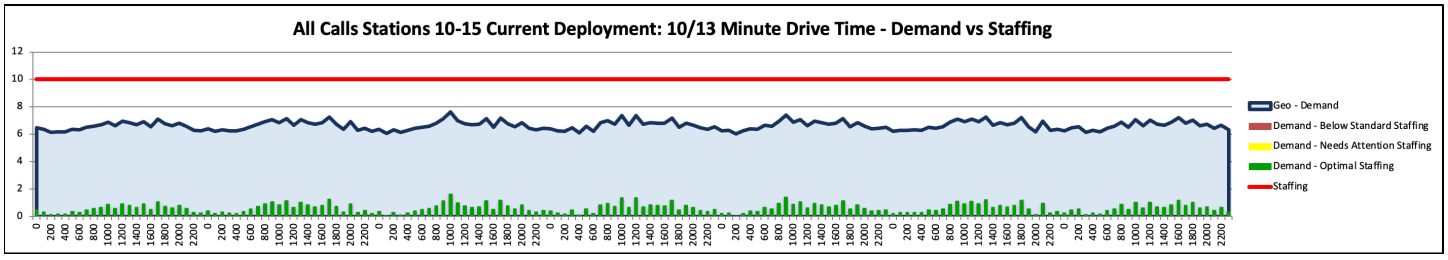
To establish baseline performance and deployment, the county can closely replicate the current performance from the Stations 10-15.

This will deliver a 10-minute travel time to higher density areas (83%) and a 13-minute travel to lower density areas (92%).

This is approximately a 7% variance from the current performance from all 16 stations.

This configuration would maintain the six county fire stations (Stations 10-15) with a tiered response plan of 10-minutes to the high density areas (83%) and 13-minutes to the low density areas (92%).

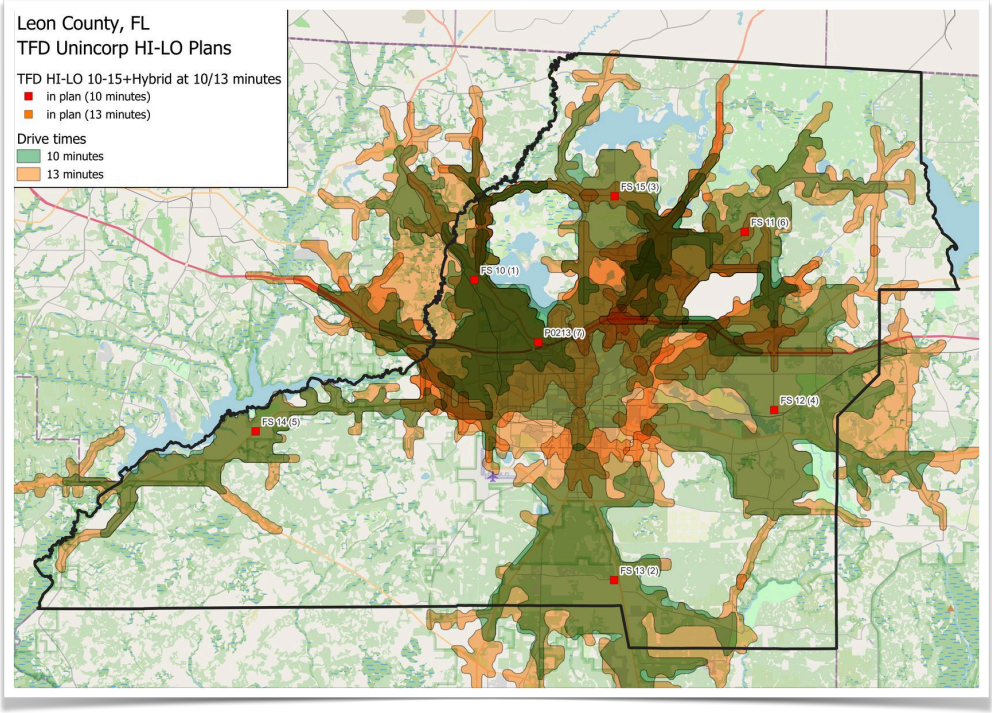
The following staffing to demand assessment considers the current staffing to demand to meet a desired travel time with six stations, and the actual call durations throughout each day of the week. The RED line indicates the deployed resources and the BLUE line indicates the combined demand for both response time compliance and the demand for resources. Results demonstrate that the resources are sufficient to both respond to calls and to deliver the desired response times every day of the week.



Fire Services Feasibility Study

Alternative 3 - Assume Services and add a 7th Station

Maintaining a consistent approach to alternatives, this alternative maintains the first six stations (10-15) plus one additional station. The high-density areas will receive a 10-minute travel time at 92% of all high density calls and 13-minutes travel time for 92% of the low density calls.



Recommendation

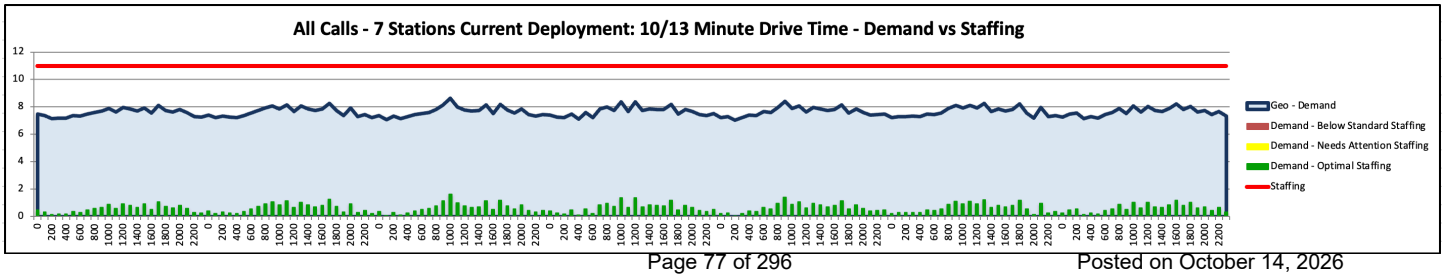
If the county added a 7th station, the high density performance would have negligible difference between the current performance.

This will deliver a 10-minute travel time to higher density areas (92%) and a 13-minute travel to lower density areas (92%).

If desired, consideration for a 7th station could be a mid- to long-term plan after experience managing the system.

The additional investment in a 7th station will maintain a close approximation of the current level of service provided by TFD. The policy balance is the cost of a 7th station and additional apparatus and personnel versus the marginal improvement of 7% over just assuming Stations 10-15. It is a local policy choice, however, the concept of an additional station could be a longer term initiative that can be reevaluated over other competing interests with better historical experience running the system.

The following staffing to demand assessment considers the current staffing to demand to meet a desired travel time, and add the seventh station, and the actual call durations throughout each day of the week. The RED line indicates the deployed resources and the BLUE line indicates the combined demand for both response time compliance and the demand for resources. Results demonstrate that the resources are sufficient to both respond to calls and to deliver the desired response times every day of the week.



Fire Model Integration into Leon EMS Dept.

To leverage existing functionality and services, an integrated fire/EMS organizational model was evaluated to consider how the new Leon County fire department positions could be incorporated into the existing EMS organizational structure without creating a fully separate department.

The current EMS organizational chart already includes the key administrative and operational framework needed for a combined Fire-EMS model, including the Director/Public Safety Chief, Deputy Chief of Operations, Deputy Chief of Clinical Affairs & Quality, Financial Compliance Manager, Special Operations/ Specialty Teams, shift commanders, logistics, and administrative support functions. The existing EMS organization could serve as the foundation for a combined Fire-EMS department. Fire positions can be added as parallel functions under current leadership areas, allowing the agency to expand fire service oversight while preserving the existing EMS chain of command.

Director, Office of Public Safety / Fire-EMS Chief
The Director position would remain the executive authority for the combined department. This position could oversee fire and EMS operations, budget, policy, strategic planning, labor coordination, compliance, and county administration reporting. Note: The Director would have to acquire a Special Certificate of Compliance within 1 year of appointment over fire services, FSS 633.408.

Deputy Chief of Operations
Fire operations could nest under the existing Deputy Chief of Operations. This division already supervises EMS shift commanders, field deployment, dispatch, and logistics. Fire Battalion Chiefs would be added as a parallel field command layer to the EMS shift commanders. The current Dispatch & Logistics function should expand to include fire logistics, PPE, uniforms, fire equipment, station supplies, apparatus readiness coordination, and operational systems support.

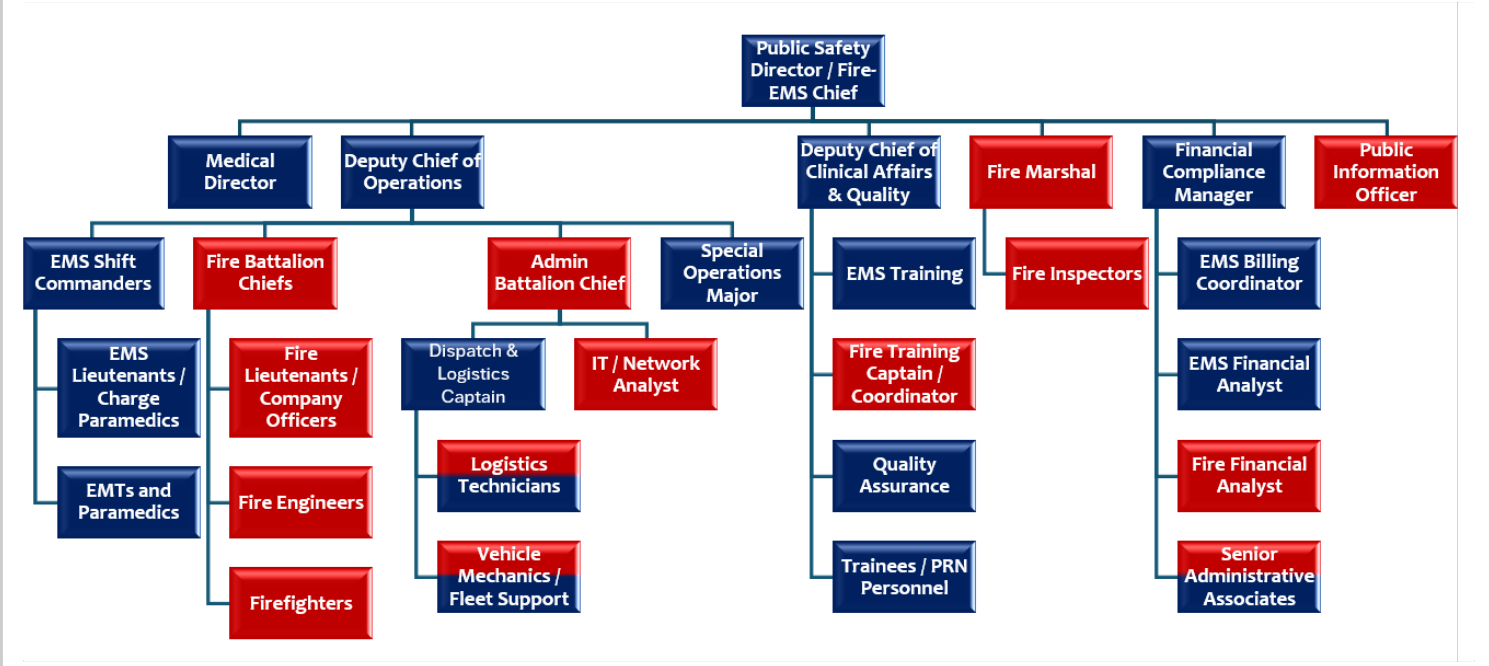
Deputy Chief Clinical Affairs & Quality
The existing clinical affairs and quality division should continue overseeing EMS quality assurance, training, credentialing, and clinical compliance. Fire training can be added to this division to centralize training records, compliance tracking, and professional development.

Fire Marshal / Fire Prevention
The Fire Marshal should report directly to the Fire-EMS Chief or Director due to the regulatory nature of fire inspections, plan review, investigations, and community risk reduction.

Financial Compliance Manager
The finance and compliance branch could absorb fire-related budget, grant, payroll, procurement, and administrative support functions. This allows the department to manage both fire and EMS financial activity through one administrative structure.

Special Operations / Specialty Teams
The existing EMS Special Operations/Specialty Teams branch should be nested under Operations and can be expanded into a combined Fire-EMS Special Operations function. This would allow hazmat, technical rescue, wildland, marine, UTV/MERV, disaster response, and special event resources to be coordinated together.

Fire Model Integration into Leon EMS Dept.



FY28 Values	6-Station Model - Current Staffing			7-Station Model - Current Staffing		
Classification / Role	FTE Counts			FTE Counts		
	FD Alone	FD w/EMS	Diff if w/EMS	FD Alone	FD w/EMS	Diff if w/EMS
Computer Systems Coordinator	1	0	-1	1	0	-1
Fire Battalion Chief	4	4	0	4	4	0
Fire Chief	1	0	-1	1	0	-1
Deputy Chief	1	0	-1	1	0	-1
Fire Financial Analyst	1	1	0	1	1	0
Fire Inspector	2	2	0	2	2	0
Fire Lieutenant	18	18	0	21	21	0
Fire Engineer	18	18	0	21	21	0
Fire Marshal	1	1	0	1	1	0
Fire Rescue Public Information Officer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Firefighter	32	32	0	37	37	0
Logistics Technician	1	1	0	1	1	0
Vehicle Mechanic	1	1	0	1	1	0
Senior Administrative Associate	1	1	0	1	1	0
Training Captain/Coordinator	1	1	0	1	1	0
HR Generalist	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total FTE	83	80	**-3**	94	91	**-3**
Total Compensation Cost	$9,663,397	$8,983,637	**-$679,760**	$10,814,974	$10,135,214	**-$679,760**

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Fire Integrated into Leon EMS Dept.

6 Stations - Current Staffing

The following tables represent the start-up (Prior to FY29) with a recommended expenditure cadence through FY27 and FY28. Tables are also provided for the first full operational year detail in FY29 and then total annual expenditures through FY33. These tables do not include the cost of debt service for 1) clarity of project cost, and 2) variability of debt service cost. However, total cost projections inclusive of County selected debt service are provided later in this report under the Summary of Fiscal and Operational Impacts sections.

Prior to FY29 - Based on 6 Stations_Current Staffing_EMS Integrated

Cost Area	Base Costs	Maintenance	Operational	Depreciation	Totals by Cost	% of All
Apparatus and vehicles	$9,847,586	$374,480	$0	$0	$10,222,066	34%
Apparatus loose equipment and suppression tools	$1,131,550	$28,408	$0	$0	$1,159,958	4%
Communications, dispatch, and alerting	$1,892,032	$67,257	$0	$0	$1,959,289	7%
Community risk reduction and public interface	$64,130	$0	$0	$0	$64,130	0%
Contingency, escalation, and reserves	$2,681,898	$0	$0	$0	$2,681,898	9%
EMS first-response equipment and supplies	$676,610	$40,810	$0	$0	$717,420	2%
Fire stations and support facilities	$3,131,245	$2,484	$0	$0	$3,133,729	10%
Fleet and facility maintenance	$625,350	$0	$0	$0	$625,350	2%
Health, safety, wellness, and infection control	$352,026	$13,250	$0	$0	$365,276	1%
Insurance, legal, and external services	$889,900	$0	$0	$0	$889,900	3%
IT, records, cyber, and business systems	$316,141	$9,808	$0	$0	$325,949	1%
Land acquisition, site selection, and site development	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	0%
Personnel startup and compensation	$5,346,343	$0	$0	$0	$5,346,343	18%
Planning, governance, and pre-operational setup	$26,500	$0	$0	$0	$26,500	0%
PPE, SCBA, and personal issue gear	$1,804,629	$92,220	$0	$0	$1,896,849	6%
Training, qualifications, and compliance	$602,580	$0	$0	$0	$602,580	2%
Water supply and operational readiness	$112,360	$1,060	$0	$0	$113,420	0%
Grand Total	**$29,500,880**	**$629,777**	**$0**	**$0**	**$30,130,657**	**100%**

FY29 - Based on 6 Stations_Current Staffing_EMS Integrated

Cost Area	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Totals by Cost Area	% of All Costs
Apparatus and vehicles	$0	$395,955	$135,446	$979,909	$1,511,311	9%
Apparatus loose equipment and suppression tools	$0	$29,260	$0	$100,027	$129,287	1%
Communications, dispatch, and alerting	$7,643	$69,275	$0	$245,773	$322,690	2%
Community risk reduction and public interface	$66,054	$0	$0	$0	$66,054	0%
Contingency, escalation, and reserves	$267,813	$0	$0	$0	$267,813	2%
EMS first-response equipment and supplies	$204,435	$42,851	$0	$58,443	$305,729	2%
Fire stations and support facilities	$0	$2,583	$0	$200,437	$203,021	1%
Fleet and facility maintenance	$656,469	$0	$0	$0	$656,469	4%
Health, safety, wellness, and infection control	$221,090	$13,648	$0	$13,102	$247,839	2%
Insurance, legal, and external services	$1,559,197	$0	$0	$0	$1,559,197	10%
IT, records, cyber, and business systems	$184,901	$10,132	$0	$26,788	$221,821	1%
Land acquisition, site selection, and site development	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	0%
Personnel startup and compensation	$10,077,560	$0	$0	$0	$10,077,560	62%
Planning, governance, and pre-operational setup	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	0%
PPE, SCBA, and personal issue gear	$17,469	$90,292	$0	$149,342	$257,102	2%
Training, qualifications, and compliance	$384,894	$0	$0	$0	$384,894	2%
Water supply and operational readiness	$10,918	$1,092	$0	$8,516	$20,526	0%
Grand Total	**$13,658,441**	**$655,088**	**$135,446**	**$1,782,337**	**$16,231,311**	**100%**

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Fire Integrated into Leon EMS Dept.

6 Stations - Current Staffing

FY27 and FY28 Expenditure Cadence - 6 Stations_Current Staffing_EMS Integrated

Cost Area	FY27	FY28
Apparatus and vehicles	$9,104,262	$1,117,804
Apparatus loose equipment and suppression tools	$415,096	$744,862
Communications, dispatch, and alerting	$947,640	$1,011,649
Community risk reduction and public interface	$0	$64,130
Contingency, escalation, and reserves	$885,026	$1,796,872
EMS first-response equipment and supplies	$306,240	$411,180
Fire stations and support facilities	$757,620	$2,376,109
Fleet and facility maintenance	$0	$625,350
Health, safety, wellness, and infection control	$0	$365,276
Insurance, legal, and external services	$0	$889,900
IT, records, cyber, and business systems	$30,740	$295,209
Land acquisition, site selection, and site development	$0	$0
Personnel startup and compensation	$409,436	$4,936,906
Planning, governance, and pre-operational setup	$0	$26,500
PPE, SCBA, and personal issue gear	$1,424,555	$472,294
Training, qualifications, and compliance	$0	$602,580
Water supply and operational readiness	$64,130	$49,290
Grand Total	**$14,344,746**	**$15,785,911**

FY27 and FY28 Expenditure Cadence - 6 Stations_Current Staffing_EMS Integrated

Cost Area	FY27	FY28
Annual recurring	$440,176	$6,746,385
Capital	$12,713,304	$6,012,107
Funding / offset analysis	$885,026	$1,796,872
Startup non-capital	$306,240	$1,230,547
Grand Total	**$14,344,746**	**$15,785,911**

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Alternative 2 - Fire Integrated into Leon EMS Dept.

6 Stations - Current Staffing

Prior to FY29 - Based on 6 Stations_Current Staffing_EMS Integrated

Cost Area	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Totals by Cost Area	% of All Costs
Annual recurring	$7,183,008	$3,554	$0	$0	$7,186,562	24%
Capital	$18,143,019	$582,392	$0	$0	$18,725,411	62%
Startup non-capital	$1,492,956	$43,831	$0	$0	$1,536,787	5%
Funding / offset analysis	$2,681,898	$0	$0	$0	$2,681,898	9%
Grand Total	**$29,500,880**	**$629,777**	**$0**	**$0**	**$30,130,657**	**100%**

FY29 - Based on 6 Stations_Current Staffing_EMS Integrated

Cost Area	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Totals by Cost Area	% of All Costs
Annual recurring	$13,390,628	$3,691	$0	$0	$13,394,319	83%
Capital	$0	$605,435	$135,446	$1,714,209	$2,455,090	15%
Startup non-capital	$0	$45,962	$0	$68,127	$114,089	1%
Funding / offset analysis	$267,813	$0	$0	$0	$267,813	2%
Grand Total	**$13,658,441**	**$655,088**	**$135,446**	**$1,782,337**	**$16,231,311**	**100%**

6 Station Model_Current Staffing based on TFD Pay Scale_EMS Integrated

Plan Year	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Annual Costs
Prior to FY29	$29,500,880	$629,777	$0	$0	**$30,130,657**
FY29	$13,658,441	$655,088	$135,446	$1,782,337	**$16,231,311**
FY30	$14,024,661	$686,500	$142,360	$1,860,293	**$16,713,815**
FY31	$14,689,251	$719,540	$149,640	$1,941,925	**$17,500,356**
FY32	$15,385,886	$754,297	$157,307	$2,027,417	**$18,324,907**
FY33	$16,116,132	$790,865	$165,380	$2,116,964	**$19,189,342**

Alternative 3 - Fire Integrated into Leon EMS Dept.

7 Stations - Current Staffing

The following tables represent the start-up (Prior to FY29) with a recommended expenditure cadence through FY27 and FY28. Tables are also provided for the first full operational year detail in FY29 and then total annual expenditures through FY33. These tables do not include the cost of debt service for 1) clarity of project cost, and 2) variability of debt service cost. However, total cost projections inclusive of County selected debt service are provided later in this report under the Summary of Fiscal and Operational Impacts sections.

Prior to FY29 - Based on 7 Stations_Current Staffing_EMS Integrated

Cost Area	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Totals by Cost Area	% of All Costs
Apparatus and vehicles	$12,225,146	$438,320	$0	$0	$12,663,466	27%
Apparatus loose equipment and suppression tools	$1,317,580	$33,046	$0	$0	$1,350,626	3%
Communications, dispatch, and alerting	$2,034,072	$74,518	$0	$0	$2,108,590	4%
Community risk reduction and public interface	$64,130	$0	$0	$0	$64,130	0%
Contingency, escalation, and reserves	$4,229,054	$0	$0	$0	$4,229,054	9%
EMS first-response equipment and supplies	$810,150	$50,380	$0	$0	$860,530	2%
Fire stations and support facilities	$14,106,205	$2,484	$0	$0	$14,108,689	30%
Fleet and facility maintenance	$729,260	$0	$0	$0	$729,260	2%
Health, safety, wellness, and infection control	$401,210	$15,370	$0	$0	$416,580	1%
Insurance, legal, and external services	$983,400	$0	$0	$0	$983,400	2%
IT, records, cyber, and business systems	$328,842	$10,558	$0	$0	$339,400	1%
Land acquisition, site selection, and site development	$540,000	$0	$0	$0	$540,000	1%
Personnel startup and compensation	$5,826,292	$0	$0	$0	$5,826,292	12%
Planning, governance, and pre-operational setup	$26,500	$0	$0	$0	$26,500	0%
PPE, SCBA, and personal issue gear	$2,084,787	$106,795	$0	$0	$2,191,582	5%
Training, qualifications, and compliance	$687,891	$0	$0	$0	$687,891	1%
Water supply and operational readiness	$125,080	$1,166	$0	$0	$126,246	0%
Grand Total	**$46,519,599**	**$732,637**	**$0**	**$0**	**$47,252,236**	**100%**

FY29 - Based on 7 Stations_Current Staffing_EMS Integrated

Cost Area	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Totals by Cost Area	% of All Costs
Apparatus and vehicles	$0	$463,626	$165,126	$1,147,924	$1,776,676	10%
Apparatus loose equipment and suppression tools	$0	$34,037	$0	$116,669	$150,706	1%
Communications, dispatch, and alerting	$7,643	$76,754	$0	$266,264	$350,660	2%
Community risk reduction and public interface	$66,054	$0	$0	$0	$66,054	0%
Contingency, escalation, and reserves	$299,803	$0	$0	$0	$299,803	2%
EMS first-response equipment and supplies	$224,417	$52,899	$0	$72,118	$349,434	2%
Fire stations and support facilities	$0	$2,583	$0	$478,524	$481,108	3%
Fleet and facility maintenance	$765,553	$0	$0	$0	$765,553	4%
Health, safety, wellness, and infection control	$247,293	$15,831	$0	$15,285	$278,409	2%
Insurance, legal, and external services	$1,657,372	$0	$0	$0	$1,657,372	9%
IT, records, cyber, and business systems	$192,364	$10,909	$0	$27,907	$231,181	1%
Land acquisition, site selection, and site development	$0	$0	$0	$13,500	$13,500	0%
Personnel startup and compensation	$11,365,422	$0	$0	$0	$11,365,422	61%
Planning, governance, and pre-operational setup	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	0%
PPE, SCBA, and personal issue gear	$17,469	$104,376	$0	$172,023	$293,868	2%
Training, qualifications, and compliance	$435,635	$0	$0	$0	$435,635	2%
Water supply and operational readiness	$10,918	$1,201	$0	$9,826	$21,945	0%
Grand Total	**$15,289,941**	**$762,216**	**$165,126**	**$2,320,042**	**$18,537,325**	**100%**

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Alternative 3 - Fire Integrated into Leon EMS Dept.

7 Stations - Current Staffing

FY27 and FY28 Expenditure Cadence - 7 Stations_Current Staffing_EMS Integrated

Cost Area	FY27	FY28
Apparatus and vehicles	$11,545,662	$1,117,804
Apparatus loose equipment and suppression tools	$505,726	$844,900
Communications, dispatch, and alerting	$1,054,435	$1,054,155
Community risk reduction and public interface	$0	$64,130
Contingency, escalation, and reserves	$1,395,588	$2,833,466
EMS first-response equipment and supplies	$382,800	$477,730
Fire stations and support facilities	$11,557,620	$2,551,069
Fleet and facility maintenance	$0	$729,260
Health, safety, wellness, and infection control	$0	$416,580
Insurance, legal, and external services	$0	$983,400
IT, records, cyber, and business systems	$30,740	$308,660
Land acquisition, site selection, and site development	$540,000	$0
Personnel startup and compensation	$409,436	$5,416,856
Planning, governance, and pre-operational setup	$0	$26,500
PPE, SCBA, and personal issue gear	$1,652,264	$539,317
Training, qualifications, and compliance	$0	$687,891
Water supply and operational readiness	$76,956	$49,290
Grand Total	**$29,151,228**	**$18,101,008**

FY27 and FY28 Expenditure Cadence - 7 Stations_Current Staffing_EMS Integrated

Cost Area	FY27	FY28
Annual recurring	$440,176	$7,423,310
Capital	$26,932,663	$6,432,398
Funding / offset analysis	$1,395,588	$2,833,466
Startup non-capital	$382,800	$1,411,833
Grand Total	**$29,151,228**	**$18,101,008**

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Alternative 3 - Fire Integrated into Leon EMS Dept.

7 Stations - Current Staffing

Prior to FY29 - Based on 7 Stations_Current Staffing_EMS Integrated

Cost Area	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Totals by Cost Area	% of All Costs
Annual recurring	$7,859,500	$3,986	$0	$0	$7,863,486	17%
Capital	$32,690,024	$675,038	$0	$0	$33,365,062	71%
Startup non-capital	$1,741,020	$53,613	$0	$0	$1,794,633	4%
Funding / offset analysis	$4,229,054	$0	$0	$0		0%
Grand Total	**$46,519,599**	**$732,637**	**$0**	**$0**	**$47,252,236**	**100%**

FY29 - Based on 7 Stations_Current Staffing_EMS Integrated

Cost Area	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Totals by Cost Area	% of All Costs
Annual recurring	$14,990,138	$4,140	$0	$0	$14,994,278	81%
Capital	$0	$701,847	$165,126	$2,237,622	$3,104,595	17%
Startup non-capital	$0	$56,229	$0	$82,419	$138,648	1%
Funding / offset analysis	$299,803	$0	$0	$0		0%
Grand Total	**$15,289,941**	**$762,216**	**$165,126**	**$2,320,042**	**$18,537,325**	**100%**

7 Station Model_Current Staffing based on TFD Pay Scale_EMS Integrated

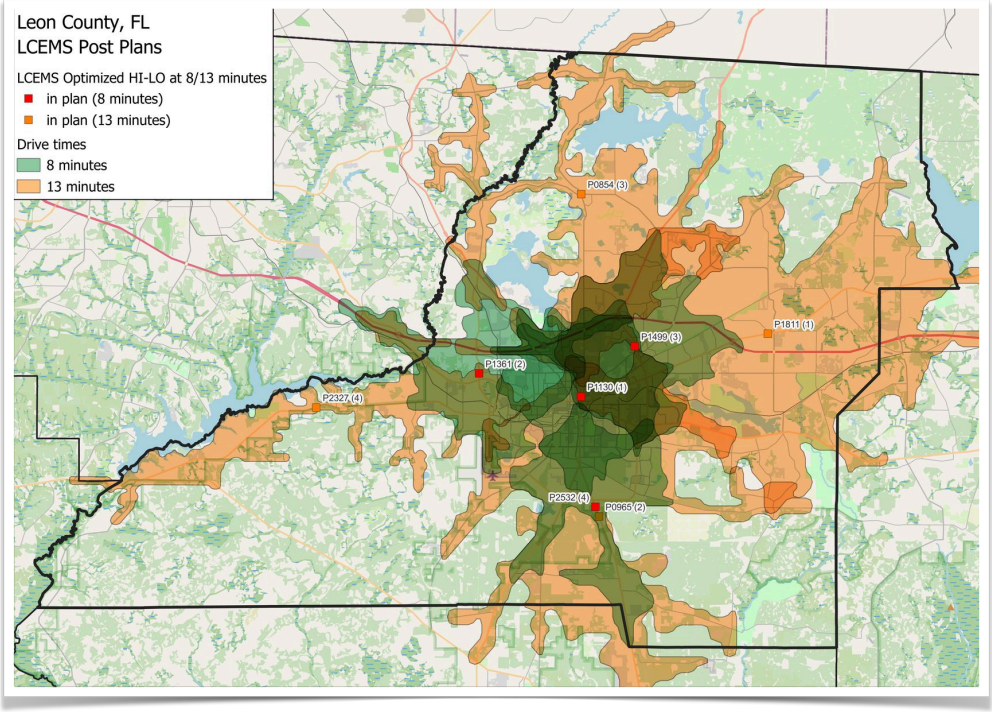
Plan Year	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Annual Costs
Prior to FY29	$46,519,599	$732,637	$0	$0	**$47,252,236**
FY29	$15,289,941	$762,216	$165,126	$2,320,042	**$18,537,325**
FY30	$15,701,868	$799,077	$173,821	$2,422,359	**$19,097,126**
FY31	$16,447,961	$837,863	$182,989	$2,529,515	**$19,998,327**
FY32	$17,230,093	$878,677	$192,656	$2,641,754	**$20,943,180**
FY33	$18,050,026	$921,632	$202,851	$2,759,331	**$21,933,840**

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Opportunities and Reinvestment for the EMS System

Utilizing a similar approach to the delivery of EMS services, a differentiated service model for high density areas (8-minutes at 90%) and low density areas (13-minutes at 90%) for emergency (lights and sirens) responses.

This strategy would require a minimum of seven optimized posts. This is an efficient methodology to cover both the high and low density areas as well prepare a solution if the relationships no longer supported co-locating ambulances at city fire stations. However, if the status quo prevailed, reordering the prioritization of the seven current posts utilized by LCEMS can achieve the same benefits.



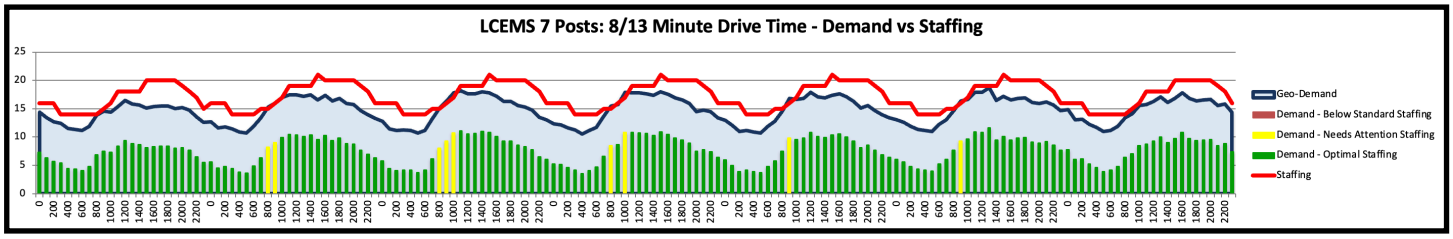
Recommendation

LCEMS is challenged by a high demand for services as well as a very large geographic service area.

The department's UHU is 45% which is Fitch's recommended planning threshold for reinvesting in the system to lower workload and improve performance.

In addition, there is no current margin in the system to understaff the daily deployment.

The following staffing to demand assessment considers the current staffing to demand to meet a desired travel time, and add the seventh station, and the actual call durations throughout each day of the week. The RED line indicates the deployed resources and the BLUE line indicates the combined demand for both response time compliance and the demand for resources. Results demonstrate that the resources are sufficient to both respond to calls and to deliver the desired response times every day of the week. However, this is a lean deployment and the full schedule must be deployed each day. In addition, the system UHU is ~45%, which is our planning threshold and additional resources will be needed.



Fire Services Feasibility Study

Opportunities and Reinvestment for the EMS System

The EMS system was evaluated to provide some context for needed investments in the EMS system both as a quality management tool, but also as a mechanism to ensure that limiting the use of fire apparatus for first response was available. This will be an important part of any discussion regarding automatic-aid between the city and the county if a separation occurs.

The growth rate for the last five years has been 5.3%. Compounding the 5.3% from today's value through 2029, the system will no longer be sufficiently resourced and performance will suffer. Additionally, the UHU value that is recommended to stay at or below 45%, would be at 54.7%.

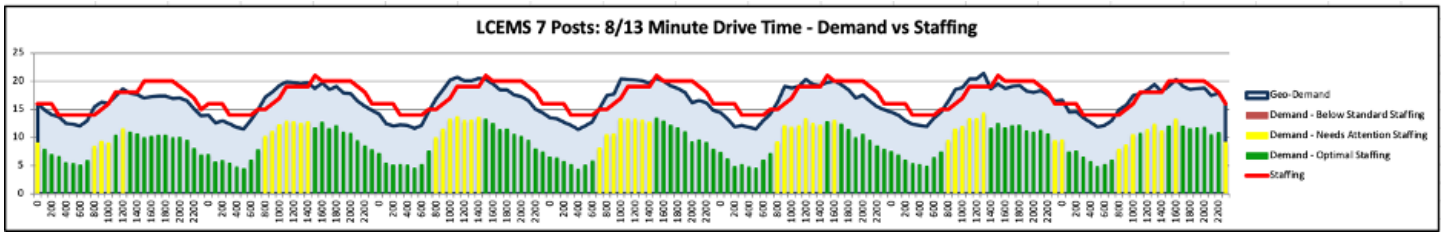
The following staffing to demand assessment considers the current staffing to demand to meet a desired travel time, and add the seventh station, and the actual call durations throughout each day of the week. The RED line indicates the deployed resources and the BLUE line indicates the combined demand for both response time compliance and the demand for resources. Results demonstrate that the resources are insufficient to both respond to calls and to deliver the desired response times every day of the week.

Recommendation

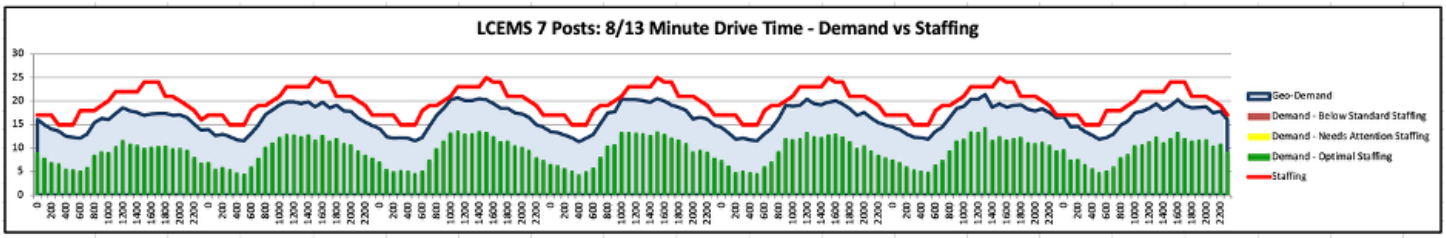
LCEMS is challenged by a high demand for services as well as a very large geographic service area.

If EMS call volume continues to grow at the 5-year rate of 5.3%, then the 2029 EMS system will be at a 55% UHU, which is well above the recommended upper threshold.

In addition, there is no current margin in the system to understaff the daily deployment.



A reinvestment of four additional day units and one overnight unit for a total additional deployment of 21,900 hours per year are required to lower the UHU to 48%. However, this is a lean deployment and the full schedule must be deployed each day. In addition, the system UHU is ~48%, which is above our planning threshold and additional resources will be needed every year or every other year to control for workload.

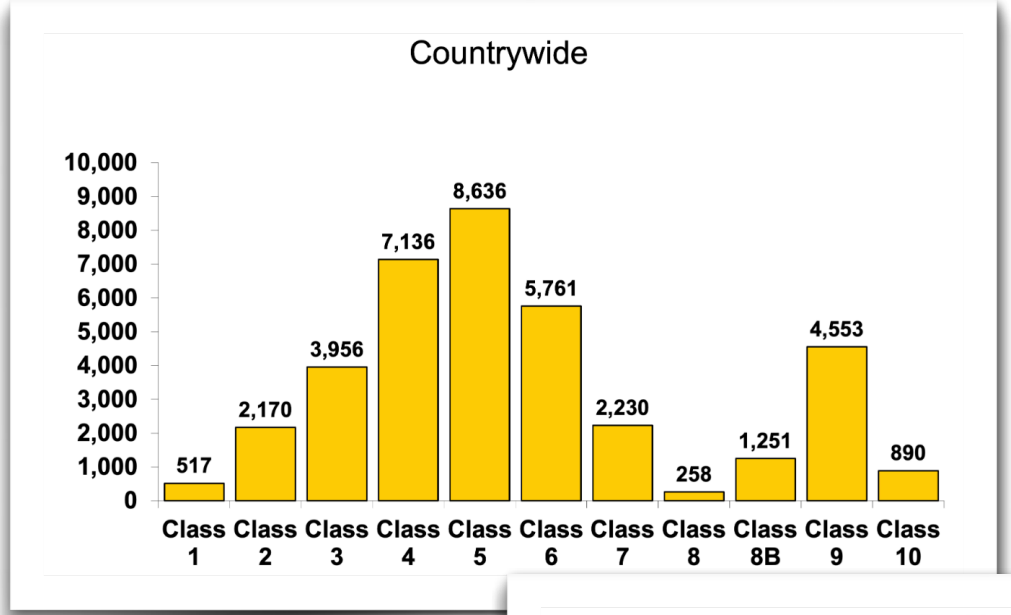


Analysis of Potential Impact on the Current ISO Rating

State and National ISO Comparisons

The Insurance Services Organization (ISO) provides some comparison for the frequency with which agencies are classified across the various Public Protection Classifications (PPC). It is recognized, that there are nuances to the ultimate PPC rating in each community, the summary provided by ISO does provide some comparative value to communities to understand their overall PPC rating versus the national experience and within Florida.

The combined (Tallahassee and Leon County) current PPC rating is a 3/3X. For these comparison purposes we will refer to it as a 3. Class 5 is the most frequently assigned classification across the United States.



Observations

Nationally, the current system's ISO PPC Classification is the fifth most frequently assigned classification.

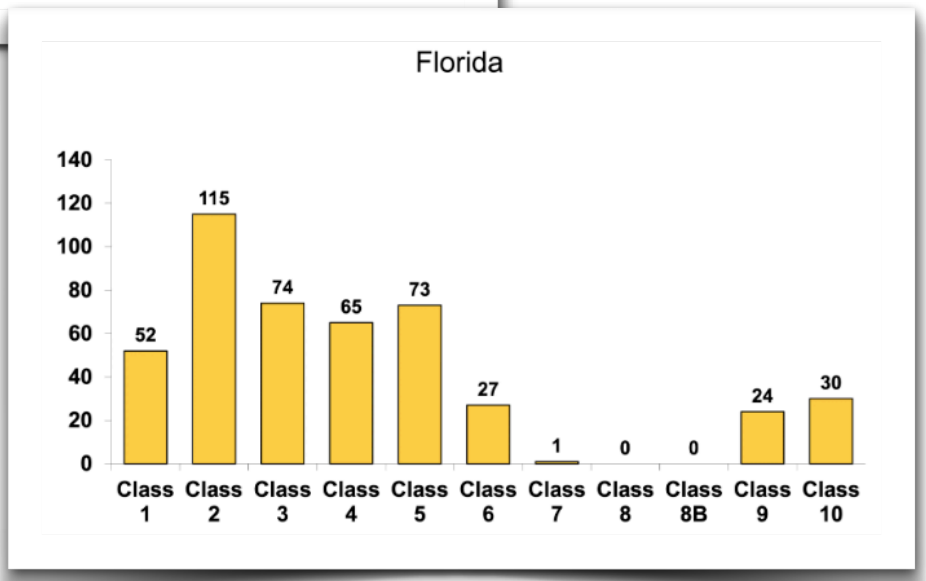
Within the State of Florida, the current system is within the 53rd percentile.

In Florida, 36% of the departments were rated better than the current state.

Comparing the current ISO PPC rating of 3/3X within Florida, reveals that the most frequently assigned PPC rating is a 2.

However, the PPC classification of 3 is the second most frequently assigned classification. Within Florida, ~53% of the departments rated were a Class 3 or better. Independently, a Class 3 represents 16% of the rated departments.

Finally, 36% of the departments that were rated within Florida were rated better than the current combined system.



Potential Impacts on the Current ISO Rating

The PPC rating from ISO includes 10 points for Emergency Communications, 50 points for the Fire Department, and another 40 points for Water Supply. Two adjustments are then made where an agency can earn up to 5.5 additional points for Community Risk Reduction activities and a negative "Divergence" value based on the relative difference between the Fire Department and Water Supply scores. Considering the PPC rating provided in the most recent 2023 evaluation, the fire department had a total of 73.54 points out of a possible 105.5, equating to a Class 3/3X rating.

ISO utilizes a number of proprietary analyses that are not specifically replicable. However, guidance in publicly available documents did provide limited insight that enable broad estimates to the range of potential impacts to changes. Overall, this approach allows the opportunity to test hypothetical boundaries that can provide some confidence in the estimates.

Observations

If Leon County independently provides services to the unincorporated county areas with a consistent station, apparatus, staffing, and water supply, then it is reasonable to assume a reduction in the ISO PPC Rating from a 3 to a 5.

The following analysis provides a comparison of the available credit, the current credit, and the estimated credit if the City and County operated independently, and without a codified automatic-aid agreement. Understanding the limitations with the analysis, it is reasonable to assume an ISO PPC rating between a 4 and 6, depending on how ISO would interpret key areas associated with water supply, fire department staffing, and deployment analyses.

FRFS Feature	Maximum Credit Available	Current Scoring with TFD Providing Service	Estimated Scoring for Leon County	Change (+/-)
Emergency Communications	10	9.17	9.17	0
Fire Department	50	30.53	23.5	-7.03
Water Supply	40	33.93	20.1	-13.83
Community Risk Reduction	5.5	4.66	5.5	0.84
Divergence		-4.75	-0.63	4.12
Total Credit	105.5	73.54	57.64	-15.9
Community PPC Rating	1	3	5	-2

Potential Impacts on the Current ISO Rating

A more robust summary of the estimated values for Leon County is provided below. The boundaries were tested by reducing key scores in areas with limited understanding within ISO's proprietary practices. This analysis provides reasonable confidence that even with significant changes to key areas such as staffing and water supply, the ISO rating should remain at least a 6.

Several areas, such as training, hydrant maintenance and testing, and community risk reduction could be improved under the county's leadership and management commitment.

FSRS Scorecard — Estimated Public Protection Classification

Item #	FSRS Line Item		Earned	Max	% of Max
	1. EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS (max 10 pts)			**10**	
1a	Emergency reporting (911 systems)		3.0	3.0	100.0%
1b	Telecommunicators (staffing, training, certification)		3.2	4.0	79.3%
1c	Dispatch circuits		3.0	3.0	100.0%
	Subtotal — Emergency Communications		**9.2**	**10.0**	**91.7%**
	2. FIRE DEPARTMENT (max 50 pts)			**50**	
2a	Engine companies		4.5	6.0	75.2%
2b	Reserve pumpers		0.4	0.5	80.0%
2c	Pump capacity		3.0	3.0	100.0%
2d	Ladder / service companies		0.0	4.0	0.0%
2e	Reserve ladder / service trucks		0.0	0.5	0.0%
2f	Deployment analysis (distribution of companies)		1.2	10.0	12.3%
2g	Company personnel (on-duty staffing)		4.0	15.0	26.7%
2h	Training		8.4	9.0	93.0%
2i	Operational considerations (SOPs, incident mgmt)		2.0	2.0	100.0%
	Subtotal — Fire Department		**23.5**	**50.0**	**47.0%**
	3. WATER SUPPLY (max 40 pts)			**40**	
3a	Supply system (adequacy vs. needed fire flow)		11.0	30.0	36.5%
3b	Hydrant size, type, and installation		2.1	3.0	70.0%
3c	Inspection and fire-flow testing of hydrants		7.0	7.0	100.0%
	Subtotal — Water Supply		**20.1**	**40.0**	**50.2%**
	4. COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION (bonus, max 5.5 pts)			**5.5**	
4a	Fire prevention code adoption & enforcement		2.2	2.2	100.0%
4b	Public fire safety education		2.2	2.2	100.0%
4c	Fire investigation programs		1.1	1.1	100.0%
	Subtotal — Community Risk Reduction		**5.5**	**5.5**	**100.0%**

RESULTS — Divergence-Adjusted Score & Estimated PPC		
Raw FSRS credit (Comm + FD + Water + CRR)	**58.24**	
Divergence adjustment (penalty if water lags dept.)	**0.626**	
FINAL ADJUSTED SCORE (max 105.5)	**57.61**	
ESTIMATED PPC CLASS (1 = best, 10 = minimum)	**5**	

Order of Magnitude for ISO Changes

The anticipated changes to the ISO PPC rating in the unincorporated area does not fully address the magnitude of the potential impact to a segment of the unincorporated population. For example, properties that are beyond 5-road miles from any of the existing fire stations, should have no change in their ISO ratings. However, properties that are beyond 5-miles from Stations 10-15 and the VFD stations, but are within 5-miles of Stations 1-9, and 16 are the most vulnerable to be reduced to an ISO 10.

This observation reinforces the commitment to either remaining a single-provider operation or ensuring a robust codified automatic-aid agreement to mitigate the substantive impacts to this segment of the properties.

To a lesser degree, the reciprocal is true as well. Without continued continuity found in a single-provider or automatic aid agreement, there may be city residents that are no longer within 5-miles of Stations 10-15.

The table below highlights a high-level analysis of the number of structures potentially impacted in unincorporated Leon County. The key metrics that ISO utilizes as a threshold for assigning either a "Y" or "X" are within the blue rows. Analyses find that approximately 20% of the structures currently within 5 miles or 5 miles and within 1,000 ft of a fire hydrant would receive a substantive reduction in the ISO rating. This would impact up to approximately 14,000 structures within the unincorporated areas without additional investments or a codified automatic-aid agreement with the City of Tallahassee.

Observations

An estimated 14,000 structures, or 20% of the structures in the unincorporated county area, would have a significant impact to the current ISO rating.

If the policy option is to address the ISO impact of separation from a single-provider solution, then the County would need to a minimum of four additional stations.

Description	Current Service Model		Stations 10-15 and VFD Stations		Stations 10-15, VFD Stations, plus 4 New	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Structures in Unincorporated Area	69,053	100%	69,053	100%	69,053	100%
Structures within 5-Miles	65,668	95%	51,783	75%	65,736	95%
Structures with 5-Miles and 1000 ft of a Hydrant	40,307	58%	28,002	41%	40,118	58%
Percentage Change for Current Service Model				**~20%**		**~0%**

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Investment Strategies to Reduce ISO Impact

Continuing with the previous page's analyses, the remedy to overcome the impact to approximately 14,000 structures insurance rating, would be to place a minimum of four additional stations that will supplement Stations 10-15 and the VFD stations. This strategy would more closely mirror the current service provisions with an estimated 7% difference.

In addition to the primary assessment of the impact to the ISO ratings, this configuration would also improve response time to an 8-minute travel time to 90% of all incidents within the unincorporated county areas.

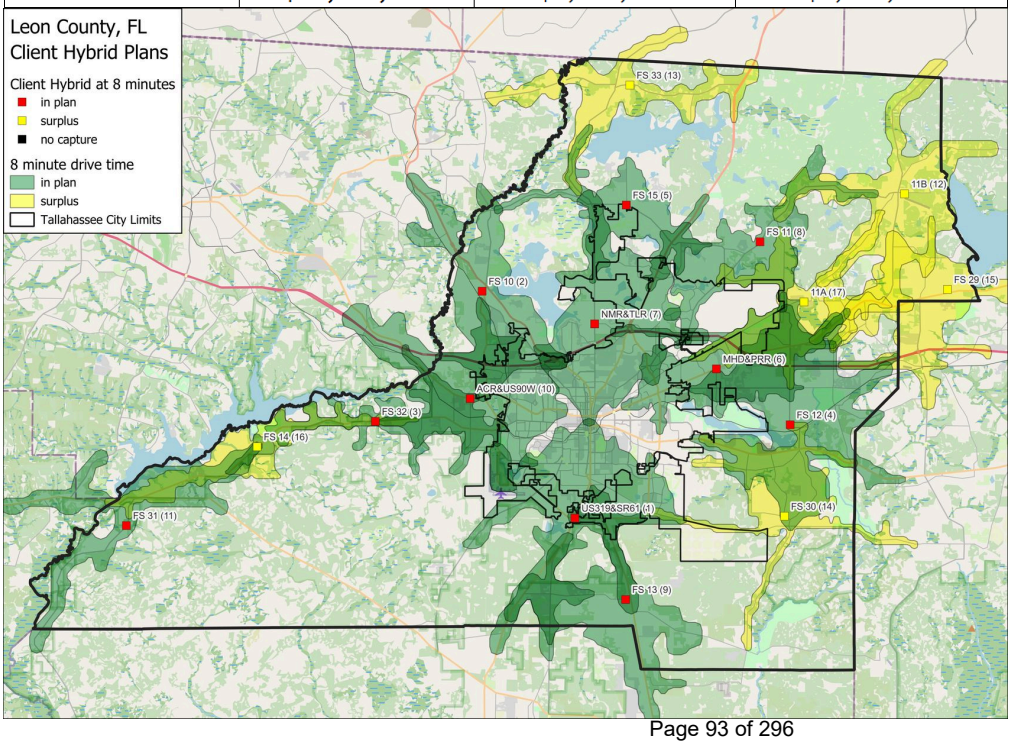
Beyond the obvious fiscal impacts for four new facilities and staffing, one challenge is the efficacy of the long-term capital investment. For example, many communities build fire stations with a 50-year life span. It would be reasonable to assume that many of these areas would be annexed by the City of Tallahassee with in the next 10 - 15 years.

Observations

The County could place a minimum of four new fire stations within closer proximity to the developed unincorporated areas near the municipal boundaries to more closely mirror the current service provisions, but at significantly more cost because of planned inefficiencies.

10 Station Model_Current Staffing based on TFD Pay Scale_EMS Integrated

Plan Year	Annual Cost	Increase from 6-Sta	Increase from 7-Sta
Prior to FY29	**$94,862,848**	$64,732,190	$47,610,612
FY29	**$24,510,963**	$8,279,652	$5,973,638
FY30	**$25,255,408**	$8,541,594	$6,158,282
FY31	**$26,455,620**	$8,955,265	$6,457,293
FY32	**$27,714,078**	$9,389,171	$6,770,898
FY33	**$29,033,652**	$9,844,311	$7,099,813



Overall, without an automatic-aid agreement that preserves the collaborative service model currently provided, the level of public investments needed by two independent agencies exceeds that of the current single provider relationship.

The mapping provided here demonstrates the duplication of services within significant portions of the city by having both City and County stations providing services in the absence of collaboration between the two governments. In other words, without a best-practice automatic-aid agreement or continuing to work together within a single-provider relationship, the tax payers will collectively pay more and not receive the totality of the return on investment because the closest available unit may not respond.

Evaluation of the Utilization of Volunteer Fire Departments

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Volunteer Utilization and Integration

There are six volunteer fire departments in the unincorporated county areas. These agencies serve a very important role in the overall fire protection system. One of the greatest challenges for providing protection in the unincorporated areas of the county is the large geographic expanse with limited development and infrastructure. This combination of large coverage areas with limited requests for service are costly as a disproportionate amount of the total cost is in readiness.

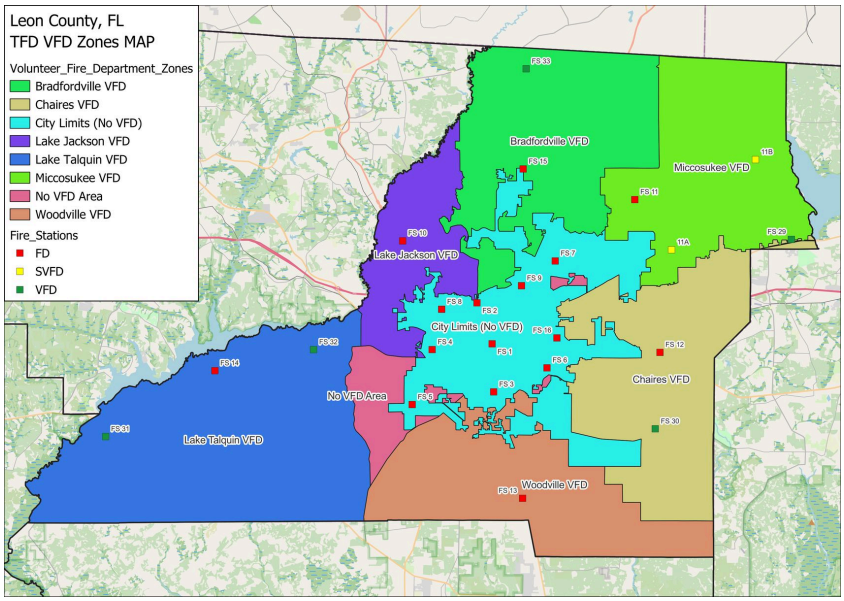
Therefore, the system design for the unincorporated areas provides for staffed stations 10 -15, one within each of the volunteer fire department (VFD) zones to supplement the volunteer agencies. Procedurally, every call for service alerts both the staffed station and the appropriate VFD.

Observations

VFD apparatus were utilized to respond to a maximum of 8% of the unique incidents.

Most of the responses by volunteers are completed as individuals or chiefs without fire apparatus such as engines and brush trucks.

Eight or less members in any agency provided 90% of the activity.



An analysis of the number of incidents by VFD area and the number of VFD apparatus responses demonstrates a relatively low utilization of apparatus for response; less than 8% of the calls.

However, the number of volunteer responses without apparatus assignment in CAD, suggest a much broader participation rate for individuals responding. Finally, in each VFD, 8 or less member provided 90% of the work.

Assigned Agency	Number of Unique Calls Occuring by VFD Area	Number of Volunteer Apparatus Movements by Agency	Percentage of Volunteer Apparatus Responses to All Incidents by VFD Area	Number of Responses by Volunteers Agency	Total Busy Hours by Volunteer Agency	Number of Members Responding to at least one call by Volunteer Agency	Number of Members doing 90% of the Work by VFD Agency
Bradfordville VFD	1,975	2	0.1%	322	119.7	12	5
Chaires / Capitola VFD	2,286	90	3.9%	1,165	444.4	24	7
Lake Jackson VFD	2,833	2	0.1%	272	75.7	14	6
Lake Talquin VFD	710	56	7.9%	402	198.4	11	6
Miccosukee VFD	478	13	2.7%	805	370.5	20	8
Woodville VFD	2,272	10	0.4%	822	301.8	12	4

Considerations for Volunteer Services

The six volunteer fire departments are an essential part of fire protection in the unincorporated county, and they remain part of the recommended system under every alternative in this study. One of the greatest challenges in the unincorporated area is its large geographic expanse with limited development and infrastructure; volunteers provide coverage across areas that would be costly to serve with staffed stations alone. The recommendations below are ordered to reflect both the operational logic of what the County can implement most quickly and the issues the departments raised most frequently and most broadly.
The County can address volunteer support in three layers: preserve the benefits it already provides, stabilize the apparatus fleet that currently depends on City-leased equipment, and add targeted staffing and training support that the departments cannot efficiently provide on their own. It is recommended that the County continue to provide workers' compensation coverage as a standing benefit, treated as baseline support.

Funding context

Available County budget records show volunteer-department support at $216,788 in FY22 (actual), $478,510 in FY23 (actual), $414,116 in FY24 (actual), and $482,479 in adopted support for both FY25 and FY26. Within that broader support, the direct FY26 allocation to the departments appears to be $118,435 under the current formula, which also uses station, apparatus, responder, and call-based factors. However, the County provides additional direct financial support for apparatus maintenance, worker's compensation insurance, vehicle and liability insurance,firefighter training, VFD station utilities and maintenance, radio communication equipment, volunteer recruitment activities.

The recommended items below would add to that baseline in two different ways: apparatus continuity is a phased capital cost, while staffing and training supports are recurring operating costs. Consistent with the rest of this study, cost figures are presented qualitatively; specific dollar amounts would be developed during budget planning and are sensitive to procurement timing and market conditions.

Recommended priority order

1. Formalize training access and certification pathways (recurring operating) - The quickest operational gain is to formalize and expand access to training. Standardized training, Firefighter I certification pathways, affordable training props, and — over the longer term — a County-supported training facility were requested across the departments and directly address both readiness and retention. This is a modest, scalable recurring cost that can leverage regional and state training resources.

2. Provide a staffing support package for recruitment and retention (recurring operating) - The next most practical step is a staffing support package that helps departments recruit and retain qualified responders. Recruitment and retention were the most broadly shared concern, and the pressure is compounded by annexation shrinking the traditional volunteer pool. A moderate, recurring investment here protects the coverage that volunteers provide and slows the erosion of active-responder counts.

3. Establish an apparatus continuity and replacement program (phased capital) - Apparatus continuity should begin immediately as a planning and procurement program because it has the longest lead time and is the concern most directly affected by any change in the ILA relationship. Several departments operate apparatus more than 20 years old and depend on City-leased vehicles whose future is uncertain after the current agreement expires in September 2028. A predictable, phased replacement or lease-buyback strategy is the single most important step to stabilize the fleet. This is the largest and longest-lead cost of the recommended items and should be treated as a phased capital program.

Considerations for Volunteer Services

4. **Improve rural water-supply capability (phased capital and maintenance)**
For the most rural districts, the County should map water-supply gaps, maintain and expand dry hydrants, and strengthen tanker-shuttle planning and training. This targets the long travel distances, limited hydrant coverage, and staffing constraints that departments identified, and it directly supports ISO performance in the rural county. This is a phased capital and maintenance expense focused on identified coverage gaps.

5. **Standardize CAD and NERIS response-data accuracy (modest administrative)**
The County should standardize CAD and NERIS reporting, correct unit identifiers, and validate volunteer activity periodically (for example, quarterly). Because CAD records understate volunteer activity, better data both credits the departments accurately and strengthens the County's ISO and planning positions. This is largely a process change with a modest setup and administrative cost.

6. **Maintain equipment, PPE and medical-supply readiness (recurring plus small capital)**
The County should establish annual inspections and replacement schedules for personal protective equipment, medical supplies, radios, and other essential equipment, and should consider the cost and logistics of evolving bunker-gear cleaning requirements so that departments are not left without protective gear. This is a predictable recurring operating and small-capital cost.

7. **Assess station and facility needs (phased capital)**
The County should assess volunteer stations and prioritize repairs to generators, roofs, bay doors, electrical systems, security, and responder facilities. Several volunteer stations are strategically located for rural coverage, and preserving them protects both service levels and ISO performance. This is a phased capital expense based on condition and risk.

8. **Provide shared administrative support (modest recurring)**
The County can provide centralized purchasing, grant, inventory, compliance, and records assistance for all volunteer departments. This relieves administrative burden on volunteer leadership and can generate offsetting savings through grants and bulk purchasing. This is a modest recurring cost with potential savings.

9. **Strengthen County–VFD communication and engagement (minimal recurring)**
The County should formalize regular engagement with the volunteer departments — including periodic County-staff attendance at VFD meetings and continued data sharing — so that the relationship extends to the general membership, not only the chiefs. This is primarily a matter of staff time with minimal direct cost.

10. **Preserve baseline benefits (existing recurring)**
The County should continue to provide workers' compensation coverage and the existing baseline support to the departments. This is a continuation of current support with no new cost, and it signals a stable commitment to the volunteer model under any service path.

Considerations for Volunteer Services

Summary of recommendations and funding effect

The table below consolidates the recommendations and the qualitative funding effect of each. It reflects both the departments' feedback and the consultant team's supplemental recommendations.

Recommendation	Type of cost	Funding effect (qualitative)
1. Formalize training access & certification pathways	Recurring operating	Modest, scalable recurring cost; leverages regional and state training resources.
2. Staffing support for recruitment & retention	Recurring operating	Moderate recurring cost; scales with the number of supported responders.
3. Apparatus continuity & replacement / lease-buyback program	Phased capital	Largest and longest-lead cost; phased over years; most exposed to any change in the City lease relationship.
4. Rural water-supply improvements (dry hydrants, tanker-shuttle)	Phased capital + maintenance	Phased capital and maintenance expense targeted to identified coverage gaps.
5. Standardize CAD / NERIS reporting; validate activity	Modest administrative	Modest setup and administrative cost; largely a process change.
6. Equipment, PPE & medical-supply readiness schedule	Recurring + small capital	Predictable recurring operating and small-capital cost.
7. Station & facility condition assessment and repairs	Phased capital	Phased capital expense based on condition and risk.
8. Shared administrative support (purchasing, grants, records)	Modest recurring	Modest recurring cost, with potential savings from grants and bulk purchasing.
9. County–VFD communication & engagement	Minimal recurring	Minimal cost; primarily staff time.
10. Preserve baseline benefits (workers' compensation)	Existing recurring	No new cost; continuation of current baseline support.

Evaluation of the Feasibility of Automatic-Aid and Closest Unit Dispatching

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Automatic Closest Unit Dispatching as an Industry Best Practice

Automatic-aid agreements and closest-unit (boundary-drop) dispatch represent the highest-performing model of regional fire and emergency medical service delivery in the United States. Unlike traditional mutual aid, which is reactive and request-based, automatic aid commits agencies in advance to a simultaneous first-alarm response, while closest-unit dispatch leverages CAD/AVL technology to send the nearest qualified resource regardless of jurisdictional boundary. National authorities, including the U.S. Fire Administration, NFPA, ISO, and the Center for Public Safety Excellence, treat these tools as essential to meeting modern response-time benchmarks and to qualifying for ISO Public Protection Classification (PPC) credit.

In Leon County, the operational case is straightforward: properly structured agreements reduce response times, optimize unit utilization, support NFPA 1710 / 1720 distribution and concentration metrics, and align with CFAI accreditation criteria. The legal framework is equally settled. Florida Statute §163.01, the Interlocal Cooperation Act, provides the operative authority for automatic-aid interlocal agreements, while Chapter 252 governs declared-emergency mutual aid through the Statewide Mutual Aid Agreement.

Observations

Automatic-aid and closest unit dispatching has been a best practice in fire and emergency services for decades.

The collaboration between Leon County and the City of Tallahassee has also had a decades long history of providing a fully integrated system and maintains all of the technology and infrastructure for full implementation within the joint 911 center.

A comparative table of the three primary methods associated with collaborative services. In reference, the “Boundary Drop/CUD accounts for both automatic-aid and closest unit dispatching. The cooperative Leon County/City of Tallahassee 911 Communications has been operating with CUD for decades.

Type	Trigger	Governance	Documentation
Mutual Aid	IC request after arrival	Informal to formal interlocal agreement	Written agreement recommended; bilateral; no run cards required
Automatic Aid	CAD dispatch on first alarm; pre-defined call types	Formal IGA / ILA with oversight provisions	Written agreement required; standardized run cards; ISO PPC documentation
Boundary Drop / CUD	Real-time CAD/AVL optimization; every call	Regional governance council; CAD operator authority	Comprehensive ILA/IGA; CAD protocol specification; SOP integration

One strategy to ensure that there are no cost-share issues or imbalanced “donor agency” issues, the ILA should focus on only high risk incidents for closest unit dispatching. In most agencies, this would equate to 15% or less of the requests for service by defining high risk events such as structure fires, penetrating trauma, cardiac arrests, drowning, vehicle accidents with known entrapment.

Fire Services Feasibility Study

Best Practice Evaluation for the County and City

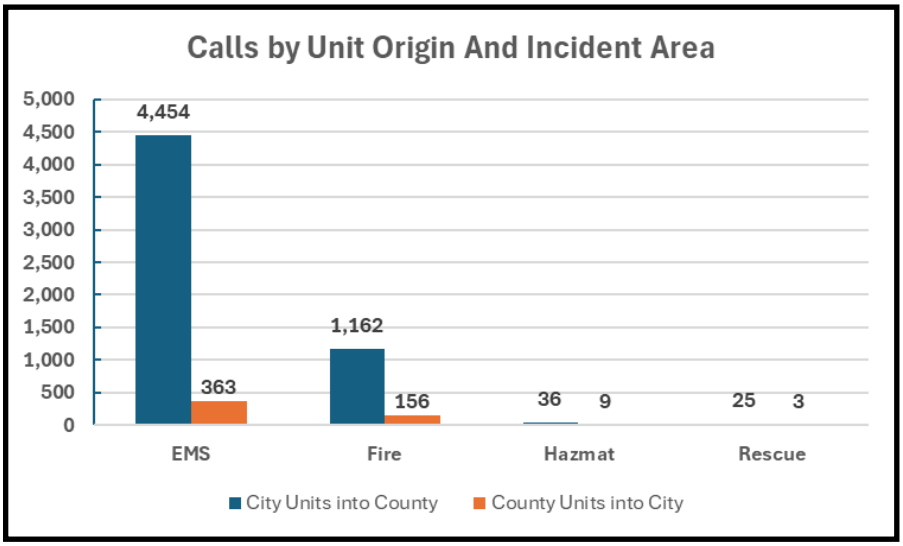
Evaluating the totality of the calls responded to by the "City" (stations 1-9,16) into the unincorporated areas and the “County" (stations 10-15) into the city limits provides a baseline perspective for future automatic-aid strategies.

City Units into County	EMS	Fire	Hazmat	Rescue	Total
Call Count	4,454	1,162	36	25	5,677
% of County Demand	53.1%	44.7%	48.0%	59.5%	51.1%

County Units into City	EMS	Fire	Hazmat	Rescue	Total
Call Count	363	156	9	3	531
% of City Demand	1.6%	1.6%	4.4%	1.0%	1.6%

Observations

If the automatic-aid requested from the city was restricted to high acuity events, then the relationship between aid-given and aid-received may be reasonably well aligned.

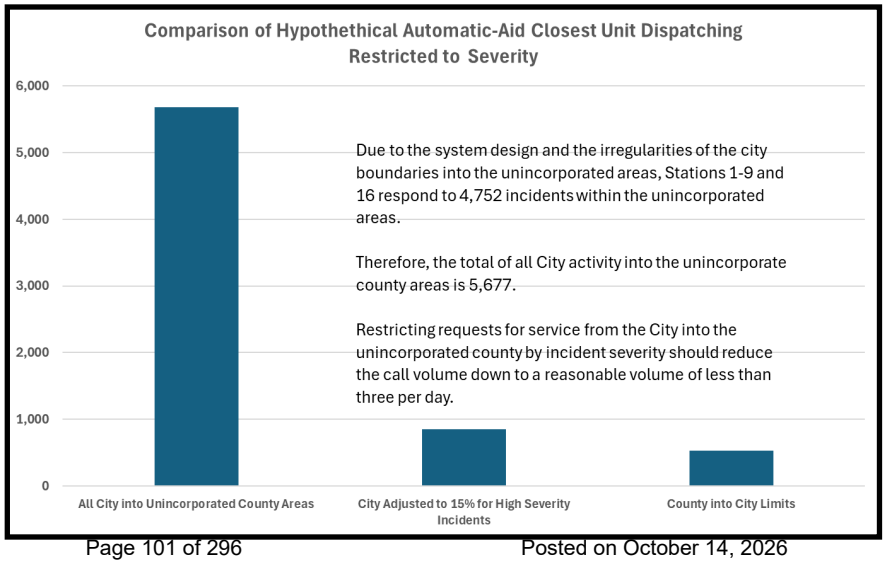


In total, City units responded to 51.1% of all calls within the unincorporated county area, while County units responded to just 1.6% of all calls within the City boundary. EMS is the predominant call type.

With the exception of Station 1, all demand zones (2-16) geographically cross into the unincorporated county area. Thus, Stations 1-9, and 16 run nearly 4,752 calls into unincorporated areas within their respective response zones.

Therefore, there is a total workload of 5,677 city run calls into unincorporated areas of the county. This would be a disproportionate ask without a formal compensation strategy.

However, if automatic-aid from the City was restricted to high acuity events, the relationship may be reasonably well-aligned. The typical demand acuity distribution would suggest that about 15% of the call volume would truly benefit from automatic-aid. This would reduce the City's unincorporated calls to around 815 annually.



Comparisons of Alternative Delivery Models to the Current Service Delivery Model

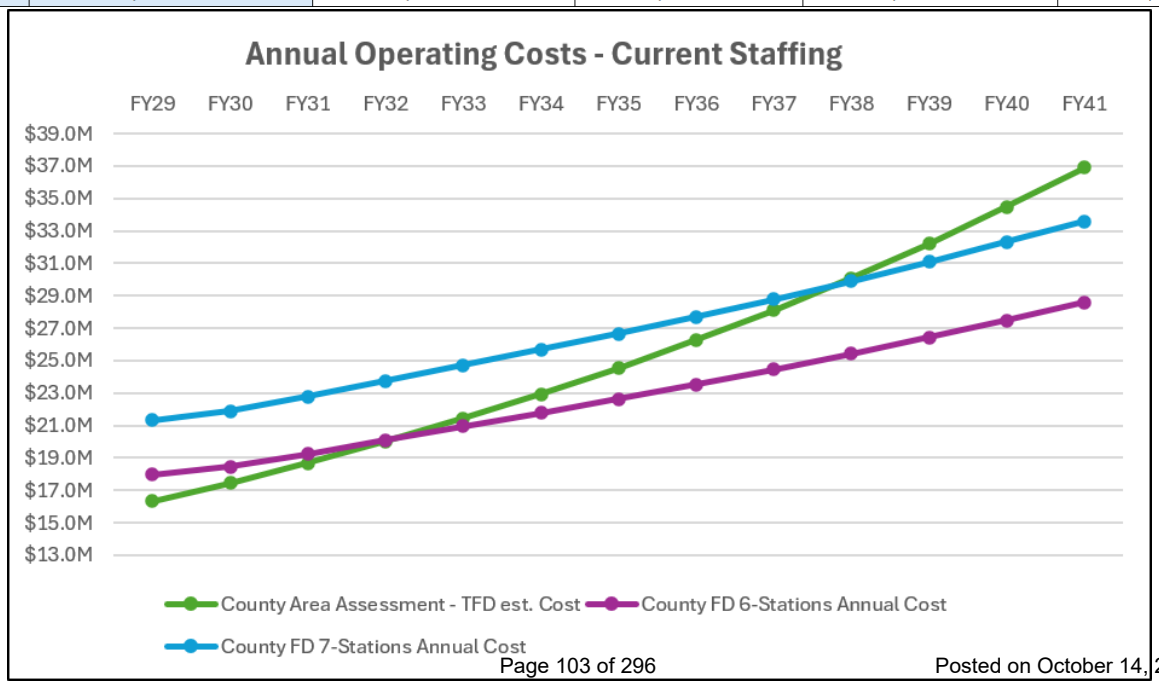
Summary of Fiscal and Operational Impacts

Costs Inclusive of Debt Service and No Cash from Reserves

This summary compares the recurring costs beginning in FY29 through FY41 for both the six and seven station configurations. This analysis utilized the current staffing provided by TFD and propagated throughout this report. Overall, the assessment of the recurring costs between the projected costs of TFD against the six and seven station scenarios demonstrate that it is a fiscally viable option if all assumptions remain over time. While the 6-station solution becomes viable in FY33, the 7-station solution does not become cost effective until FY38. This analysis does not include the start-up costs.

Current Staffing - With 30-year Debt Service and No Cash from Reserves

Fiscal Year	County Area Assessment - TFD est. Cost	County FD 6-Stations Annual Cost	Difference from TFD to County FD	County FD 7-Stations Annual Cost	Difference from TFD to County FD
FY29	$16.3M	$18.0M	($1.7M)	$21.3M	($5.0M)
FY30	$17.5M	$18.5M	($1.0M)	$21.9M	($4.4M)
FY31	$18.7M	$19.3M	($0.6M)	$22.8M	($4.1M)
FY32	$20.0M	$20.1M	($0.1M)	$23.7M	($3.7M)
FY33	$21.4M	$20.9M	$0.5M	$24.7M	($3.3M)
FY34	$22.9M	$21.8M	$1.2M	$25.7M	($2.7M)
FY35	$24.5M	$22.6M	$1.9M	$26.7M	($2.1M)
FY36	$26.3M	$23.5M	$2.8M	$27.7M	($1.4M)
FY37	$28.1M	$24.4M	$3.7M	$28.8M	($0.7M)
FY38	$30.1M	$25.4M	$4.7M	$29.9M	$0.2M
FY39	$32.2M	$26.4M	$5.8M	$31.1M	$1.1M
FY40	$34.5M	$27.5M	$7.0M	$32.3M	$2.2M
FY41	$36.9M	$28.6M	$8.3M	$33.6M	$3.3M



Fire Services Feasibility Study

Summary of Fiscal and Operational Impacts

Costs Inclusive of Debt Service and No Cash from Reserves

This summary combines the start-up costs occurring prior to FY29 with the recurring costs beginning in FY29 through FY50 for both the six and seven station configurations. Overall, the assessment of the cumulative sum of the start-up costs and the recurring costs between the projected costs of TFD against the six and seven station scenarios demonstrate that the 6-station model becomes cost effective in FY40 while the 7-station model is not cost effective until FY47.

Observations

If the County chooses to establish its own Fire Department, it will still need to pay TFD for services until FY29 when it becomes operational; $29.8M in addition to the $30.1M start up cost for 6-Stations.

In other words, while the recurring costs presented on the previous page may be more fiscally enticing, the inclusion of the start-up costs significantly change the fiscal break-over points. Note, these tables only represent the cost directly associated with each option. If the County chooses to establish its own Fire Department, it will still need to pay TFD for services until FY29 when it becomes operational. These payments are not included in the table below.

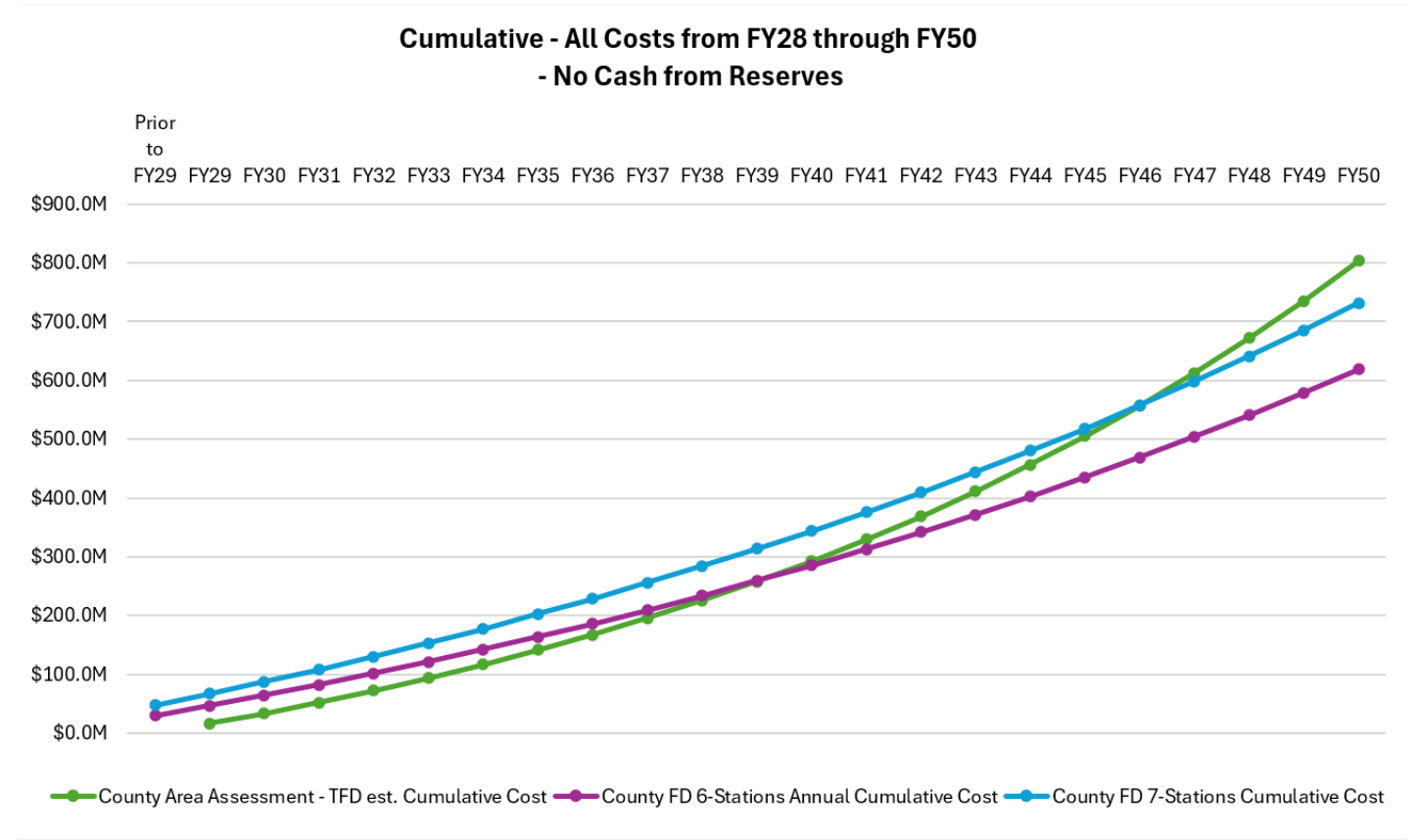
Current Staffing - Cumulative Cost from FY28-FY50 with 30-year Debt Service and No Cash from Reserves

Fiscal Year	County Area Assessment - TFD est. Cumulative Cost	County FD 6-Stations Annual Cumulative Cost	Difference from TFD to County FD	County FD 7-Stations Cumulative Cost	Difference from TFD to County FD
Prior to FY29		$30.1M	($30.1M)	$47.3M	($47.3M)
FY29	$16.3M	$47.0M	($30.7M)	$66.9M	($50.6M)
FY30	$33.8M	$64.4M	($30.6M)	$87.2M	($53.4M)
FY31	$52.5M	$82.6M	($30.1M)	$108.3M	($55.9M)
FY32	$72.5M	$101.6M	($29.1M)	$130.4M	($57.9M)
FY33	$93.9M	$121.5M	($27.5M)	$153.5M	($59.6M)
FY34	$116.8M	$142.1M	($25.3M)	$177.5M	($60.7M)
FY35	$141.4M	$163.7M	($22.3M)	$202.6M	($61.2M)
FY36	$167.7M	$186.1M	($18.5M)	$228.6M	($61.0M)
FY37	$195.8M	$209.5M	($13.7M)	$255.8M	($60.0M)
FY38	$225.9M	$233.8M	($8.0M)	$284.1M	($58.2M)
FY39	$258.1M	$259.2M	($1.1M)	$313.5M	($55.4M)
FY40	$292.6M	$285.6M	$7.0M	$344.2M	($51.6M)
FY41	$329.5M	$313.1M	$16.4M	$376.1M	($46.7M)
FY42	$369.0M	$341.7M	$27.2M	$409.4M	($40.4M)
FY43	$411.3M	$371.6M	$39.7M	$444.1M	($32.8M)
FY44	$456.5M	$402.7M	$53.8M	$480.2M	($23.7M)
FY45	$505.0M	$435.1M	$69.9M	$517.9M	($12.9M)
FY46	$556.8M	$468.8M	$88.0M	$557.1M	($0.3M)
FY47	$612.3M	$504.0M	$108.3M	$598.0M	$14.3M
FY48	$671.7M	$540.6M	$131.1M	$640.6M	$31.1M
FY49	$735.3M	$578.8M	$156.5M	$685.0M	$50.3M
FY50	$803.4M	$618.6M	$184.8M	$731.3M	$72.1M
FY51	$876.2M	$660.1M	$216.2M	$779.5M	$96.7M

Summary of Fiscal and Operational Impacts

Costs Inclusive of Debt Service and No Cash from Reserves

The assessment of the cumulative sum of the start-up costs and the recurring costs between the projected costs of TFD against the six and seven station scenarios demonstrate that the 6-station model becomes cost effective in FY40 while the 7-station model is not cost effective until FY47.



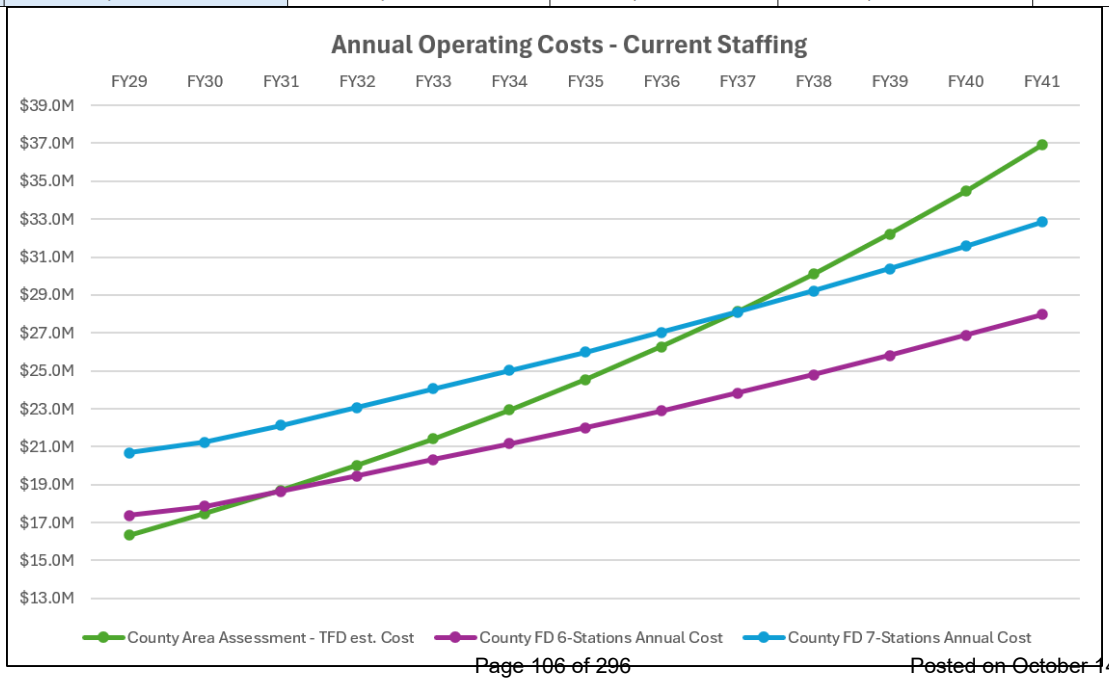
Summary of Fiscal and Operational Impacts

Costs Inclusive of Debt Service and 9M Cash from Reserves

This summary compares the recurring costs beginning in FY29 through FY41 for both the six and seven station configurations. This analysis utilized the current staffing provided by TFD and propagated throughout this report. Overall, the assessment of the recurring costs between the projected costs of TFD against the six and seven station scenarios demonstrate that it is a fiscally viable option if all assumptions remain over time. While the 6-station solution becomes viable in FY31, the 7-station solution does not become cost effective until FY37. This analysis does not include the start-up costs.

Current Staffing - With 30-year Debt Service and 9m Cash from Reserves

Fiscal Year	County Area Assessment - TFD est. Cost	County FD 6-Stations Annual Cost	Difference from TFD to County FD	County FD 7-Stations Annual Cost	Difference from TFD to County FD
FY29	$16.3M	$17.4M	($1.0M)	$20.7M	($4.4M)
FY30	$17.5M	$17.9M	($0.4M)	$21.2M	($3.8M)
FY31	$18.7M	$18.6M	$0.1M	$22.1M	($3.4M)
FY32	$20.0M	$19.5M	$0.5M	$23.1M	($3.1M)
FY33	$21.4M	$20.3M	$1.1M	$24.1M	($2.6M)
FY34	$22.9M	$21.1M	$1.8M	$25.0M	($2.1M)
FY35	$24.5M	$22.0M	$2.5M	$26.0M	($1.5M)
FY36	$26.3M	$22.9M	$3.4M	$27.0M	($0.7M)
FY37	$28.1M	$23.8M	$4.3M	$28.1M	$0.0M
FY38	$30.1M	$24.8M	$5.3M	$29.2M	$0.9M
FY39	$32.2M	$25.8M	$6.4M	$30.4M	$1.8M
FY40	$34.5M	$26.9M	$7.6M	$31.6M	$2.9M
FY41	$36.9M	$28.0M	$8.9M	$32.8M	$4.1M



Fire Services Feasibility Study

Summary of Fiscal and Operational Impacts

Costs Inclusive of Debt Service and 9M Cash from Reserves

This summary combines the start-up costs occurring prior to FY29 with the recurring costs beginning in FY29 through FY50 for both the six and seven station configurations. Overall, the assessment of the cumulative sum of the start-up costs and the recurring costs between the projected costs of TFD against the six and seven station scenarios demonstrate that the 6-station model becomes cost effective in FY39 while the 7-station model is not cost effective until FY46.

Observations

If the County chooses to establish its own Fire Department, it will still need to pay TFD for services until FY29 when it becomes operational; $29.8M in addition to the $30.1M start up cost for 6-Stations.

In other words, while the recurring costs presented on the previous page may be more fiscally enticing, the inclusion of the start-up costs significantly change the fiscal break-over points. Note, these tables only represent the cost directly associated with each option. If the County chooses to establish its own Fire Department, it will still need to pay TFD for services until FY29 when it becomes operational. These payments are not included in the table below.

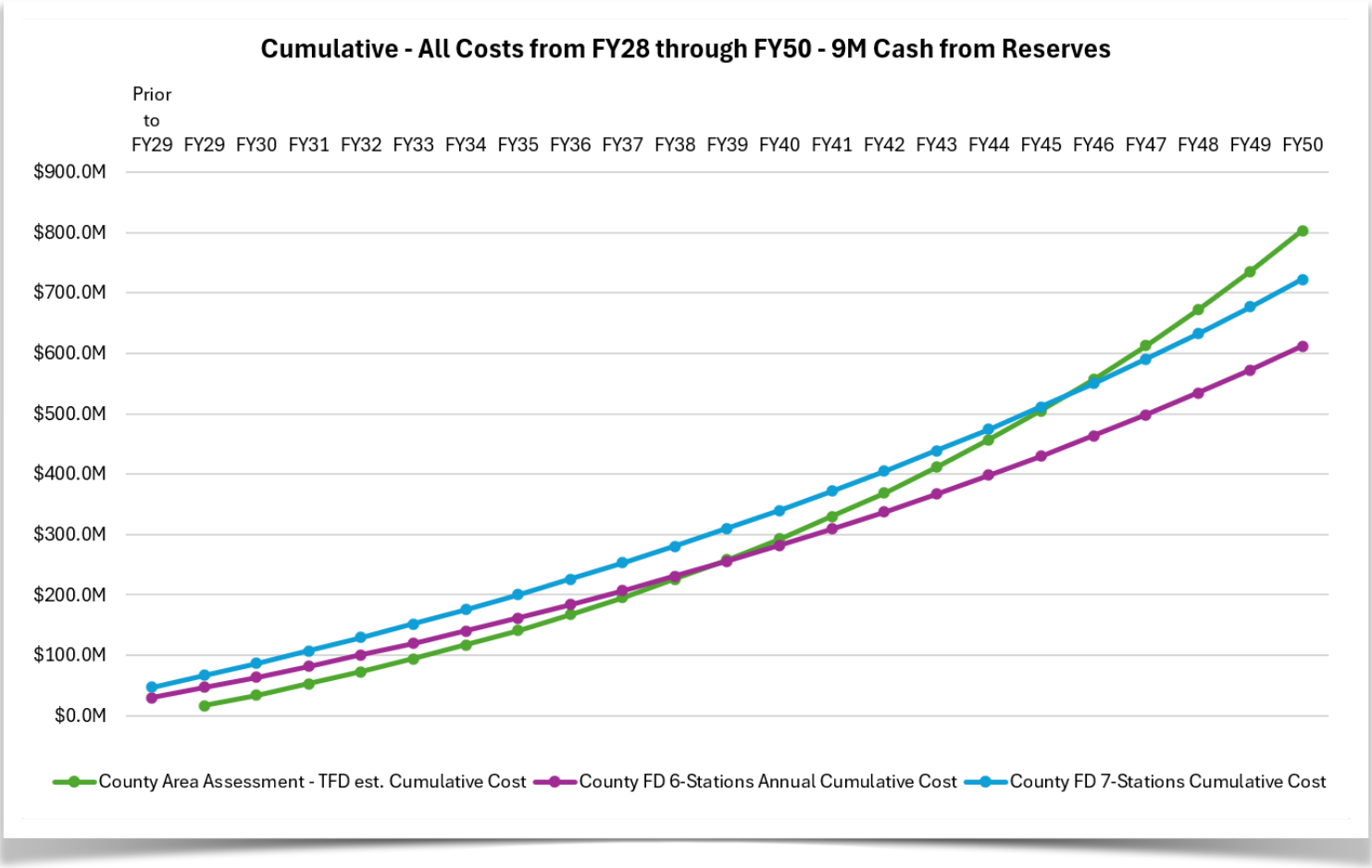
Current Staffing - Cumulative Cost from FY28-FY50 with 30-year Debt Service and 9m Cash from Reserves

Fiscal Year	County Area Assessment - TFD est. Cumulative Cost	County FD 6-Stations Annual Cumulative Cost	Difference from TFD to County FD	County FD 7-Stations Cumulative Cost	Difference from TFD to County FD
Prior to FY29		$30.1M	($30.1M)	$47.3M	($47.3M)
FY29	$16.3M	$46.7M	($30.4M)	$66.6M	($50.3M)
FY30	$33.8M	$63.8M	($30.0M)	$86.5M	($52.8M)
FY31	$52.5M	$81.7M	($29.2M)	$107.4M	($54.9M)
FY32	$72.5M	$100.4M	($27.9M)	$129.1M	($56.6M)
FY33	$93.9M	$120.0M	($26.0M)	$151.9M	($58.0M)
FY34	$116.8M	$140.4M	($23.5M)	$175.6M	($58.8M)
FY35	$141.4M	$161.6M	($20.2M)	$200.3M	($58.9M)
FY36	$167.7M	$183.7M	($16.1M)	$226.0M	($58.4M)
FY37	$195.8M	$206.8M	($11.0M)	$252.8M	($57.0M)
FY38	$225.9M	$230.8M	($5.0M)	$280.7M	($54.8M)
FY39	$258.1M	$255.9M	$2.2M	$309.8M	($51.7M)
FY40	$292.6M	$282.0M	$10.6M	$340.0M	($47.5M)
FY41	$329.5M	$309.2M	$20.3M	$371.6M	($42.1M)
FY42	$369.0M	$337.5M	$31.4M	$404.5M	($35.5M)
FY43	$411.3M	$367.1M	$44.2M	$438.7M	($27.4M)
FY44	$456.5M	$397.9M	$58.6M	$474.4M	($17.9M)
FY45	$505.0M	$430.0M	$75.0M	$511.5M	($6.6M)
FY46	$556.8M	$463.4M	$93.4M	$550.3M	$6.5M
FY47	$612.3M	$498.3M	$114.0M	$590.7M	$21.7M
FY48	$671.7M	$534.6M	$137.1M	$632.7M	$39.0M
FY49	$735.3M	$572.5M	$162.8M	$676.6M	$58.7M
FY50	$803.4M	$612.0M	$191.4M	$722.3M	$81.1M
FY51	$876.2M	$653.2M	$223.1M	$769.9M	$106.8M

Summary of Fiscal and Operational Impacts

Costs Inclusive of Debt Service and 9M Cash from Reserves

The assessment of the cumulative sum of the start-up costs and the recurring costs between the projected costs of TFD against the six and seven station scenarios demonstrate that the 6-station model becomes cost effective in FY39 while the 7-station model is not cost effective until FY46.



Fire Services Feasibility Study

Summary of Fiscal and Operational Impacts

This summary provides the total annual cost, inclusive of debt service and cash from reserve strategies for the six and seven station models. The County provided debt service values to finance start-up cost prior to FY29. The debt service values consisted of two options for each model. Option 1 utilized debt services for 100% of start-up costs. Option 2 provided 9M in cash from reserves and then utilized debt service to cover the balance of start-up costs.

6 Station Model_Current Staffing based on TFD Pay Scale_EMS Integrated_Without Cash From Reserves

Plan Year	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Annual Costs	Cash from Reserves	30-year Debt Service	Total Annual Costs
Prior to FY29	$29,500,880	$629,777	$0	$0	$30,130,657	$0	$0	**$30,130,657**
FY29	$13,658,441	$655,088	$135,446	$1,782,337	$16,231,311	$0	$1,752,490	**$17,983,801**
FY30	$14,024,661	$686,500	$142,360	$1,860,293	$16,713,815	$0	$1,752,490	**$18,466,305**
FY31	$14,689,251	$719,540	$149,640	$1,941,925	$17,500,356	$0	$1,752,490	**$19,252,846**
FY32	$15,385,886	$754,297	$157,307	$2,027,417	$18,324,907	$0	$1,752,490	**$20,077,397**
FY33	$16,116,132	$790,865	$165,380	$2,116,964	$19,189,342	$0	$1,752,490	**$20,941,832**

6 Station Model_Current Staffing based on TFD Pay Scale_EMS Integrated_With Cash From Reserves

Plan Year	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Annual Costs	Cash from Reserves	30-year Debt Service	Total Annual Costs
Prior to FY29	$29,500,880	$629,777	$0	$0	$30,130,657	$9,000,000	$0	**$30,130,657**
FY29	$13,658,441	$655,088	$135,446	$1,782,337	$16,231,311	$0	$1,137,804	**$17,369,115**
FY30	$14,024,661	$686,500	$142,360	$1,860,293	$16,713,815	$0	$1,137,804	**$17,851,619**
FY31	$14,689,251	$719,540	$149,640	$1,941,925	$17,500,356	$0	$1,137,804	**$18,638,160**
FY32	$15,385,886	$754,297	$157,307	$2,027,417	$18,324,907	$0	$1,137,804	**$19,462,711**
FY33	$16,116,132	$790,865	$165,380	$2,116,964	$19,189,342	$0	$1,137,804	**$20,327,146**

7 Station Model_Current Staffing based on TFD Pay Scale_EMS Integrated_Without Cash From Reserves

Plan Year	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Annual Costs	Cash from Reserves	30-year Debt Service	Total Annual Costs
Prior to FY29	$46,519,599	$732,637	$0	$0	$47,252,236	$0	$0	**$47,252,236**
FY29	$15,289,941	$762,216	$165,126	$2,320,042	$18,537,325	$0	$2,792,603	**$21,329,928**
FY30	$15,701,868	$799,077	$173,821	$2,422,359	$19,097,126	$0	$2,792,603	**$21,889,729**
FY31	$16,447,961	$837,863	$182,989	$2,529,515	$19,998,327	$0	$2,792,603	**$22,790,930**
FY32	$17,230,093	$878,677	$192,656	$2,641,754	$20,943,180	$0	$2,792,603	**$23,735,783**
FY33	$18,050,026	$921,632	$202,851	$2,759,331	$21,933,840	$0	$2,792,603	**$24,726,443**

7 Station Model_Current Staffing based on TFD Pay Scale_EMS Integrated_With Cash From Reserves

Plan Year	Base Costs	Maintenance Costs	Operational Costs	Depreciation Costs	Annual Costs	Cash from Reserves	30-year Debt Service	Total Annual Costs
Prior to FY29	$46,519,599	$732,637	$0	$0	$47,252,236	$9,000,000	$0	**$47,252,236**
FY29	$15,289,941	$762,216	$165,126	$2,320,042	$18,537,325	$0	$2,132,224	**$20,669,549**
FY30	$15,701,868	$799,077	$173,821	$2,422,359	$19,097,126	$0	$2,132,224	**$21,229,350**
FY31	$16,447,961	$837,863	$182,989	$2,529,515	$19,998,327	$0	$2,132,224	**$22,130,551**
FY32	$17,230,093	$878,677	$192,656	$2,641,754	$20,943,180	$0	$2,132,224	**$23,075,404**
FY33	$18,050,026	$921,632	$202,851	$2,759,331	$21,933,840	$0	$2,132,224	**$24,066,064**

Realistic Strategies for Implementation

Key Elements for Consideration

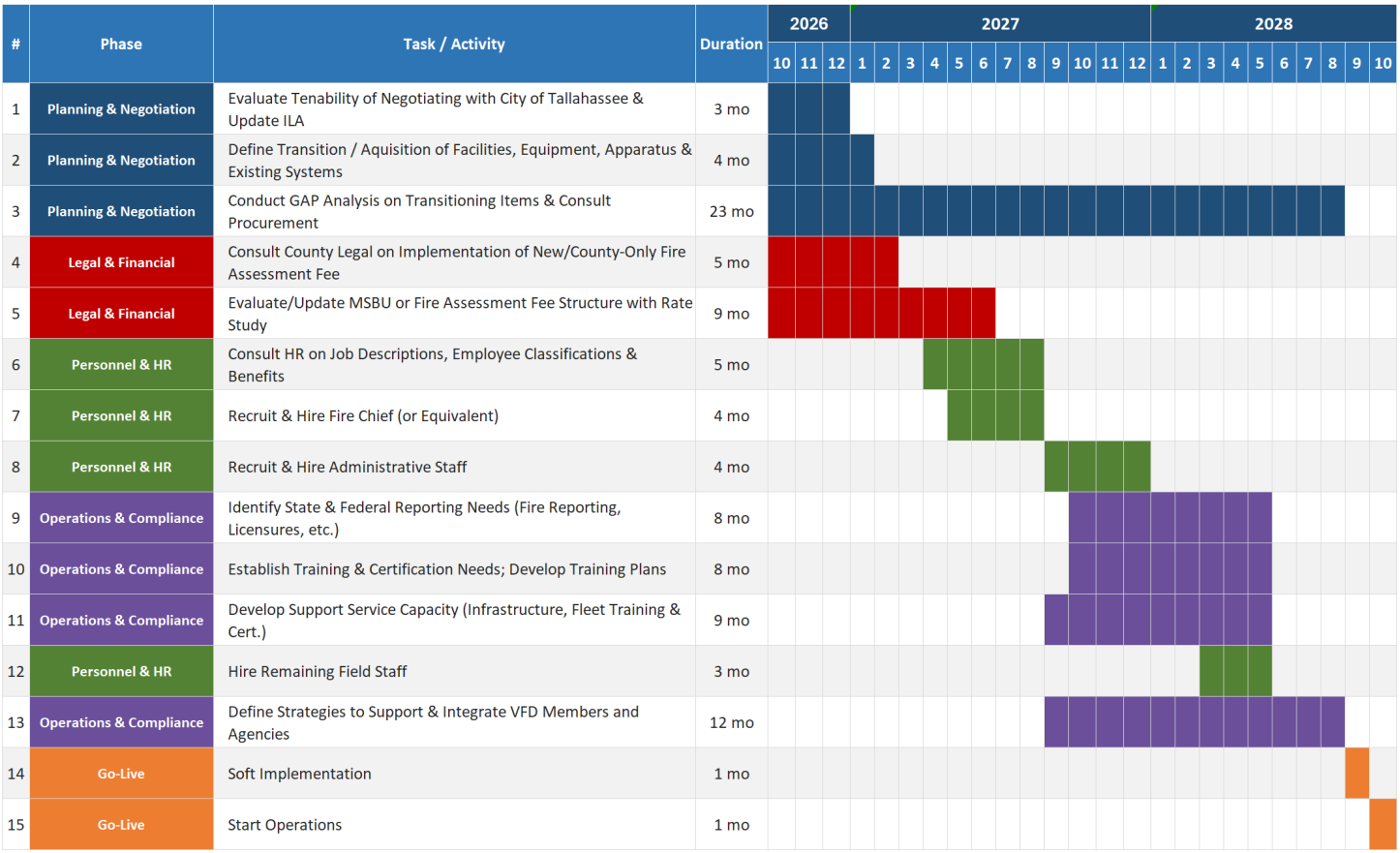
A high-level implementation strategy is provided below to provide the policy discourse with realistic timelines for negotiations with the city if desired and/or the preparations for providing a county fire service by October 1, 2028.

Overall, the implementation can be reasonably accomplished in the allowable timeframe, but the decision to move forward should be made on or before March 2027.

Fire Services Implementation Timeline

Implementation Strategy & Schedule | June 2026 – October 2028

#	Phase	Task / Activity	Duration
1	Planning & Negotiation	Evaluate Tenability of Negotiating with City of Tallahassee & Update ILA	3 mo
2	Planning & Negotiation	Define Transition / Aquisition of Facilities, Equipment, Apparatus & Existing Systems	4 mo
3	Planning & Negotiation	Conduct GAP Analysis on Transitioning Items & Consult Procurement	23 mo
4	Legal & Financial	Consult County Legal on Implementation of New/County-Only Fire Assessment Fee	5 mo
5	Legal & Financial	Evaluate/Update MSBU or Fire Assessment Fee Structure with Rate Study	9 mo
6	Personnel & HR	Consult HR on Job Descriptions, Employee Classifications & Benefits	5 mo
7	Personnel & HR	Recruit & Hire Fire Chief (or Equivalent)	4 mo
8	Personnel & HR	Recruit & Hire Administrative Staff	4 mo
9	Operations & Compliance	Identify State & Federal Reporting Needs (Fire Reporting, Licensures, etc.)	8 mo
10	Operations & Compliance	Establish Training & Certification Needs; Develop Training Plans	8 mo
11	Operations & Compliance	Develop Support Service Capacity (Infrastructure, Fleet Training & Cert.)	9 mo
12	Personnel & HR	Hire Remaining Field Staff	3 mo
13	Operations & Compliance	Define Strategies to Support & Integrate VFD Members and Agencies	12 mo
14	Go-Live	Soft Implementation	1 mo
15	Go-Live	Start Operations	1 mo



Note: Durations and start dates reflect current planning assumptions and are subject to refinement as the project progresses.

If the county elects to provide their own services, a more detailed and granular implementation schedule will be provided.

Consideration for Timeline of Hiring of Personnel

To compliment, the high-level implementation schedule, specific detail is provided for the hiring of personnel that is already captured in the items of hiring or assigning leadership or equivalent, the administrative staff, and the remainder of the field staff.

The headers should be interpreted as the duration of the employees existing on the county payroll. For example, a Chief Officer, Finance Analyst, and an Admin. Associate would be on the payroll from FY27 forward. Some members would be on the payroll for 12 or 6-months of FY28 and the remaining, and largest portion, would be on the payroll for three months of FY28. In the EMS integrated model, the Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, and Computer Systems Coordinator might be treated as contract positions used during start-up and then transitioned to existing EMS Department leadership once operational, thus those positions are not included in the chart below.

FTE Rollout for 6-Station Model_EMS Integrated_Current Staffing

Classification / Role	FY27-Full	FY28-Full	FY28-3/4	FY28-1/2	FY28-1/4	Total
Computer Systems Coordinator	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Battalion Chief	1	0	0	3	0	4
Fire Chief	0	0	0	0	0	0
Deputy Chief	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Financial Analyst	1	0	0	0	0	1
Fire Inspector	0	0	0	0	2	2
Fire Lieutenant	0	3	0	3	12	18
Fire Engineer	0	0	0	3	15	18
Fire Marshal	0	1	0	0	0	1
Fire Rescue Public Information Officer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Firefighter	0	0	0	0	32	32
Logistics Technician	0	1	0	0	0	1
Vehicle Mechanic	0	0	0	0	1	1
Senior Administrative Associate	1	0	0	0	0	1
Training Captain/Coordinator	0	1	0	0	0	1
HR Generalist	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**3**	**6**	**0**	**9**	**62**	**80**

Evaluation of the Potential for Greater Efficiencies within the Current Service Model with the City of Tallahassee

Incremental Adjustments to the Fire Assessment

In addition to the suggestions associated with revisiting the ILA, there is an additional element of the fire assessment fee process that may deserve further exploration and legal review.

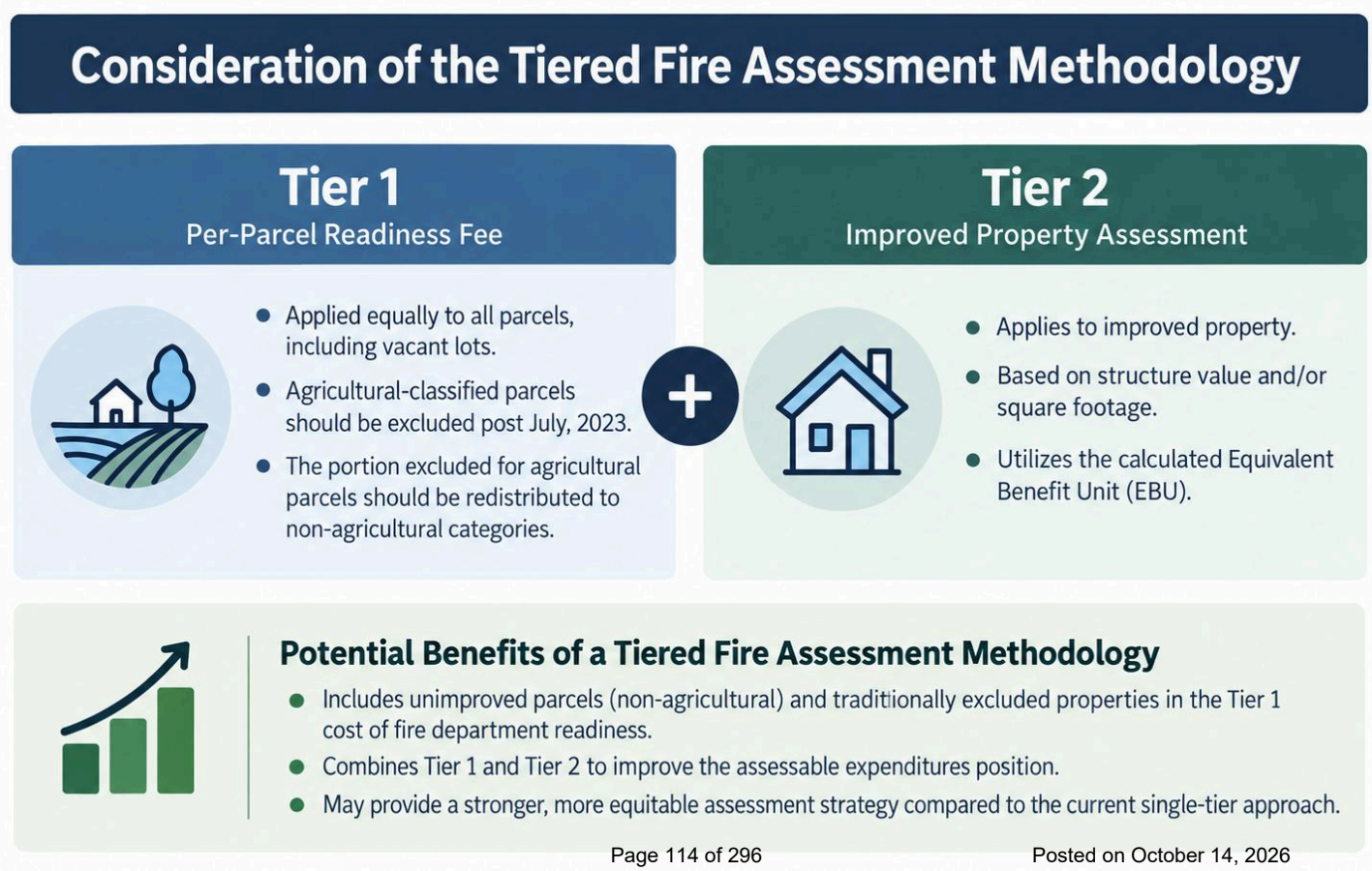
Consideration of the Tiered Fire Assessment Methodology

The Florida Supreme Court Case, *Morris v City of Cape Coral (2015),* validated the tiered process that many of the agencies in Florida utilize today. Tier 1 is a per-parcel readiness fee that is applied equally to all parcels including vacant lots. Agricultural-classified parcels should be excluded post July, 2023 and that portion should be redistributed to non-agricultural categories. Tier 2 is for improved property and is based on the structure value and/or square footage and the calculated Equivalent Benefit Unit (EBU).

Recommendations

The County is encouraged to evaluate the Tiered Fire Assessment Fee methodology as compared to the current single-tier approach established in ~2010.

The benefit of exploring a tiered fire assessment fee methodology as described here, is that unimproved parcels (non-agricultural) and traditionally excluded properties could be included in the Tier 1 cost of fire department readiness. The combined Tier 1 and Tier 2 strategy could improve the assessable expenditures position over the current single-tier assessment strategy.



Billing and Collection of the Fire Assessment

The property tax bill is commonly used by communities in Florida to bill and collect fire service special assessments. This approach allows the assessment to be included with the regular property tax bill and collected through the existing tax collection process.

Because the same property information used to develop the fire assessment is also used for billing, each property is treated consistently. Including the assessment on the property tax bill also generally results in higher collection rates and provides an established process for handling unpaid assessments with clear procedures.

Recent legal challenges in Florida have raised questions about utilizing utility bills to collect fire fees. In Ocala, a fee added to the utility bill led to major litigation and was found to be improperly structured. A separate challenge is underway in Tallahassee that raises similar concerns about whether utility-based billing of fire assessment fees meets legal requirements. Using the property tax bill as the method of collecting a fire special assessment is clearly allowable under current Florida law and legally defensible.

Observations

The property tax bill is the common method used by Florida communities to bill and collect fire service assessments.

Billing on the property tax bill treats each property consistently, generally results in higher collection rates, and provides an established process for handling unpaid assessments.

Fire Department Service Evaluation
Rosemount Fire Department, MN

026

FITCH
& ASSOCIATES

benesch



Leon County

Fire Assessment Program Support

Final Technical Report

October 7, 2026

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LEON COUNTY
FIRE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM SUPPORT

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I. Introduction

History of the Fire Services Fund Interlocal Agreement

Leon County, Florida ("County") and the City of Tallahassee ("City") entered into the Interlocal Agreement Regarding the Provision of Fire and Emergency Medical Services between Leon County and the City of Tallahassee ("Agreement") in 2009 to establish the provision of county-wide fire services and emergency medical services. Per the Agreement, the County and the City fund and pay for fire rescue services through the levy and collection of special assessments on benefited non-governmental property and through billing and collection of a fee on benefited governmental property. The Agreement has been amended six times, with the most recent amendment becoming effective on October 1, 2023. This amendment confirmed that both parties agreed to adopt and incorporate the *Fire Assessment Memorandum for the City of Tallahassee and Leon County, Florida*; *April 2023* (also referred to as the "*3rd Term Rate Study*"), which established new flat fire protection assessment and fee rates for a five-year period from FY 2023/24 through FY 2027/28. The City and the County adopted the *3rd Term Rate Study* into their respective resolutions establishing the assessment and fee rate schedules.

Background of Special Assessments and Fees

This report focuses solely on the fire services special assessment and the fire services fee program in the incorporated and unincorporated portions of the County. A special assessment is used to pay for the fire services provided to all property within the service area. A special assessment is a non-ad valorem charge levied by local governments to property owners to specifically fund fire protection, suppression and rescue/first responder services, excluding advanced life support (ALS) services. Under Florida case law, the services or improvements funded by an assessment must have a logical relationship with and provide a "special benefit" to property, and the assessment methodology must apportion the costs in a fair and reasonable manner.

As it relates to the special assessment component, some properties are granted exemptions for various reasons. For example, property zoned for agricultural use, is exempt from an assessment pursuant to Section 125.01, Florida Statutes. Another example is that places of worship on property owned by religious institutions may be exempted.

As explained in the *3rd Term Rate Study*, "[w]hen crafting an exemption, it is important to understand that the fair apportionment element required by Florida case law prohibits the shifting of the fiscal costs of any special assessment from exempt landowners to other non-exempt landowners. In other words, the funding for an exemption from a special assessment

must come from a legally available external revenue source, such as the City and County's general funds. Funding for fire assessment exemptions cannot come from the proceeds derived directly from the imposition of special assessments for fire services and facilities. Because any exemption must be funded by an external funding source, the grant of any exemption will not have any impact upon the fire assessment to be imposed upon any other non-exempt parcels." *3rd Term Rate Study*, pages 21-22.

Regarding certain institutional or government properties, F.S. 170.201, provides that local governments may exempt from fire assessments: property owned or occupied by a religious institution and used as a place of worship or education; by a public or private preschool, elementary school, middle school, or high school; or by a governmentally financed, insured, or subsidized housing facility that is used primarily for persons who are elderly or disabled. It is important to note that any revenue loss due to exemptions cannot be recovered by increasing the rates for other paying properties. As stated in the *3rd Term Rate Study*, this amount of lost revenue needs to be funded through other revenue sources, such as the General Fund. For example, the City would be required to transfer funds into the Fire Services Fund in the amount of any exemption afforded to property in the incorporated portion of the County or that the City is otherwise responsible for billing. Similarly, the County would be required to transfer funds into the Fire Services Fund in the amount of any exemption afforded to property in the unincorporated portion of the County.

Certain properties, depending on classification and ownership, such as property owned by Federal and State governments and school boards, are charged a governmental fire services fee. Under the *3rd Term Rate Study*, the governmental entities were charged a fee based upon a calculation of $.267 per square footage of property as determined by the City. *3rd Term Rate Study*, page 23. The *3rd Term Rate Study*, explains that user fees may be charged to governmental entities either in exchange for a particular governmental service benefitting the property and impact fees may likewise be charged to meet the historical demand for fire services from the developed property, respectively. Further, *3rd Term Rate Study*, acknowledges that "state-owned property is not required to pay a special assessment without legislative authorization but that such authorization is not needed for user fees or service charges. Additionally, a valid charge cannot be enforced by a lien against public property absent elector approval. Rather, the enforcement remedy is a mandamus action to compel payment. In addition, certain general laws preempt the home rule power of local governments to impose special assessments on educational institutions." *3rd Term Rate Study*, page 23.

Methods of Collection

The City and the County use different methods of collection. The County collects the fire services assessment through the tax bill, using the uniform method of collection authorized per F.S. 197.3632. The City collects the fire services assessment through its utility billing system or by direct bills. For governmental properties, including those located within the unincorporated areas of the County, the City collects the fire services fee through its utility billing system or by monthly or quarterly direct billing. For non-governmental properties in the incorporated area, the City collects fire services assessments on residents' utility bills. Prior to October 1, 2025, in the unincorporated area of the County, the City collected fire services assessments on utility bills for residents with a City of Tallahassee utility account and through quarterly direct billings for properties in the unincorporated areas of the County that did not have a City utility account; as of October 1, 2025, the County withdrew its authorization for the City to bill non-governmental properties in the unincorporated areas of the County.

Budget Deficit Identified and Request for New Rate Study

In early 2025, the City identified a deficit in its fire services budget, which the City initially attributed to the School Board's non-payment of the fire services fee and the collective bargaining agreement with the firefighter's union for increased pay. According to information provided by Leon County, City staff expressed an intent to retain a consultant to calculate a new rate schedule without having communicated with the County. Ultimately, as required by the Agreement, the County agreed to jointly retain a consultant to conduct a new rate study to provide rates and fees based upon the costs provided to the consultant by the City. Over time, the City identified additional reasons for the funding deficit. Ultimately neither the City nor the County adopted the study conducted in 2025 or the fees or rates therein *("2025 Unadopted Rate Study").* However, in 2025 the City of Tallahassee unilaterally increased its fire services assessment rates and fees through Resolution No. 25-R-45, but these increases were not based on information provided in the *3rd Term Rate Study* or the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study*.

Retention of Benesch and Objectives of Evaluation

Leon County retained Benesch to verify the accuracy of the recent City fire services billings, collections, and funding, and to identify unanticipated expenditures not contemplated in the *3rd Term Rate Study*. This evaluation included the review of the following:

- Available background information of the fire services assessment program;
- Methodology used in the fire services assessment and fees technical studies;
- Fire services assessment rate and fee levels charged by the City and County;
- Fire services assessment and fees billings versus collections;

- Fire services assessment and fee collections versus expenditures;
- Bond financing in excess of identified costs in the *3rd Term Rate Study* and projects associated with this additional amount;
- Fire services assessment and fee revenue shortfalls due to exempt properties, under billings, and/or under collections; and
- Transfers from other accounts to make up for the fire services assessment and fee exemptions/shortfall, including but not limited to the Fire Operating Reserve Fund.

Over the past 35 years, Benesch's Public Finance Practice has specialized in funding studies for local governments, including fire services assessment programs and other funding studies. We have been involved in all aspects of funding fire services and completed multiple studies throughout Florida. Our staff includes planners, engineers, economists and GIS specialists with in-depth experience in assessments. We have prepared Fire Station Master Plans as well as fire/EMS impact fee studies and understand the elements that are critical in fire facility capital and operating budgets. Availability of these capabilities enable us to provide accurate analyses needed to fulfill legal requirements associated with funding fire services.

This technical report presents results of the analysis completed for Leon County. It is important to note that Benesch is not an accounting firm, and we do not have certified public accountants on our staff. Hence, this analysis did not involve auditing the City's records and is limited to a review of data provided by Leon County, joint City/County GIS staff, and data acquired from the City of Tallahassee via public records requests or records otherwise available publicly.

Initial Summary of Findings

As will be discussed in detail in this report, the primary findings of this analysis suggest that in FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25 there was a shortfall in revenues ranging from $15.8 million to $21.2 million, which would have covered the budget increase of $11.5 million identified in the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study.* Primary components of this revenue loss include the following:

- Due to the City not using the 5-year flat rates calculated in the *3rd Term Rate Study*, combined revenues in FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25 were approximately **$3.8 million less than expected**.

- For multiple parcels, the annual assessment amount billed by the City does not match the amount set forth in the City's resolution.

- The utility billing records include **"negative" bills of $5.4 million** in FY 2024/25. Approximately $4.6 million of this is related to nonpayment of the fire services fee by the School Board; this total amount seems to be a "write-off" of approximately four years of unpaid fire services fees in FY 2024/2025.

- The billings (charges) from both the City and County, in total, were approximately $51.5 million while actual revenues were $45.5 million for FY 2024/25, **a difference of $6 million or an estimated $12 million over two years.**

These figures do not include potential revenue loss due to how the religious institutions are charged (or exempted) and inconsistent billing practices described later in this report.

II. Review of Fire Services Assessment and Fee Rate Studies

As part of this analysis, the *3rd Term Rate Study* and the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study* were reviewed. This section provides a summary and comparison of key elements from each study.

3rd Term Rate Study

The City and County's *3rd Term Rate Study* was completed in April 2023. This study utilized a common apportionment methodology in which all assessable costs for fire services were allocated to different land uses based on their historical demand for the fire services. The *3rd Term Rate Study* calculated the fire services assessment and fee rates based on a five-year average of estimated fire services assessable budgets, with rates to remain constant year-to-year from FY 2023/24 through FY 2027/28. By using an average of five years' worth of budget projections, it was anticipated that revenues collected in the first two to three years of the assessment program would bring in surplus revenues (when compared to the budgeted expenditures for those years), and the program would begin to accumulate a reserve balance. In turn, the balance of the Fire Operating Reserve Fund would be utilized to cover revenue shortfalls anticipated in the latter years of the five-year time frame identified in the study.

As shown in Table 1 on the next page, the *3rd Term Rate Study* estimated that billing the identified rates would result in the collection of approximately $50.9 million in net revenue for FY 2024/25. However, based upon a review of the City's own billing data, actual collections were more than 10 percent lower than anticipated for that fiscal year. A large portion of this collection deficit is due to the City's imposition and collection of phased rates, as opposed to the flat rates, for non-governmental property as discussed in more detail following Table 1, on the next page.

Table 1

Expected Revenue vs. Actual Revenue

Source	FY 2024/25
Estimated Net Revenue[(1)]	$50,943,708
Actual Collections[(2)]	$45,544,029
Difference (Total less Net)	**-$5,399,679**
Percent Difference	-10.60%

1) Source: *3rd Term Rate Study,* Table 16 footnote (Estimated Assessment Revenue net of institutional buy-downs) and Table 18 (Government Fee Allocation Revenue); these totals were added together. See Appendix C of this report for a copy of the *3rd Term Rate Study*.
2) Source: Appendix A, Table A-7, which shows the Fire Services Assessment and Fees Actual Collections for FY 2024/25 from the City and County.

When the City and County each adopted the *3rd Term Rate Study* in 2023, Leon County adopted and imposed the five-year flat assessment rates required by the *3rd Term Rate Study*. The City, however, adopted[1] assessment rates that reflect a phased implementation of non-governmental property rates, meaning that the City charged lower rates in FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25 for non-governmental property than the flat rates that the County charged for the same period of time and lower than the rates required by the *3rd Term Rate Study*. This means that non-governmental rate payers billed by the City paid less than non-governmental rate payers billed by the County, with a resulting approximately $3.8 million deficit in the FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25 revenue. The City's 2023 rate resolution references the *3rd Term Rate Study* for the rates imposed, but the City's non-governmental property rate schedule is not supported by the rate schedule in the *3rd Term Rate Study* and was developed by the City unilaterally outside of and unsupported by the study. Appendix A, Tables A-1 and A-2 provide a comparison of rates imposed by the County and the City based upon their respective fire services resolutions, which are included in Appendices E and F of this report. The rates utilized by the City also appear in the City's utility billing files for FY 2024/25.

In summary, the City's decision not to impose, bill, and collect the flat rates on non-governmental property as calculated by the *3rd Term Rate Study* contributed to its budget deficit in FY 2024/2025. To estimate the impact of this approach on the potential revenue generation, a sensitivity analysis was conducted using the property unit data presented in the *3rd Term Rate Study* and fire assessment rates adopted by the County versus the City. Additionally, nothing in

[1] City of Tallahassee Resolution No. 23-R-19

the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study* reflects an adjustment to the rates proposed to be imposed by the City and the County going forward to address the approximately $3.8 million deficit in City billing and collections for FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25.

Assessment Rate Sensitivity Analysis

Table 2 below identifies the estimated impact on the fire assessment revenue resulting from the City billing reduced rates on non-governmental property for FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25.

These estimates were generated using the following data and process:

- Number of units and building-per-tier values were obtained from the *3rd Term Rate Study*.
- Flat rates from the *3rd Term Rate Study* were multiplied by these units. These rates were held constant for the two years of this comparison.
- Then, the reduced, phased rates adopted by the City were multiplied by the same number of units.

Table 2 shows the estimated calculation of the amount of lost revenue resulting from the City charging lower rates than required by the *3rd Term Rate Study*.

Table 2

Revenue Loss Estimate Due to Phased Implementation

Period	Expected Gross Revenue at 5-Yr Flat Rates(1)	Expected Gross Revenue w/City Phased Rates(2)	Difference(3)	Percent(4)
FY 2023/24	$51,448,000	$48,977,000	-$2,471,000	-4.8%
FY 2024/25	$51,448,000	$50,158,000	-$1,290,000	-2.5%
Cumulative Shortfall			**-$3,761,000**	-7.3%

1) Source: Appendix A, Table A-3 (rounded to nearest $1,000), which shows figures from the Sensitivity Analysis based upon the imposition of the 5-Year Flat Rates.
2) Source: Appendix A, Table A-4, which shows the figures from the Sensitivity Analysis of the City's adopted rates for FY 2023/24, and Table A-5, which shows the figures from the Sensitivity Analysis of the City's adopted rates for FY 2024/25 (all figures rounded to nearest $1,000)
3) Calculation of expected gross revenue with City rate (Item 2) less expected gross revenue at 5-Year Flat rates (Item 1)
4) Calculation of the difference (Item 3) divided by the expected gross revenue at 5-Year flat rates (Item 1)

Conclusion: As shown in Table 2 above, had the City imposed, billed, and collected the flat rates required by the *3rd Term Rate Study* beginning FY 2023/24, the fire assessment and fee program could have potentially generated additional revenue (approximately $3.8 million) that would

have increased the Fire Operating Reserve Fund balance for use during the latter years of the *3rd Term Rate Study* (FY 25/26 through FY 27/28) or should have been accounted for in the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study*.

2025 Unadopted Rate Study

As previously mentioned, the City and the County commissioned a fire services assessment rate study in early 2025 to address budget deficits identified by the City. For the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study*, the City provided the consultant with an estimated assessable budget that had an $11.5 million increase above the assessable budget in the *3rd Term Rate Study*.

As stated in the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study*, most of the increase in the City's budget was attributed to the fire union bargaining agreement related to increases in personnel expenses, cost increases related to Fire Station 17, the City's Strategic Plan to improve the Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating, and bad debt/under collection. The following table (Table 3) presents a condensed comparison of the 5-year average budget from the *3rd Term Rate Study* and the 3-year average budget from the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study*.

The total net assessable budget increased approximately $11.5 million in the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study*. This is a 22.3% increase from the *3rd Term Rate Study*, as shown in Table 3.

Budget categories with the largest increases include:

- Personnel expenditures increased approximately $3.9 million
- Other Services & Charges (Bad Debt) increased approximately $1.2 million
- Capital outlay, which includes expenses related to vehicle equipment and unclassified equipment, increased approximately $2.1 million
- Internal service funds increased approximately $2.2 million
- Transfers (mainly debt service transfers) increased approximately $1.5 million

A full line-item detailed comparison is included in Appendix A, Table A-6 of this report. Budgets shown in Table 3, on the next page, were the basis for the calculated assessment rates in each respective rate study and the difference between these two budgets was approximately $11.5 million. Several of the categories with more significant increases are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Table 3

Fire Assessment Budget Comparison

Expenditures	3rd Term Rate Study 5-yr Avg[1]	2025 Unadopted Study 3-yr Avg[2]	Difference	Percent Change	Percent of Total Diff.
Personnel Services	$37,688,871	$41,553,408	$3,864,537	10.3%	33.7%
Operating Expenses	$1,808,163	$1,794,750	-$13,413	-0.7%	-0.1%
Bad Debt Expense	$173,875	$1,394,202	$1,220,327	701.8%	10.7%
Capital Outlay	$336,473	$2,483,831	$2,147,358	638.2%	18.7%
Internal Service Funds	$7,874,272	$10,041,310	$2,167,038	27.5%	18.9%
Utilities and Other Expenses	$345,022	$350,140	$5,118	1.5%	0.0%
Transfers (Debt Service)	$1,111,152	$2,648,788	$1,537,636	138.4%	13.4%
Contributions to Operations	$96,533	$97,966	$1,433	1.5%	0.0%
5-Year CIP	$1,229,783	$1,246,303	$16,520	1.3%	0.1%
Total Expenditures	**$50,664,144**	**$61,610,698**	**$10,946,554**	**21.6%**	**95.6%**
Less: Total Revenues	$1,947,546	$2,043,062	$95,516	4.9%	-0.8%
Net Expenditures	**$48,716,598**	**$59,567,636**	**$10,851,038**	**22.3%**	-
Additional Costs	$2,706,478	$3,309,313	$602,835	22.3%	5.3%
Net Assessable Expenditures	**$51,423,076**	**$62,876,949**	**$11,453,873**	**22.3%**	-

Source: Appendix A, Table A-6

1) The 5-year average includes FY 2023/24 through FY 2027/28
2) The 3-year average includes FY 2025/26 through FY 2027/28

The following paragraphs provide further details on primary components of this $11.5 million increase.

Personnel Costs

Of this $11.5 million increase, approximately $3.9 million, or 34%, of the increase was attributed to personnel costs resulting from a combination of higher salaries/wages negotiated with the International Association of Fire Fighters and additional personnel hired for Stations 15 and 17. As explained by the City during the September 3, 2025, City Commission meeting, the City hired ten firefighters (with 12 additional offers of employment accepted) to ensure the availability of staff when Fire Station 17 (and the expansion of Fire Station 15) came on-line. In the meantime, these new personnel were to be allocated to the five busiest stations in the City. Based on available information, the specific portions of the budget that were increased due to the Fire Station 17 construction and Fire Station 15 addition could not be separated from increases unrelated to the construction of these stations. Appendix A, Tables A-8 through A-12 provide additional details on the negotiated salary and wage rates.

Capital Outlay and Internal Service Funds

Increases in capital outlay and internal service funds collectively account for approximately $4.3 million, or 38%, of the increase. Capital outlay includes expenses related to vehicle equipment

and unclassified equipment. Internal Service Funds include transfers to other departments to cover costs associated with support provided specifically for fire services by these supporting departments. The primary components of the Internal Service Funds are information systems, utility service, and vehicle replacement and maintenance related expenses. Although not specifically explained in the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study*, the study makes a reference to the City's Strategic Plan to improve the Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating as one of the reasons for the City's budget increase. There is no other justification or support for these costs in the information reviewed.

Fire Station 17 Related Debt Service

Approximately $1.5 million of the $11.5 million in additional cost identified by the City for use in the 2025 Unadopted Study is related to pay additional debt service cost. According the documentation provided by the City, pursuant to public records requests, that $1.5 million is to pay for the construction of Fire Station 17. The budget contemplated in the *3rd Term Rate Study* included a cost of $17 million for the construction of Fire Station 17. In fact, the *3rd Term Rate Study* accounted for Fire Station 17 to be fully constructed and operational by the end of 2023,[2] so those constructions costs should have been mostly accounted for in rates imposed, billed, and collected by the end of the 2023 calendar year. The following provides a timeline of changes related to the estimated cost of building Fire Station 17:

- April 2023: Fire Station 17 cost was estimated at $17 million and incorporated in the capital cost of the *3rd Term Rate Study.*
- June 2024: The City of Tallahassee issued the Fire Improvement Revenue Note, Series 2024 for $27 million to be used to finance the construction of new Fire Station 17.
    - Leon County did not approve of the $10 million increase for Fire Station 17 construction.
    - Along with the $10 million increase in principal, there is approximately $6.7 million in added interest costs over the 20-year payment schedule for the construction financing.
- February 2025: Fire Station 17 cost estimate was increased to $34 million; presented at the February 12, 2025 City Commission Workshop & Summary.
- May 2025: Fire Station 17 is referenced in the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study* but a cost breakdown for Fire Station 17-related items was not included.

[2] *3rd Term Rate Study*, page 3, fn. 1.

In conclusion, the project had not been bid out at the time the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study* was issued in mid-2025, and the budget of $17 million[3] that was contemplated to bring Fire Station 17 on-line in the *3rd Term Rate Study* was increased to at least $27 million in the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study*. Additional costs associated with this increase include $10 million of principal and $6.7 million of interest, for a total of $16.7 million.

"Bad" Debt

As shown in Table 3 previously, the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study* estimates an increase of $1.22 million in bad debt when compared to the *3rd Term Rate Study*. Bad debt expenses relate to a City contractor hired to pursue collections from residents who have not paid their utility bill, which may include the fire services assessment. The amount of the fire services assessment is set as part of the budget process, which is then expensed monthly as a one-twelfth amount. This amount is an estimate, and the actual expense is determined at year-end following an assessment of the adequacy of the amount in the bad debt allowance account. It is important to note that only the portion of uncollected utility bills attributed to the fire services assessment charges should be included in the fire services assessment budget. The County is currently working with the City to gather more information and confirm the scope of the bad debt line item.

[3] WCTV Eyewitness News Article, August 11, 2025. "After back-and-forth, Leon County may not raise fire fee"

III. Review of Billing & Collection Records

In documenting the billings and collections of the fire services assessments and fees, several data files were reviewed:

- City of Tallahassee utility billing file includes monthly and quarterly billing of governmental and non-governmental property for calendar years 2024 and 2025.[4]
  - Data from these two calendar years were combined and summarized into a FY 2024/25 dataset that would be compatible and consistent with the timeframe used in budget, revenue, and expenditure reporting.
  - This dataset represents the amount billed by the City.
- Leon County fire rescue services non-ad valorem assessment roll for FY 2024/25.
  - This dataset represents the amount billed by the County.
- City of Tallahassee fire services expenditures and revenues for FY 2022/23 through FY 2024/25.
  - This dataset represents the actual collections from both the City and County.

The following findings are based solely on the review of available documents with limited interaction with the City, which indicate certain gaps in fire services assessment collections and inconsistencies in fire services assessment billings.

Billings

As part of this review, the City of Tallahassee utility billings for the fire services assessment were reviewed. For FY 2024/25, the City's billings totaled approximately $47.5 million. However, the billing file also included approximately $5.4 million of "negative" billings, noting that most of these negative billings were associated with the School Board properties. It is important to note that the Leon County School Board has not paid fire services assessment fees since 2021 and has been accumulating a negative fund balance. According to the City, negative billings represent money credited back to the account, which could be for any number of reasons. At times, if there is an issue with the original billing the entire amount is credited back to the account and then a new bill is sent with the correct amount. However, this explanation does not address the fact that the School Board has not paid for the fire assessments and, therefore, would not be entitled to a reimbursement credit. A summary of the total "positive" and "negative" billing amounts,

[4] Due to changes in the City's software in 2023, retrieving billing data prior to 2024 was not realistic due to volume, time, and cost constraints.

along with a detailed breakdown by land use of the "negative" billings, is presented in Table 4, below.

Table 4

City Fire Assessment Billing Summary; FY 2024/25

Period	Positive Billings	Negative Billings
FY 2024/25	$47,474,947	-$5,377,782
Additional Detail for Land Uses with Negative Billings		
0100 - Single Family Residential	$12,448,533	-$1,828
0200 - Mobile Homes	$778,436	-$293
0300 - Multi-Family(10 or More Units)	$7,560,615	-$1,321
0400 - Condominia Improved	$1,113,634	-$18
0700 - Miscellaneous Residential	$21,068	-$335
1100 - Stores, One Story	$1,308,309	-$10
1600 - Community Shopping Centers	$1,553,352	-$30,350
1700 - Office Buildings/Nonprof/One	$937,853	-$47
1800 - Office Buildings/Nonprof/Multi	$2,241,628	-$1,063
2800 - Mobile Home Parks	$372,620	-$3
4000 - Vacant Industrial	$13,211	-$1,173
4800 - Warehousing, Distribution	$816,000	-$30
7100 - Churches	$422,871	-$61,298
7400 - Homes for the Aged	$202,709	-$357
8000 - Vacant Governmental	$30,208	-$127,027
8300 - Public County School	$29,351	-$4,611,998
8600 - County	$535,623	-$10,481
8700 - State	$1,941,320	-$44,482
N/A - Land use could not be determined	$3,615,658	-$485,668
Total for Parcels w/o Negative Billings	$11,531,948	$0
Total	**$47,474,947**	**-$5,377,782**

Source: City of Tallahassee; "N/A" is for billings that could not be joined to the Leon County parcel database through an address match.

In conclusion, for FY 2024/25 the City of Tallahassee billed properties approximately $47.5 million for the fire services assessment. The utility billing files also included approximately $5.4 million in "negative" billings, which appear to represent billing corrections or cumulative billing write-offs.

Collections

In addition to the billing file, the actual collections were reviewed based on information provided by the City and the County. Details of these collections by property type are presented in Appendix A, Table A-7.

Table 5, below, presents a comparison of the FY 2024/25 total billings (City and County) versus the total revenue (collections) received. As shown, actual revenue (collections) was almost 12%, or approximately $6 million, less than the net billings.

Table 5
Fire Assessment Billings Versus Actual Collections
FY 2024/25

Source	FY 2024/25
Tallahassee Billings[(1)]	$47,474,947
Leon County Billings[(2)]	$4,000,069
Total FY 2024/25 Billings	**$51,475,016**
Total FY 2024/25 Revenue[(3)]	**$45,544,029**
Difference (Rev. less Billings)	-$5,930,987
Percent Difference	-11.52%

1) Source: Table 4; City of Tallahassee "positive" billings for FY 2024/25
2) Source: Leon County tax roll billing for FY 2024/25
3) Source: City of Tallahassee (Appendix A, Table A-7) Fire assessment revenues collected by Leon County are included in this total.

For FY 2024/25, the County collected approximately 98% of the amount billed, based on information provided by the County. This would suggest that the City only collected approximately 88% of the amount billed.

Per the 2nd Amendment to the Agreement (Section D (7)), if either the City or County collects less than 95% of the amount billed on behalf of that party for the fiscal year, that Party is responsible for remitting funds to the Fire Services Fund to meet the 95% threshold. The Fire Operating Reserve Funds are an eligible source to cover unanticipated growth rate expenditures. However, based upon the review of the dataset described above, the City failed to meet the 95% collections minimum threshold and, therefore, would be required to transfer money from a different source, such as General Revenue, to make up the deficit.

Billings of Select Land Uses

The following subsections document a review of the City's utility billing file in terms of certain land uses and a sample of records.

Government Properties

As previously shown in Table 4, for FY 2024/25, School Board properties were billed for approximately $29,000, but also had "negative" billings of approximately $4.6 million. Although this is the largest amount, there were other land uses with negative billings as presented previously. The City provided the explanation that negative billings represent corrections; however, given the large amounts in the case of School Board properties and some of the other land uses, a more detailed evaluation is recommended.

Based on an October 20, 2025, article from the Tallahassee Democrat[5], the City of Tallahassee started to write-off fire fees unpaid by the Leon County School Board from its budgeting balances. This loss of revenue needs to be balanced through transfers from the City's General Fund or other eligible non-assessment funding sources from the City. As explained in the *3rd Term Rate Study*, the burden of these "lost" revenues is not allowed to be recovered through increasing the fire services assessment rates paid by other property owners or through the fire assessment/fee reserves.

Aside from the School Board, based on data obtained from joint City/County GIS technicians, there were several examples of inconsistent fire assessment application to City, County, State, and Federal properties[6]. A few examples include:

- The City of Tallahassee Airport would have been assessed approximately $156,000 for FY 2024/25 based upon assessment and fee calculations but was only billed approximately $27,000.
- The Leon County Health Department would have been assessed approximately $4,900 for FY 2024/25 based upon assessment and fee calculations but was only billed for approximately $2,700.
- The Florida Department of Law Enforcement would have been assessed approximately $84,000 for FY 2025/25 but only billed for approximately $55,000.

Conclusion: In FY 2024/25, the City appears to have written off the fire services assessment fee for School Board properties of approximately $4.6 million. In addition, there appear to be discrepancies in how some of the other government entities are billed.

[5] Tallahassee Democrat article, October 20, 2025, "Fire fee feud fizzles out between the City of Tallahassee and Leon County School Board."

[6] Disclaimer: due to gaps in both city billing data and the property appraiser's building data for government properties, alongside a lack of transparency regarding the underlying fee methodology, it is not possible to conclusively prove or disprove these figures.

Religious Institutions

For religious institutions, the "place of worship" portion of the property is exempt from the fire services assessment as stated in resolutions R23-11 (County) and 23-R-19 (City). The City provided the exemption as "[p]ursuant to Section 170.201(b)(2), Florida Statutes, a Religious Institution used as a place of worship shall be exempt from the Fire Protection Assessment." The County's exemption in 2023 was similarly phrased.

Benesch reviewed several example religious institution properties; however, we could not identify a consistent application of the method for determining the exempt portion of these uses. In the billing file, several religious institutions were billed for all structures while other religious institutions that were reviewed did receive a fire services assessment exemption for a portion of the square footage on the property. The level of detail available in the billing file and in the Leon County Property Appraiser database is not sufficient for verification. It would be helpful to obtain additional details from the City on how the exempt portion of each property is calculated.

In addition to the inconsistent application of the exemption for religious institutions noted in Tallahassee Democrat news articles[7], several properties that were not charged a fire services assessment at all, were reviewed. Examples of inconsistent application include:

- Parcel Number: 2136400373310 (St. John's Episcopal Church Bookstore) & 2136401093660 (St. John's Episcopal Church)
- Parcel Number: 1433201380000 (St. Peter's Anglican Church)
- Parcel Number: 1128206180000 (Temple Israel)
- Parcel Number: 2115240000010 (City Church)

In 2025, the City revised its exemption for a place of worship in resolution no. 25-R-45 as follows:

- *"A Place of Worship located within property owned by a Religious Institution shall be exempt from the Fire Protection Assessment. Place of Worship shall mean: (a) the interior space (measured in square feet) (b) of a single worship hall, meeting room or auditorium space, and (c) which is used for religious services or activities. Only one Place of Worship shall be exempt on any property owned by a Religious Institution. The single worship hall, meeting room or auditorium space with the largest number of square feet shall be presumed to constitute the*

[7] Tallahassee Democrat article, July 14, 2025, "Faith and fire fees: Some churches pay, others don't, raising questions of fairness;" and Tallahassee Democrat article, March 12, 2026, "Tallahassee churches now pay fire fees as city applies exemption evenly."

Place of Worship at any property unless the Religious Institution designates another, smaller interior space as the Place of Worship for purposes of the exemption."

This may reflect the City's attempt to clarify the exemption. However, during FYs 23/24 and 24/25, the City needed to transfer funds from another source to fund the exemptions. As explained in the *3rd Term Rate Study*, "[f]unding for fire assessment exemptions cannot come from the proceeds derived directly from the imposition of special assessments for fire services and facilities. Because any exemption must be funded by an external funding source, the grant of any exemption will not have any impact upon the fire assessment to be imposed upon any other non-exempt parcels." *3rd Term Rate Study*, page 22.

In conclusion, based on the records received from the City, we were unable to identify a consistent application of the exemption for places of worship and there is no evidence that the City transferred from its general funds or other external source to fund the exemption.

Utility Billing Inconsistencies

As a general practice, most local governments prefer using the property tax bill to impose and bill for fire assessments. This is because the tax bill is sent to the owners of parcels and the collection rates tend to be better. In addition, most technical studies, including the *3rd Term Rate Study*, use the Property Appraiser's database to classify each parcel into one of the assessment rate land use categories. Using the same database to bill the properties provides a higher level of consistency in how each parcel is treated for fire services assessment and fee purposes.

Conversely, utility bills are sometimes billed and paid by tenants as opposed to property owners, and the collection of the assessment can be more difficult unless the City refuses to accept partial payments for utility bills and shuts off utility service to a property when the fire services assessment is not paid. Further, the land use classifications from the City's billing file are not always consistent with those in the Property Appraiser database, which results in inconsistent rate calculation and billing for residents. In fact, the *3rd Term Rate Study*, warned that some non-residential properties may have multiple utility accounts and cautioned when "utilizing the utility bill to collect the [f]ire [s]ervices [a]ssessment, a considerable amount of data collection will be necessary to assess each utility account assigned to the building." *3rd Term Rate Study*, page 24.

As part of this analysis, a sample of the billing files for 2024 and 2025 was reviewed in more detail. From this sample, multiple properties were billed as expected, pursuant to the City's phased fire services assessment rate schedule or based on the quarterly billing method applied to certain properties. In other cases, properties were billed less than expected, in many cases

missing months of billing, possibly due to pauses in utility services or demolition/new construction of a property. In the case of several properties, the amount billed far exceeded the expected amount imposed by the City's resolution. These parcels show multiple bills sent on the same date or multiple times in a single month.

Conversely, Tables 6, 7, and 8 show a few examples of underbilling, i.e., properties that were billed less than expected for a full year. The expected billing amount (based on the City's phased rates) for January through December of 2024 for these parcels was approximately $238.98.

Table 6
2024 Billing for Parcel 2127030000600 (Zone 1)

Bill Date	Billed Amount
1/29/2024	$6.55
1/29/2024	-$6.55
1/29/2024	-$9.32
1/29/2024	$9.32
10/9/2024	$16.11
11/13/2024	$20.14
12/10/2024	$20.14
2024 Total:	**$56.39**

Source: City of Tallahassee

Table 7
2024 Billing for Parcel 2126205000000 (Zone 1)

Bill Date	Billed Amount
1/29/2024	$19.84
1/29/2024	-$19.84
1/29/2024	-$19.84
1/29/2024	-$19.84
1/29/2024	$19.84
1/29/2024	$19.84
1/29/2024	-$19.55
1/29/2024	$19.55
6/21/2024	$19.84
7/23/2024	$19.84
8/22/2024	$19.84
9/23/2024	$19.84
10/23/2024	$20.14
11/21/2024	$20.14
12/23/2024	$20.14
2024 Total:	**$139.78**

Source: City of Tallahassee

Table 8
2024 Billing for Parcel 212720444000 (Zone 1)

Bill Date	Billed Amount
1/26/2024	-$19.84
5/23/2024	$11.90
6/24/2024	$19.84
7/23/2024	$19.84
8/22/2024	$19.84
9/23/2024	$19.84
10/23/2024	$20.14
11/21/2024	$20.14
12/23/2024	$20.14
2024 Total:	**$131.84**

Source: City of Tallahassee

Tables 6, 7, and 8 reflect underbilling for these three parcels in the amount of $182.59, $99.20, $107.14, respectively, all based upon the phased rates imposed by the City for the 2024 calendar year. Compared to the flat rate of $245.39 from the *3rd Term Rate Study*, the difference between what was billed and what should have been collected would be $189.00, $105.61, and $113.55, respectively.

As discussed throughout this subsection, the assessment/fee billing review indicates inconsistent application of fire service assessment rates and fees and treatment of government properties, religious institutions and other land uses, which are difficult to specifically quantify but seem to have collectively contributed to the City's funding deficit.

Budget Transfers

To fully fund the fire department, any revenue shortfalls due to property exemptions or underpayment need to be recovered from the General Fund or other revenue sources, excluding fire assessment revenues. In addition to fire assessment revenue, Table A-7 (in Appendix A of this report) presents the details of the revenues transferred from other funding sources in FY 2024/25. As indicated in Table A-7, the City transferred approximately $6.0 million from Fire Operating Reserve to balance the budget. It is also important to note that legal requirements related to assessment programs prohibit shifting the shortfall from exempt or discounted property owners or those that refuse to pay, such as the Leon County School Board, to those who are paying the full assessment or fee. As also stated in the *3rd Term Rate Study*, any budget deficiencies due to exemptions, discounts, or the refusal of payments should be compensated through the General Fund or other legally available funds outside of the fire assessment revenues. This is to ensure that property owners are not being overcharged to make up for these

shortfalls and that their payments are limited to the benefit they receive. The available budget information from the City did not provide any indication that the City made a transfer from the General Fund or other legally available funds outside of the fire assessment revenues to cover the shortfalls.

IV. Summary of Findings

As discussed in detail in this report, the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study* indicated increased costs of $11.5 million compared to the average five-year budget that was utilized in the *3rd Term Rate Study.* One of these factors was the additional debt service of $10 million for the construction of the Fire Station 17 without approval from Leon County, which also added $6.7 million in additional interest payments over the next 20 years. Other line items that increased more significantly included personnel, capital outlay, internal service transfers and bad debt costs.

This study reviewed the accuracy of the City fire services billings, collections, and funding. Primary findings of this analysis suggest that in FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25 there was a shortfall in revenues ranging from $15.8 million to $21.2 million, which would have covered the budget increase of $11.5 million identified in the *2025 Unadopted Rate Study.* Primary components of this revenue loss include the following:

- <u>Underfunding and underbilling:</u>
  - Due to the City using phased fire assessment rates and not the 5-year flat rates calculated in the *3rd Term Rate Study*, combined revenues for FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25 were lower than expected.
    - Approximately **$3.8 million less than expected** had the 5-year flat rates been imposed by the City.

  - For multiple parcels, the annual assessment amount billed by the City does not match the amount set forth in the City's resolution.

  - The utility billing records include a large portion of "negative" bills.
    - Approximately **$5.4 million "negative bills"** for FY 2024/25. Approximately $4.6 million of this is related to the School Board, possibly the unpaid fire services fees over the last four years.

- <u>Under collection</u>
  - The net billings/charges (City and County) were approximately $51.5 million while actual revenues were $45.5 million for FY 2024/25.
    - FY 2024/25 actual revenues are approximately **$6 million less than billings or an estimated $12 million over two years.**

These figures do not account for any potential revenue loss due to how the religious institutions are charged and inconsistent billing practices described previously.

Appendix A:
Supplemental Information

Appendix A: Supplemental Information

This appendix presents a detailed fire services assessment and fee rate comparison, collections data, and information regarding union contract salary increases utilized in the fire services assessment and fee program review.

Table A-1

Fire Services Assessment Rate Comparison; FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25 (Zone 1)

Land Use	Unit	FY 2023/24 ZONE 1		City/ County Ratio	FY 2024/25 ZONE 1		City/ County Ratio
		County[1]	City[2]		County[1]	City[2]	
Residential							
Residential	per unit	$245.39	$238.14	97.0%	$245.39	$241.71	98.5%
Commercial							
Commercial <1,999	per bldg	$384	$355.61	92.6%	$384	$369.76	96.3%
Commercial 2,000 - 3,499	per bldg	$768	$710.02	92.5%	$768	$738.28	96.1%
Commercial 3,500 - 4,999	per bldg	$1,344	$1,241.63	92.4%	$1,344	$1,291.04	96.1%
Commercial 5,000 - 9,999	per bldg	$1,920	$1,773.22	92.4%	$1,920	$1,843.80	96.0%
Commercial 10,000 - 19,999	per bldg	$3,840	$3,545.24	92.3%	$3,840	$3,686.34	96.0%
Commercial 20,000 - 29,999	per bldg	$7,680	$7,090.47	92.3%	$7,680	$7,372.67	96.0%
Commercial 30,000 - 39,999	per bldg	$11,519	$10,634.49	92.3%	$11,519	$11,057.74	96.0%
Commercial 40,000 - 49,999	per bldg	$15,359	$14,179.73	92.3%	$15,359	$14,744.09	96.0%
Commercial 50,000 - 59,999	per bldg	$19,198	$17,723.75	92.3%	$19,198	$18,429.16	96.0%
Commercial 60,000 - 69,999	per bldg	$23,038	$21,268.99	92.3%	$23,038	$22,115.50	96.0%
Commercial 70,000 - 79,999	per bldg	$26,877	$24,813.02	92.3%	$26,877	$25,800.58	96.0%
Commercial 80,000 - 89,999	per bldg	$30,717	$28,358.26	92.3%	$30,717	$29,486.92	96.0%
Commercial 90,000 - 99,999	per bldg	$34,557	$31,902.28	92.3%	$34,557	$33,171.99	96.0%
Commercial 100,000+	per bldg	$38,396	$35,447.51	92.3%	$38,396	$36,858.32	96.0%
Industrial/Warehouse							
Industrial/Wh <1,999	per bldg	$63	$40.05	63.6%	$63	$49.07	77.9%
Industrial/Wh 2,000 - 3,499	per bldg	$125	$80.10	64.1%	$125	$98.16	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 3,500 - 4,999	per bldg	$218	$140.17	64.3%	$218	$171.77	78.8%
Industrial/Wh 5,000 - 9,999	per bldg	$311	$198.82	63.9%	$311	$243.64	78.3%
Industrial/Wh 10,000 - 19,999	per bldg	$621	$397.64	64.0%	$621	$487.27	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 20,000 - 29,999	per bldg	$1,242	$795.27	64.0%	$1,242	$974.53	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 30,000 - 39,999	per bldg	$1,863	$1,192.91	64.0%	$1,863	$1,461.80	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 40,000 - 49,999	per bldg	$2,484	$1,590.54	64.0%	$2,484	$1,949.05	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 50,000 - 59,999	per bldg	$3,104	$1,988.19	64.1%	$3,104	$2,436.32	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 60,000 - 69,999	per bldg	$3,725	$2,385.82	64.0%	$3,725	$2,923.58	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 70,000 - 79,999	per bldg	$4,346	$2,783.46	64.0%	$4,346	$3,410.85	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 80,000 - 89,999	per bldg	$4,967	$3,181.09	64.0%	$4,967	$3,898.11	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 90,000 - 99,999	per bldg	$5,587	$3,578.73	64.1%	$5,587	$4,385.38	78.5%
Industrial/Wh 100,000+	per bldg	$6,208	$3,976.37	64.1%	$6,208	$4,872.65	78.5%
Government							
Government	per sq ft	$0.267	$0.267	100.0%	$0.267	$0.267	100.0%

1) Source: *3rd Term Rate Study,* Table 16 and Table 19. Leon County adopted via Resolution No. 23-11. See Appendix C of this report for a copy of the *3rd Term Rate Study*.
2) Source: City of Tallahassee; FY 2023/24 rates provided were based on the annual increases shown in Fire Assessment Resolution No. 23-R-19, Section 6 (B)

Table A-2

Fire Services Assessment Rate Comparison; FY 2023/24 and FY 2024/25 (Zone 2)

Land Use	Unit	FY 2023/24 ZONE 2		City/ County Ratio	FY 2024/25 ZONE 2		City/ County Ratio
		County[1]	City[2]		County[1]	City[2]	
Residential							
Residential	per unit	$223.00	$218.27	97.9%	$223.00	$220.63	98.9%
Commercial							
Commercial <1,999	per bldg	$356	$325.75	91.5%	$356	$340.47	95.6%
Commercial 2,000 - 3,499	per bldg	$712	$650.26	91.3%	$712	$679.65	95.5%
Commercial 3,500 - 4,999	per bldg	$1,245	$1,138.26	91.4%	$1,245	$1,189.71	95.6%
Commercial 5,000 - 9,999	per bldg	$1,779	$1,625.06	91.3%	$1,779	$1,698.51	95.5%
Commercial 10,000 - 19,999	per bldg	$3,557	$3,248.89	91.3%	$3,557	$3,395.74	95.5%
Commercial 20,000 - 29,999	per bldg	$7,113	$6,497.77	91.4%	$7,113	$6,791.47	95.5%
Commercial 30,000 - 39,999	per bldg	$10,669	$9,746.66	91.4%	$10,669	$10,187.21	95.5%
Commercial 40,000 - 49,999	per bldg	$14,226	$12,995.55	91.4%	$14,226	$13,582.95	95.5%
Commercial 50,000 - 59,999	per bldg	$17,782	$16,244.43	91.4%	$17,782	$16,978.67	95.5%
Commercial 60,000 - 69,999	per bldg	$21,338	$19,493.31	91.4%	$21,338	$20,374.41	95.5%
Commercial 70,000 - 79,999	per bldg	$24,895	$22,742.20	91.4%	$24,895	$23,770.15	95.5%
Commercial 80,000 - 89,999	per bldg	$28,451	$25,991.08	91.4%	$28,451	$27,165.88	95.5%
Commercial 90,000 - 99,999	per bldg	$32,007	$29,239.97	91.4%	$32,007	$30,561.62	95.5%
Commercial 100,000+	per bldg	$35,564	$32,488.86	91.4%	$35,564	$33,957.36	95.5%
Industrial/Warehouse							
Industrial/Wh <1,999	per bldg	$114	$96.29	84.5%	$114	$104.51	91.7%
Industrial/Wh 2,000 - 3,499	per bldg	$227	$192.57	84.8%	$227	$209.02	92.1%
Industrial/Wh 3,500 - 4,999	per bldg	$398	$335.74	84.4%	$398	$364.41	91.6%
Industrial/Wh 5,000 - 9,999	per bldg	$568	$478.90	84.3%	$568	$519.80	91.5%
Industrial/Wh 10,000 - 19,999	per bldg	$1,135	$957.80	84.4%	$1,135	$1,039.60	91.6%
Industrial/Wh 20,000 - 29,999	per bldg	$2,270	$1,914.33	84.3%	$2,270	$2,077.81	91.5%
Industrial/Wh 30,000 - 39,999	per bldg	$3,405	$2,870.87	84.3%	$3,405	$3,116.04	91.5%
Industrial/Wh 40,000 - 49,999	per bldg	$4,540	$3,827.40	84.3%	$4,540	$4,154.26	91.5%
Industrial/Wh 50,000 - 59,999	per bldg	$5,674	$4,783.94	84.3%	$5,674	$5,192.49	91.5%
Industrial/Wh 60,000 - 69,999	per bldg	$6,809	$5,741.74	84.3%	$6,809	$6,232.09	91.5%
Industrial/Wh 70,000 - 79,999	per bldg	$7,944	$6,698.27	84.3%	$7,944	$7,270.31	91.5%
Industrial/Wh 80,000 - 89,999	per bldg	$9,079	$7,654.81	84.3%	$9,079	$8,308.53	91.5%
Industrial/Wh 90,000 - 99,999	per bldg	$10,213	$8,611.35	84.3%	$10,213	$9,346.76	91.5%
Industrial/Wh 100,000+	per bldg	$11,348	$9,567.88	84.3%	$11,348	$10,384.97	91.5%
Government							
Government	per sq ft	$0.267	$0.267	100.0%	$0.267	$0.267	100.0%

1) Source: *3rd Term Rate Study,* Table 16 and Table 19. Leon County adopted via Resolution No. 23-11. See Appendix C of this report for a copy of the *3rd Term Rate Study*.
2) Source: City of Tallahassee; FY 2024/25 rates provided were based on the annual increases shown in Fire Assessment Resolution No. 23-R-19, Section 6 (B)

Table A-3

Sensitivity Analysis; 5-Year Flat Rates

Lane Use	Unit	Zone 1			Zone 2			Total
		du/bldg	Rate	Revenue	du/bldg	Rate	Revenue	
Residential								
Residential	per unit	77,628	$245.39	$19,049,134.92	47,672	$223.00	$10,630,856.00	**$29,679,990.92**
Commercial								
Commercial <1,999 sq ft	per bldg	1,239	$384	$475,776.00	205	$356	$72,980.00	**$548,756.00**
Commercial 2,000 - 3,499 sq ft	per bldg	900	$768	$691,200.00	166	$712	$118,192.00	**$809,392.00**
Commercial 3,500 - 4,999 sq ft	per bldg	591	$1,344	$794,304.00	100	$1,245	$124,500.00	**$918,804.00**
Commercial 5,000 - 9,999 sq ft	per bldg	941	$1,920	$1,806,720.00	161	$1,779	$286,419.00	**$2,093,139.00**
Commercial 10,000 - 19,999 sq ft	per bldg	490	$3,840	$1,881,600.00	86	$3,557	$305,902.00	**$2,187,502.00**
Commercial 20,000 - 29,999 sq ft	per bldg	170	$7,680	$1,305,600.00	29	$7,113	$206,277.00	**$1,511,877.00**
Commercial 30,000 - 39,999 sq ft	per bldg	101	$11,519	$1,163,419.00	9	$10,669	$96,021.00	**$1,259,440.00**
Commercial 40,000 - 49,999 sq ft	per bldg	58	$15,359	$890,822.00	10	$14,226	$142,260.00	**$1,033,082.00**
Commercial 50,000 - 59,999 sq ft	per bldg	36	$19,198	$691,128.00	3	$17,782	$53,346.00	**$744,474.00**
Commercial 60,000 - 69,999 sq ft	per bldg	27	$23,038	$622,026.00	5	$21,338	$106,690.00	**$728,716.00**
Commercial 70,000 - 79,999 sq ft	per bldg	19	$26,877	$510,663.00	3	$24,895	$74,685.00	**$585,348.00**
Commercial 80,000 - 89,999 sq ft	per bldg	10	$30,717	$307,170.00	3	$28,451	$85,353.00	**$392,523.00**
Commercial 90,000 - 99,999 sq ft	per bldg	8	$34,557	$276,456.00	3	$32,007	$96,021.00	**$372,477.00**
Commercial 100,000+ sq ft	per bldg	43	$38,396	$1,651,028.00	5	$35,564	$177,820.00	**$1,828,848.00**
Industrial/Warehouse								
Industrial/Wh <1,999 sq ft	per bldg	66	$63	$4,158.00	25	$114	$2,850.00	**$7,008.00**
Industrial/Wh 2,000 - 3,499 sq ft	per bldg	80	$125	$10,000.00	50	$227	$11,350.00	**$21,350.00**
Industrial/Wh 3,500 - 4,999 sq ft	per bldg	58	$218	$12,644.00	34	$398	$13,532.00	**$26,176.00**
Industrial/Wh 5,000 - 9,999 sq ft	per bldg	194	$311	$60,334.00	71	$568	$40,328.00	**$100,662.00**
Industrial/Wh 10,000 - 19,999 sq ft	per bldg	185	$621	$114,885.00	34	$1,135	$38,590.00	**$153,475.00**
Industrial/Wh 20,000 - 29,999 sq ft	per bldg	56	$1,242	$69,552.00	8	$2,270	$18,160.00	**$87,712.00**
Industrial/Wh 30,000 - 39,999 sq ft	per bldg	34	$1,863	$63,342.00	1	$3,405	$3,405.00	**$66,747.00**
Industrial/Wh 40,000 - 49,999 sq ft	per bldg	12	$2,484	$29,808.00	0	$4,540	$0.00	**$29,808.00**
Industrial/Wh 50,000 - 59,999 sq ft	per bldg	4	$3,104	$12,416.00	0	$5,674	$0.00	**$12,416.00**
Industrial/Wh 60,000 - 69,999 sq ft	per bldg	4	$3,725	$14,900.00	0	$6,809	$0.00	**$14,900.00**
Industrial/Wh 70,000 - 79,999 sq ft	per bldg	1	$4,346	$4,346.00	1	$7,944	$7,944.00	**$12,290.00**
Industrial/Wh 80,000 - 89,999 sq ft	per bldg	1	$4,967	$4,967.00	2	$9,079	$18,158.00	**$23,125.00**
Industrial/Wh 90,000 - 99,999 sq ft	per bldg	6	$5,587	$33,522.00	0	$10,213	$0.00	**$33,522.00**
Industrial/Wh 100,000+ sq ft	per bldg	18	$6,208	$111,744.00	2	$11,348	$22,696.00	**$134,440.00**
Total (non-Govt)				$32,663,664.92			$12,754,335.00	**$45,417,999.92**
Government								
Government (11.72%)								**$6,029,666.51**
Total								**$51,447,666.43**

Source: *3rd Term Rate Study;* Table 14 (residential dwelling units), Table 15 (non-residential buildings) and Table 16 (rates), of the *3rd Term Rate Study*. The Government portion was calculated using the approximate percentage of government fire calls (11.72%) shown in Table 18. See Appendix C of this report for a copy of the *3rd Term Rate Study*.

Table A-4

Sensitivity Analysis; FY 2023/24 City of Tallahassee Adopted Rates

Lane Use	Unit	Zone 1			Zone 2			Total
		du/bldg[1]	FY 23/24 Rate[2]	Revenue	du/bldg[1]	FY 23/24 Rate[2]	Revenue	
Residential								
Residential	per unit	77,628	$238.14	$18,486,331.92	47,672	$218.27	$10,405,367.44	**$28,891,699.36**
Commercial								
Commercial <1,999 sq ft	per bldg	1,239	$355.61	$440,600.79	205	$325.75	$66,778.75	**$507,379.54**
Commercial 2,000 - 3,499 sq ft	per bldg	900	$710.02	$639,018.00	166	$650.26	$107,943.16	**$746,961.16**
Commercial 3,500 - 4,999 sq ft	per bldg	591	$1,241.63	$733,803.33	100	$1,138.26	$113,826.00	**$847,629.33**
Commercial 5,000 - 9,999 sq ft	per bldg	941	$1,773.22	$1,668,600.02	161	$1,625.06	$261,634.66	**$1,930,234.68**
Commercial 10,000 - 19,999 sq ft	per bldg	490	$3,545.24	$1,737,167.60	86	$3,248.89	$279,404.54	**$2,016,572.14**
Commercial 20,000 - 29,999 sq ft	per bldg	170	$7,090.47	$1,205,379.90	29	$6,497.77	$188,435.33	**$1,393,815.23**
Commercial 30,000 - 39,999 sq ft	per bldg	101	$10,634.49	$1,074,083.49	9	$9,746.66	$87,719.94	**$1,161,803.43**
Commercial 40,000 - 49,999 sq ft	per bldg	58	$14,179.73	$822,424.34	10	$12,995.55	$129,955.50	**$952,379.84**
Commercial 50,000 - 59,999 sq ft	per bldg	36	$17,723.75	$638,055.00	3	$16,244.43	$48,733.29	**$686,788.29**
Commercial 60,000 - 69,999 sq ft	per bldg	27	$21,268.99	$574,262.73	5	$19,493.31	$97,466.55	**$671,729.28**
Commercial 70,000 - 79,999 sq ft	per bldg	19	$24,813.02	$471,447.38	3	$22,742.20	$68,226.60	**$539,673.98**
Commercial 80,000 - 89,999 sq ft	per bldg	10	$28,358.26	$283,582.60	3	$25,991.08	$77,973.24	**$361,555.84**
Commercial 90,000 - 99,999 sq ft	per bldg	8	$31,902.28	$255,218.24	3	$29,239.97	$87,719.91	**$342,938.15**
Commercial 100,000+ sq ft	per bldg	43	$35,447.51	$1,524,242.93	5	$32,488.86	$162,444.30	**$1,686,687.23**
Industrial/Warehouse								
Industrial/Wh <1,999 sq ft	per bldg	66	$40.05	$2,643.30	25	$96.29	$2,407.25	**$5,050.55**
Industrial/Wh 2,000 - 3,499 sq ft	per bldg	80	$80.10	$6,408.00	50	$192.57	$9,628.50	**$16,036.50**
Industrial/Wh 3,500 - 4,999 sq ft	per bldg	58	$140.17	$8,129.86	34	$335.74	$11,415.16	**$19,545.02**
Industrial/Wh 5,000 - 9,999 sq ft	per bldg	194	$198.82	$38,571.08	71	$478.90	$34,001.90	**$72,572.98**
Industrial/Wh 10,000 - 19,999 sq ft	per bldg	185	$397.64	$73,563.40	34	$957.80	$32,565.20	**$106,128.60**
Industrial/Wh 20,000 - 29,999 sq ft	per bldg	56	$795.27	$44,535.12	8	$1,914.33	$15,314.64	**$59,849.76**
Industrial/Wh 30,000 - 39,999 sq ft	per bldg	34	$1,192.91	$40,558.94	1	$2,870.87	$2,870.87	**$43,429.81**
Industrial/Wh 40,000 - 49,999 sq ft	per bldg	12	$1,590.54	$19,086.48	0	$3,827.40	$0.00	**$19,086.48**
Industrial/Wh 50,000 - 59,999 sq ft	per bldg	4	$1,988.19	$7,952.76	0	$4,783.94	$0.00	**$7,952.76**
Industrial/Wh 60,000 - 69,999 sq ft	per bldg	4	$2,385.82	$9,543.28	0	$5,741.74	$0.00	**$9,543.28**
Industrial/Wh 70,000 - 79,999 sq ft	per bldg	1	$2,783.46	$2,783.46	1	$6,698.27	$6,698.27	**$9,481.73**
Industrial/Wh 80,000 - 89,999 sq ft	per bldg	1	$3,181.09	$3,181.09	2	$7,654.81	$15,309.62	**$18,490.71**
Industrial/Wh 90,000 - 99,999 sq ft	per bldg	6	$3,578.73	$21,472.38	0	$8,611.35	$0.00	**$21,472.38**
Industrial/Wh 100,000+ sq ft	per bldg	18	$3,976.37	$71,574.66	2	$9,567.88	$19,135.76	**$90,710.42**
Total (non-Govt)				$30,904,222.08			$12,332,976.38	**$43,237,198.46**
Government								
Government (11.72%)								**$5,740,144.61**
Total								**$48,977,343.07**

1) Source: *3rd Term Rate Study*. Table 14 (residential dwelling units) and Table 15 (non-residential buildings). The Government portion was calculated using the approximate percentage of government fire calls (11.72%) shown in Table 18. See Appendix C of this report for a copy of the *3rd Term Rate Study*.
2) Source: City of Tallahassee; FY 2023/24 rates provided were based on the annual increases shown in Fire Assessment Resolution No. 23-R-19, Section 6 (B)

Table A-5

Sensitivity Analysis; FY 2024/25 City of Tallahassee Adopted Rates

Lane Use	Unit	Zone 1			Zone 2			Total
		du/bldg[1]	FY 24/25 Rate[2]	Revenue	du/bldg[1]	FY 24/25 Rate[2]	Revenue	
Residential								
Residential	per unit	77,628	$241.71	$18,763,463.88	47,672	$220.63	$10,517,873.36	**$29,281,337.24**
Commercial								
Commercial <1,999 sq ft	per bldg	1,239	$369.76	$458,132.64	205	$340.47	$69,796.35	**$527,928.99**
Commercial 2,000 - 3,499 sq ft	per bldg	900	$738.28	$664,452.00	166	$679.65	$112,821.90	**$777,273.90**
Commercial 3,500 - 4,999 sq ft	per bldg	591	$1,291.04	$763,004.64	100	$1,189.71	$118,971.00	**$881,975.64**
Commercial 5,000 - 9,999 sq ft	per bldg	941	$1,843.80	$1,735,015.80	161	$1,698.51	$273,460.11	**$2,008,475.91**
Commercial 10,000 - 19,999 sq ft	per bldg	490	$3,686.34	$1,806,306.60	86	$3,395.74	$292,033.64	**$2,098,340.24**
Commercial 20,000 - 29,999 sq ft	per bldg	170	$7,372.67	$1,253,353.90	29	$6,791.47	$196,952.63	**$1,450,306.53**
Commercial 30,000 - 39,999 sq ft	per bldg	101	$11,057.74	$1,116,831.74	9	$10,187.21	$91,684.89	**$1,208,516.63**
Commercial 40,000 - 49,999 sq ft	per bldg	58	$14,744.09	$855,157.22	10	$13,582.95	$135,829.50	**$990,986.72**
Commercial 50,000 - 59,999 sq ft	per bldg	36	$18,429.16	$663,449.76	3	$16,978.67	$50,936.01	**$714,385.77**
Commercial 60,000 - 69,999 sq ft	per bldg	27	$22,115.50	$597,118.50	5	$20,374.41	$101,872.05	**$698,990.55**
Commercial 70,000 - 79,999 sq ft	per bldg	19	$25,800.58	$490,211.02	3	$23,770.15	$71,310.45	**$561,521.47**
Commercial 80,000 - 89,999 sq ft	per bldg	10	$29,486.92	$294,869.20	3	$27,165.88	$81,497.64	**$376,366.84**
Commercial 90,000 - 99,999 sq ft	per bldg	8	$33,171.99	$265,375.92	3	$30,561.62	$91,684.86	**$357,060.78**
Commercial 100,000+ sq ft	per bldg	43	$36,858.32	$1,584,907.76	5	$33,957.36	$169,786.80	**$1,754,694.56**
Industrial/Warehouse								
Industrial/Wh <1,999 sq ft	per bldg	66	$49.07	$3,238.62	25	$104.51	$2,612.75	**$5,851.37**
Industrial/Wh 2,000 - 3,499 sq ft	per bldg	80	$98.16	$7,852.80	50	$209.02	$10,451.00	**$18,303.80**
Industrial/Wh 3,500 - 4,999 sq ft	per bldg	58	$171.77	$9,962.66	34	$364.41	$12,389.94	**$22,352.60**
Industrial/Wh 5,000 - 9,999 sq ft	per bldg	194	$243.64	$47,266.16	71	$519.80	$36,905.80	**$84,171.96**
Industrial/Wh 10,000 - 19,999 sq ft	per bldg	185	$487.27	$90,144.95	34	$1,039.60	$35,346.40	**$125,491.35**
Industrial/Wh 20,000 - 29,999 sq ft	per bldg	56	$974.53	$54,573.68	8	$2,077.81	$16,622.48	**$71,196.16**
Industrial/Wh 30,000 - 39,999 sq ft	per bldg	34	$1,461.80	$49,701.20	1	$3,116.04	$3,116.04	**$52,817.24**
Industrial/Wh 40,000 - 49,999 sq ft	per bldg	12	$1,949.05	$23,388.60	0	$4,154.26	$0.00	**$23,388.60**
Industrial/Wh 50,000 - 59,999 sq ft	per bldg	4	$2,436.32	$9,745.28	0	$5,192.49	$0.00	**$9,745.28**
Industrial/Wh 60,000 - 69,999 sq ft	per bldg	4	$2,923.58	$11,694.32	0	$6,232.09	$0.00	**$11,694.32**
Industrial/Wh 70,000 - 79,999 sq ft	per bldg	1	$3,410.85	$3,410.85	1	$7,270.31	$7,270.31	**$10,681.16**
Industrial/Wh 80,000 - 89,999 sq ft	per bldg	1	$3,898.11	$3,898.11	2	$8,308.53	$16,617.06	**$20,515.17**
Industrial/Wh 90,000 - 99,999 sq ft	per bldg	6	$4,385.38	$26,312.28	0	$9,346.76	$0.00	**$26,312.28**
Industrial/Wh 100,000+ sq ft	per bldg	18	$4,872.65	$87,707.70	2	$10,384.97	$20,769.94	**$108,477.64**
Total (non-Govt)				$31,740,547.79			$12,538,612.91	**$44,279,160.70**
Government								
Government (11.72%)								**$5,878,474.89**
Total								**$50,157,635.59**

1) Source: *3rd Term Rate Study*. Table 14 (residential dwelling units) and Table 15 (non-residential buildings). The Government portion was calculated using the approximate percentage of government fire calls (11.72%) shown in Table 18. See Appendix C of this report for a copy of the *3rd Term Rate Study*.
2) Source: City of Tallahassee; FY 2024/25 rates provided were based on the annual increases shown in Fire Assessment Resolution No. 23-R-19, Section 6 (B)

Table A-6
Line-Item Budget Comparison

Expenditures	3rd Term Rate Study 5-yr Avg[1]	2025 Unadopted Study 3-yr Avg[2]	Difference	Percent Change
Personnel Services				
Salaries	$22,093,314	$24,385,676	$2,292,362	10.4%
Salary Enhancements	$999,438	$1,103,490	$104,052	10.4%
Firefighter Holiday Pay	$738,508	$808,682	$70,174	9.5%
Overtime	$1,165,616	$1,265,784	$100,168	8.6%
Other Salary Items	$611,675	$672,284	$60,609	9.9%
Pension - Current	$8,093,460	$8,898,106	$804,646	9.9%
Pension - MAP	$112,647	$134,624	$21,977	19.5%
Mandatory Medicare	$338,356	$373,395	$35,039	10.4%
Health Benefits	$3,562,789	$3,920,226	$357,437	10.0%
Health Benefits - OPEB	$222,148	$257,110	$34,962	15.7%
Flex Benefits	$48,502	$58,040	$9,538	19.7%
Vacancy Factor of 3%	-$297,582	-$324,009	-$26,427	8.9%
Total Personnel Services	**$37,688,871**	**$41,553,408**	**$3,864,537**	**10.3%**
Operating Expenses				
Advertising	$1,428	$1,450	$22	1.5%
Cleaning & Laundry	$13,376	$13,574	$198	1.5%
Reproduction	$2,554	$2,592	$38	1.5%
Equipment Repairs	$12,043	$12,222	$179	1.5%
Medical Services	$1,616	$1,640	$24	1.5%
Construction Services	$8,844	$8,975	$131	1.5%
Unclassified Contractual Srvcs	$212,010	$215,159	$3,149	1.5%
Contractual Svc - VFD County	$519,882	$527,602	$7,720	1.5%
Contractual Svc - Other	$400,000	$400,000	$0	0.0%
Computer Software	$2,785	$2,826	$41	1.5%
Telephone	$18,800	$19,079	$279	1.5%
Chem-Med-Lab	$3,957	$4,015	$58	1.5%
Food	$1,071	$1,087	$16	1.5%
Gasoline	$351	$356	$5	1.4%
Office Supplies	$17,181	$17,437	$256	1.5%
Uniforms & Clothing	$333,752	$304,383	-$29,369	-8.8%
Unclassified Supplies	$127,816	$129,714	$1,898	1.5%
Non-Capital- Furniture & Equip	$862	$875	$13	1.5%
Travel & Training	$54,344	$55,151	$807	1.5%
Journals & Books	$16,314	$16,556	$242	1.5%
Memberships	$3,292	$3,341	$49	1.5%
Certificates & Licenses	$618	$628	$10	1.6%
Rent Expense - Machines	$8,837	$8,969	$132	1.5%
Unclassified Charges	$46,430	$47,119	$689	1.5%
Total Operating Expenses	**$1,808,163**	**$1,794,750**	**-$13,413**	**-0.7%**
Other Services & Charges				
Bad Debt Expense	$173,875	$1,394,202	$1,220,327	701.8%
Total Other Services & Charges	**$173,875**	**$1,394,202**	**$1,220,327**	**701.8%**

Table A-6 (continued)
Line-Item Budget Comparison

Expenditures	3rd Term Rate Study 5-yr Avg[1]	2025 Unadopted Study 3-yr Avg[2]	Difference	Percent Change
Capital Outlay				
Computer Equipment	$1,293	$1,312	$19	1.5%
Vehicle Equipment	$169,760	$1,242,908	$1,073,148	632.2%
Unclassified Equipment	$165,420	$1,239,611	$1,074,191	649.4%
Total Capital Outlay	**$336,473**	**$2,483,831**	**$2,147,358**	**638.2%**
Internal Service Funds				
Human Resource Expense	$418,513	$379,177	-$39,336	-9.4%
Accounting Expense	$189,214	$213,189	$23,975	12.7%
Purchasing Expense	$53,764	$96,541	$42,777	79.6%
Information Systems Expense	$2,123,662	$3,372,725	$1,249,063	58.8%
Risk Management Expense	$347,691	$301,989	-$45,702	-13.1%
Radio Communications Expense	$171,707	$287,739	$116,032	67.6%
Revenue Collection	$437,392	$439,776	$2,384	0.5%
Utility Services Expense	$1,941,683	$2,317,127	$375,444	19.3%
Facilities and Environmental	$41,050	$25,963	-$15,087	-36.8%
Vehicle Garage Expense	$388,426	$563,349	$174,923	45.0%
Vehicle Fuel	$61,379	$99,642	$38,263	62.3%
Vehicle Replacement	$952,938	$1,161,717	$208,779	21.9%
Indirect Costs	$482,323	$560,450	$78,127	16.2%
Community Relations Expense	$163,002	$133,918	-$29,084	-17.8%
Diversity and Inclusion Expens	$101,528	$88,008	-$13,520	-13.3%
Total Internal Service Funds	**$7,874,272**	**$10,041,310**	**$2,167,038**	**27.5%**
Utilities and Other Expenses				
Utilities - Sewer	$29,397	$29,823	$426	1.4%
Utilities - Sanitation	$16,224	$16,471	$247	1.5%
Utilities - Stormwater	$19,969	$20,265	$296	1.5%
Utilities - Gas	$33,871	$34,374	$503	1.5%
Utilities - Water	$23,553	$23,902	$349	1.5%
Utilities - Electric	$178,873	$181,529	$2,656	1.5%
Utilities - Fire Services	$43,135	$43,776	$641	1.5%
Total Utilities and Other Expenses	**$345,022**	**$350,140**	**$5,118**	**1.5%**
Transfers				
Debt Service Transfer	$1,063,380	$2,600,307	$1,536,927	144.5%
Inter-Fund Ops Transfer	$47,772	$48,481	$709	1.5%
Total Transfers	**$1,111,152**	**$2,648,788**	**$1,537,636**	**138.4%**
Contributions to Operations				
Contribution to CDA Operating	$96,533	$97,966	$1,433	1.5%
Total Contributions to Operations	**$96,533**	**$97,966**	**$1,433**	**1.5%**
5-year CIP				
Facilities Management & Maintenance Master	$343,374	$346,731	$3,357	1.0%
Fire Hydrant Maintenance Master	$886,409	$899,572	$13,163	1.5%
Total 5-year CIP	**$1,229,783**	**$1,246,303**	**$16,520**	1.3%
Total Expenditures	**$50,664,144**	**$61,610,698**	**$10,946,554**	**21.6%**

Table A-6 (continued)
Line-Item Budget Comparison

Expenditures	3rd Term Rate Study 5-yr Avg[1]	2025 Unadopted Study 3-yr Avg[2]	Difference	Percent Change
Revenues				
Fire Inspection Fees	$376,316	$428,309	$51,993	13.8%
Firefighters Supplemental Comp	$117,274	$145,540	$28,266	24.1%
Forfeited Discounts	$75,427	$76,547	$1,120	1.5%
Interest	-$32,648	-$170,847	-$138,199	423.3%
Other Miscellaneous Revenue	$12,931	$13,123	$192	1.5%
Contribution From Airport Fund	$1,398,246	$1,550,390	$152,144	10.9%
Total Revenues	**$1,947,546**	**$2,043,062**	**$95,516**	**4.9%**
Total Expenditures	$50,664,144	$61,610,698	$10,946,554	21.6%
Less: Total Revenues	$1,947,546	$2,043,062	$95,516	4.9%
Net Expenditures	**$48,716,598**	**$59,567,636**	**$10,851,038**	**22.3%**
Additional Costs				
Statutory Discount & Undercollection (5%)	$2,706,478	$3,309,313	$602,835	22.3%
Total Additional Costs	**$2,706,478**	**$3,309,313**	**$602,835**	**22.3%**
Total Net Assessable Expenditures	**$51,423,076**	**$62,876,949**	**$11,453,873**	**22.3%**

1) Source: *3rd Term Rate Study*, Table 7; Line-Item detail provided by City of Tallahassee. The 5-year average includes FY 2023/24 through FY 2027/28
2) Source: *2025 Unadopted Rate Study*, Table 2. The 3-year average includes FY 2025/26 through FY 2027/28

Table A-7

Fire Services Assessment and Fees Actual Collections; FY 2024/25

Item	Tag	FY 2024/25 ACTUAL
329002 - Fire Inspection Fees	-	$464,631
Intergovernmental Revenue		
335230 - Firefighters Supplemental Comp	-	$143,271
Charges for Services		
342201 - Fire Services - Residential	Fire Svcs	$21,599,700
342202 - Fire Services - Commercial	Fire Svcs	$11,804,769
342203 - Fire Services - Governmental	Fire Svcs	$1,763,380
342204 - Fire Services - Industrial	Fire Svcs	$0
342207 - Leon County EMS Payment	-	$3,731,380
342208 - Fire Services - Institutional	Fire Svcs	$0
342301 - Fire Svcs - Resident - County	Fire Svcs	$7,659,890
342302 - Fire Svc - Commercial - County	Fire Svcs	$1,253,537
342303 - Fire Svc - Government - County	Fire Svcs	$0
342304 - Fire Svcs - Industry - County	Fire Svcs	$0
342308 - Fire Svcs - Institute - County	Fire Svcs	$0
342902 - Fire Permit Expediting Fees	-	$37,129
343123 - Forfeited Discounts	-	$0
343301 - Residential	-	$5,047
349999 - Budget Bill Variance Revenue	-	$10,699
342307 - Fire Svc Resid County Quarterly	Fire Svcs	$1,601,750
342305 - Fire Svc Comm County Quarterly	Fire Svcs	$259,661
342306 - Fire Svc Indust County Quarterly	Fire Svcs	
342309 - Fire Svc Govt County Quarterly	Fire Svcs	-$398,658
Other Revenues		
361001 - Interest	-	-$306,690
369920 - Other Miscellaneous Revenue	-	$7,567
Other Sources		
381000 - Transfer From Other Fund (Fire Operating Reserve)	-	$6,078,659
382000 - Contributions From Other Funds (Airport Fire Oper.)	-	$1,548,727
Accounting Transfers		
390200 - Non-Budgeted Fund Xfers In	-	$311
Total Revenue		**$57,264,760**
Fire Services ONLY		**$45,544,029**

Source: Leon County and the City of Tallahassee

The following tables present the change in base rate salaries for different positions within the fire department based on the latest fire union bargaining agreements. The minimum and maximum base salary options are shown to establish the range.

Table A-8

Captain – Fire Coordinator – Senior Fire Specialist Plan

Fiscal Year	Minimum Base Rate	Percent Change		Maximum Base Rate	Percent Change
FY 18	$79,298.07	-		$102,792.60	-
FY 19	$81,677.01	3.0%		$105,876.38	3.0%
FY 20	$84,127.33	3.0%		$109,052.67	3.0%
FY 21	$90,788.37	7.9%		$117,687.24	7.9%
FY 22	$91,242.31	0.5%		$118,275.68	0.5%
FY 23	$91,470.42	0.3%		$118,571.37	0.3%
FY 24*	$92,156.45	0.8%		$119,460.66	0.8%
FY 25	$92,842.48	0.7%		$120,349.94	0.7%
FY 26	$93,306.69	0.5%		$120,951.69	0.5%
FY 27	$93,773.22	0.5%		$121,556.45	0.5%

1) City of Tallahassee
2) *FY 24 is estimated as the average of FY 23 and FY 25

Table A-9

Battalion Chief – Assistant Division Chief Plan

Fiscal Year	Minimum Base Rate	Percent Change		Maximum Base Rate	Percent Change
FY 18	$92,977.32	-		$113,592.84	-
FY 19	$95,766.64	3.0%		$117,000.62	3.0%
FY 20	$98,639.64	3.0%		$120,510.64	3.0%
FY 21	$106,449.73	7.9%		$130,052.44	7.9%
FY 22	$106,981.98	0.5%		$130,702.71	0.5%
FY 23	$107,249.43	0.2%		$131,029.46	0.2%
FY 24*	$108,053.80	0.7%		$132,012.18	0.7%
FY 25	$108,858.17	0.7%		$132,994.90	0.7%
FY 26	$109,402.46	0.5%		$133,659.88	0.5%
FY 27	$109,949.47	0.5%		$134,328.18	0.5%

1) City of Tallahassee
2) *FY 24 is estimated as the average of FY 23 and FY 25

Table A-10
Firefighter

Fiscal Year	Step 1	Percent Change		Step 13	Percent Change
FY 18	$41,434.56	-		$66,338.06	-
FY 19	$42,677.60	3.0%		$68,328.20	3.0%
FY 20	$43,957.92	3.0%		$70,378.04	3.0%
FY 21	$43,957.92	0.0%		$70,378.04	0.0%
FY 22	$44,177.71	0.5%		$70,729.93	0.5%
FY 23	$44,729.93	1.2%		$71,614.05	1.2%
FY 24*	$44,864.97	0.3%		$77,352.14	8.0%
FY 25	$45,000.00	0.3%		$83,090.22	7.4%
FY 26	$45,000.00	0.0%		$83,090.22	0.0%
FY 27	$46,575.00	3.5%		$85,998.38	3.5%

1) City of Tallahassee
2) *FY 24 is estimated as the average of FY 23 and FY 25

Table A-11
Engineer

Fiscal Year	Step 1	Percent Change		Step 13	Percent Change
FY 18	$41,434.56	-		$66,338.06	-
FY 19	$42,677.60	3.0%		$68,328.20	3.0%
FY 20	$43,957.92	3.0%		$70,378.04	3.0%
FY 21	$43,957.92	0.0%		$70,378.04	0.0%
FY 22	$44,177.71	0.5%		$70,729.93	0.5%
FY 23	$44,729.93	1.2%		$71,614.05	1.2%
FY 24*	$44,864.97	0.3%		$77,352.14	8.0%
FY 25	$45,000.00	0.3%		$83,090.22	7.4%
FY 26	$45,000.00	0.0%		$83,090.22	0.0%
FY 27	$46,575.00	3.5%		$85,998.38	3.5%

1) City of Tallahassee
2) *FY 24 is estimated as the average of FY 23 and FY 25

Table A-12

Lieutenants & Specialists

Fiscal Year	Step 1	Percent Change		Step 13	Percent Change
FY 18	$41,434.56	-		$66,338.06	-
FY 19	$42,677.60	3.0%		$68,328.20	3.0%
FY 20	$43,957.92	3.0%		$70,378.04	3.0%
FY 21	$43,957.92	0.0%		$70,378.04	0.0%
FY 22	$44,177.71	0.5%		$70,729.93	0.5%
FY 23	$44,729.93	1.2%		$71,614.05	1.2%
FY 24*	$44,864.97	0.3%		$77,352.14	8.0%
FY 25	$45,000.00	0.3%		$83,090.22	7.4%
FY 26	$45,000.00	0.0%		$83,090.22	0.0%
FY 27	$46,575.00	3.5%		$85,998.38	3.5%

1) City of Tallahassee
2) *FY 24 is estimated as the average of FY 23 and FY 25

Appendix B:
List of Documents & Data Files Reviewed

Appendix B: List of Documents & Data Files Reviewed

Appendix B provides a comprehensive list of the documents and data files reviewed as part of the fire assessment program support.

- Interlocal Agreement 2009-10-1: Regarding the Provision of Fire and Emergency Medical Services
  - 1st Amendment 2009-06-09
  - 2nd Amendment 2013-09-05
  - 3rd Amendment 2013-10-21
  - 4th Amendment 2015-07-08
  - 5th Amendment 2021-10-08
  - 6th Amendment 2023-11-03

- City of Tallahassee and Leon County, Florida: Fire Assessment Memorandum, April 2023
  - Also referred to as the "*3rd Term Rate Study*"
  - Supplemental line-item budget detail provided by the City of Tallahassee

- City of Tallahassee and Leon County Fire Rescue Assessment Program (May 2025) – Amendment to Fire Assessment Memorandum dated April 2023
  - Also referred to as the "*2025 Unadopted Rate Study*"

- Leon County Resolution No. 23-11
  - Board of County Commissions July 11, 2023 Meeting Minutes

- City of Tallahassee Resolution No. 23-R-19
  - City Commission September 13, 2023 Meeting Minutes

- City of Tallahassee Resolution No. 25-R-45
  - City Commission September 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes

- Fire Assessment rates imposed by the City for FY 2021/22 through FY 2024/25 and proposed rated for FY 2025/26 though FY 2027/28

- Fire Services Fund Revenues and Expenditures for FY 2022/23 to FY 2025/26 (Year-to-Date)

  - Also referred to the "Actual" revenues collected by the City and County

- Fire Operating Reserve Fund Balance Report for FY 2021/22 to FY 2024/25 (YTD)
- Fire Services Adopted Budgets for FY 2022/23 to FY 2027/28
- Scope Documents for Fire Station 17 from FY 2023 to FY 2025
- Leon County Fire Rescue Services Non-Ad Valorem Assessment Roll for FY 2023/24 to 2024/25
- City of Tallahassee Utility Billing Files; Calendar years 2024 and 2025
- Leon County Property Appraiser's Parcel Database
- City of Tallahassee Budget Website
- City of Tallahassee Union Contracts and Contract Negotiations for FY 2024 and 1-Yr Agreement
- City of Tallahassee Documents for Restructuring/Refinancing Debt
- City of Tallahassee's Internal Service Funds Overview and City Commission Policy Manual No. 224
- City of Tallahassee's Agreement for Delinquent Debt Collection Services, with Penn/Central Corporation d/b/a Penn Credit Corporation
  - City of Tallahassee Correspondence regarding Bad Debt Expense
- GIS Data Identifying Religious Properties, Coded as 7100
- Articles from the Tallahassee Democrat regarding exemptions for Places of Worship and the feud between the City of Tallahassee and the Leon County School Board
- Article from WCTV Eyewitness News regarding the Fire Station 17 cost increase
- City of Tallahassee's Response to Leon County's Public Records Requests Regarding Supplementing Funds for Leon County Schools' Unpaid Fees

- Letter from City of Tallahassee to Leon County regarding *2025 Unadopted Rate Study*
- Article from the Tallahassee Democrat regarding Leon County Schools Unpaid Fees
- Fire Service Fee Updated Collections for FY 2024 and FY 2025

Appendix C:
3rd Term Rate Study

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City of Tallahassee and Leon County, Florida

Fire Assessment Memorandum

APRIL 2023

Presented by:
Government Services Group, Inc.,
an Anser Advisory Company
1500 Mahan Drive, Suite 250
Tallahassee, Florida 32308
(850) 681-3717

Posted on October 14, 2026

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Appendices

Appendix A—Situation Found Codes and Descriptions

Appendix B—Fixed Property Use Codes and Descriptions

Appendix C—Leon County Property Appraiser Building Improvement Codes and Use Descriptions with Assignment of Property Use Category

Appendix D--Department of Revenue (DOR) Codes

Appendix E—Map of Service Zones

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Introduction

The City of Tallahassee (City) and Leon County (County) entered into a professional services agreement with Government Services Group, Inc., an Anser Advisory Company (GSG) to provide specialized services in the development and implementation of a non-ad valorem assessment program to fund fire services within the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County (Fire Assessment Project).

The objective of this Fire Assessment Project is to develop and implement an update to the City's current revenue program capable of efficiently and effectively collecting all assessable and billable costs associated with providing fire services on an annual basis throughout the entire County for Fiscal Year 2023-24 and future fiscal years. The mechanism for collecting the fire fee from governmental properties will remain in effect, however both the City and County will utilize the City's utility bill as the collection method for all non-governmental properties where possible and the City will assist the County in the collection of the fire assessment utilizing the utility bill, tax bill, and separate bills. This document is the Fire Assessment Memorandum (Assessment Memorandum), which is one of the project deliverables specified in the scope of services.

The work effort, documented by this Assessment Memorandum, focused on the calculation of assessment rates and classifications required to fully fund the identified assessable costs to provide countywide fire services for Fiscal Year 2023-24 and future fiscal years. However, the City and County have the choice of funding all or only a portion of the assessable costs based on policy direction. In addition, the work effort recorded in this Assessment Memorandum required the identification of the full costs of assessable fire services (net of all fire related revenues) and the allocation of those costs to properties that specially benefit from the provision of such fire services.

BACKGROUND

In 1999, the City adopted a fire services funding program consisting of two components: a Fire Fee and a Fire Assessment. The goal of the Fire Services Funding Project in 1999 was to design an alternative revenue program capable of efficiently and effectively collecting all assessable and billable costs associated with providing fire services on an annual basis. The Fire Fee is the funding mechanism that secures recovery of the cost for providing fire services to governmental property. The Fire Assessment is the funding mechanism for non-government property that could be collected on the City's utility bill. The program was updated to account for changes in call data, property data and service delivery in 2004, 2009, and 2015.

OBJECTIVES

The City retained GSG to develop an annual recurring special assessment program that is capable of funding all of the assessable costs associated with providing countywide fire services. The City will utilize the utility bill for collection of the fire assessment and will assist the County in the collection of the fire assessment utilizing the utility bill, the tax bill, and separate bills. GSG has been charged to fully cost the services to be provided by the City, develop a fair and reasonable apportionment methodology for such

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assessable costs, and determine assessment rates and parcel classifications that are accurate, fair and reasonable.

The fire non-ad valorem assessments must meet the Florida case law requirements for a valid special assessment. These requirements include the following:

1. The service provided must confer a special benefit to the property being assessed; and
2. The costs assessed must be fairly and reasonably apportioned among the properties that receive the special benefit.

The work effort of this project required the evaluation of data obtained from the City and the County to develop a fire assessment program that focuses upon the projected Fiscal Year 2023-24 assessable cost calculations. The objectives of this initial effort were to:

- Determine the full costs of providing fire services within the County.
- Review such final cost determination with the City to determine which elements provide the requisite special benefit to the assessed properties.
- Determine the relative benefit anticipated to be derived by categories of property use within the County from the delivery of fire services.
- Recommend the fair and reasonable apportionment of assessable costs among benefited parcels within each category of property use.
- Calculate assessment rates and parcel classifications for Fiscal Year 2023-24 and future years based on the projected Fiscal Year 2023-24 through Fiscal Year 2027-28 Fire Department budget provided by the City and associated assessable costs developed by GSG.

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Service Description

Fire Rescue services are provided throughout the County from 17[1] paid fire rescue stations and 6 volunteer stations. Two of the volunteer stations are co-located at Stations 15 and 10. Table 1 identifies fire rescue buildings/facilities inventory, as well as the corresponding physical location address for the facility.

Table 1
Fire Rescue Department Buildings/Facility Inventory

Station	Address
Station #1	327 North Adams Street, Tallahassee
Station #2	2805 Sharer Road, Tallahassee
Station #3	3005 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee
Station #4	2899 West Pensacola Street, Tallahassee
Station #5	3238 Capital Circle Southwest, Tallahassee
Station #6	2901 Apalachee Parkway, Tallahassee
Station #7	2805 Shamrock South, Tallahassee
Station #8	2423 Hartsfield Road, Tallahassee
Station #9	3209 Thomasville Road, Tallahassee
Station #10	5323 Tower Road, Tallahassee
Station #11	8752 Centerville Road, Tallahassee
Station #12	4701 Chaires Cross Road, Tallahassee
Station #13	1555 Oak Ridge Road East, Tallahassee
Station #14	16614 Blountstown Highway, Tallahassee
Station #15	1445 Bannerman Road, Tallahassee
Station #16	913 Easterwood Drive, Tallahassee
Station #17	1815 Lake Bradford Road, Tallahassee
Miccosukee (County-Volunteer)	15013 Cromartic Road, Tallahassee
Bradfordville (County-Volunteer) (Co-located at Station #15)	1445 Bannerman Road Tallahassee
Lake Jackson (County-Volunteer) (Co-located at Station #10)	5323 Tower Road, Tallahassee
Chaires-Capitola (County-Volunteer)	6370 Williams Road, Tallahassee
Woodville (County-Volunteer)	155 East Oakridge, Tallahassee
Lake Talquin (County-Volunteer)	16614 Blountstown Highway, Tallahassee

Source: City of Tallahassee

The City of Tallahassee Fire Rescue Department provides standard fire suppression, medical services, hazmat response, technical rescue, airport capabilities, state disaster response, emergency response and

[1] Station 17 is anticipated to be operational by the end of 2023.

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disaster preparedness, fire prevention and safety education.

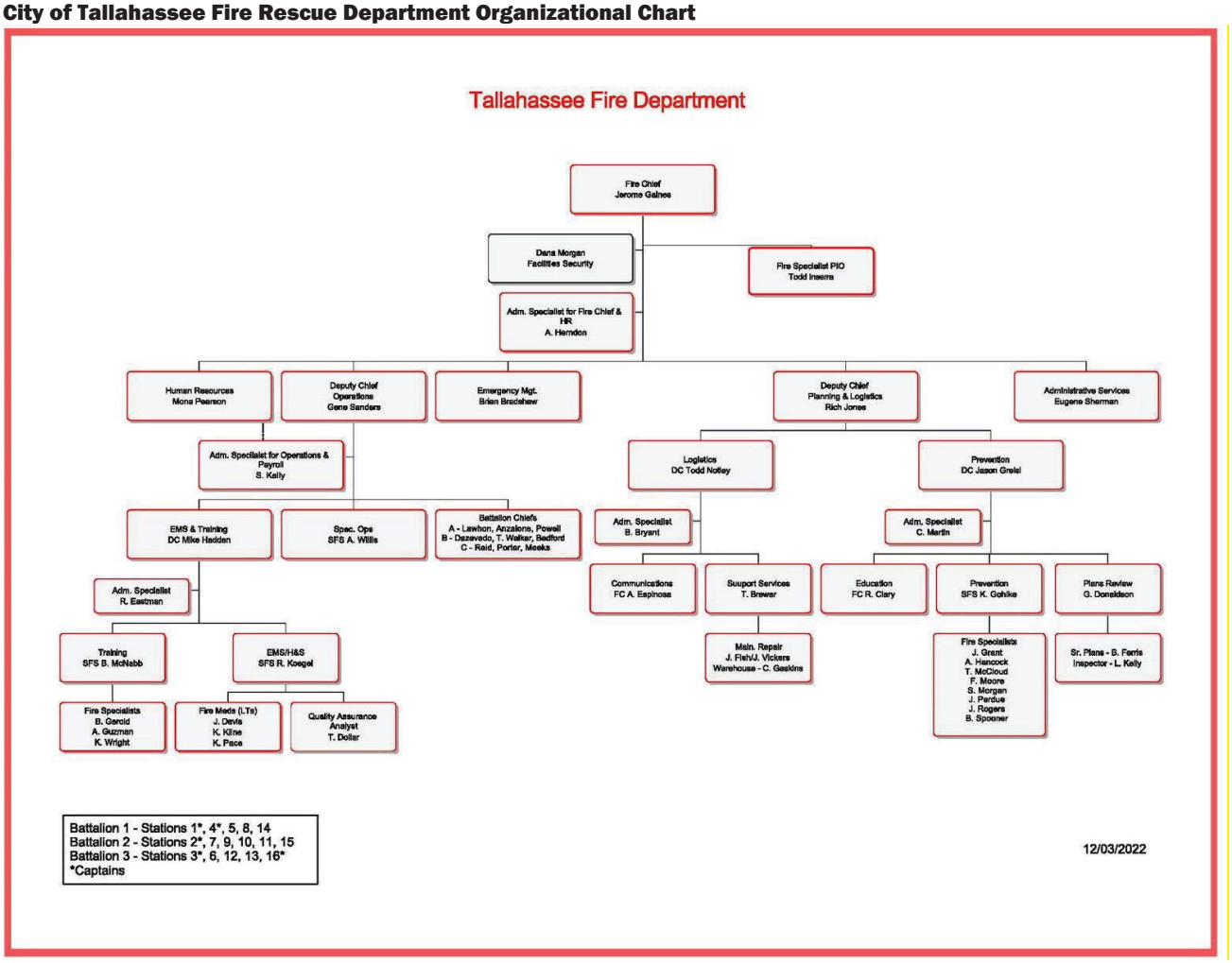
The City has an interlocal agreement with Leon County to provide fire protection services within the unincorporated area of the County. The County compensates the City for these services with collections from the fire service assessment in the unincorporated areas of the County.

The County has an interlocal agreement with the City to provide ALS and transport EMS services to the incorporated area of the City. The City compensates the County for these services by providing for the inclusion of the territorial boundaries of the City within the EMS Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) of the County. However, the City provides provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) services in coordination with Leon County EMS. The County compensates the City for these services.

Dispatch services for fire and EMS services are provided through a joint dispatch operation between the City and the County.

Tables 2 through 5 outline the Fire Rescue Department's current service operations and service components. Table 2 outlines the Fire Rescue Department's organizational structure.

Table 2
City of Tallahassee Fire Rescue Department Organizational Chart



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Table 3 describes the normal staffing for each apparatus. This information is used in the development of the Administrative Factor, as further discussed in the "Development of Factors" section of this Assessment Memorandum.

Table 3
Fire Rescue Department Apparatus Normal Staffing Requirements

Apparatus	Typical Staffing
Engine	4 personnel
Chevy Tahoe/Battalion Chief	1 personnel
Rescue	2 Personnel
Truck	4 Personnel
Tanker	1 Personnel
Airport	1 Personnel

Source: City of Tallahassee

Table 4 lists the location and the fire flow/pumping capacity of the Fire Rescue Department's apparatus. This information is used to determine the square footage cap for non-residential properties.

Table 4
Fire Rescue Department Apparatus Fire Flow

Location	Apparatus	Fire Flow (GPM)
Station 1	2022 E-One Tanker	1,500
	1996 E-One International Air and Light	N/A
	2014 Pierce Impel Pumper	1,500
	2021 E-One 100' Platform	1,500
	2017 Chevy Tahoe	N/A
	2014 E-One Impel Pumper	1,500
Station 2	2017 Hackney Tractor Trailer Haz-Mat	N/A
	2016 Chevy Tahoe	N/A
	2018 E-One 100' Platform	1,500
	2020 Ford F-550 Brush Truck	350
	2017 E-One Typhoon Pumper	1,500
Station 3	1994 Rescue-1 Boat	N/A
	2005 Ford-550 HazMat Tow Vehicle	N/A
	1997 E-One Medium Rescue	N/A
	2014 Pierce Impel 75 ft. Aerial	1,500
	2016 Chevy Tahoe	N/A
	2017 E-One Typhoon Pumper	1,500
Station 4	2010 Rescue -1 Boat	N/A
	2018 E-One 100' Aerial	1,500
	1996 E-One International Rescue Squad	500
	1998 16ft. Trailer	N/A
	2002 Ford F-550 Brush Truck	350
	2022 E-One Typhoon Pumper	1,500
	2005 International 4X4 Tractor	N/A
	2005 Hackney Trailer	N/A
	2005 E-One International Air Light Truck	N/A

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Location	Apparatus	Fire Flow (GPM)
Station 5*	2015 Oshkosh Stinger F-550 ARFF	500
	2010 E-One Titan Force ARFF	3,300
	2014 Oshkosh Striker 3000	3,300
Station 6	2017 E-One Typhoon Pumper	1,500
Station 7	2019 E-One Typhoon Pumper	1,500
Station 8	2017 E-One Typhoon Pumper	1,500
Station 9	2015 Pierce Impel Pumper	1,500
Station 10	2015 Pierce Impel Pumper	1,500
Station 11	2019 E-One International Tanker/Pumper	1,500
	2015 Pierce F-550 Rescue	650
Station 12	2019 E-One International Tanker/Pumper	1,500
	2016 Pierce F-550 Rescue	650
Station 13	2020 E-One International Tanker/Pumper	1,500
	2015 Pierce F-550 Rescue	650
Station 14	1994 Rescue-1 Boat	N/A
	2016 Pierce F-550 Rescue	650
	2020 E-One International Tanker/Pumper	1,500
Station 15	2020 Gator Tail Boat	N/A
	2019 Ford F-550 Brush Truck	350
	2019 E-One Typhoon Pumper	1,500
Station 16	2015 Pierce Impel 100’ Tower	1,500
	2015 Pierce Impel Pumper	1,500
	2019 Ford F-550 Brush Truck	350
	1994 Rescue-1 Boat	N/A
	Total GPM	**37,500**

Source: City of Tallahassee
* Pumping capacity for Station 5 is not included in total because those apparatus are dedicated to the airport.

The current pumping capacity is defined as the combined amount of water that all apparatus in the Fire Rescue Department can pump to a first alarm non-residential fire. As outlined by Table 4 above, the pumping capacity of the City’s Fire Rescue Department is 37,500 gallons per minute. Accordingly, based on National Fire Protection Association firefighting standards for fire flow as provided for in NFPA 1 Fire Code, 2015, Chapter 18 (assuming ordinary construction), the Fire Rescue Department currently has sufficient fire flow capacity to provide service coverage in the event of a structure fire involving unlimited square feet.

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Table 5 below details the Fire Rescue Department's response protocol.

Table 5
Minimum Response Protocol

Call Type	Typical City Response
Medical	Engine (1)
Vehicle Accident	Engine (1)
Vehicle Accident with Extraction	Engines (2), FireMed (1), Battalion Chief (1)
Residential Fire (single)	Engines (3), Truck (1), Battalion Chiefs (2), FireMed (1)
Residential Structure (multiple)	Engines (4), Truck (1), Battalion Chiefs (2), FireMed (1)
Residential/Building Alarm	Engine (1)
Commercial Fire	Engines (4), Truck (1), FireMed (1), Battalion Chiefs (2)
Hazardous Material	Engines (2), Haz-Mat (1), FireMed (1), Battalion Chief (1)
Service Calls	Engine (1)

Call Type	Typical County Response
Medical	Rescue (1), Tanker (1)
Vehicle Accident	Rescue (1), Tanker (1)
Vehicle Accident with Extraction	Rescue (1), Tanker (1), FireMed (1), Battalion Chief (1), Engine (1)
Residential Fire (single)	Rescue (1), Tanker (1), FireMed (1), Battalion Chiefs (2), TA1 (1), Engines (2), Truck (1)
Residential Structure (multiple)	Rescue (1), Tanker (1), FireMed (1), Battalion Chiefs (2), TA1 (1), Engines (3), Truck (1)
Residential/Building Alarm	Rescue (1), Tanker (1)
Commercial Fire	Rescue (1), Tanker (1), FireMed (1), Battalion Chiefs (2), TA1 (1), Engines (3), Truck (1)
Hazardous Material	Rescue (1), Tanker (1), HazMat (1), FireMed (1), Battalion Chief (1), Engine (1)
Service Calls	Rescue (1), Tanker (1)

Source: City of Tallahassee

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Assessable Cost Calculations

The cost calculations, apportionment methodology and assessable rates developed apply to the fire services serving the unincorporated area of Leon County and the incorporated area of the City of Tallahassee.

DEVELOPMENT OF FACTORS

FIRE RESCUE V. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

In June 2000, litigation over the City of North Lauderdale fire rescue assessment program resulted in a decision by the Fourth District Court of Appeals in the case of SMM Properties, Inc. v. City of North Lauderdale, (the "North Lauderdale" case). The Fourth District Court of Appeals concluded that Emergency Medical Services (EMS) did not provide a special benefit to property. The Court, however, reaffirmed that fire suppression, fire prevention, fire/building inspections and first response medical services do provide a special benefit to property. In 2002, the Florida Supreme Court upheld the decision of the Fourth District Court of Appeals.

To address these concerns, GSG developed a methodology that removed the costs associated with emergency medical services. This method of splitting the fire and EMS portions of a consolidated public safety department's budget was upheld by the Fourth District Court of Appeals in Desiderio Corporation, et al. vs. The City of Boynton Beach, Florida, et al., 39 So.3d 487 (Fla. 4th DCA 2010).

The proposed fire rescue department's line-item costs were allocated between fire rescue and emergency medical services as a result of the Florida Supreme Court's opinion in City of North Lauderdale v. SMM Properties that emergency medical services (above the level of first response) do not provide a special benefit to property. Accordingly, the City's fire rescue costs were split from emergency medical service costs based on the following general guidelines.

DIRECT ALLOCATIONS

To the extent that certain line items could be allocated directly to fire, direct allocations were made. For example, all costs associated with "Fire Prevention", "Fire Plans Review" and "Contractual Svc – VFD County" were allocated entirely to fire. All costs directly related to "Medical Services" were directly allocated to EMS.

ADMINISTRATIVE FACTOR

Certain line items were allocated between fire and EMS based on an Administrative Factor. This Administrative Factor is derived by creating a ratio between non-EMS or fire personnel and total combat personnel per shift. The administrative factor calculations are based on the City's total Fire Rescue Department combat personnel staffing, including an allocation for volunteers. Under normal staffing, this results in 87 non-EMS personnel and 19 EMS personnel for a total of 106 combat personnel. This normal staffing yields an 82.08 % percent non-EMS Administrative Factor.

This percentage was applied to all applicable line items to allocate the costs that could not be directly allocated as fire costs or EMS costs, and that could not be operationally allocated (see below). For example, the Administrative Factor was applied to the line-item expenditures for salaries and benefits, "Uniforms and Clothing", and "Utilities - Electric" to determine the fire service costs of these line items.

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OPERATIONAL FACTOR

Other line items were allocated between fire and EMS based on an Operational Factor. The Operational Factor is derived by creating a ratio between non-EMS (i.e., fire) calls and EMS calls, and this ratio which is based on the City's Fire Rescue Department's operations, was then applied to certain budget line items such as "Equipment Repairs" and "Gasoline".

To develop the Operational Factor, GSG obtained fire rescue incident data identifying the number of fire rescue calls made to property categories within the entire County over a three-year period. The City fire rescue incident data was used to determine the demand for fire rescue services. GSG obtained information from the City in an electronic format, identifying the number and type of fire rescue incident responses for a three-year period July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022.

The State Fire Marshal's office uses the Florida Fire Incident Reporting System (FFIRS). This system is a tool for fire rescue departments to report and maintain computerized records of fire rescue incidents and other department activities in a uniform manner. Under this system, a series of basic phrases with code numbers are used to describe fire rescue incidents. Appendix A provides a codes list for the "type of situation found" as recorded on the fire rescue incident reports used to identify EMS and non-EMS calls.

The ratio between non-EMS (i.e., fire) calls and EMS calls is then applied to all applicable line items to allocate the costs that could not be directly allocated as fire costs or EMS costs, and that could not be administratively allocated. For the three-year period, the City reported 66,575 total fire rescue incident calls to FFIRS, of which 18,563 were non-EMS (i.e. fire) calls and 48,012 were EMS calls. This information results in a 27.88% non-EMS Operational Factor.

ASSESSABLE COST CALCULATIONS

The fire services assessable cost calculations for Fiscal Years 2023-24 through 2027-28 are based on the following assumptions for the purpose of this Fire Assessment Memorandum.

- Actual projected expenditures and revenues were provided by the City for Fiscal Years 2023-24 through 2027-28.
- Revenues are shown as a reduction of the total projected expenditures for each fiscal year, thereby reducing the total assessable costs for that year. Revenues are comprised of revenues directly received from or for the delivery of fire services, such as "Fire Inspection Fees," "Forfeited Discounts," "Firefighters Supplemental Comp," and contract for service revenues that are allocated to the fire budget.
- All costs associated with providing contract services to the Tallahassee Regional Airport were included in the assessable budget with the corresponding contract revenues removed from the assessable budget calculations.
- The line item "Statutory Discount & Undercollection" under "Additional Costs" reflects a 95% collection rate of the Fire Services Assessment.
- The costs associated with supporting the volunteer fire departments were included as 100% fire costs and are included in the assessable budget.

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Table 6 provides a calculation of the assessable costs for Fiscal Year 2023-24 based on an application of the above factors to the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Projected Budget. The calculation yields an assessable cost of $47,481,665 for Fiscal Year 2023-24.

Table 6
Fire Services Assessable Cost Calculations (FY 2023-24)

	FY23-24 Budget	FY23-24 Assessable
Expenditures		
Personnel Services		
Salaries	24,212,689	20,236,470
Salary Enhancements	1,096,598	916,672
Firefighter Holiday Pay	809,046	674,568
Overtime	1,317,005	1,101,071
Other Salary Items	669,818	556,550
Pension- Current	8,246,987	6,866,071
Pension- MAP	121,924	104,320
Mandatory Medicare	370,328	309,426
Health Benefits	3,911,866	3,259,873
Health Benefits - OPEB	244,969	201,059
Flex Benefits	52,499	45,069
Vacancy Factor of 3%	-355,971	-296,268
Total Personnel Services	**$40,697,758**	**$33,974,882**
Operating Expenses		
Advertising	1,689	1,386
Cleaning & Laundry	14,525	12,981
Reproduction	5,658	2,479
Equipment Repairs	47,402	11,687
Medical Services	102,700	1,568
Construction Services	10,457	8,583
Unclassified Contractual Srvcs	352,574	205,745
Contractual Svc - VFD County	504,518	504,518
Contractual Svc – Other	400,000	400,000
Computer Software	3,294	2,704
Telephone	23,579	18,244
Chem-Med-Lab	105,961	3,839
Food	1,266	1,039
Gasoline	866	341
Office Supplies	21,700	16,672
Uniforms & Clothing	458,907	376,752
Unclassified Supplies	176,519	124,039
Non-Capital- Furniture & Equip	837	837
Travel & Training	77,756	52,737
Journals & Books	17,949	15,831
Memberships	4,191	3,195
Certificates & Licenses	2,404	600
Rent Expense- Machines	10,449	8,576
Unclassified Charges	54,898	45,058
Total Operating Expenses	**$2,400,099**	**$1,819,412**
Other Services & Charges		
Bad Debt Expense	168,736	168,736
Total Other Services & Charges	**$168,736**	**$168,736**
Capital Outlay		

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	FY23-24 Budget	FY23-24 Assessable
Computer Equipment	1,255	1,255
Vehicle Equipment	166,666	164,743
Unclassified Equipment	184,324	162,957
Total Capital Outlay	**$352,245**	**$328,956**
Internal Service Funds		
Human Resource Expense	491,633	406,145
Accounting Expense	220,228	183,621
Purchasing Expense	63,410	52,174
Information Systems Expense	2,497,035	2,060,901
Risk Management Expense	409,185	337,415
Radio Communications Expense	203,023	166,632
Revenue Collection	424,465	424,465
Utility Services Expense	1,884,299	1,884,299
Facilities and Environmental	48,050	39,837
Vehicle Garage Expense	1,237,218	376,947
Vehicle Fuel	205,018	59,565
Vehicle Replacement	3,111,004	924,775
Indirect Costs	559,824	468,068
Community Relations Expense	192,731	158,185
Diversity and Inclusion Expense	119,267	98,528
Total Internal Service Funds	**$11,666,390**	**$7,641,559**
Utilities and Other Expenses		
Utilities - Sewer	34,336	28,527
Utilities - Sanitation	18,865	15,745
Utilities - Stormwater	23,549	19,379
Utilities - Gas	40,049	32,870
Utilities - Water	27,701	22,857
Utilities - Electric	207,817	173,586
Utilities - Fire Services	51,003	41,861
Total Utilities and Other Expenses	**$403,320**	**$334,825**
Transfers		
Debt Service Transfer	1,270,772	1,270,772
Inter-Fund Ops Transfer	46,360	46,360
Total Transfers	**$1,317,132**	**$1,317,132**
Contributions to Operations		
Contribution to CDA Operating	335,976	93,680
Total Contributions to Operations	**$335,976**	**$93,680**
Year End Adjustments		
XFER TO FIRE SVCS OP RESERVE	1,202,828	0
Total Year End Adjustments	**$1,202,828**	**$0**
5-year CIP		
Facilities Management & Maintenance Master	406,000	333,226
Fire Hydrant Maintenance Master	860,213	860,213
Total 5-year CIP	**$1,266,213**	**$1,193,439**
Total Expenditures	**$59,810,697**	**$46,872,619**
Revenues		

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	FY23-24 Budget	FY23-24 Assessable
Fire Inspection Fees	365,195	365,195
Firefighters Supplemental Comp	113,808	113,808
Leon County EMS Payment	3,501,740	0
Forfeited Discounts	73,198	73,198
Interest	-31,683	-31,683
Other Miscellaneous Revenue	12,548	12,548
Contribution From Airport Fund	1,356,923	1,356,923
Total Revenues	**$5,391,729**	**$1,889,989**
Total Expenditures	**$59,810,697**	**$46,872,619**
Total Revenues	**$5,391,729**	**$1,889,989**
Net Expenditures	**$54,418,968**	**$44,982,630**
Additional Costs		
Under collection (5%)		2,499,035
Total Additional Costs		**$2,499,035**
Total Net Assessable Expenditures		**$47,481,665**

Table 7 shows the calculation of the full cost of the Fire Services Assessment Program for Fiscal Year 2023-24 through Fiscal Year 2027-28 as well as the five-year average Fire Services Assessment Program cost.

Table 7
Fire Assessable Cost Calculations Five-Year Average (FY 23-24 thru FY 27-28)

	FY23-24 Assessable	FY24-25 Assessable	FY25-26 Assessable	FY26-27 Assessable	FY27-28 Assessable	5-Yr Average Assessable
Expenditures						
Personnel Services	$33,974,882	$36,331,042	$38,269,326	$39,594,842	$40,274,267	$37,688,872
Operating Expenses	$12,897,738	$12,798,144	$12,964,929	$13,132,855	$13,082,694	$12,975,272
Total Expenditures	**$46,872,619**	**$49,129,186**	**$51,234,255**	**$52,727,697**	**$53,356,961**	**$50,664,144**
Total Revenues	**$1,889,989**	**$1,918,339**	**$1,947,114**	**$1,976,320**	**$2,005,965**	**$1,947,545**
Net Expenditures	**$44,982,630**	**$47,210,847**	**$49,287,141**	**$50,751,377**	**$51,350,996**	**$48,716,598**
Additional Costs	**$2,499,035**	**$2,622,825**	**$2,738,174**	**$2,819,521**	**$2,852,833**	**$2,706,478**
Total Net Assessable Expenditures	**$47,481,665**	**$49,833,672**	**$52,025,315**	**$53,570,898**	**$54,203,829**	**$51,423,076**

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Determination of Fire Services Demand

INCIDENT DATA

GSG obtained information from the City in an electronic format, identifying the number and type of fire rescue incident responses for a three-year period July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022. The City uses the Florida Fire Incident Reporting System (FFIRS) to record its fire rescue incidents. The FFIRS is a tool for fire rescue departments to report and maintain computerized records of fire rescue incidents and other department activities in a uniform manner.

Under this system, a series of basic phrases with code numbers are used to describe fire rescue incidents. A data field in the FFIRS, "type of situation found," identifies the incident as an EMS or non-EMS type of call for each incident. Appendix A provides a code list for the "type of situation found" as recorded on the fire rescue incident reports used to identify EMS and non-EMS calls.

Another data field in the FFIRS, "fixed property use," identifies the type of property that fire rescue departments respond to for each fire rescue incident. The fixed property uses correlate to property uses determined by the Leon County Property Appraiser on the ad valorem tax roll. Appendix B provides a code list for the "fixed property use" as recorded on the fire rescue incident reports.

GSG analyzed the three years of fire rescue incident data from the FFIRS files to evaluate trends and determine if aberrations were present. The fire rescue incident data for the three-year period (July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022) represents 66,575 fire rescue incidents. Of the 66,575 fire rescue incidents, there were 48,012 incidents classified as EMS type incidents based on the type of situation found indicated on the incident report. The 48,012 EMS type incidents were not included in the analysis.

There are certain fire incidents that could not be assigned to a specific property or parcel. These calls represent non-specific type incidents, which are incidents that either could not be correlated to a specific parcel or calls that involved auto accidents and other types of incidents along roads and highways.

Of the 18,563 remaining fire type incidents, 15,777 were calls to specific property uses. The remaining 2,786 incidents were considered non-specific type incidents. Because of the inability to correlate these non-specific type incidents to specific property categories, the call analysis does not include these 2,786 incidents. Additionally, the level of services required to meet anticipated demand for fire services and the corresponding annual fire services budget required to fund fire services provided to non-specific property uses would be required notwithstanding the occurrence of any incidents from such non-specific property uses.

The suppression of fires on vacant land and agricultural property primarily benefits adjacent property by containing the spread of fire rather than preserving the integrity of the vacant parcel. Thus, incidents to vacant and agricultural property were not included in the final analysis of the fire call database. The 578 calls to these two property-use categories were removed.

Of the remaining 15,199 fire type incidents, there were 1,782 calls for service to government properties and 13,417 calls to non-Government properties as identified by addresses or fixed property use codes provided in the FFIRS reports. The costs associated with providing service to government properties were segregated. Those government properties will fund fire service through a fee that is determined by the historical demand for service as detailed later in this Memorandum.

Table 8 outlines the assignment of fire type incidents based on the analysis conducted by GSG.

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Table 8
Fire Calls by Category (July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022)

Property Category	Number of Fire Incidents	Percentage of Total Incidents
Non-Government	13,417	88.28%
Government	1,782	11.72%
Total	**15,199**	**100%**

Source: City of Tallahassee

PROPERTY DATA

GSG obtained information from the ad valorem tax roll from the Leon County Property Appraiser's office, the City's utility billing files, and the County's certified fire assessment roll to develop the assessment roll. Each building within the County on the ad valorem tax roll was assigned to one or more of the property-use categories based on their assignment of use by the Leon County Property Appraiser or verification of use obtained through field research. A list of building improvement codes used by the Leon County Property Appraiser and their assignment to a property use category is provided as Appendix C.

The Residential Property Use Category includes such properties as single-family, duplexes, mobile homes, triplexes, quadruplexes, apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and cooperatives. In the event the data was indefinite, the DOR codes were used to clarify mobile home categories and help identify condominium and townhouse buildings. For parcels assigned to the Residential Property Use Category, GSG utilized the total number of dwelling units as determined from the building files on the ad valorem tax roll or through the use of field research.

The Non-Residential Property Use Category includes commercial and industrial/warehouse property uses. For parcels within the Non-Residential Property Use Categories (Commercial and Industrial/Warehouse), GSG determined the amount of square footage of the structures using the building files on the ad valorem tax roll or through the use of field research.

For RV parks regulated under Chapter 513, Florida Statutes, in accordance with Sections 166.223 and 125.0168, Florida Statutes, which mandate that cities and counties treat RV parks like commercial property for non-ad valorem assessments levied by the City and County, each RV space within the park was treated as a building of commercial property and assigned the square footage of 191 square feet, the average size of a recreational vehicle, according to the Florida Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds.

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Computation of Fire Services Assessments

The fire services apportionment methodology allocates assessable costs based on the anticipated demand for fire services by categories of private, real property use as identified on the real property assessment roll prepared for the levy of ad valorem taxes. The assessable fire costs are allocated among private, real property use categories based upon the historical demand for these services. This demand is identified by examining the fire incident data as reported by the City to the State Fire Marshal's office.

The fire services apportionment methodology for government property allocates billable costs to provide fire services based upon the historical demand for these services for all government owned property (i.e., City, County, State, Federal, etc.), as reflected by the incident data reported by the City.

This section of the Memorandum includes the assessment rates as calculated within this Assessment Memorandum. The fire rescue assessment cost calculations provided herein are primarily based on information supplied by the City. The assessable cost projections developed by GSG are designed to forecast assessment rates within each property use category for Fiscal Years 2023-24 based on the five-year average assessable budget.

SERVICE ZONES

Service zones were created under the previous fire assessment study in April 2015 to reflect the level of service differentiation of a property located in a higher density area that receives fire protection coverage from multiple stations as compared to a property located in an area generally described as rural and typically serviced by a single fire station. For this purpose, "core stations" were identified and defined as those stations within five road miles of at least two other stations. The creation of a core area was necessary to eliminate the appearance of a higher service level of those properties that may be within five road miles of two stations; however, the location of the property lies between two stations that are nearly ten miles apart. This same approach was used in this study. Any changes in the level of service provided in the two zones will need to be reviewed in subsequent studies to ensure that this approach is still valid.

Those properties included in "Zone 1" were generally located within five road miles of two "core stations." Properties located outside of five road miles of two "core stations" were included in "Zone 2." A map of the service zones is provided in Appendix E.

Calls were plotted, or "geocoded," on a map based upon the geographic location of the incident provided in the FFIRS database. Those calls correlated to properties included in "Zone 1," and those calls correlated to properties included in "Zone 2," were separated and assigned to the respective zone. Table 9 details the assignment of calls to service zones.

Table 9
Fire Calls to Non-Governmental Properties by Zone
(July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2022)

Zone	Number of Calls to Specific Property Uses
Zone 1	10,106
Zone 2	3,311

The calls for service were then weighted based on the average call duration differential between Zone 1 and Zone 2 to account for the difference in resources used on calls between the two zones. On average a

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call in Zone 2 is 19% longer in duration than a call in Zone 1. Therefore, all calls in Zone 2 were multiplied by a weighting factor of 1.19 to determine the weighted number of calls while all calls in Zone 1 were assigned a weighting factor of 1.00. Table 10 details the weighting of calls by zone.

Table 10
Weighted Fire Calls to Non-Governmental Properties by Zone (July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022)

Zone	Number of Calls to Specific Property Uses	Weighting Factor	Number of Weighted Calls to Specific Property Uses
Zone 1	10,106	1.00	10,106
Zone 2	3,311	1.19	3,940

Table 11 outlines the property use category assignment of weighted fire type incidents for non-governmental properties based on the historical demand for service in each zone.

Table 11
Weighted Fire Calls by Category to Non-Governmental Properties (July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022)

	Zone 1		Zone 2	
Category	**Number of Incidents**	**Percentage of Calls**	**Number of Incidents**	**Percentage of Calls**
Residential	5,894	58.32%	3,283	83.33%
Commercial	4,043	40.01%	602	15.28%
Industrial/Warehouse	169	1.67%	55	1.39%
Total	**10,106**	**100%**	**3,940**	**100%**

Source: City of Tallahassee

SPECIAL BENEFIT ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions support a finding that the fire services, facilities, and programs provided by the City provide a special benefit to the assessed parcels.

- Fire services, facilities, and programs possess a logical relationship to the use and enjoyment of property by: (i) protecting the value and integrity of improvements and structures through the availability and provision of comprehensive fire services; (ii) protecting the life and safety of intended occupants in the use and enjoyment of property; (iii) lowering the cost of fire insurance by the presence of a professional and comprehensive fire services program; and (iv) containing fire incidents occurring on land with the potential to spread and endangering other property and property features.
- The availability and provision of comprehensive fire services enhances and strengthens the relationship of such services to the use and enjoyment of the parcels of property, the market perception of the area and, ultimately, the property values within the assessable area.

APPORTIONMENT METHODOLOGY

The following section describes the assessment apportionment methodology for fire services based on: (i) the fire services assessable cost calculations; (ii) the ad valorem tax roll maintained by the property appraiser and the availability of the data residing on the database; and (iii) the fire rescue incident data.

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COST APPORTIONMENT

The assessable costs were first apportioned among government and non-government property based upon the historical demand for service percentages shown in Table 8. The assessable costs attributable to non-government property were then apportioned to Zone 1 and Zone 2 and then further to the individual property use categories in each service zone based upon the weighted historical demand for fire services reflected by the fire incident data experienced in each service zone for July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022. The five-year average cost apportionment is illustrated in Table 12.

Table 12
Cost Apportionment (Five-Year Average)

	Zone 1 (71.95% of Weighted Fire Calls)			Zone 2 (28.05% of Weighted Fire Calls)		
Category	**Total Calls**	**Percentage**	**Assessable Costs**	**Total Calls**	**Percentage**	**Assessable Costs**
Residential	5,894	58.32%	$19,049,431	3,283	83.33%	$10,610,742
Commercial	4,043	40.01%	$13,066,992	602	15.28%	$1,946,008
Industrial/Warehouse	169	1.67%	$546,209	55	1.39%	$176,910
Total	**10,106**	**100.00%**	**$32,662,632**	**3,940**	**100.00%**	**$12,733,660**

PARCEL APPORTIONMENT

The share of the assessable costs apportioned to each property use category was further apportioned among the individual buildings of property within each property use category in the manner described in Table 13.

Table 13
Parcel Apportionment within Property Use Categories

Category	Parcel Apportionment
Residential	Dwelling Unit
Non-Residential: -Commercial -Industrial/Warehouse	Improvement Area Per Building Within Square Footage Ranges (100,000 Square Foot Cap Per Building)

Applying the foregoing parcel apportionment methodology, fire assessment rates were computed for each property use category. The specific methodology, underlying special benefit and fair apportionment assumptions are included below and generally described.

RESIDENTIAL PARCEL APPORTIONMENT ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions support findings that the parcel apportionment applied in the Residential Property Use category are fair and reasonable. The Residential Property Use Category includes such properties as single-family dwelling units and multi-family dwelling units.

- The size or the value of the residential parcel does not determine the scope of the required fire services. The potential demand for fire services is driven by the existence of a dwelling unit and the anticipated average occupant population.
- Apportioning the assessable costs for fire services attributable to the residential property use category on a per dwelling unit basis is required to avoid cost inefficiency and unnecessary administration and is a fair and reasonable method of parcel apportionment based upon historical fire call data.

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- The consolidation of single-family and multi-family properties into a single category is fair and reasonable because they are similar property uses and the number of calls per dwelling unit is not significantly different.

RESIDENTIAL PARCEL APPORTIONMENT CALCULATION

Based upon the historical demand for fire services, the percentages of assessable costs attributable to residential properties were calculated. The amount of the assessable costs allocable to each residential property was divided by the number of dwelling units in the Residential Property Use Category to compute the fire assessment to be imposed against each dwelling unit. For each residential parcel, the actual number of dwelling units located on the parcel will be multiplied by the residential dwelling unit rate to compute the residential fire assessment amount for the parcel.

Table 14 illustrates the assignment of dwelling units under this apportionment methodology to the Residential Property Use Category for each zone.

Table 14
Parcel Apportionment (Residential Property Use Category)

Residential Property Use Category	Number of Dwelling Units-Zone 1	Number of Dwelling Units-Zone 2
Residential Dwelling Units	77,628	47,672

Source: City of Tallahassee and Leon County Property Appraiser Data

NON-RESIDENTIAL PARCEL APPORTIONMENT ASSUMPTIONS

The Non-Residential Property Use category includes commercial and industrial/warehouse property uses. The capacity to handle fires and other emergencies in Non-Residential Property Use category is governed by the following:

- The current pumping capacity is defined as the combined amount of water that all apparatus in the Fire Department can pump to a non-residential fire. As outlined by Table 4 above, the pumping capacity of the Fire Department is 37,500 gallons per minute. Accordingly, based on National Fire Protection Association firefighting standards for fire flow as provided for in NFPA 1 Fire Code, 2015, Chapter 18 (assuming ordinary construction), the Fire Rescue Department currently has sufficient fire flow capacity to provide service coverage in the event of a structure fire involving unlimited square feet. To avoid inefficiency and unnecessary administration, the City has made a policy decision to set the maximum classification of any building at 100,000 square feet.

The following assumption supports findings that the parcel apportionment applied in the Non-Residential Property Use category is fair and reasonable.

- The risk of loss and demand for fire services availability is substantially the same for structures below a certain minimum size. Because the value and anticipated occupancy of structures below a certain minimum size is less, it is fair, reasonable, and equitable to provide a lesser assessment burden on such structures by the creation of a specific property parcel classification for those parcels.
- The separation of non-residential buildings into square footage classifications is fair and reasonable for the purposes of parcel apportionment because: (i) the absence of a need for precise square footage data within the ad valorem tax records maintained by the property appraiser undermines the use of actual square footage of structures and improvements within each improved building as a basis for parcel apportionment; (ii) the administrative expense and complexity created by an on-site inspection to determine the actual square footage of structures and improvements within each improved parcel assessed is impractical; and (iii) the demand for fire services availability is not precisely determined or measured by the actual square footage of structures and improvements within benefited parcels; and (iv) the classification of buildings within square footage ranges is a fair and reasonable method to

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classify benefited parcels and to apportion costs among benefited buildings that create similar demand for the availability of fire services.

- The consolidation of commercial and institutional properties into a single category is fair and reasonable because the non-government institutional type properties are similar in use to the commercial type properties.

The parcel apportionment for each Non-Residential Property Use Classification shall include both minimum building classifications and an additional classification of all other buildings based upon the assumed square footage of structures and improvements within the improved parcel. The Non-Residential Property Use Classifications include Commercial and Industrial/Warehouse. The following describes the Non-Residential Property parcel apportionment calculation and classification for the Commercial and Industrial/Warehouse categories.

NON-RESIDENTIAL PARCEL APPORTIONMENT CALCULATION

Based upon the historical demand for fire services, property in the Non-Residential Property Use categories will be responsible for funding a percentage of assessable costs. The amount of the assessable costs allocable to buildings within each of the Non-Residential Property Use Classifications was calculated based upon the following building classifications.

- Non-residential buildings with square footage of non-residential improvements less than 1,999 square feet were assigned an improvement area of 1,000 square feet per building. Buildings with square footage of non-residential improvements between 2,000 square feet and 3,499 square feet were assigned an improvement area of 2,000 square feet per building. Buildings with non-residential improvements between 3,500 square feet and 4,999 square feet were assigned an improvement area of 3,500 square feet per building. Buildings with non-residential improvement areas between 5,000 square feet and 9,999 square feet were assigned an improvement area of 5,000 square feet per building. For buildings containing non-residential improvements between 10,000 square feet and 99,999 square feet, assignments of improvement area were made in 10,000 square foot increments.
- For buildings, containing non-residential improvements over 99,999 square feet, an assignment of improvement area of 100,000 was made.

Sections 125.0168 and 166.223, Florida Statutes, relating to special assessments levied on recreational vehicle parks regulated under Chapter 513, Florida Statues are based on the following:

- When a city or county levy a non-ad valorem special assessment on a recreational vehicle park regulated under Chapter 513, the non-ad valorem special assessment shall not be based on the assertion that the recreational vehicle park is comprised of residential units. Instead, recreational vehicle parks regulated under Chapter 513 shall be assessed as a commercial entity in the same manner as a hotel, motel, or other similar facility.

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Table 15 illustrates the assignment of improvement area under this apportionment methodology for the Commercial and Industrial/Warehouse categories.

Table 15
Parcel Apportionment (Non-Residential Property Use Category)

Square Foot Tiers	Number of Commercial Buildings		Number of Industrial/Warehouse Buildings	
	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 1	Zone 2
≤ 1,999	1,239	205	66	25
2,000 - 3,499	900	166	80	50
3,500 - 4,999	591	100	58	34
5,000 - 9,999	941	161	194	71
10,000 - 19,999	490	86	185	34
20,000 - 29,999	170	29	56	8
30,000 - 39,999	101	9	34	1
40,000 - 49,999	58	10	12	0
50,000 - 59,999	36	3	4	0
60,000 - 69,999	27	5	4	0
70,000 - 79,999	19	3	1	1
80,000 - 89,999	10	3	1	2
90,000 - 99,999	8	3	6	0
>= 100,000	43	5	18	2

Source: City of Tallahassee and Leon County Property Appraiser Data

Because the suppression of fires on vacant land and agricultural property primarily benefits adjacent property by containing the spread of fire rather than preserving the integrity of the vacant parcel, incidents to vacant and agricultural property were not included in the final analysis of the fire call database. Therefore, only the primary structures on vacant and agricultural parcels will be charged.

COMPUTATION OF FIRE ASSESSMENT RATES

Applying the parcel apportionment methodology, fire services assessment rates were computed for each specified property use category. Based on the assessable costs of providing fire services, the number of fire calls apportioned to specific property categories and the number of billing units within the specified property categories.

Table 16 illustrates the assessment rates after application of the assessment methodology based on 100 percent funding of the five-year average assessable costs.

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Table 16
Fire Services Assessment Rates (Five-Year Average)

Residential Property Use Categories		Zone 1 - Rate Per Dwelling Unit	Zone 2 - Rate Per Dwelling Unit
Residential Dwelling Unit		$245.39	$223
Commercial Property Use Category	**Building Classification (in square foot ranges)**	**Zone 1 – Rate Per Building**	**Zone 2 - Rate Per Building**
	≤ 1,999	$384	$356
	2,000 - 3,499	$768	$712
	3,500 - 4,999	$1,344	$1,245
	5,000 - 9,999	$1,920	$1,779
	10,000 - 19,999	$3,840	$3,557
	20,000 - 29,999	$7,680	$7,113
	30,000 - 39,999	$11,519	$10,669
	40,000 - 49,999	$15,359	$14,226
	50,000 - 59,999	$19,198	$17,782
	60,000 - 69,999	$23,038	$21,338
	70,000 - 79,999	$26,877	$24,895
	80,000 - 89,999	$30,717	$28,451
	90,000 - 99,999	$34,557	$32,007
	≥ 100,000	$38,396	$35,564
Industrial/Warehouse Property Use Category	**Building Classification (in square foot ranges)**	**Zone 1 - Rate Per Building**	**Zone 2 – Rate Per Building**
	≤ 1,999	$63	$114
	2,000 - 3,499	$125	$227
	3,500 - 4,999	$218	$398
	5,000 - 9,999	$311	$568
	10,000 - 19,999	$621	$1,135
	20,000 - 29,999	$1,242	$2,270
	30,000 - 39,999	$1,863	$3,405
	40,000 - 49,999	$2,484	$4,540
	50,000 - 59,999	$3,104	$5,674
	60,000 - 69,999	$3,725	$6,809
	70,000 - 79,999	$4,346	$7,944
	80,000 - 89,999	$4,967	$9,079
	90,000 - 99,999	$5,587	$10,213
	≥ 100,000	$6,208	$11,348

*Estimated Gross Revenue: $45,396,291; Estimated Institutional Tax-Exempt Buy-down: $479,368; Estimated Net Revenue: $44,916,923.

EXEMPTIONS AND IMPACT OF EXEMPTIONS

Because the fire services assessment is being developed to meet the case law standards for a valid special assessment, any proposed exemptions require special scrutiny. The crafting of an exemption must be founded upon a legitimate public purpose, and not tramp on state or federal constitutional concepts of equal protection and constitutional prohibitions against establishment of religion or the use of the public treasury directly or indirectly to aid religious institutions. Furthermore, to ensure public acceptance, any exemption must make common sense and be fundamentally fair. Finally, the impact of any proposed exemption should be evaluated in terms of its magnitude and fiscal consequences on the City and County's general funds respectively.

Whenever crafting an exemption, it is important to understand that the fair apportionment element required by Florida case law prohibits the shifting of the fiscal costs of any special assessment from exempt landowners to other non-exempt landowners. In other words, the funding for an exemption from a special assessment must come from a legally available external revenue source, such as the City and

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County's general funds. Funding for fire assessment exemptions cannot come from the proceeds derived directly from the imposition of special assessments for fire services and facilities. Because any exemption must be funded by an external funding source, the grant of any exemption will not have any impact upon the fire assessment to be imposed upon any other non-exempt parcels.

The decision to fund exemptions for fire services assessments on property owned by non-governmental entities is based upon the determination that such exemptions constituted a valid public purpose.

Table 17 summarizes the estimated impact of exempting institutional, wholly tax-exempt property based on the five-year average assessable budget.

Table 17
Estimated Impact of Exemptions (Five-Year Average)

Financial Classification	Zone 1	Zone 2	Total
Estimated Assessable Costs	$32,662,632	$12,733,660	$45,396,291
Estimated Buy-down for Institutional Tax-Exempt Building Uses	$345,780	$133,588	$479,368
Estimated Revenue Generated	**$32,316,852**	**$12,600,072**	**$44,916,923**

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Fire Services Fees Imposed on Governmental Property

The special benefit and fair and reasonable apportionment requirements for a valid special assessment do not rigidly apply to charges against government property. Florida case law has stated that user fees are paid by choice and are charged in exchange for a particular governmental service, which benefits the property paying the fee in a manner not shared by other members of the public. In the user fee context, choice means that the property paying the fee has the option of not using the governmental service and thereby avoiding the charge. Under such tests and definition of choice, the validity of both impact fees and stormwater fees have been upheld.

Impact fees are imposed to place the economic burden of infrastructure required by growth on new development. Stormwater fees are imposed to control and treat the stormwater burden generated by the use and enjoyment of developed property. Likewise, fire services provided by the City and County are intended to meet the historical demand for fire services from developed property and such fee benefits the owner or user of developed property in a manner not shared by other members of society (e.g., the owner of undeveloped property).

The Florida Attorney General has recognized that state-owned property is not required to pay a special assessment without legislative authorization but that such authorization is not needed for user fees or service charges. Additionally, a valid charge cannot be enforced by a lien against public property absent elector approval. Rather, the enforcement remedy is a mandamus action to compel payment. In addition, certain general laws preempt the home rule power of local governments to impose special assessments on educational institutions.

As discussed previously and documented in the “Incident Data” section of this document, the fire services incidents were analyzed to determine the fire services demand for all governmental property. It was determined that approximately 11.72% of the total fire calls were attributable to governmental property. Therefore, approximately 11.72% of the total assessable budget was allocated to governmental property as shown in Table 18 below.

Table 18
Government Cost Allocation

Total Assessable Costs	Percentage of Governmental Calls	Governmental Cost Allocation
$51,423,076	11.72%	$6,026,785

The costs attributable to each governmental entity will be allocated based on each entity’s percentage of the total governmental square footage as determined by the City. GSG calculated a rate per square foot for governmental property based on the governmental cost allocation in Table 18 and the total governmental square footage as provided by the City. This calculation is shown in Table 19 below.

Table 19
Government Rate Calculation

Governmental Cost Allocation	Total Government Square Feet	Government Rate Per Square Foot
$6,026,785	22,627,160	$0.267

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Additional Information

EXEMPTION CALCULATIONS

GSG utilized the most current data to identify institutional, tax-exempt parcels within the County in order to calculate the aggregate cost ('buy down') of these parcels. In addition, best efforts were made by GSG to reconcile any differences necessary to calculate the estimated buy down for this exemption category. Missing or incorrect property data could affect the estimated aggregate costs.

NON-SPECIFIC CALLS

In the fire call analysis, certain fire related calls were classified as non-property specific, because of the location of occurrence in the incident report. These calls represent non-specific incidents that either could not be correlated to a specific parcel or involved auto accidents or other types of incidents along roads and highways. These calls are excluded from the analysis that determines the percentage of calls for service to respective property types and therefore, are not considered in the determination of the extent of budget required to fund the department. Because the budget is established based on the ability of the department to adequately protect structures, no adjustment has been made to the budget due to non-property specific calls.

MOBILE HOME AND RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARK VACANCY CREDIT

As a consequence of the transient use and potential extraordinary vacancies within mobile home and recreational vehicle (RV) parks as compared to other residential property and the lack of demand for fire services for unoccupied spaces, it is fair and reasonable to provide for an extraordinary vacancy adjustment procedure for mobile home and RV park properties. Vacant mobile home and RV spaces within a mobile home or RV park will be charged; however, these properties will be eligible for an extraordinary vacancy adjustment for vacant mobile home or RV spaces.

VERIFICATION OF SQUARE FOOTAGE OF STRUCTURES ON TAX-EXEMPT PARCELS

The ad valorem tax roll provides the data required to determine value. So long as properties remain in the name of owners exempt from ad valorem taxation, the property appraiser may not consistently maintain data related to building improvements on such parcels. As a consequence of such data imperfections, the square footage on some of the parcels, particularly for institutional private sector classifications, may not be complete.

BILLING PROPERTIES WITH MULTIPLE UTILITY ACCOUNTS

The proposed methodology can determine the assessment rate per building on a tax parcel. However, for some non-residential properties there may be many utility accounts assigned to a building. When utilizing the utility bill to collect the Fire Services Assessment, a considerable amount of data collection will be necessary to assess each utility account assigned to the building.

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Appendix A

SITUATION FOUND CODES AND DESCRIPTIONS

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Situation Found Code	Description	EMS Type Call
111	Building Fire	No
112	Fires in structures other than in a building	No
113	Cooking fire, confined to a container	No
114	Chimney or flue fire, confined to chimney or flue	No
115	Incinerator overload or malfunction, fire confined	No
116	Fuel burner/boiler malfunction, fire confined	No
118	Trash or rubbish fire, contained	No
120	Fire in mobile property used as a fixed structure, other	No
121	Fire in mobile home used as a fixed residence	No
122	Fire in mobile home, camper, recreational vehicle	No
123	Fire in portable building, fixed location	No
130	Mobile property (vehicle) fire, other	No
131	Passenger vehicle fire	No
132	Road freight or transport vehicle fire	No
134	Water vehicle fire	No
137	Camper or RV fire	No
138	Off Road vehicle or heavy equipment fire	No
140	Natural vegetation fire	No
141	Forest, woods or wildland fire	No
142	Brush, or brush and grass mixture fire	No
143	Grass fire	No
150	Outside rubbish fire, other	No
151	Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire	No
152	Garbage dump or sanitary landfill fire	No
153	Construction or demolition landfill fire	No
154	Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire	No
155	Outside stationary compactor/compacted trash fire	No
160	Special outside fire, other	No
161	Outside storage fire	No
162	Outside equipment fire	No
163	Outside gas or vapor combustion explosion	No
170	Cultivated vegetation, crop fire, other	No
173	Cultivated trees or nursery stock fire	No
210	Overpressure rupture from steam, other	No
211	Overpressure rupture of steam pipe or pipeline	No
220	Overpressure rupture from air or gas, other	No
221	Overpressure rupture of air or gas pipe/pipeline	No
223	Air or gas rupture of pressure or process vessel	No
240	Explosion (no fire), other	No
243	Fireworks explosion (no fire)	No
251	Excessive heat, scorch burns with no ignition	No
311	Medical assist, assist EMS crew	Yes
320	Allergic reaction	Yes
321	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	Yes
322	Vehicle accident with injuries	Yes
323	Motor vehicle/pedestrian accident (MV Ped)	Yes
324	Motor Vehicle Accident, No Injuries	No
331	Lock-in (if lock out, use 511)	No
341	Search for person on land	No

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Situation Found Code	Description	EMS Type Call
342	Search for person in water	No
350	Extrication, rescue, other	No
351	Extrication of victim(s) from building/structure	No
352	Extrication of victim(s) from vehicle	No
353	Removal of victim(s) from stalled elevator	No
354	Trench/below grade rescue	No
356	High angle rescue	No
357	Extrication of victim(s) from machinery	No
360	Water & ice related rescue, other	No
361	Swimming/recreational water areas rescue	No
363	Swift water rescue	No
365	Watercraft rescue	No
370	Electrical rescue	No
372	Trapped by power lines	No
381	Rescue or EMS standby	Yes
410	Flammable gas or liquid condition, other	No
411	Gasoline or other flammable liquid spill	No
412	Gas leak	No
413	Oil or other combustible liquid spill	No
420	Toxic condition, other	No
421	Chemical hazard (no spill or leak)	No
422	Chemical spill or leak	No
423	Refrigeration leak	No
424	Carbon monoxide incident	No
440	Electrical wiring/equipment problem, other	No
441	Heat from short circuit (wiring), defective/worn	No
442	Overheated motor	No
443	Light ballast breakdown	No
444	Power line down	No
445	Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	No
451	Police Assist	No
460	Accident, potential accident, other	No
461	Building or structure weakened or collapsed	No
462	Aircraft standby	No
463	Vehicle accident, general cleanup	No
471	Explosive, bomb removal (for bomb scare, use 721)	No
480	Attempted burning, illegal action, other	No
481	Attempt to burn	No
482	Threat to burn	No
500	Service call, other	No
510	Person in distress, other	No
511	Lock-out	No
512	Ring or jewelry removal	No
520	Water problem, other	No
521	Water evacuation	No
522	Water or steam leak	No
531	Smoke or odor removal	No
540	Animal problem, other	No
542	Animal rescue	No

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Situation Found Code	Description	EMS Type Call
550	Public service assistance, other	No
551	Assist police or other governmental agency	No
552	Police matter	No
553	Public service	No
554	Assist invalid	Yes
555	Defective elevator	No
561	Unauthorized burning	No
600	Good intent call, other	No
611	Dispatched & canceled en route	No
621	Wrong location	No
622	No incident found upon arrival	No
631	Authorized controlled burning	No
632	Prescribed fire	No
641	Vicinity alarm (incident in other location)	No
650	Steam, other gas mistaken for smoke, other	No
651	Smoke scare, odor of smoke	No
652	Steam, vapor, fog or dust thought to be smoke	No
653	Barbecue, tar kettle	No
661	EMS call, party transported by non-fire agency	Yes
671	Hazmat release investigation w/no hazmat	No
672	Biological hazard investigation, none found	No
710	Malicious, mischievous false call, other	No
711	Municipal alarm system, malicious false alarm	No
713	Telephone, malicious false alarm	No
714	Central station, malicious false alarm	No
715	Local alarm system, malicious false alarm	No
721	Bomb scare - no bomb	No
730	System malfunction	No
731	Sprinkler activation due to malfunction	No
732	Extinguishing system activation due to malfunction	No
733	Smoke detector activation due to malfunction	No
734	Heat detector activation due to malfunction	No
735	Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	No
736	CO detector activation due to malfunction	No
740	Unintentional transmission of alarm, other	No
741	Sprinkler activation, no fire - unintentional	No
742	Extinguishing system activation	No
743	Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional	No
744	Detector activation, no fire - unintentional	No
745	Alarm system sounded, no fire - unintentional	No
746	Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO	No
813	Wind storm, tornado/hurricane assessment	No
814	Lightning strike (no fire)	No
815	Severe weather or natural disaster standby	No
911	Citizen complaint	No

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Appendix B

FIXED PROPERTY USE CODES AND DESCRIPTIONS

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Fixed Property Use Code	Description	Category
000	FIXED PROP USE UNDETERMINED	NON-SPECIFIC
100	UNKNOWN OTHER	NON-SPECIFIC
110	FIXED USE RECREATION, OTHER	COMMERCIAL
111	BOWLING ESTABLISHMENT	COMMERCIAL
112	BILLIARD CENTER	COMMERCIAL
113	AMUSEMENT CENTER	COMMERCIAL
114	ICE RINK	COMMERCIAL
115	ROLLER RINK	COMMERCIAL
116	SWIMMING FACILITY	COMMERCIAL
120	VARIABLE USE AMUSEMENT/RECREATION	COMMERCIAL
121	BALLROOM,GYMNASIUM	COMMERCIAL
122	EXHIBITION HALL	COMMERCIAL
123	ARENA/STADIUM	COMMERCIAL
124	PLAYGROUND	COMMERCIAL
129	AMUSEMENT CENTER INDOOR/OUTDOOR	COMMERCIAL
130	PLACES OF WORSHIP,CHURCH,FUNERAL PARLOR	COMMERCIAL
131	CHURCH/CHAPEL	COMMERCIAL
134	FUNERAL PARLOR/CHAPEL	COMMERCIAL
140	CLUBS, OTHER	COMMERCIAL
141	ATHLETIC CLUB/YMCA	COMMERCIAL
142	CLUB HOUSE	COMMERCIAL
143	YACHT CLUB	COMMERCIAL
144	CASINO, GAMBLING CLUBS	COMMERCIAL
150	PUBLIC, GOVT, OTHER	COMMERCIAL
151	LIBRARY	COMMERCIAL
152	MUSEUM, ART GALLERY	COMMERCIAL
154	MEMORIAL STRUCTURE,MONUMENT	COMMERCIAL
155	COURT ROOM	COMMERCIAL
160	EATING/DRINKING PLACES	COMMERCIAL
161	RESTAURANT	COMMERCIAL
162	NIGHTCLUB	COMMERCIAL
170	TERMINALS OTHER	COMMERCIAL
171	AIRPORT TERMINAL	COMMERCIAL
173	BUS TERMINAL	COMMERCIAL
180	THEATER, STUDIO OTHER	COMMERCIAL
181	PERFORMANCE THEATER	COMMERCIAL
182	AUDITORIUM, CONCERT HALL	COMMERCIAL
183	MOVIE THEATER	COMMERCIAL
185	RADIO, TV STUDIO	COMMERCIAL
200	EDUCATIONAL PROPERTY OTHER	COMMERCIAL
210	SCHOOLS NON-ADULT OTHER	COMMERCIAL
211	PRE-SCHOOL	COMMERCIAL
213	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	COMMERCIAL
215	HIGH SCHOOL/JR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL	COMMERCIAL
241	COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY	COMMERCIAL
254	DAY CARE-IN COMMERCIAL PROPERTY	COMMERCIAL
255	DAY CARE-IN RESIDENCE-LICENSED	COMMERCIAL
300	HEALTHCARE/DETENTION OTHER	COMMERCIAL
311	CARE OF THE AGED/NURSING STAFF	COMMERCIAL
321	MENTAL RETARDATION/DEVELOPMENT DISABILITY FACILITY	COMMERCIAL
322	ALCOHOL/SUBSTANCE ABUSE RECOVERY CENTER	COMMERCIAL

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323	ASYLUM/MENTAL INSTITUTION	COMMERCIAL
331	HOSPITAL-MEDICAL/PSYCHIATRIC	COMMERCIAL
332	HOSPICES	COMMERCIAL
340	CLINICS, OTHER	COMMERCIAL
341	CLINIC, CLINIC-TYPE INFIRMARY	COMMERCIAL
342	DOCTOR/DENTIST/SURGEONS OFFICE	COMMERCIAL
343	HEMODIALYSIS UNIT	COMMERCIAL
361	JAIL/PRISON - NOT JUVENILE	COMMERCIAL
363	REFORMATORY, JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER	COMMERCIAL
365	POLICE STATION	COMMERCIAL
400	RESIDENTIAL OTHER	RESIDENTIAL
419	ONE- AND TWO-FAMILY DWELLING	RESIDENTIAL
429	MULTI-FAMILY DWELLINGS	RESIDENTIAL
439	ROOMING, BOARDING, RESIDENTIAL HOTELS	COMMERCIAL
449	HOTELS, MOTELS, INNS, LODGES	COMMERCIAL
459	RESIDENTIAL BOARD AND CARE	COMMERCIAL
460	DORMITORIES OTHER	COMMERCIAL
462	FRATERNITY, SORORITY HOUSE	COMMERCIAL
464	MILITARY BARRACKS/DORMITORY	RESIDENTIAL
500	MERCANTILE PROPERTIES OTHER	COMMERCIAL
511	CONVENIENCE STORE	COMMERCIAL
519	FOOD, BEVERAGE SALES, GROCERY STORE	COMMERCIAL
529	TEXTILE, WEARING APPAREL SALES	COMMERCIAL
539	HOUSEHOLD GOODS SALES, REPAIRS	COMMERCIAL
549	SPECIALTY SHOPS	COMMERCIAL
557	BARBER, BEAUTY SHOP, PERSONAL SERVICES	COMMERCIAL
559	RECREATIONAL, HOBBY,HOME SALES, PET STORE	COMMERCIAL
564	SELF-SERVICE LAUNDRY/DRY CLEANING	COMMERCIAL
569	PROFESSIONAL SUPPLIES	COMMERCIAL
571	SERVICE STATION	COMMERCIAL
579	MOTOR VEHICLE, BOAT SALES/SERVICE/REPAIRS	COMMERCIAL
580	GENERAL ITEM STORES, OTHER	COMMERCIAL
581	DEPARTMENT STORE	COMMERCIAL
592	BANK W/FIRST STORY BANKING FACILITY	COMMERCIAL
593	MEDICAL, RESEARCH, SCIENTIFIC OFFICE	COMMERCIAL
596	POST OFFICE OR MAILING FORMS	COMMERCIAL
599	BUSINESS OFFICES	COMMERCIAL
600	BASIC INDUSTRY, UTILITY, DEFENSE OTHER	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
610	ENERGY PRODUCTION, OTHER	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
615	ELECTRIC GENERATING PLANT	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
629	LABORATORIES	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
631	NATIONAL DEFENSE SITE/MILITARY SITE	COMMERCIAL
632	RADIO, RADAR SITE	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
635	COMPUTER, DATA PROCESSING CNTR	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
639	COMMUNICATIONS CENTER	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
640	UTILITY, ENERGY DISTRIBUTION CNTR OTHER	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
642	ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION DISTIB. SYSTEM	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
644	GAS DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM, PIPELINE	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
647	WATER UTILITY	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
648	SANITARY SERVICE	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
655	CROPS, ORCHARDS	AGRICULTURAL LAND
659	LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION	AGRICULTURAL LAND

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669	FOREST, TIMBERLAND	AGRICULTURAL LAND
700	MANUFACTURING PROPERTY, PROCESSING	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
800	STORAGE PROPERTY OTHER	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
807	OUTSIDE MATERIAL STORAGE AREA	NON-SPECIFIC
808	SHED	NON-SPECIFIC
880	VEHICLE STORAGE; OTHER	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
881	RESIDENTIAL PARKING STORAGE	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
882	GENERAL VEHICLE PARKING GARAGE	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
888	FIRE STATIONS	COMMERCIAL
891	GENERAL WAREHOUSE	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
898	WHARF, PIER	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
899	RESIDENTIAL OR SELF STORAGE UNITS	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
900	OUTSIDE, SPECIAL PROPERTIES; OTHER	NON-SPECIFIC
919	DUMP SANITARY LANDFILL	NON-SPECIFIC
921	BRIDGE, TRESTLE	NON-SPECIFIC
926	OUTBUILDING, EXCLUDING GARAGE	NON-SPECIFIC
931	OPEN LAND, FIELD	VACANT LAND
935	CAMPSITE WITH UTILITIES	COMMERCIAL
936	VACANT LOT	VACANT LAND
938	GRADED AND CARED FOR PLOTS OF LAND	AGRICULTURAL LAND
940	WATER AREAS, OTHER	NON-SPECIFIC
946	LAKE/RIVER/STREAM	NON-SPECIFIC
951	RAILROAD RIGHT OF WAY	NON-SPECIFIC
960	STREET, OTHER	NON-SPECIFIC
961	DIVIDED HIGHWAY, HIGHWAY	NON-SPECIFIC
962	PAVED PUBLIC STREET, RESIDENTIAL	NON-SPECIFIC
963	PAVED PRIVATE STREET, COMMERCIAL	NON-SPECIFIC
965	UNCOVERED PARKING AREA	NON-SPECIFIC
972	AIRCRAFT RUNWAY	COMMERCIAL
973	TAXIWAY/UNCOV PARK/MAINT AREA	COMMERCIAL
974	AIRCRAFT LOADING AREA	COMMERCIAL
981	CONSTRUCTION SITE	NON-SPECIFIC
983	PIPELINE, POWER LINE RIGHT OF WAY	NON-SPECIFIC
984	INDUSTRIAL PLANT YARD	INDUSTRIAL/WAREHOUSE
NNN	NONE	NON-SPECIFIC
UUU	UNDETERMINED	NON-SPECIFIC

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Appendix C

LEON COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER
BUILDING IMPROVEMENT CODES AND USE DESCRIPTIONS
WITH ASSIGNMENT OF PROPERTY USE CATEGORY

DocuSign Envelope ID: 748C492A-92F3-4FF9-A333-48FC5AF49CEF

Building Use Code - Description	Category
0100 - SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	Residential
0300 - DUPLEX	Residential
0400 - CONDOMINIUM	Residential
0500 - STUDENT APARTMENTS	Residential
0501 - FRAT/SORORITY	Commercial
0510 - STUDENT MULTI LEASE	Residential
0600 - STANDARD APARTMENTS	Residential
0601 - APT/ LESS THAN 10 UNITS	Residential
0602 - DORMITORY	Residential
0650 - Lihtc	Residential
0700 - TOWNHOUSE	Residential
0800 - MOBILE HOME	Residential
1000 - GARDEN APARTMENT	Residential
1100 - HIGH RISE	Residential
1200 - EXEMPT MULTI FAMILY	Residential
1400 - MOTELS	Commercial
1500 - EXTENDED STAY HOMES	Commercial
1600 - HOTELS	Commercial
1700 - HOSP/NURS HOME	Commercial
1710 - NURSING HOME	Commercial
1720 - CLINIC	Commercial
1730 - Vet Clinic	Commercial
1740 - REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER	Commercial
1750 - ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY	Commercial
1800 - CO-OP	Commercial
2000 - STORE	Commercial
2010 - CONDO-STORE	Commercial
2011 - SALON/BARBER SHOP	Commercial
2012 - LAUNDROMAT	Commercial
2013 - CARWASH	Commercial
2014 - PHYS FITNESS CENTER	Commercial
2015 - STORE SFR CONV	Commercial
2016 - IND/RETAIL/STORE	Commercial
2018 - DRY CLEANERS	Commercial
2020 - CONVENIENCE STORE	Commercial
2030 - CONV-STORE/GAS	Commercial
2040 - SUPERMARKET	Commercial
2050 - PHARMACY	Commercial
2060 - JR DISCOUNT	Commercial
2070 - SUPER DISCOUNT	Commercial
2080 - AUTO PARTS	Commercial
2090 - AUTO SERVICE	Commercial
2100 - DEPARTMENT STORE	Commercial
2110 - JR DEPARTMENT STORE	Commercial
2200 - SHOP CENTER	Commercial
2210 - NBHD SHOP CENTER	Commercial
2220 - COMM SHOP CENTER	Commercial
2300 - SERVICE STATION	Commercial
2400 - REC/BOWL ALLEY	Commercial
2410 - CLUBHOUSE/REC	Commercial
2420 - Clubhouse/Exempt	Commercial

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Building Use Code - Description	Category
2500 - REST/LOUNGE	Commercial
2510 - FAMILY RESTAURANT	Commercial
2520 - TAKE-OUT RESTAURANT	Commercial
2600 - FAST FOOD DRIVE IN	Commercial
2610 - FAST FOOD NO SEAT	Commercial
2620 - NITE CLUB	Commercial
2700 - AUDIT/THEATER	Commercial
2800 - MALL	Commercial
2810 - SUPER REG MALL	Commercial
3000 - OFFICE	Commercial
3010 - OFFICE CONDO	Commercial
3015 - Office Condo High Rise	Commercial
3020 - OFFICE STRIP CENTER	Commercial
3030 - OFFICE LOW RISE	Commercial
3040 - OFFICE MID RISE	Commercial
3045 - Office Park	Commercial
3050 - OFFICE HIGH RISE	Commercial
3060 - OFFICE INDUSTRIAL	Commercial
3070 - OFFICE/SFR CONVERSION	Commercial
3080 - CONDO MEDICAL OFFICE	Commercial
3100 - ED/RELIGIOUS	Commercial
3110 - CHILD CARE	Commercial
3200 - PUBLIC PARKING	Industrial/Warehouse
3300 - BANKS	Commercial
3400 - BANKS-BRANCH	Commercial
3410 - BANKS-DRV THRU	Commercial
3500 - FUNERAL HOME	Commercial
3600 - TRAINING CENTER	Commercial
3700 - MEDICAL OFFICE	Commercial
3901 - BROADCAST CENTER	Commercial
3902 - WCTV 2	Commercial
3930 - CLASSROOM/TRAINING	Commercial
3940 - LIBRARY/MULTI-MEDIA	Commercial
3950 - OFFICES	Commercial
3960 - DORMITORY/HOUSING	Commercial
3970 - MEDICAL FACILITIES	Commercial
3980 - Courthouse	Commercial
4000 - WAREHOUSE	Industrial/Warehouse
4010 - CONDO WAREHOUSE	Industrial/Warehouse
4020 - DISTRIBUTION WAREHOUSE	Industrial/Warehouse
4030 - TECH MANUFACTURING	Industrial/Warehouse
4031 - INDUSTRIAL OFFICE	Industrial/Warehouse
4040 - WAREHOUSE/MULTI-BAY	Industrial/Warehouse
4100 - SERVICE/PARKING GARAGE	Industrial/Warehouse
4110 - INDEPENDENT AUTO CENTER	Commercial
4200 - MINI WAREHOUSE	Industrial/Warehouse
4300 - COLD STORAGE	Industrial/Warehouse
4400 - LIGHT MANUFACTURING	Industrial/Warehouse
4500 - HEAVY MANUFACTURING	Industrial/Warehouse
4600 - AUTO SHOW/GARAGE	Industrial/Warehouse
4610 - CAR/TRUCK RENTAL	Commercial

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Building Use Code - Description	Category
4620 - BOAT S/E DEALER	Commercial
4700 - PREFAB METAL BUILDING	not charged
4800 - BARN SHED	not charged
4810 - Airport Terminal	Commercial
4900 - MAINT/MECH/WAREHOUSING	Industrial/Warehouse
4910 - RESEARCH/DEVELOP LABS	Industrial/Warehouse
4920 - STADIUMS/ARENAS	Commercial
4930 - PARKING GARAGES	Industrial/Warehouse
4940 - PRISONS/JAILS	Commercial
4950 - MILITARY FACILITIES	Commercial
4960 - FIRE STATION	Commercial
MHPK - MOBILE HOME PARK	Residential
MUSE - MUSEUM/CULTURAL	Commercial
RVPK - RV PARK	Commercial

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Appendix D

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE (DOR) CODES

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DOR Code - Description	
0000 - Vacant Residential	
0004 - Vacant Condo	
0100 - Single Family Residential	
0107 - Townhomes	
0107 - Townhouse	
0200 - Mobile Homes	
0300 - Multi-Family(10 or More Units)	
0400 - Condominia Improved	
0600 - Retirement Homes Not Eligible	
0700 - Miscellaneous Residential	
0800 - MFR < 10 Units - Residential	
0805 - MFR < 10 Units - Commercial	
0900 - Residential Common Elements/Areas	Not Charged
1000 - Vacant Commercial	
1100 - Stores, One Story	
1200 - Mixed Use, Store/Office/Resi	
1300 - Department Store	
1400 - Supermarkets	
1500 - Regional Shopping Centers	
1600 - Community Shopping Centers	
1700 - Office Buildings/Nonprof/One	
1800 - Office Buildings/Nonprof/Multi	
1900 - Professional Service & Medical	
2000 - Airports, Terminals, Piers	
2100 - Restaurants, Cafeterias	
2200 - Drive In Restaurants	
2300 - Financial Institutions	
2500 - Repair Service Shops	
2600 - Service Stations	
2700 - Auto Sales, Repair & Related	
2800 - Parking Lots, Commercial	
3200 - Enclosed Theatres/Auditoriums	
3300 - Night Clubs, Lounges, Bars	
3400 - Bowling, Skating, Pool Enclose	
3500 - Tourist Attraction, Exhibits	
3800 - Golf Courses, Driving Ranges	
3900 - Hotels, Motels	
4000 - Vacant Industrial	
4100 - Light Industrial	
4800 - Warehousing, Distribution	
4900 - Open Storage, Supply/Junkyards	
5000 - Improved Agriculture	
5100 - Cropland, Class I	
5200 - Cropland, Class II	
5400 - Timberland, Index 90+	
5500 - Timberland, Index 80-90	
5600 - Timberland, Index 70-79	
5700 - Timberland, Index 60-69	
5800 - Timberland, Index 50-59	
5900 - Timberland, Not Classed	
6000 - Grazing, Class I	

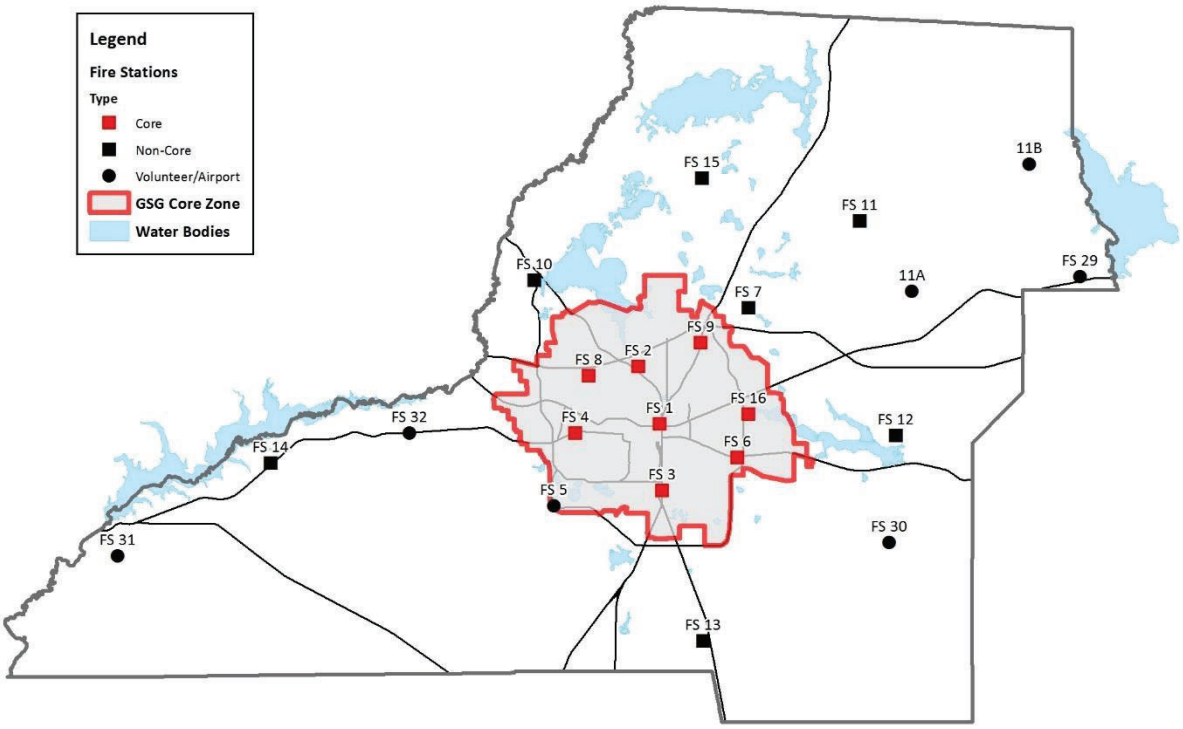
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DOR Code - Description	
6100 - Grazing, Class II	
6200 - Grazing, Class III	
6300 - Grazing, Class IV	
6600 - Orchard, Groves, Citrus	
6900 - Ornamentals, Misc	
7000 - Vacant Institutional	
7100 - Churches	
7200 - Private Schools/Colleges	
7300 - Privately Owned Hospitals	
7400 - Homes for the Aged	
7500 - Orphanages, Other Services	
7600 - Mortuaries, Cemeteries	
7700 - Clubs, Lodges, Union Halls	
7900 - Cultural Organization Facil	
8000 - Vacant Governmental	
8100 - Military	
8200 - Forest, Parks, Recreation Area	
8300 - Public County School	
8400 - Colleges	
8500 - Hospitals	
8600 - County	
8700 - State	
8800 - Federal	
8900 - Municipal	
9100 - Utilities	
9200 - Mining, Petrolium/Gas	
9400 - Rights-of-Way	Not Charged
9500 - Rivers, Lakes, Submerged Lands	Not Charged
9600 - Sewage Disposal, Solid Waste	Not Charged
9700 - Outdoor Recreational	
9800 - Centrally Assessed/Railroads	Not Charged
9900 - Vacant Acreage, Not Agri	
9901 - Imp acre, Not Agri	

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Appendix E

MAP OF SERVICE ZONES


Legend
Fire Stations
Type
Core
Non-Core
Volunteer/Airport
GSG Core Zone
Water Bodies
FS 15
11B
FS 11
FS 10
FS 29
11A
FS 7
FS 9
FS 8
FS 2
FS 16
FS 32
FS 4
FS 1
FS 12
FS 14
FS 6
FS 3
FS 5
FS 31
FS 30
FS 13

Appendix D:
2025 Unadopted Rate Study

accenture

May 8, 2025

Via Email

Karen Jumonville, Assistant City Manager
City of Tallahassee
300 S. Adams Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator
Leon County
301 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Re: City of Tallahassee and Leon County Fire Rescue Assessment Program – Amendment to Fire Assessment Memorandum dated April 2023

Dear Ms. Jumonville and Mr. Morris,

Accenture Infrastructure and Capital Projects, LLC, formerly known as Government Services Group, Inc. (Accenture) was retained by the City of Tallahassee (City) and Leon County (County) to update the fire assessment rates for Fiscal Year 2025-26 to account for increased expenditures.

In order to accomplish this Accenture had to complete the following tasks:

- Identify the full costs of the fire protection services using the City's projected Fiscal Years 2025-26 through 2027-28 fire department budget and cost allocation factors and identify the fire protection services costs versus the emergency medical services costs.
- Develop a three-year average assessable budget.
- Determine fire protection revenue requirements to ensure the City recovers the cost of (a) net revenue requirements, (b) implementing the program, and (c) collection costs.
- Calcuate rate scenarios using the updated Three-Year Average Assessable Budget and the analysis conducted by Accenture in the April 2023 Fire Assessment Memorandum prepared by Government Services Group, Inc. (2023 Fire Assessment Study).

ASSESSABLE COSTS CALCULATIONS

The assessable cost calculations for Fiscal Years 2025-26 through 2027-28 (Three-Year Average Assessable Budget) are based on the following assumptions for the purpose of this Assessment Memorandum Addendum.

- Accenture used the factors established in the 2023 Fire Assessment Study.
- The City provided the proposed FY 2025-25 through FY 2027-28 Fire Rescue Department budget. The Fire Rescue Department budget is divided into ten major programs including Fire Administration, Fire Prevention, Training, General Operations, Hazmat, Advanced Life Support, Emergency Medical Services, Airport Operations, Support Services, and Plans Review.
    - The expenses and revenues associated with Fire Prevention, Hazmat, and Plans Review were allocated directly to fire. The costs associated with supporting the volunteer fire departments were allocated directly to fire.
    - All costs associated with providing contract services to the Tallahassee Regional Airport were included in the assessable budget with the corresponding contract revenues removed from the assessable budget calculations.
    - The remaining expenses and revenues were allocated based on the factors described in the Development of Factors section of the 2023 Fire Assessment Study.
- The majority of the increased expenditures were associated with the Fire Union bargaining agreement, Fire Station 17 increased costs, costs associated with the City's Strategic Plan to improve the Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating, and bad debt/under collection. The three year average net assessable expenditure impact is as follows:
    - Total Assessable Expenditures increased $9,171,060
        - Personnel Expenditures increased $2,173,929
        - Bad Debt Expense increased $1,217,745
        - Capital Outlay increase $2,143,580
        - Internal Services Funds increased $2,050,106
        - Utilities and Other Expenses decreased $4
        - Debt Service Transfer increased $1,587,446
        - 5-year CIP decreased $1,742
    - Projected Assessable Revenues increased $66,595
    - Net Assessable Expenditures increased $9,104,464
    - Additional costs for the statutory discount (@5%) increased $505,804
    - Total Net Assessable Expenditures increased $9,610,268
- Revenues are shown as a reduction of the total projected expenditures for each fiscal year, thereby reducing the total assessable costs for that year. Revenues are comprised of revenues directly received from or for the delivery of fire services, such as "Fire Inspection Fees," "Forfeited Discounts," "Firefighters Supplemental Comp," and contract for service revenues that are allocated to the fire budget.
- Currently the City does not have any reserves available to offset the assessable expenditures; at this time all are obligated.
- The line item "Statutory Discount & Undercollection" under "Additional Costs" reflects a 95% collection rate of the Fire Services Assessment.

Table 1 provides a calculation of the assessable costs for Fiscal Year 2025-26 based on an application of the factors outlined in the 2023 Fire Assessment Study.

Table 1
Fire Services Assessable Cost Calculations (FY 2025-26)

	FY25-26 Budget	FY25-26 Assessable
Personnel Services		
Salaries	28,086,781	23,598,463
Salary Enhancements	1,270,329	1,067,767
Firefighter Holiday Pay	938,544	782,915
Overtime	1,465,242	1,226,191
Other Salary Items	781,286	651,138
Pension- Current	10,312,469	8,615,477
Pension- MAP	144,244	129,784
Mandatory Medicare	430,320	361,360
Health Benefits	4,537,902	3,793,582
Health Benefits - OPEB	285,342	259,888
Flex Benefits	62,136	55,634
Vacancy Factor of 3%	-375,144	-313,654
Total Personnel Services	**$47,939,450**	**$40,228,545**
Operating Expenses		
Advertising	1,740	1,428
Cleaning & Laundry	14,964	13,373
Reproduction	5,829	2,554
Equipment Repairs	48,835	12,040
Medical Services	104,866	1,615
Construction Services	10,773	8,842
Unclassified Contractual Srvcs	362,741	211,964
Contractual Svc - VFD County	519,767	519,767
Contractual Svc - Other	400,000	400,000
Computer Software	3,393	2,785
Telephone	24,291	18,796
Chem-Med-Lab	108,246	3,956
Food	1,304	1,070
Gasoline	892	351
Office Supplies	22,359	17,178
Uniforms & Clothing	464,074	380,995
Unclassified Supplies	181,855	127,788
Non-Capital- Furniture & Equip	862	862
Travel & Training	80,107	54,332
Journals & Books	18,491	16,310
Memberships	4,317	3,291
Certificates & Licenses	2,477	618
Rent Expense- Machines	10,764	8,835
Unclassified Charges	56,557	46,419
Total Operating Expenses	**$2,449,504**	**$1,855,169**
Other Services & Charges		
Bad Debt Expense	1,326,758	1,326,758
Total Other Services & Charges	**$1,326,758**	**$1,326,758**

	FY25-26 Budget	FY25-26 Assessable
Capital Outlay		
Computer Equipment	1,293	1,293
Vehicle Equipment	1,184,697	1,182,716
Unclassified Equipment	1,199,865	1,178,667
Total Capital Outlay	**$2,385,855**	**$2,362,676**
Internal Service Funds		
Human Resource Expense	436,443	360,927
Accounting Expense	243,705	202,977
Purchasing Expense	111,777	91,876
Information Systems Expense	3,896,632	3,209,973
Risk Management Expense	348,232	287,436
Radio Communications Expense	333,619	273,819
Revenue Collection	418,502	418,502
Utility Services Expense	2,205,038	2,205,038
Facilities and Environmental	29,618	24,721
Vehicle Garage Expense	1,808,556	537,218
Vehicle Fuel	331,505	94,906
Vehicle Replacement	3,760,225	1,107,529
Indirect Costs	639,400	533,640
Community Relations Expense	155,271	127,439
Diversity and Inclusion Expense	101,266	83,773
Total Internal Service Funds	**$14,819,789**	**$9,559,775**
Utilities and Other Expenses		
Utilities - Sewer	35,375	29,391
Utilities - Sanitation	19,435	16,221
Utilities - Stormwater	24,261	19,965
Utilities - Gas	41,259	33,864
Utilities - Water	28,538	23,547
Utilities - Electric	214,099	178,833
Utilities - Fire Services	52,544	43,126
Total Utilities and Other Expenses	**$415,511**	**$344,946**
Transfers		
Debt Service Transfer	3,068,064	2,518,128
Inter-Fund Ops Transfer	47,761	47,761
Total Transfers	**$3,115,825**	**$2,565,889**
Contributions to Operations		
Contribution to CDA Operating	346,131	96,511
Total Contributions to Operations	**$346,131**	**$96,511**
5-year CIP		
Facilities Management & Maintenance Master	418,271	343,298
Fire Hydrant Maintenance Master	886,212	886,212
Total 5-year CIP	**$1,304,484**	**$1,229,511**
Total Expenditures	**$74,103,307**	**$59,569,780**
Revenues		

	FY25-26 Budget	FY25-26 Assessable
Fire Inspection Fees	419,856	419,856
Firefighters Supplemental Comp	143,379	143,379
Leon County EMS Payment	3,724,960	0
Forfeited Discounts	75,410	75,410
Interest	-167,475	-167,475
Other Miscellaneous Revenue	12,928	12,928
Contribution From Airport Fund	1,519,859	1,519,859
Total Revenues	**$5,728,917**	**$2,003,957**
Total Expenditures	**$74,103,307**	**$59,569,780**
Total Revenues	**$5,728,917**	**$2,003,957**
Net Expenditures	**$68,374,390**	**$57,565,823**
Additional Costs		
Statutory Discount & Undercollection (5%)		3,198,101
Total Additional Costs		**$3,198,101**
Total Net Assessable Expenditures		**$60,763,925**

Table 2 shows the calculation of the full cost of the Fire Services Assessment Program for Fiscal Year 2025-26 through Fiscal Year 2027-28 as well as the three-year average Fire Services Assessment Program cost.

Table 2
Fire Assessable Cost Calculations Three-Year Average (FY 25-26 thru FY 27-28)

Expenditures	FY25-26 Assessable	FY26-27 Assessable	FY27-28 Assessable	3-Year Average Assessable
Personnel Services				
Salaries	23,598,463	24,300,656	25,257,908	24,385,676
Salary Enhancements	1,067,767	1,099,559	1,143,145	1,103,490
Firefighter Holiday Pay	782,915	807,189	835,944	808,682
Overtime	1,226,191	1,263,594	1,307,566	1,265,784
Other Salary Items	651,138	670,457	695,257	672,284
Pension- Current	8,615,477	8,874,350	9,204,490	8,898,106
Pension- MAP	129,784	132,108	141,981	134,624
Mandatory Medicare	361,360	372,122	386,702	373,395
Health Benefits	3,793,582	3,909,450	4,057,645	3,920,226
Health Benefits - OPEB	259,888	247,781	263,661	257,110
Flex Benefits	55,634	57,103	61,382	58,040
Vacancy Factor of 3%	-313,654	-323,025	-335,349	-324,009
Total Personnel Services	**$40,228,545**	**$41,411,345**	**$43,020,332**	**$41,553,408**
Operating Expenses				
Advertising	1,428	1,449	1,471	1,450
Cleaning & Laundry	13,373	13,573	13,777	13,574
Reproduction	2,554	2,591	2,630	2,592
Equipment Repairs	12,040	12,221	12,404	12,222
Medical Services	1,615	1,640	1,665	1,640
Construction Services	8,842	8,974	9,109	8,975
Unclassified Contractual Srvcs	211,964	215,143	218,370	215,159
Contractual Svc - VFD County	519,767	527,563	535,476	527,602
Contractual Svc - Other	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000

Expenditures	FY25-26 Assessable	FY26-27 Assessable	FY27-28 Assessable	3-Year Average Assessable
Computer Software	2,785	2,826	2,868	2,826
Telephone	18,796	19,078	19,364	19,079
Chem-Med-Lab	3,956	4,015	4,075	4,015
Food	1,070	1,087	1,103	1,087
Gasoline	351	356	362	356
Office Supplies	17,178	17,435	17,697	17,437
Uniforms & Clothing	380,995	383,165	148,989	304,383
Unclassified Supplies	127,788	129,705	131,650	129,714
Non-Capital- Furniture & Equip	862	875	888	875
Travel & Training	54,332	55,147	55,974	55,151
Journals & Books	16,310	16,554	16,803	16,556
Memberships	3,291	3,341	3,391	3,341
Certificates & Licenses	618	628	637	628
Rent Expense- Machines	8,835	8,968	9,103	8,969
Unclassified Charges	46,419	47,115	47,822	47,119
Total Operating Expenses	**$1,855,169**	**$1,873,450**	**$1,655,628**	**$1,794,749**
Other Services & Charges				
Bad Debt Expense	1,326,758	1,393,096	1,462,751	1,394,202
Total Other Services & Charges	**$1,326,758**	**$1,393,096**	**$1,462,751**	**$1,394,202**
Capital Outlay				
Computer Equipment	1,293	1,312	1,332	1,312
Vehicle Equipment	1,182,716	1,241,921	1,304,087	1,242,908
Unclassified Equipment	1,178,667	1,238,611	1,301,555	1,239,611
Total Capital Outlay	**$2,362,676**	**$2,481,844**	**$2,606,974**	**$2,483,831**
Internal Service Funds				
Human Resource Expense	360,927	378,878	397,726	379,177
Accounting Expense	202,977	213,022	223,569	213,189
Purchasing Expense	91,876	96,465	101,283	96,541
Information Systems Expense	3,209,973	3,370,059	3,538,143	3,372,725
Risk Management Expense	287,436	301,750	316,780	301,989
Radio Communications Expense	273,819	287,510	301,886	287,739
Revenue Collection	418,502	439,427	461,398	439,776
Utility Services Expense	2,205,038	2,315,290	2,431,054	2,317,127
Facilities and Environmental	24,721	25,943	27,225	25,963
Vehicle Garage Expense	537,218	562,926	589,902	563,349
Vehicle Fuel	94,906	99,564	104,455	99,642
Vehicle Replacement	1,107,529	1,160,839	1,216,782	1,161,717
Indirect Costs	533,640	560,012	587,699	560,450
Community Relations Expense	127,439	133,811	140,502	133,918
Diversity and Inclusion Expense	83,773	87,939	92,312	88,008
Total Internal Service Funds	**$9,559,775**	**$10,033,437**	**$10,530,717**	**$10,041,310**
Utilities and Other Expenses				
Utilities - Sewer	29,391	29,831	30,248	29,823
Utilities - Sanitation	16,221	16,481	16,710	16,471
Utilities - Stormwater	19,965	20,264	20,567	20,265

Expenditures	FY25-26 Assessable	FY26-27 Assessable	FY27-28 Assessable	3-Year Average Assessable
Utilities - Gas	33,864	34,372	34,887	34,374
Utilities - Water	23,547	23,900	24,259	23,902
Utilities - Electric	178,833	181,516	184,238	181,529
Utilities - Fire Services	43,126	43,772	44,429	43,776
Total Utilities and Other Expenses	**$344,946**	**$350,136**	**$355,340**	**$350,141**
Transfers				
Debt Service Transfer	2,518,128	2,641,871	2,640,924	2,600,307
Inter-Fund Ops Transfer	47,761	48,478	49,205	48,481
Total Transfers	**$2,565,889**	**$2,690,349**	**$2,690,129**	**$2,648,789**
Contributions to Operations				
Contribution to CDA Operating	96,511	97,959	99,428	97,966
Total Contributions to Operations	**$96,511**	**$97,959**	**$99,428**	**$97,966**
5-year CIP				
Facilities Management & Maintenance Master	343,298	348,448	348,448	346,731
Fire Hydrant Maintenance Master	886,212	899,506	912,998	899,572
Total 5-year CIP	**$1,229,511**	**$1,247,953**	**$1,261,446**	**$1,246,303**
Total Expenditures	**$59,569,780**	**$61,579,569**	**$63,682,744**	**$61,610,698**
Revenues				
Fire Inspection Fees	419,856	428,253	436,818	428,309
Firefighters Supplemental Comp	143,379	145,530	147,713	145,540
Leon County EMS Payment	0	0	0	0
Forfeited Discounts	75,410	76,541	77,689	76,547
Interest	-167,475	-170,825	-174,241	-170,847
Other Miscellaneous Revenue	12,928	13,122	13,318	13,123
Contribution From Airport Fund	1,519,859	1,550,154	1,581,157	1,550,390
Total Revenues	**$2,003,957**	**$2,042,775**	**$2,082,455**	**$2,043,062**
Total Expenditures	**$59,569,780**	**$61,579,569**	**$63,682,744**	**$61,610,698**
Total Revenues	**$2,003,957**	**$2,042,775**	**$2,082,455**	**2,043,062**
Net Expenditures	**$57,565,823**	**$59,536,794**	**$61,600,289**	**$59,567,636**
Additional Costs				
Statutory Discount & Undercollection (5%)	3,198,101	3,307,600	3,422,238	3,309,313
Total Additional Costs	**$3,198,101**	**$3,307,600**	**$3,422,238**	**$3,309,313**
Total Net Assessable Expenditures	**$60,763,925**	**$62,844,394**	**$65,022,527**	**$62,876,949**

Table 3 provides the assignment of fire type incidents for government vs. non—government as outlined in the 2023 Fire Assessment Study.

Table 3
Costs Apportionment – Non-Government v. Government

Property Category	Number of Fire Incidents	Percentage of Total Incidents	Assessable Costs
Non-Government	13,417	88.28%	$55,507,771
Government	1,782	11.72%	$7,369,178
Total	**15,199**	**100%**	**$62,876,949**

Source: April 2023 Report and May 2025 Updated Assessable Budget

Table 4 provides the updated assessable costs attributable to non-government property apportioned to Zone 1 and Zone 2 and then further to the individual property use categories for each zone based on the updated assessable budget and the 2023 Fire Assessment Study.

Table 4
Cost Apportionment (Three-Year Average)

	Zone 1 (71.95% of Weighted Fire Calls)			Zone 2 (28.05% of Weighted Fire Calls)		
Category	Total Calls	Percentage	Assessable Costs	Total Calls	Percentage	Assessable Costs
Residential	5,894	58.32%	$23,292,463	3,283	83.33%	$12,974,158
Commercial	4,043	40.01%	$15,977,508	602	15.28%	$2,379,458
Industrial/Warehouse	169	1.67%	$667,870	55	1.39%	$216,314
Total	10,106	100.00%	$39,937,841	3,940	100.00%	$15,569,930

Source: April 2023 Report and May 2025 Updated Assessable Budget

COMPUTATION OF FIRE ASSESSMENT RATES

Applying the parcel apportionment methodology described in the 2023 Fire Assessment Study and the updated three-year average assessable expenditures, fire assessment rates were computed for each specified property use category.

Table 5 illustrates the assessment rates after application of the assessment methodology based on 100 percent funding of the three-year average assessable costs (Fiscal Years 2025-26 through 2027-28).

Table 5
Fire Services Assessment Rates (Three-Year Average)

Residential Property Use Categories		**Zone 1 – Rate Per Dwelling Unit**	**Zone 2 – Rate Per Dwelling Unit**
Residential Dwelling Unit		$300.05	$272.15
Commercial Property Use Category	**Building Classification (in square foot ranges)**	**Zone 1 – Rate Per Building**	**Zone 2 – Rate Per Building**
	≤ 1,999	$470	$435
	2,000 - 3,499	$939	$870
	3,500 - 4,999	$1,644	$1,522
	5,000 - 9,999	$2,348	$2,175
	10,000 - 19,999	$4,695	$4,349
	20,000 - 29,999	$9,390	$8,697
	30,000 - 39,999	$14,085	$13,046
	40,000 - 49,999	$18,780	$17,394
	50,000 - 59,999	$23,474	$21,743
	60,000 - 69,999	$28,169	$26,091
	70,000 - 79,999	$32,864	$30,439
	80,000 - 89,999	$37,559	$34,788
	90,000 - 99,999	$42,254	$39,136
	≥ 100,000	$46,948	$43,485
Industrial/Warehouse Property Use Category	**Building Classification (in square foot ranges)**	**Zone 1 – Rate Per Building**	**Zone 2 – Rate Per Building**
	≤ 1,999	$76	$139
	2,000 - 3,499	$152	$278
	3,500 - 4,999	$266	$486
	5,000 - 9,999	$380	$694
	10,000 - 19,999	$760	$1,388
	20,000 - 29,999	$1,519	$2,776
	30,000 - 39,999	$2,278	$4,163
	40,000 - 49,999	$3,037	$5,551
	50,000 - 59,999	$3,796	$6,938
	60,000 - 69,999	$4,555	$8,326
	70,000 - 79,999	$5,314	$9,713
	80,000 - 89,999	$6,073	$11,101
	90,000 - 99,999	$6,832	$12,488
	≥ 100,000	$7,591	$13,876

*Estimated Gross Revenue: $55,507,771; Estimated Institutional Tax-Exempt Buy-down: $586,137; Estimated Net Revenue: $54,921,634.

Table 6 summarizes the estimated impact of exempting institutional, wholly tax-exempt property based on the three-year average assessable budget.

Table 6
Estimated Impact of Exemptions (Three-Year Average)

Financial Classification	Zone 1	Zone 2	Total
Estimated Assessable Costs	**$39,937,841**	**$15,569,930**	**$55,507,771**
Estimated Buy-down for Institutional Tax-Exempt Building Uses	$422,823	$163,314	586,137
Estimated Revenue Generated	**$39,515,018**	**$15,406,616**	**$54,921,634**

Government Rates

Table 7 provides the assessable costs attributable to government property based on the updated assessable budget and the 2023 Fire Assessment Study.

Table 7
Government Cost Allocation

Total Assessable Costs	Percentage of Governmental Calls	Governmental Cost Allocation
$62,876,949	11.72%	$7,369,178

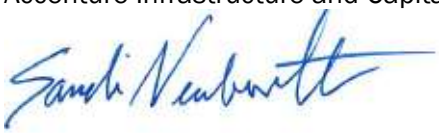
Table 8 provides the governmental per square foot rate based on the updated assessable budget and the 2023 Fire Assessment Study.

Table 8
Government Rate Calculation

Governmental Cost Allocation	Government Rate Per Square Foot
$7,369,178	$0.326

Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,
Accenture Infrastructure and Capital Projects, LLC



Sandi Neubarth
Director
(850) 681-3717
Sandra.Neubarth@accenture.com

Appendix E:
Leon County Resolution No. 23-11

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11

RESOLUTION NO. 23-_____

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS RELATING TO THE PROVISION AND FUNDING OF FIRE RESCUE SERVICES; PROVIDING FOR RECITALS; PROVIDING FOR AUTHORITY; PROVIDING FOR DEFINITIONS; PROVIDING FOR A RESOLUTION; PROVIDING FOR PROVISION OF FIRE RESCUE SERVICES; PROVIDING FOR GENERAL LEGISLATIVE DETERMINATIONS; PROVIDING FOR FIRE RESCUE CHARGE; PROVIDING FOR EXEMPT PROPERTY; PROVIDING FOR LIEN; PROVIDING FOR COLLECTION OF FIRE RESCUE CHARGE; PROVIDING FOR FINAL ADJUDICATION; REPLACING AND SUPERSEDING RESOLUTION NO. 15-20; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the County desires to continue to provide fire rescue services, facilities and programs, hereafter "*fire rescue services*," in the most efficient manner possible in order to promote the health, safety and general welfare of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to maintain a uniform financial mechanism for the funding of such *fire rescue services* to its citizens on an equitable basis; and

WHEREAS, the City of Tallahassee and the County have entered into an Interlocal Agreement, as amended, to administer the provision of and funding for *fire rescue services*; and

WHEREAS, the Interlocal Agreement by and between the City of Tallahassee and the County provides for the funding and payment for *fire rescue services* by means of the levy, imposition and collection of special assessments upon benefited *nongovernment property* and the imposition of fire rescue fees on *government property*; and

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WHEREAS, on March 19, 2009, the Board of County Commissioners enacted an ordinance amending Chapter 7, Leon County Code of Laws, relating to the provision and funding of *fire rescue services*; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 7, Leon County Code of Laws, on May 26, 2015, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a *fire rescue assessment rate resolution* and *fire rescue fee rate resolution*, Resolution No. 15-20; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners utilized a rate study, attached to and incorporated into Resolution No. 15-20 as Exhibit "A", in calculating the fire rescue assessment rate and fire rescue fee; and

WHEREAS, the fire rescue assessment rate and fire rescue fee established in Resolution No. 15-20 apportioned costs based upon a reasonable estimation of the five-year average annual cost of providing fire rescue services, and the rates no longer adequately fund the costs of providing fire rescue services; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Interlocal Agreement, as amended, the Board of County Commissioners commissioned a new rate study utilizing the same methodology set forth in the rate study attached to Resolution No. 15-20, but with updated service delivery, fire incident data, property data and budget information; and

WHEREAS, a new rate study has been completed and shows that an adjustment to the rates is needed to adequately fund fire rescue services; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners desires to adopt a new *fire rescue assessment rate resolution* and *fire rescue fee rate resolution* pursuant to Chapter 7, Leon County Code of Laws in order to adequately fund fire rescue services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Leon County, Florida, that:

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Section 1. Recitals. The Recitals set forth above are deemed incorporated herein as if fully set forth below.

Section 2. Authority. This Resolution is adopted pursuant to the authority granted to the County under Article VIII, Section 1, Florida Constitution, Chapter 125, Florida Statutes, the Leon County Charter, Chapter 7 of the Leon County Code of Laws, and other applicable provisions of law.

Section 3. Definitions. For purposes of this Resolution, the definitions contained in Section 7-39, Leon County Code of Laws, are incorporated herein by reference as if fully set forth below. In addition, as used in this Resolution, the following terms shall have the following meanings, unless the context hereof otherwise requires:

"*Building area*" means the actual area of a *building* expressed in square feet and reflected on the *tax roll* or, in the event such information is not reflected or is determined not to be accurately reflected on the *tax roll*, that area determined by the County.

"*Code descriptions*" mean the descriptions listed in the *fixed property use codes* and the descriptions listed in the *improvement codes*.

"*Core stations*" are those fire stations located within five road miles of at least two other stations.

"*Commercial property*" means those *tax parcels* with a *code description* designated as "*commercial*" in the *improvement codes*, including those *tax parcels* that meet the definition of *recreational vehicle park* herein.

"*Cost apportionment*" means the apportionment of the *fire rescue cost* among all *property use categories* according to the *demand percentages* established pursuant to the apportionment methodology described in Sections 7.A.3 and 7.B.2 of this Resolution.

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"*Cost Factor*" means the factor that represents the varying cost in providing *fire rescue services* to the different *service zones*, as calculated in accordance with Section 7.B of this Resolution.

"*Demand percentage*" means the percentage of demand for *fire rescue services* attributable to each *property use category* determined by analyzing the historical demand for *fire rescue services* as reflected in *incident reports* in the *state database* under the methodology described in Sections 7.A.3 and 7.B.2 of this Resolution.

"*DOR code*" means a property use code established in Rule 12D-8.008, Florida Administrative Code, assigned by the Property Appraiser to *tax parcels*.

"*Dwelling unit*" means (1) a *building*, or a portion thereof, available to be used for residential purposes, consisting of one or more rooms arranged, designed, used, or intended to be used as living quarters for one family only, or (2) the use of land in which lots or spaces are offered for rent or lease for the placement of mobile homes or the like for residential purposes.

"EMS services" means those services recorded in *FFIRS* that assign a "type of situation found code" of 3, 300, 311,320, 321, 321B, 322, 323, 381, 551E, 554, and 661.

"EMS Cost" means the amount, other than first response medical rescue services, determined by the County to be associated with *EMS services*.

"*FFIRS*" means the Florida Fire Incident Reporting System maintained by the Florida State Fire Marshal.

"Fire rescue cost" means the *fire rescue cost* as defined in Chapter 7 of the Leon County Code of Laws, but specifically excluding any *EMS Cost*.

"*Fire rescue services"* means fire rescue services, facilities and programs.

"*Fire rescue fee*" means a fee for *fire rescue services* provided to each improved parcel of *governmental property* located within the unincorporated area of the County.

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"*Fire services property use category*" means the use codes developed for the purpose of assigning a *fire rescue charge* for collection on a *utility* bill.

"*Fixed property use codes*" mean the property use codes used by *FFIRS* as specified in the attached Exhibit A, Appendix B.

"*Improvement codes*" mean the building use codes assigned by the Property Appraiser to *tax parcels* as specified in the attached Exhibit A, Appendix C.

"*Incident report*" means an individual report filed with the Florida State Fire Marshal under *FFIRS* that is not associated with *EMS services*.

"*Industrial/warehouse property*" means those *tax parcels* with a *code description* designated as "*industrial/warehouse*" in the *improvement codes*.

"*Mixed use property*" means a *tax parcel* that contains *buildings* whose use descriptions are capable of assignment under a *code description* in the *improvement codes* in more than one *property use category*.

"*Non-residential property*" means, collectively, *commercial property* and *industrial/warehouse property*.

"*Parcel apportionment*" means the further apportionment of the *fire rescue cost* allocated to each *property use category* by the *cost apportionment* among the *tax parcels* under the methodology established in Sections 7.A.3 and 7.B.2 of this Resolution.

"*Property use categories*" means, collectively, *residential property* and all categories of *non-residential property*.

"Recreational vehicle park" means (1) a place set aside and offered by a person, for either direct or indirect remuneration of the owner, lessor, or operator of such place, for the parking, accommodation, or rental of five or more recreational vehicles or tents; and (2) licensed by the Department of Health of the State of Florida, or its successor in function as a "recreational vehicle

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park" or “lodging park” under Chapter 513, Florida Statutes, as may be amended from time-to-time.

"*Residential property*" means those *tax parcels* designated as “Residential” in the *improvement codes.*

“*Service zones*” mean the geographic areas defined to differentiate between the two levels of *fire rescue services* provided within the County based upon proximity to *core stations.*

"State database" means the incident data derived from the *FFIRS incident reports* maintained by the Florida State Fire Marshal.

"Tax parcel" means a parcel of property located within the unincorporated area of the County to which the Property Appraiser has assigned a distinct ad valorem property tax identification number.

Section 4. Resolution. This Resolution shall constitute the *fire rescue assessment rate resolution* and the *fire rescue fee rate resolution* as described in Sections 7-42 and 7-43, Leon County Code of Laws.

Section 5. Provision of Fire Rescue Services. The County shall continue to provide *fire rescue services* for the benefit of all parcels of *assessed property* located within the unincorporated areas of the County commencing October 1, 2023. All or a portion of the cost to provide such *fire rescue services* shall be funded from proceeds of the *fire rescue charge*. The remaining cost, if any, required to provide *fire rescue services* shall be funded by available County revenues other than such proceeds.

Section 6. General Legislative Determinations. It is hereby ascertained and declared that the *fire rescue services* provide a special benefit to the *assessed property* based upon the following legislative determinations and based upon that certain report entitled “City of Tallahassee and Leon County, Florida, Fire Assessment Memorandum” dated April 2023, prepared by Government

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Services Group, Inc., which is hereby specifically approved and adopted as Exhibit A, same being attached hereto and incorporated herein as if fully set forth below. Upon the adoption of this Resolution, the legislative determinations ascertained and declared in Sections 7-42 and 7-43, Leon County Code of Laws are hereby ratified and confirmed.

A. It is hereby ascertained, determined, and declared that each parcel of property subject to a *fire rescue charge* located within the unincorporated area of the County, and the *owners* and occupants of said parcel, will be benefited by the County's provision of *fire rescue services*, in an amount not less than the *fire rescue charge* imposed against such parcel and that such *fire rescue charge,* as computed in a manner as set forth in this Resolution, constitutes a fair and reasonable charge for the provision of *fire rescue services*.

B. The availability and provision of comprehensive *fire rescue services* enhance and strengthen the relationship of such services to the use and enjoyment of the parcels of property, the market perception of the area and, ultimately, the property and rental values within the assessable area.

C. The Board does hereby find that the various legislative findings and determinations contained herein are found to have existed as of the original imposition of the *fire rescue charge* in 2009 and relate back thereto. Therefore, such findings shall be deemed to have been incorporated in the provisions of Chapter 7, Leon County Code of Laws, adopted March 13, 2009, Resolution No. 09-16, adopted June 9, 2009, and Resolution No. 15-20, adopted on May 26, 2015, as if they had been set forth fully therein and continued thereafter.

Section 7. Fire Rescue Charges.

A. Fire Rescue Fee.

1. Imposition; Legislative Determinations.

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a. A *fire rescue fee* is hereby imposed upon each improved parcel of *government property* located within the unincorporated area of the County, and which is hereby ascertained, determined, and declared to be reasonably and fairly related to the cost of providing *fire rescue services* to such *government property* and as such the *fire rescue fee* constitutes a fair, reasonable, just, and equitable manner for apportioning and allocating the *fire rescue cost for government property*. The *fire rescue fee* imposed hereby is not a special assessment; it is a fee for services available and rendered to *government property*.

b. Upon the adoption of this Resolution determining the *fire rescue fee* and identifying the *government property* to be billed a *fire rescue fee*, the legislative determinations ascertained and declared in Section 7-42, Leon County Code of Laws, are hereby ratified and confirmed.

c. It is fair and reasonable to use the *fire services property use category* to assign property use for a *fire rescue fee* because the use codes are most compatible with the system of billing on the City of Tallahassee *utility* bill.

d. It is fair and reasonable to use the *fire rescue costs for* the development of the *fire rescue fee* and apply the *fire rescue fee* for future fiscal years at the rates established in this Resolution because it is hereby determined that the actual annual cost of providing *fire rescue services*, over the five-year period will be as great as or greater than the *fire rescue fee* established herein.

e. It is fair and reasonable and consistent with the decision of the Florida Supreme Court in the case of City of North Lauderdale v. SMM Properties, Inc., 825 So.2d 343 (Fla. 2002), to exclude from the *fire rescue costs,* amounts determined to constitute the cost of providing emergency medical services.

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f. Apportioning *fire rescue costs for government property* among classifications of improved *government property* based upon historical demand for *fire rescue services*, but not emergency medical services, is a fair and reasonable method of *cost apportionment* because it reflects the property uses' potential fire risk based upon *building* use and is a reasonable proxy for the amount of fire flow, fire fighters, quantity and size of apparatus, and other special firefighting equipment that must be available in accordance with the County's required standards and practices.

g. The greater the *building area*, the greater the potential for a large fire and the greater the firefighting resources that must be available in the event of a fire in a structure of that *building*'s size. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to use *building area* as a proxy for determining the *fire rescue fees*.

h. It is fair and reasonable to not charge a *fire rescue fee* to *government property* that is vacant as evidenced by the cessation of *utility* services. The costs of administering and collecting *fire rescue fees* from such vacant property exceed the anticipated *fire rescue fees* that could be collected from such property.

i. The *incident reports* are the most reliable data available to determine the potential demand for *fire rescue services* from *government property* use and to determine the benefit to property use resulting from the availability of *fire rescue services* to protect and serve *buildings* located within *government property* and their intended occupants. There exist sufficient *incident reports* documenting the historical demand for *fire rescue services* from *government property*. The *demand percentage* determined for each classification of *government property* by an examination of such *incident reports* is consistent

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with the experience of the County. Therefore, the use of *demand percentages* determined by an examination of *incident reports* is a fair and reasonable method to apportion the *fire rescue costs* among each classification of *government property*.

j. The suppression of fire on vacant property primarily benefits the *buildings* within the adjacent improved property by the containment of the spread of fire rather than the preservation of the vacant property. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable not to apportion any of the costs attributed to providing *fire rescue services* to vacant property and the *incident reports* omitted from the *demand percentage* calculation.

k. The budget is sized based upon its ability to provide *fire rescue services* to *assessed property* within the unincorporated area. Therefore, the level of services required to meet anticipated demand for *fire rescue services* and the corresponding fire services budget required to fund *fire rescue services* provided to non-specific property uses would be required notwithstanding the occurrence of any incidents from such non-specific uses. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to omit from the *demand percentage* calculation, the *incident reports* documenting *fire rescue services* provided to non-specific property uses and vacant property.

2. Methodology for Determining Fire Rescue Fees. The *fire rescue fees* shall be calculated as follows:

a. The number of *incident reports* filed within a sampling period was determined for *government property* and all *property use categories* of *nongovernment property*. The percentages of total *incident reports* allocated to *government*

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property as compared to total *incident reports* allocated to *nongovernment property* were used to calculate the *fire rescue cost* for *assessed property* and the *fire rescue cost for government property*.

b. The *fire rescue cost for government property* was then apportioned among the *tax parcels* of *government property* as follows:

1. Add the *building area* of all the *buildings* of *government property* to arrive at the aggregate square footage for *government property*. Any *buildings* that exceed 100,000 square feet of *building area* shall only be included at 100,000 square feet.

2. Divide the *fire rescue cost for government property* by the product of subsection 1. above to arrive at a rate per square foot of *building area* to be charged to *government property*.

3. For each *building* of *government property*, multiply the applicable square foot rate determined in subsection 2. above by the number of square feet for that *building* and then sum the amounts for all *buildings* on that *tax parcel*.

3. Amount of Fire Rescue Fee.

The *fire rescue cost for government property* is further determined to be a reasonable estimation of a five-year average annual cost of providing *fire rescue services* to *government property*. The amount of the *fire rescue fee* imposed upon *government property for fire rescue services* is specifically based upon the Rate Study, Exhibit A, established pursuant to and in accordance with Section 7-42, Leon County Code of Laws, and shall be as set forth in Exhibit B, Rate Schedule, same being attached hereto and incorporated herein as if fully

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set forth below, commencing October 1, 2023, annually, until otherwise determined by the Board.

B. Fire Rescue Assessment.

1. Imposition; Legislative Determinations; Cost Apportionment Methodology; Parcel Apportionment Methodology; Amount.

A *fire rescue assessment* is hereby levied and imposed upon each improved parcel of *nongovernment property* located within the unincorporated area of the County, and which is hereby ascertained, determined, and declared to be reasonably related to the cost of providing *fire rescue services* and thereby provides an equitably corresponding special benefit to *nongovernment property*. The *fire rescue assessment* is hereby ascertained, determined, and declared to be based upon a reasonable estimation of the five-year average annual cost of providing *fire rescue services* to such *nongovernment property*. It is further ascertained, determined, and declared that the *fire rescue assessment* imposed hereby provides a special benefit to and is equitably apportioned among the *assessed property* based upon the special benefit assumptions and apportionment methodology set forth in the Rate Study, Exhibit A, and as further set forth below:

a. It is further hereby ascertained and declared that the *fire rescue services* provide a special benefit to *nongovernment property,* that is improved by the existence or construction of a *building,* based upon the following legislative determinations:

1. *Fire rescue services* enhance the use and enjoyment of improved property, which constitutes a special benefit to *owners*, commercial tenants, residential tenants, and occupants by the following:

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a) Protecting the value of the improvements, structures, and contents through the provision of available *fire rescue services*;

b) Protecting the life and safety of occupants, residential tenants and commercial tenants, in the use and enjoyment of the improvements and structures within improved parcels; and

c) Lowering the cost of fire insurance, including renter's insurance and property coverage for the repair and replacement of contents of improvements and structures within the improved parcels, by the presence of a professional and comprehensive fire services program within the unincorporated area of the County.

2. The *fire rescue services* enhance the use and enjoyment of commercial tenants by protecting the continued commercial operations within improved parcels of property within the unincorporated area of the County.

3. The *fire rescue services* enhance the value of business and commercial interests, which accrues to *owners* and lessees, by protecting the continued commercial operations within improved parcels of property within the unincorporated area of the County.

4. The legislative determinations of special benefit ascertained arising from the *fire rescue services*, as set out and declared in Section 7-43, Leon County Code of Laws, are incorporated herein by reference and further ratified and confirmed.

b. It is fair and reasonable to create *service zones* to reflect the level of service differentiation between a property located in a higher density area that receives fire protection coverage from multiple *core stations* and a property located in

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an area generally described as rural and typically serviced by a single fire station.

c. It is fair and reasonable to use the *improvement codes* and the *DOR codes* for the *cost apportionment* and the *parcel apportionment* because: (1) the *tax roll* database employing the use of such property use codes is the most comprehensive, accurate, and reliable information readily available to determine the property use and *building area* for improved property within the County, (2) the *tax roll* database within such property use codes is maintained by the Property Appraiser and is thus consistent with parcel designations on the *tax roll*, and (3) the parcel descriptions on the *tax roll* are not incompatible with the property use descriptions on the City of Tallahassee's *utility* customer database which has been developed and maintained by the City of Tallahassee and which will be used in many instances to bill the *fire rescue assessments*.

d. The data available in the *improvement codes* is more useful and accurate to determine *building area* than the data maintained in the *DOR codes* because (1) the data maintained in the *improvement codes* reveals the existence of a *building* with a different use than the use described in the *DOR codes*, (2) the *improvement codes* represent records maintained by the Property Appraiser with the most information relative to *building area* regardless of property use, and (3) the City of Tallahassee *utility* customer database does not contain *building area* data.

e. It is fair and reasonable and consistent with the decision of the Florida Supreme Court in the case of City of North Lauderdale v. SMM Properties, Inc., 825 So.

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2d 343 (Fla. 2002), to exclude from the *fire rescue costs,* amounts determined to constitute the cost of providing *EMS services*.

f. Apportioning the *fire rescue cost for assessed property* among classifications of improved property based upon historical demand for *fire rescue services*, but not *EMS services*, is a fair and reasonable method of *cost apportionment* because it reflects the property uses' potential fire risk based upon *building* use and is a reasonable proxy for the amount of fire flow, fire fighters, quantity and size of apparatus, and other special firefighting equipment that must be available in accordance with the County's required standards and practices.

g. The cost of responding to fire incidents varies among the *service zones*. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to use a *cost factor* in calculating the *demand percentages* because it reflects the varying costs that are associated with the responses and services to different *property use categories* based upon average call duration, which accounts for the time that personnel and equipment were out of service.

h. It is fair and reasonable to use the *fire rescue costs for assessed property* for the development of the *fire rescue assessment* and apply the *fire rescue assessment* for future fiscal years at the rates established in this Resolution because it is hereby determined that the actual annual cost of providing *fire rescue services* over the five-year period will be as great as or greater than the *fire rescue assessment* established herein.

i. The *incident reports* are the most reliable data available to determine the potential demand for *fire rescue services* from property use and to determine the benefit to property use resulting from the availability of *fire rescue services*

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to protect and serve *buildings* located within the *assessed property* and their intended occupants. There exist sufficient *incident reports* documenting the historical demand for *fire rescue services* from *assessed property* within the *property use categories*. The *demand percentage* determined for each *property use category* by an examination of such *incident reports* is consistent with the experience of the City of Tallahassee Fire Department. Therefore, the use of *demand percentages* determined by an examination of *incident reports* is a fair and reasonable method to apportion the *fire rescue costs* among the *property use categories*.

j. The suppression of fire on vacant property primarily benefits the buildings within the adjacent improved property by the containment of the spread of fire rather than the preservation of the vacant property. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable not to apportion any of the costs attributed to providing *fire rescue services* to vacant property and the *incident reports* documenting historical *fire rescue costs* provided to vacant property were thus omitted from the *demand percentage* calculation.

k. The budget for *fire rescue services* is sized based upon its ability to provide service to *assessed property* within the unincorporated area. Therefore, the level of services required to meet anticipated demand for *fire rescue services* and the corresponding budget required to fund *fire rescue services* provided to nonspecific property uses would be required notwithstanding the occurrence of any incidents from such nonspecific uses. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to omit from the *demand percentage* calculation the *incident reports*

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documenting *fire rescue services* provided to nonspecific property uses and vacant property.

l. It is fair and reasonable to not charge a *fire rescue assessment* to *nongovernment property* that is vacant as evidenced by the cessation of *utility* services. The costs of administering and collecting *fire rescue assessments* from such vacant property exceed the anticipated *fire rescue assessments* that could be collected from such property.

m. The size or the value of the *residential property* does not determine the scope of the required *fire rescue services* response. The potential demand for *fire rescue services* is driven by the existence of a *dwelling unit* and the anticipated average occupant population.

n. Apportioning the *fire rescue costs* to *residential property* on a per *dwelling unit* basis is required to avoid cost inefficiency and unnecessary administration and is a fair and reasonable method of *parcel apportionment* based upon historical call data.

o. The demand for *fire rescue service* availability is substantially the same for all *residential property*; therefore, it is fair and reasonable to use the combined *demand percentages* attributable to all types of *residential property,* both *single family property* and *multi-family property,* to determine *fire rescue assessments* for *residential property*.

p. The risk of loss and the demand for *fire rescue services* availability is substantially the same for *buildings* below a certain minimum size. Because the value and anticipated occupancy of non-residential *buildings* below a certain minimum size is less, it is fair, reasonable, and equitable to provide a

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lesser assessment burden on improved property containing such *buildings* by the creation of specific *building area* classification ranges for such parcels.

q. The assessment of *nonresidential property* by square footage classification ranges is fair and reasonable for the purpose of *parcel apportionment* because the demand for fire rescue service, fire flow, fire fighters, quantity and size of apparatus, and other special firefighting equipment is determined and measured by the square footage of structures and improvements within benefited parcels.

r. The greater the *building area*, the greater the potential for a large fire and the greater the amount of firefighting resources that must be available in the event of a fire in a structure of that *building*'s size. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to use *building area* as a proxy for determining the *tax parcel*'s *fire rescue assessment*.

s. The separation of improved *non-residential property* into *building area* classification ranges is fair and reasonable for the purposes of *parcel apportionment* because: (1) the absence of a need for precise square footage data within the ad valorem tax records maintained by the Property Appraiser undermines the use of actual *building area* within each improved parcel as a basis for *parcel apportionment*; (2) the administrative expense and complexity created by an on-site inspection to determine the actual *building area* within each improved parcel assessed is impractical; (3) the demand for *fire rescue services* availability is not precisely determined or measured by the actual *building area* within benefited parcels; and (4) the classification of parcels within *building area* classification ranges is a fair and reasonable method to

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classify benefited parcels and to apportion costs among benefited parcels that create similar demand for the availability of *fire rescue services*.

t. The demand for the availability of *fire rescue services* diminishes at the outer limit of *building* size since a fire occurring in a structure greater than a certain size is not capable of being suppressed under expected conditions and the fire control activities under such circumstances are directed to avoid the spread of the fire event to adjacent *buildings*. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to place a cap on the *building area* classification of benefited parcels within *non-residential property*.

u. In accordance with Section 125.0168, Florida Statutes, which mandates that counties treat recreational vehicle park property as *commercial property* for non-ad valorem special assessments levied by a county, like the *fire rescue assessment*, it is fair and reasonable to treat each space within recreational vehicle park property as a *building* on *commercial property* and to assign the square footage of 191 square feet, the average size of a recreational vehicle, according to the Florida Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds.

2. Cost Apportionment Methodology for Fire Rescue Assessment.

a. The number of *incident reports* filed within a sampling period was determined for *government property* and all *property use categories* of *nongovernment property*. The percentages of total *incident reports* allocated to *government property* as compared to total *incident reports* allocated to *nongovernment property* were used to calculate the *fire rescue cost for assessed property* and the *fire rescue cost for government property*.

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b. Next, to correlate the *nongovernment tax parcels* to the *service zones*, the *incident reports* filed within a sampling period were geo-coded on the GIS system map based upon the address provided in the *FFIRS* database.

c. Based upon such correlation by *service zone*, the number of *incident reports* filed within a sampling period were determined for each *service zone*.

d. A *cost factor* was then developed and applied to the *incident reports* within each *service zone* based upon the difference in average call duration between the *service zones* with Zone 1 being assigned a 1.00 weighting *cost factor* and Zone 2 being assigned a 1.26 weighting *cost factor.*

e. A *demand percentage* was then determined for each *service zone* by calculating the percentage that *incident reports* allocated to each *service zone* bears to the total number of *incident reports* documented for both *service zones* during the sampling period. The *demand percentage* for each *service zone* was then applied to the *fire rescue cost for assessed property* and the resulting product is the cost allocation of that portion of the *fire rescue costs* allocated to each *service zone*.

f. Using the weighted *incident reports*, fire rescue incidents were assigned within the County to the *property use categories* by correlating the *code descriptions* within the *fixed property use codes* to the *improvement codes* and *DOR codes*.

g. To correlate the *property use categories* with the *state database*, the *code descriptions* within the *fixed property use codes* similar to *code descriptions* within the *improvement codes* that were used to determine the *property use categories* were identified. Exhibit A, Appendix C contains a designation of *code descriptions* by *property use category* with the *improvement codes*, and

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Exhibit A, Appendix B contains a designation of *code descriptions* by *property use category* with the *fixed property use codes*. Such correlation between *code descriptions* by *property use category* between the *fixed property use codes* and the *improvement codes* is necessary to allocate the historical demand for *fire rescue services* as reflected by the weighted *incident reports* for *tax parcels* on the *tax roll* within the *property use categories*.

h. Based upon such assignment of weighted *incident reports* to *property use categories*, the number of weighted *incident reports* filed within a sampling period was determined for each *property use category*. A *demand percentage* was then determined for each *property use category* in each *service zone* by calculating the percentage that weighted *incident reports* allocated to each *property use category* bear to the total number of weighted *incident reports* documented for all *property use categories* within the sampling period. The *demand percentage* for each *property use category* within each *service zone* was then applied to the *fire rescue cost for assessed property* for that *service zone*, and the resulting product is the cost allocation of that portion of the *fire rescue cost for assessed property* allocated to each *property use category* within that *service zone*.

3. Parcel Apportionment Methodology.

a. The apportionment among *tax parcels* of *nongovernment property* of that portion of the *fire rescue cost for assessed property* apportioned to each *property use category* within each *service zone* under the *cost apportionment* is consistent with the *parcel apportionment* methodology described and determined herein.

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b. RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY. For each *service zone*, the *fire rescue assessment* for each *tax parcel* of *residential property* shall be computed by multiplying the *demand percentage* attributable to *residential property* by the *fire rescue cost for assessed property* allocated to the respective *service zone*, dividing such product by the total number of *dwelling units* shown on the *tax roll* within the *service zone*, and then multiplying such quotient by the number of *dwelling units* located on such *tax parcel*.

c. NON-RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY. The *fire rescue assessments* for each *building* of *nonresidential property*, except recreational vehicle property, shall be computed as follows for each *service zone*:

1. Respectively, multiply the *fire rescue cost for assessed property* for the applicable *service zone* by the *demand percentage* attributable to each of the non-residential *property use categories*. The resulting dollar amounts reflect the portions of the fire *rescue services* budget to be respectively funded from *fire rescue assessment* revenue derived from each of the non-residential *property use categories*.

2. Separate each *building* in each of the *nonresidential property use categories* into one of the following square footage categories:

a) *buildings* with a *building area* of 1,999 square feet or less;

b) *buildings* with a *building area* between 2,000 square feet and 3,499 square feet;

c) *buildings* with a *building area* between 3,500 square feet and 4,999 square feet;

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d) *buildings* with a *building area* between 5,000 square feet and 9,999 square feet;

e) *buildings* with a *building area* between 10,000 square feet and 19,999 square feet;

f) *buildings* with a *building area* between 20,000 square feet and 29,999 square feet;

g) *buildings* with a *building area* between 30,000 square feet and 39,999 square feet;

h) *buildings* with a *building area* between 40,000 square feet and 49,999 square feet; and

i) *buildings* with a *building area* between 50,000 square feet and 59,999 square feet; and

j) *buildings* with a *building area* between 60,000 square feet and 69,999 square feet; and

k) *buildings* with a *building area* between 70,000 square feet and 79,999 square feet; and

l) *buildings* with a *building area* between 80,000 square feet and 89,999 square feet; and

m) *buildings* with a *building area* between 90,000 square feet and 99,999 square feet; and

n) *buildings* with a *building area* of 100,000 square feet or greater.

3. As to each non-residential *property use category* multiply the number of *buildings* categorized in:

a) Paragraph (2)(a) of this subsection by 1,000 square feet; and

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b) Paragraph (2)(b) of this subsection by 2,000 square feet; and

c) Paragraph (2)(c) of this subsection by 3,500 square feet; and

d) Paragraph (2)(d) of this subsection by 5,000 square feet; and

e) Paragraph (2)(e) of this subsection by 10,000 square feet; and

f) Paragraph (2)(f) of this subsection by 20,000 square feet; and

g) Paragraph (2)(g) of this subsection by 30,000 square feet; and

h) Paragraph (2)(h) of this subsection by 40,000 square feet; and

i) Paragraph (2)(i) of this subsection by 50,000 square feet; and

j) Paragraph (2)(j) of this subsection by 60,000 square feet; and

k) Paragraph (2)(k) of this subsection by 70,000 square feet; and

l) Paragraph (2)(l) of this subsection by 80,000 square feet; and

m) Paragraph (2)(m) of this subsection by 90,000 square feet; and

n) Paragraph (2)(n) of this subsection by 100,000 square feet.

4. For each non-residential *property use category*, add the products of paragraphs (3)(a) through (3)(n) of this subsection. The sum of these products reflects an aggregate square footage area for each non-residential *property use category* to be used in the computation of *fire rescue assessments*.

5. Divide the product of paragraph 1. of this subsection relative to each of the non-residential *property use categories* by the sum of the products for each non-residential *property use category* described in paragraph 4. of this subsection. The resulting quotient expresses a dollar amount adjusted or weighted per square foot of improved area to be used in computing *fire rescue assessments* on each of the respective non-residential *property use categories*.

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6. For each of the non-residential *property use categories*, multiply the resulting quotients from paragraph 5. of this subsection by each of the respective products in paragraphs (3)(a) through (3)(n) of this subsection. The resulting products for each non-residential *property use category*, expresses a series of gross dollar amounts expected to be funded by all *buildings* in the respective non-residential *property use categories* in each of the square footage categories described in paragraph 2. of this subsection.

7. For each of the non-residential *property use categories*, divide each of the respective products of paragraph 6. of this subsection by the number of *buildings* determined to be in each of the square footage categories identified in paragraph 2. of this subsection. The result expresses the respective dollar amounts of the *fire rescue assessments* to be imposed upon each *building* in each of the non-residential *property use categories*.

d. RECREATIONAL VEHICLE PARK PROPERTY. Notwithstanding the procedure in subsection c. above for *non-residential property*, the *fire rescue assessments* for each *tax parcel* of *recreational vehicle park* property shall be computed as follows:

1. Aggregate the amount of square footage for each *tax parcel* of *recreational vehicle park*, with recreational vehicle park spaces, as reported to the Department of Health, at 191 square feet each, mobile home spaces, as reported to the Department of Health, at actual *building area* or 720 square feet each if actual square footage is not available, and actual *building area* for all other *buildings*.

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2. Assign the respective dollar amount of the *fire rescue assessments* determined in subsection c. above for *commercial property* for the applicable *service zone* to the comparable aggregated square footage category ranges of *recreational vehicle park* property as calculated in paragraph 1. above. Any aggregated square footage that exceeds 100,000 square feet on a *tax parcel* shall be assigned the *commercial* dollar amount for 100,000 square feet. The result expresses the respective dollar amounts of the *fire rescue assessments* to be imposed upon each *recreational vehicle park* property.

e. MIXED USE PROPERTY. The *fire rescue assessments* for each *tax parcel* classified in two or more *property use categories* shall be the sum of the *fire rescue assessments* computed for each *property use category*.

4. Amount of Fire Rescue Assessment.

The amount of the *fire rescue assessment* levied and imposed upon *nongovernment property* shall be as set forth in Exhibit B, Rate Schedule, commencing October 1, 2023, annually, until otherwise determined by the Board.

Section 8. Exempt Property. The *fire rescue assessment* heretofore imposed upon *nongovernment property* shall not be levied nor imposed against property owned or occupied by a "religious institution" as that term is defined in Section 170.201(2), Florida Statutes, to the extent same is used as a place of worship.

Section 9. Lien. The *fire rescue assessments* imposed herein shall constitute a lien upon the Assessed Property so assessed equal in rank and dignity with the liens of all state, county, district or municipal taxes and other non-ad valorem assessments. Except as otherwise provided by law, such lien shall be superior in dignity to all other liens, titles and claims, until paid.

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Section 10. Collection of Fire Rescue Charge; Legislative Determinations. The collection of the *fire rescue charge* shall be made pursuant to and in accordance with Section 7-44, Leon County Code of Laws, and is authorized hereby, commencing October 1, 2023. The use of the *utility* bills for the collection of the *fire rescue fee* and *fire rescue assessment* is a method of collection that is reasonably related and directed to those that derive the benefit received by the property from the provision of *fire rescue services*. The benefit to the property is not solely received by the *owner* of the property but also extends to all intended occupants, including but not limited to, tenants, leaseholders and others occupying the property. There is a rational nexus between the use of the *utility* bill to collect the *fire rescue fees* and *fire rescue assessments* from the property and the intended occupants of the property, including but not limited to, owners, tenants, leaseholders and others occupying property, and the benefit they derive through the enhancement of their use and enjoyment of the property. The use of *utility* bills for collection also provides a convenient mechanism of payment and further relieving any potential economic burden by providing an opportunity to pay smaller fees in twelve (12) increments annually as opposed to one larger lump sum payment being collected annually.

Section 11. Final Adjudication. The adoption of this Resolution shall be the final adjudication of the issues presented (including, but not limited to, the determination of special benefit and fair apportionment, the method of apportionment, the rate of assessment and fee, the and the levy and lien of the *fire rescue charges*), unless proper steps shall be initiated in a court of competent jurisdiction to secure relief within 20 days from the date of this Resolution.

Section 12. Repealer. This resolution replaces and supersedes Resolution No. 15-20, which was adopted by the Board on May 26, 2015.

Section 13. Effective Date. This Resolution shall have effect upon adoption and shall apply to all property located within the unincorporated area of Leon County.

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DONE, ADOPTED AND PASSED by the Board of County Commissioners of Leon County, Florida, this 11th day of July, 2023.

LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

DocuSigned by:
BY: 4997E9A7C6EB483...
Nick Maddox, Chair
Board of County Commissioners

ATTESTED BY:

Gwendolyn Marshall Knight, Clerk
& Comptroller, Leon County, Florida

DocuSigned by:
BY: Gwendolyn Marshall Knight
178D7F95C3774F4...

DS

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
Chasity H. O'Steen, County Attorney
Leon County Attorney's Office

DocuSigned by:
BY: Chasity H. O'Steen
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Exhibit "B"

Rate Schedule			
Property Use Category	**Unit of Measurement**	**Per Annum for FY 2024 and each Fiscal Year Thereafter**	
		Zone 1	Zone 2
Residential	Per Residential Dwelling Unit	$245.39	$223.00
Commercial/Institutional	Per Square Feet		
	≤ 1,999	$384.00	$356.00
	2,000 - 3,499	$768.00	$712.00
	3,500 - 4,999	$1,344.00	$1,245.00
	5,000 - 9,999	$1,920.00	$1,779.00
	10,000 - 19,999	$3,840.00	$3,557.00
	20,000 - 29,999	$7,680.00	$7,113.00
	30,000 - 39,999	$11,519.00	$10,669.00
	40,000 - 49,999	$15,359.00	$14,226.00
	50,000 - 59,999	$19,198.00	$17,782.00
	60,000 - 69,999	$23,038.00	$21,338.00
	70,000 - 79,999	$26,877.00	$24,895.00
	80,000 - 89,999	$30,717.00	$28,451.00
	90,999 - 99,999	$34,557.00	$32,007.00
	≥ 100,000	$38,396.00	$35,564.00
Industrial/Warehouse	Per Square Feet		
	≤ 1,999	$63.00	$114.00
	2,000 - 3,499	$125.00	$227.00
	3,500 - 4,999	$218.00	$398.00
	5,000 - 9,999	$311.00	$568.00
	10,000 - 19,999	$621.00	$1,135.00
	20,000 - 29,999	$1,242.00	$2,270.00
	30,000 - 39,999	$1,863.00	$3,405.00
	40,000 - 49,999	$2,484.00	$4,540.00
	50,000 - 59,999	$3,104.00	$5,674.00
	60,000 - 69,999	$3,725.00	$6,809.00
	70,000 - 79,999	$4,346.00	$7,944.00
	80,000 - 89,999	$4,967.00	$9,079.00
	90,999 - 99,999	$5,587.00	$10,213.00
	≥ 100,000	$6,208.00	$11,348.00
Governmental	per square foot	$0.267	$0.267

Appendix F:
City of Tallahassee Resolution No. 23-R-19

RESOLUTION NO. 23-R-19

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, RELATING TO FIRE SERVICE ASSESSMENTS AND FEES; PROVIDING FOR THE PROVISION OF FIRE SERVICES CHARGES, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE CITY OF TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA; IMPOSING A FIRE SERVICES FEE ON GOVERNMENT PROPERTY; DESCRIBING THE METHOD OF APPORTIONING FIRE SERVICES COSTS FOR GOVERNMENT PROPERTY AMONG GOVERNMENT PROPERTY; PROVIDING FOR THE COLLECTION OF THE FIRE SERVICES FEE ON THE CITY UTILITY BILL; IMPOSING A FIRE SERVICES ASSESSMENT ON NON-GOVERNMENT PROPERTY; DESCRIBING THE METHOD OF ASSESSING FIRE SERVICES ASSESSED COSTS AGAINST NON-GOVERNMENT PROPERTY; PROVIDING FOR THE COLLECTION OF THE FIRE SERVICES ASSESSMENT ON THE CITY UTILITY BILL; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City Commission of the City of Tallahassee, Florida intends to continue to provide fire services, facilities and programs within the City and to fund such services through the existing mechanisms: a fire services assessment on non-government property and a fire services fee on government property.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA:

ARTICLE I. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

Section 1. Authority. This resolution is adopted pursuant to the provisions of Article III, Chapter 8, City of Tallahassee General Code (the "Ordinance"), the City of Tallahassee Charter; sections 166.021 and 166.041, Florida Statutes; and other applicable provisions of law.

Section 2. Purpose and Definitions. This resolution constitutes the fire services fee rate resolution and the fire services assessment rate resolution as defined in the Ordinance. All capitalized words and terms not otherwise defined herein shall have the meanings set forth in the Ordinance. Unless the context indicates otherwise, words

imparting the singular number, include the plural number, and vice versa. As used in this resolution, the following terms shall have the following meanings, unless the context hereof otherwise requires:

"Altered Assessed Property" is Assessed Property (1) which is improved by the addition of a Building subsequent to the effective date of this Resolution, (2) whose existing Building size is altered subsequent to the effective date of this Resolution, or (3) whose use changes among the Property Use Categories to an Assessed Property.

"Building Area" means the actual area of a Building expressed in square feet and reflected on the Tax Roll or, in the event such information is not reflected or is determined not to be accurately reflected on the Tax Roll, that area determined by the City.

"Code Descriptions" mean the descriptions listed in the Fixed Property Use Codes and the descriptions listed in the Improvement Codes.

“Core Stations” are those fire stations within five road miles of at least two other stations.

"Commercial Property" means those Tax Parcels with a Code Description designated as "Commercial" in the Improvement Codes.

"Cost Apportionment" means the apportionment of the Fire Services Cost among all Property Use Categories according to the Demand Percentages established pursuant to the apportionment methodology described in Sections II.4 and III.3 of this Resolution.

“CPI Adjustment” means the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. City Average, All items (unadjusted). The CPI Adjustment will be computed annually by the City using the twelve-month period ending March 31st of the preceding fiscal year.

"Demand Percentage" means the percentage of demand for fire services, facilities, or programs attributable to each Property Use Category determined by analyzing the historical demand for Fire Services as reflected in Incident Reports in the State Database under the methodology described in Sections II.4 and III.3 of this Resolution.

"DOR Code" means a property use code established in Rule 12D-8.008, Florida Administrative Code, assigned by the Property Appraiser to Tax Parcels within the City.

"Dwelling Unit" means (1) a Building, or a portion thereof, available to be used for residential purposes, consisting of one or more rooms arranged, designed, used, or intended to be used as living quarters for one family only, or (2) the use of land in which lots or spaces are offered for rent or lease for the placement of mobile homes or the like for residential purposes.

"EMS Response" means an Incident Report that records a fire services response to Property that is assigned a "Situation Code", as set forth in the study (Appendix A), indicating an EMS-type response.

"FFIRS" means the Florida Fire Incident Reporting System maintained by the Florida State Fire Marshal.

"Fire Services Property Use Category" means the use codes developed by the City for the purpose of assigning a Fire Services Charge for collection on the Utility Bill.

"Fixed Property Use Codes" mean the property use codes used by FFIRS as specified in the study (Appendix B).

"Improvement Codes" mean the building use codes assigned by the Property Appraiser to Tax Parcels within the City as specified in the study (Appendix C).

"Incident Report" means an individual report filed with the Florida State Fire Marshal under FFIRS that is not an EMS Response.

"Industrial/Warehouse Property" means those Tax Parcels with a Code Description designated as "Industrial/Warehouse" in the Improvement Codes.

"Residential Property" means those Tax Parcels designated as “Residential” in the Improvement Codes.

"Non-Residential Property" means, collectively, Commercial Property and Industrial/Warehouse Property.

"Non-Residential Fire Response" means an Incident Report that records a fire services response to Non-Residential Property that is not an EMS Response.

"Parcel Apportionment" means the further apportionment of the Fire Services Cost allocated to each Property Use Category by the Cost Apportionment among the Tax Parcels under the methodology established in Sections II.4 and III.3 of this Resolution.

"Property Use Categories" means, collectively, Residential Property and all categories of Non-Residential Property.

"Recreational Vehicle Park" means (1) a place set aside and offered by a person, for either direct or indirect remuneration of the owner, lessor, or operator of such place, for the parking, accommodation, or rental of five or more recreational vehicles or tents; and (2) licensed by the Department of Health of the State of Florida, or its successor in function, as a "recreational vehicle park" under Chapter 513, Florida Statutes, as may be amended from time-to-time.

"Religious Institution" means any church, synagogue, or other established physical place of worship at which non-profit religious services and activities are regularly conducted and carried on.

"Residential Fire Response" means an Incident Report that records a fire services response to Residential Property that is not an EMS Response.

“Service Zones” mean the geographic areas defined to differentiate between the two levels of fire services provided within the County based upon proximity to Core Stations.

"State Database" means the incident data specific to the City derived from the FFIRS Incident Reports maintained by the Florida State Fire Marshal.

"Tax Parcel" means a parcel of property located within the City to which the Property Appraiser has assigned a distinct ad valorem property tax identification number.

“Zone 1 Properties” are those properties included in the geographic area defined by the boundaries representing five road miles from two or more Core Stations.

“Zone 2 Properties” are those properties located outside of the geographic area defined by the boundaries representing five road miles from two or more Core Stations.

Section 3. Provision and Funding of Fire Services.

(A) Upon the imposition of a Fire Services Charge against Property subject to the Fire Services Charge located within the geographic area of the City, the City shall provide fire services, facilities, or programs to such Property. All or a portion of the cost to provide such fire services, facilities, and programs shall be funded from proceeds of the Fire Services Charge. The remaining cost, if any, required to provide fire services, facilities, and programs shall be funded by available City revenues other than such proceeds.

(B) It is hereby ascertained, determined, and declared that each parcel of Property subject to a Fire Services Charge located within the geographic area of the City

will be benefited by the City's provision of fire services, facilities, and programs in an amount not less than the Fire Services Charge imposed against such parcel, computed in the manner set forth in this Resolution.

(C) The Commission does hereby find that the various legislative findings and determinations contained herein are found to have existed as of the original imposition of the Fire Services Assessment in 1999 and relate back thereto. Therefore, such findings shall be deemed to have been incorporated in the provisions of the Ordinance, and as previously codified in section 10-46 et seq., Tall. Code 1984, as if they had been set forth fully therein and continued thereafter.

(D) The Commission has adopted and hereby incorporates by reference the study entitled "City of Tallahassee Florida Fire Assessment Memorandum" prepared by Government Services Group, Inc., dated April 2023, which study is attached to this resolution and incorporated by reference. The purpose of the study was to establish a methodology and structure for estimating and apportioning Fire Service Costs and for calculating Fire Services Fees and Fire Services Assessments for the period commencing October 1, 2023 and extending through September 30, 2028.

Section 4. Determination of Fire Services Costs. It is hereby ascertained and declared that the Fire Services Cost is a reasonable estimation of the five-year average annual costs of providing fire services, facilities and programs to all parcels of improved property within the City commencing on October 1, 2023.

ARTICLE II. FIRE SERVICES FEES ON GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

Section 1. Imposition and Computation of Fire Services Fees. A Fire Services Fee is hereby imposed against all Government Property within the City. Fire Services Fees shall be computed in the same manner set forth in this Resolution.

Section 2. Legislative Determinations as to Government Property Subject to the Fire Services Fee.

(A) It is hereby ascertained and declared that the Fire Services Cost for Government Property is a reasonable estimation of the five-year average annual costs of providing fire services, facilities and programs to Government Property commencing on

October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028. The structure and methodology utilized in establishing Fire Services Rates for the five-year period commencing October 1, 2023 underlies establishment of Fire Services Rates for the period commencing October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028.

(B) Upon the adoption of this Resolution determining the Fire Services Costs and identifying the Government Property to be billed a Fire Services Fee, the legislative determinations ascertained and declared in Section 8-65 of the Ordinance are hereby ratified and confirmed for the period commencing October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028.

(C) It is fair and reasonable to use the Fire Services Property Use Category to assign property use for a Fire Services Charge because the use codes are most compatible with the system of billing on the City Utility bill.

(D) It is fair and reasonable to use Fire Services Costs for the development of the Fire Services Fee and apply the Fire Services Fee for future fiscal years at the rates established in this Resolution because it is hereby determined that the actual annual cost of providing fire services, facilities and programs over the five-year period commencing October 1, 2023 through September, 2028 will be as great as or greater than the Fire Services Charges established herein.

(E) It is fair and reasonable and consistent with the decision of the Florida Supreme Court in the case of City of North Lauderdale v. SMM Properties, Inc., 825 So.2d 343 (Fla. 2002), to exclude from the Fire Services Assessed Cost amounts determined to constitute the cost of providing emergency medical services.

(F) It is fair and reasonable to not charge a Fire Services Fee to Government Property that is vacant as evidenced by the cessation of Utility services. The costs of administering and collecting Fire Services Fees from such vacant property exceed the anticipated Fire Services Fees that could be collected from such property. The City shall supplement the fire services budget from sources other than Fire Services Fees with amounts necessary to provide fire services, facilities and programs to such vacant property.

(G) Apportioning Fire Services Costs among classifications of Government Property based upon historical demand for fire services produces a fair and reasonable fee for services rendered to the Government Property.

(H) The Incident Reports are the most reliable data available to determine the potential demand for fire services from Government Property use and to determine the benefit to property use resulting from the availability of fire services to protect and serve Buildings located within Government Property and their intended occupants. There exists sufficient Incident Reports documenting the historical demand for fire services from Government Property. The Demand Percentage determined for each classification of Government Property by an examination of such Incident Reports is consistent with the experience of the City. Therefore, the use of Demand Percentages determined by an examination of Incident Reports is a fair and reasonable method to apportion the Fire Services Costs among Government Property.

(I) The suppression of fire on vacant property primarily benefits the Buildings within the adjacent improved property by the containment of the spread of fire rather than the preservation of the vacant property. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable not to apportion any of the Fire Services Costs to vacant property and the Incident Reports omitted from the Demand Percentage calculation.

(J) The level of services required to meet anticipated demand for fire services and the corresponding annual fire services budget required to fund fire services provided to non-specific property uses would be required notwithstanding the occurrence of any incidents from such non-specific uses. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to omit from the Demand Percentage calculation the Incident Reports documenting fire services provided to non-specific property uses and vacant property.

Section 3. Methodology for Determining Fire Services Fees.

(A) The number of Incident Reports filed within a sampling period was determined for Government Property.

(B) A Demand Percentage was then determined for each Fire Services Property Use Category, including Government Property, by calculating the percentage that Incident Reports allocated to each category bear to the total number of Incident Reports documented for all Fire Services Property Use Categories within the sampling period. The Demand Percentage for each Fire Services Use Category was then applied to the Fire Services Costs and the resulting product was the allocation of that portion of the Fire

Services Costs allocated to each individual Fire Services Property Use Category. After determining the cost allocation for each property use category, the methodology detailed in the study (page 23) was applied to Government Property.

Section 4. Government Parcel Apportionment Methodology. The apportionment among Tax Parcels of Government Property of that portion of the Fire Services Costs apportioned to Government Property under the Cost Apportionment was consistent with the Parcel Apportionment methodology described and determined in the study (page 23), which Parcel Apportionment methodology is hereby approved, adopted, and incorporated into this Resolution by reference.

Section 5. Determination of Fire Services Fee Costs; Establishment of Fire Services Fees.

(A) The Fire Services Costs to be assessed and apportioned among Government Property pursuant to the Cost Apportionment and the Parcel Apportionment commencing on the effective date of this Resolution, is the same amount as determined in the study (page 23, table 19). The approval of the Fire Services Fee Rate by the adoption of this Resolution determines the amount of the Fire Services Costs. The remainder of such Fiscal Year budget, if any, for fire services, facilities, and programs shall be funded from available City revenue other than Fire Services Assessment proceeds.

(B) The Fire Services Fees specified in the study (page 23, table 19) for FY 2023-24 are hereby established to fund the specified Fire Services Costs determined to be assessed commencing on October 1, 2023 and continuing through September 30, 2028. The Fire Services Fees for the following five-year period shall be established as follows: (1) the FY 2023-24 to FY 2027-28 rate will equal the FY 2022-23 rate.

ARTICLE III. FIRE SERVICES ASSESSMENTS ON ASSESSED PROPERTY

Section 1. Imposition and Computation of Fire Services Assessments. A Fire Services Assessment is hereby imposed against all Property except Government Property within the Property Use Categories within the City. Fire Services Assessments shall be computed in the manner set forth in this Resolution.

Section 2. Legislative Determinations of Special Benefit and Fair Apportionment for Fire Services Assessments. It is hereby ascertained and declared that the Fire Services Cost for Assessed Property is a reasonable estimation of the five-year average annual costs of providing fire services, facilities and programs to Non-Governmental Property commencing on October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028. The structure and methodology utilized in establishing Fire Services Rates for the five-year period commencing October 1, 2023 underlies establishment of Fire Services Rates for the period commencing October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028.

(A) It is further hereby ascertained and declared that the fire services, facilities, and programs provide a special benefit to Nongovernment Property that is improved by the existence or construction of a building based upon the following legislative determinations:

(1) Fire services enhance the use and enjoyment of improved property, which constitutes a special benefit to Owners, commercial tenants, residential tenants, and occupants by the following:

a. Protecting the value of the improvements, structures, and contents through the provision of available fire services;

b. Protecting the life and safety of occupants, residential tenants and commercial tenants, in the use and enjoyment of the improvements and structures within improved parcels; and

c. Lowering the cost of fire insurance, including renter's insurance and property coverage for the repair and replacement of contents of improvements and structures within the improved parcels, by the presence of a professional and comprehensive fire services program within the City.

(2) The fire services of the City under its existing fire services program enhance the use and enjoyment of commercial tenants by protecting the continued commercial operations within improved parcels of property within the areas served by the City.

(3) The fire services of the City under its existing fire services program enhance the value of business and commercial interests, which accrues to Owners and lessees, by protecting the continued commercial operations within improved parcels of property within the areas served by the City.

(4) The legislative determinations of special benefit ascertained arising from the Fire Services Assessments, as set out and declared in Section 8-66 of the Ordinance are incorporated herein by reference and further ratified and confirmed.

(B) It is fair and reasonable to create Service Zones to reflect the level of service differentiation between a property located in a higher density area that receives fire protection coverage from multiple Core Stations and a property located in an area generally described as rural and typically serviced by a single fire station.

(C) It is fair and reasonable to use the Improvement Codes and the DOR Codes for the Cost Apportionment and the Parcel Apportionment because: (1) the Tax Roll database employing the use of such property use codes is the most comprehensive, accurate, and reliable information readily available to determine the property use and Building Area for improved property within the City, (2) the Tax Roll database within such property use codes is maintained by the Property Appraiser and is thus consistent with

parcel designations on the Tax Roll, and (3) the parcel descriptions on the Tax Roll are not incompatible with the property use descriptions on the City's Utility Customer Database which has been developed and maintained by the City and will be used to bill the Fire Services Fee.

(D) The data available in the Improvement Codes is more useful and accurate to determine Building Area than the data maintained in the DOR Codes because (1) the data maintained in the Improvement Codes reveals the existence of a Building with a different use than the use described in the DOR Codes, (2) the Improvement Codes represent records maintained by the Property Appraiser with the most information relative to Building Area regardless of property use, and (3) the City's Utility customer database does not contain Building Area data.

(E) It is fair and reasonable and consistent with the decision of the Florida Supreme Court in the case of City of North Lauderdale v. SMM Properties, Inc., 825 So. 2d 343 (Fla. 2002), to exclude from the Fire Services Assessed Cost amounts determined to constitute the cost of providing emergency medical services.

(F) Apportioning Fire Services Assessed Costs among classifications of improved property based upon historical demand for fire services, but not emergency medical services, is fair and reasonable and proportional to the special benefit received.

(G) It is fair and reasonable to use Fire Services Assessed Costs for the development of the Fire Services Assessment and apply the Fire Services Assessment for future fiscal years at, or based on, the rates established in this Resolution because (1) it is hereby determined that the actual annual cost of providing fire services, facilities and programs over the five-year period will be as great as or greater than the Fire Services Assessed Costs established herein; and, (2) the additional Fire Services Charges that may be received from Altered Assessed Property shall not exceed the actual cost of providing fire services, facilities and programs in future fiscal years.

(H) Apportioning Fire Services Assessed Costs among classifications of improved property based upon historical demand for fire services is fair and reasonable and proportional to the special benefit received.

(I) The Incident Reports are the most reliable data available to determine the potential demand for fire services from property use and to determine the benefit to

property use resulting from the availability of fire services to protect and serve Buildings located within Assessed Property and their intended occupants. There exists sufficient Incident Reports documenting the historical demand for fire services from Assessed Property within the Property Use Categories. The Demand Percentage determined for each Property Use Category by an examination of such Incident Reports is consistent with the experience of the City. Therefore, the use of Demand Percentages determined by an examination of Incident Reports is a fair and reasonable method to apportion the Fire Services Assessed Costs among the Property Use Categories.

(J) The suppression of fire on vacant property primarily benefits the Buildings within the adjacent improved property by the containment of the spread of fire rather than the preservation of the vacant property. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable not to apportion any of the Fire Services Assessed Costs to vacant property and the Incident Reports documenting historical fire services provided to vacant property were thus omitted from the Demand Percentage calculation.

(K) The level of services required to meet anticipated demand for fire services and the corresponding annual fire services budget required to fund fire services provided to non-specific property uses would be required notwithstanding the occurrence of any incidents from such non-specific uses. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to omit from the Demand Percentage calculation the Incident Reports documenting fire services provided to non-specific property uses and vacant property.

(L) It is fair and reasonable to not charge a Fire Services Assessment to Non-Government Property that is vacant as evidenced by the cessation of Utility services. The costs of administering and collecting Fire Services Assessments from such vacant property exceed the anticipated Fire Services Assessments that could be collected from such property. The City shall supplement the fire services budget from sources other than Fire Services Assessments with amounts necessary to provide fire services, facilities and programs to such property.

(M) The size or the value of the Residential Property does not determine the scope of the required fire services response. The potential demand for fire services is driven by the existence of a Dwelling Unit and the anticipated average occupant population.

(N) Apportioning the Fire Services Assessed Costs for fire services attributable to Residential Property on a per Dwelling Unit basis is required to avoid cost inefficiency and unnecessary administration and is a fair and reasonable method of Parcel Apportionment based upon historical call data.

(O) The demand for fire service availability is substantially the same for all Residential Property; therefore, it is fair and reasonable to use the combined Demand Percentages attributable to all types of Residential Property to determine Fire Services Assessments for Residential Property.

(P) The risk of loss and the demand for fire services availability is substantially the same for Buildings below a certain minimum size. Because the value and anticipated occupancy of non-residential Buildings below a certain minimum size is less, it is fair, reasonable and equitable to provide a lesser assessment burden on improved property containing such Buildings by the creation of specific Building Area classification ranges for such parcels.

(Q) The separation of improved Non-Residential Property into Building Area classification ranges is fair and reasonable for the purposes of Parcel Apportionment because: (1) the absence of a need for precise square footage data within the ad valorem tax records maintained by the Property Appraiser undermines the use of actual Building Area within each improved parcel as a basis for Parcel Apportionment; (2) the administrative expense and complexity created by an on-site inspection to determine the actual Building Area within each improved parcel assessed is impractical; (3) the demand for fire services availability is not precisely determined or measured by the actual Building Area within benefited parcels; and (4) the classification of parcels within Building Area classification ranges is a fair and reasonable method to classify benefited parcels and to apportion costs among benefited parcels that create similar demand for the availability of fire services.

(R) The demand for the availability of fire services diminishes at the outer limit of Building size since a fire occurring in a structure greater than a certain size is not capable of being suppressed under expected conditions and the fire control activities under

such circumstances are directed to avoid the spread of the fire event to adjacent Buildings. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to place a cap on the Building Area classification of benefited parcels within Non-Residential Property.

(S) In accordance with Section 166.223, Florida Statutes, which mandates that cities treat Recreational Vehicle Park property as Commercial Property for non-ad valorem special assessments levied by a city, like the Fire Protection Assessment, it is fair and reasonable to treat each space within Recreational Vehicle Park property as a Building on Commercial Property and to assign the square footage of 191 square feet, the average size of a recreational vehicle, according to the Florida Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds.

(T) Pursuant to Section 170.201(b)(2), Florida Statutes, a Religious Institution used as a place of worship shall be exempt from the Fire Protection Assessment.

Section 3. Cost Apportionment Methodology for Fire Services Assessments.

(A) To correlate the Tax Parcels within the City to the Service Zones, the Incident Reports filed within a sampling period were geo-coded on the GIS system map based upon the address provided in the FFIRS database.

(B) Based upon such correlation by Service Zone, the number of Incident Reports filed within a sampling period were determined for each Service Zone.

(C) The Incident Reports were then weighted based on the average call duration differential between the Service Zones, to account for the difference in resources used in each call between the two zones, to determine the number of weighted Incident Reports per zone. The number of weighted calls was applied to each zone and a Demand Percentage based on the now weighted calls was determined. The Demand Percentage was then determined for each Service Zone by calculating the percentage that Incident Reports allocated to each Service Zone bears to the total number of Incident Reports documented for both Service Zones during the sampling period. The Demand Percentage for each Service Zone was then applied to the Fire Services Assessed Costs and the resulting product is the cost allocation of that portion of the Fire Services Assessed Costs allocated to each Service Zone.

(D) To correlate the Property Use Categories with the State Database, the Code Descriptions within the Fixed Property Use Codes similar to Code Descriptions within the Improvement Codes that were used to determine the Property Use Categories were identified. Appendix C of the study contains a designation of Code Descriptions by Property Use Category with the Improvement Codes, and Appendix B contains a designation of Code Descriptions by Property Use Category with the Fixed Property Use Codes. Such correlation between Code Descriptions by Property Use Category between the Fixed Property Use Codes and the Improvement Codes is necessary to allocate the historical demand for fire services as reflected by the Incident Reports for Tax Parcels on the Tax Roll within the Property Use Categories.

(E) Based upon such correlation by Property Use Category between the Code Descriptions in the Fixed Property Use Codes and the Code Descriptions in the Improvement Codes, the number of Incident Reports filed during the sampling period was determined for each Property Use Category within each Service Zone.

(F) A Demand Percentage was then determined for each Property Use Category within each Service Zone by calculating the percentage that Incident Reports allocated to each Property Use Category within that Service Zone bear to the total number of Incident Reports documented for all Property Use Categories within that Service Zone during the sampling period. The Demand Percentage for each Property Use Category within each Service Zone was then applied to the Fire Services Assessed Costs for that Service Zone, and the resulting product is the cost allocation of that portion of the Fire Services Assessed Costs allocated to each individual Property Use Category within that Service Zone.

Section 4. Parcel Apportionment Methodology. The apportionment among Non-Government Property of that portion of the Fire Services Assessed Costs apportioned to each Property Use Category within each Service Zone under the Cost Apportionment shall be consistent with the Parcel Apportionment methodology described and determined in the study (pages 16-20), which Parcel Apportionment methodology is hereby approved, adopted, and incorporated into this Resolution by reference.

Section 5. Fire Services Assessments for Altered Assessed Property.

(A) Pursuant to the manner set forth in this Resolution, Fire Services Assessments shall be imposed on Altered Assessed Property.

(B) Fire Services Assessments shall be imposed on Altered Assessed Property consisting of a new Building at the next Utility bill issued subsequent to setting the permanent electrical meter.

(C) Fire Services Assessments shall be imposed on Altered Assessed Property consisting of additions or improvements to existing Buildings at the next Utility bill issued subsequent to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

(D) Fire Services Assessments shall be imposed on Altered Assessed Property that experienced a change in use upon such change being reflected on the Utility bill by the Utility Customer of Record or otherwise.

(E) Provided, however, in the event that the Property becomes Altered Assessed Property, a Fire Services Assessment shall be imposed on such property subsequent to the City Manager becoming aware of such change in property use through information obtained from a permit application or request for Utility services or any other means reasonably available when the City is not otherwise aware of such Altered Assessed Property Use as provided in subsections (A), (B), or (C) herein.

(F) The City Manager shall assign the Fire Services Property Use Category and the applicable rate of the Fire Services Assessment for Altered Assessed Property based on the information contained on any permit application, request for utility services, or other means reasonably available for such Altered Assessed Property and assign its Assessed Property Use Category and applicable fee from the Fire Services Assessment Rate Schedule Five-Year Average in the study (page 21, table 16).

Section 6. Determination of Fire Services Assessed Costs; Establishment of Fire Services Assessments.

(A) The Fire Services Assessed Costs to be assessed and apportioned among benefited parcels pursuant to the Cost Apportionment and the Parcel Apportionment commencing on the effective date of this Resolution, is the amount determined in the Fire Services Assessment Rate Schedule Five-Year Average in the study (page 21, table 16). The

approval of the Fire Services Assessment Rate Schedule by the adoption of this Resolution determines the amount of the Fire Services Assessed Costs. The remainder of such Fiscal Year budget, if any, for fire services, facilities, and programs shall be funded from available City revenue other than Fire Services Assessment proceeds.

(B) The Fire Services Assessments specified in the Fire Services Assessment Rate Schedule Five-Year Average in the study (page 21, table 16) for FY 2023-24 are hereby established to fund the specified Fire Services Assessed Costs determined to be assessed commencing on October 1, 2023 and continuing through September 30, 2028. The Fire Services Fees for the following five-year period shall be established as follows:

(1) Residential Zone 1:

(a) the FY 2023-24 rate will equal the FY 2020-23 rate increased by 1.50%; and

(b) the FY2024-25 to FY 2027-28 rates will be equal to the preceding year's rate increased by 1.50%.

(2) Residential Zone 2:

(a) the FY 2023-24 rate will equal the FY 2020-23 rate increased by 1.08%; and

(b) the FY2024-25 to FY 2027-28 rates will be equal to the preceding year's rate increased by 1.08%.

(3) Commercial Zone 1:

(a) the FY 2023-24 rate will equal the FY 2020-23 rate increased by 3.98%; and

(b) the FY2024-25 to FY 2027-28 rates will be equal to the preceding year's rate increased by 3.98%.

(4) Commercial Zone 2:

(a) the FY 2023-24 rate will equal the FY 2020-23 rate increased by 4.52%; and

(b) the FY2024-25 to FY 2027-28 rates will be equal to the preceding year's rate increased by 4.52%.

(5) Industrial Zone 1:

(a) the FY 2023-24 rate will equal the FY 2020-23 rate increased by 22.54%; and

(b) the FY2024-25 to FY 2027-28 rates will be equal to the preceding year's rate increased by 22.54%.

(6) Industrial Zone 2:

(a) the FY 2023-24 rate will equal the FY 2020-23 rate increased by 8.54%; and

(b) the FY2024-25 to FY 2027-28 rates will be equal to the preceding year's rate increased by 8.54%.

ARTICLE IV. COLLECTION OF FIRE SERVICES FEES AND FIRE SERVICES ASSESSMENTS

Section 1. Application of Proceeds from the Fire Services Charge. Proceeds derived by the City from the Fire Services Charges will be utilized for the provision of fire services, facilities, and programs by the City. In the event there is any fund balance remaining at the end of the Fiscal Year, such balance shall be carried forward and used only to fund fire services, facilities, and programs provided by the City.

Section 2. Legislative Determinations as to Collection of the Fire Services Fee and the Fire Services Assessment.

(A) The use of the utility bills for the collection of the Fire Service Assessment and Fees is a method of collection that is reasonably related and directed to those that derive the benefit received by the property from the provision of fire services. The benefit to the property is not solely received by the owner of the property but also extends to all intended occupants, including but not limited to, tenants, leaseholders and others occupying the property. There is a rational nexus between the use of the utility bill to collect the Fire Services Assessments and Fees from property and the intended occupants of the property, including but not limited to, owners, tenants, leaseholders and others occupying property, and the benefit they derive through the enhancement of their use and enjoyment of the property.

(B) The use of utility bills for collection also provides a convenient mechanism of payment and further relieving any potential economic burden by providing an opportunity to pay smaller fees in twelve (12) increments annually as opposed to one larger lump sum payment being collected annually.

Section 3. Collection of the Fire Services Fee and the Fire Services Assessment. Commencing with the Utility bills issued to customers on or after the effective date of this Resolution, the Fire Services Charge shall be collected against Property on the City's Utility bill in the manner provided in Section 8-67 of the Ordinance.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Resolution shall have effect and shall apply to all utility bills issued on and after, October 1, 2023.

ADOPTED by the City Commission of the City of Tallahassee this ___ day of _____, 2023.

CITY OF TALLAHASSEE

By: _____
John E. Dailey
Mayor

Attest:

By: _____
James O. Cooke, IV
City Treasurer-Clerk

Approved as to form:

By: _____
Cassandra K. Jackson
City Attorney

Appendix G:
City of Tallahassee Resolution No. 25-R-45

RESOLUTION NO. 25-R-45

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, RELATING TO FIRE SERVICE ASSESSMENTS AND FEES; PROVIDING FOR THE PROVISION OF FIRE SERVICES CHARGES, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE CITY OF TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA; IMPOSING A FIRE SERVICES FEE ON GOVERNMENT PROPERTY; DESCRIBING THE METHOD OF APPORTIONING FIRE SERVICES COSTS FOR GOVERNMENT PROPERTY AMONG GOVERNMENT PROPERTY; PROVIDING FOR THE COLLECTION OF THE FIRE SERVICES FEE ON THE CITY UTILITY BILL; IMPOSING A FIRE SERVICES ASSESSMENT ON NON-GOVERNMENT PROPERTY; DESCRIBING THE METHOD OF ASSESSING FIRE SERVICES ASSESSED COSTS AGAINST NON-GOVERNMENT PROPERTY; PROVIDING FOR THE COLLECTION OF THE FIRE SERVICES ASSESSMENT ON THE CITY UTILITY BILL; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City Commission of the City of Tallahassee, Florida intends to continue to provide fire services, facilities and programs within the City and to fund such services through the existing mechanisms: a fire services assessment on non-government property and a fire services fee on government property.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA:

ARTICLE I. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

Section 1. Authority. This resolution is adopted pursuant to the provisions of Article III, Chapter 8, City of Tallahassee General Code (the "Ordinance"), the City of Tallahassee Charter; sections 166.021 and 166.041, Florida Statutes; and other applicable provisions of law.

Section 2. Purpose and Definitions. This resolution constitutes the fire services fee rate resolution and the fire services assessment rate resolution as defined in the Ordinance. All capitalized words and terms not otherwise defined herein shall have the meanings set forth in the Ordinance. Unless the context indicates otherwise, words

imparting the singular number, include the plural number, and vice versa. As used in this resolution, the following terms shall have the following meanings, unless the context hereof otherwise requires:

"Altered Assessed Property" is Assessed Property (1) which is improved by the addition of a Building subsequent to the effective date of this Resolution, (2) whose existing Building size is altered subsequent to the effective date of this Resolution, or (3) whose use changes among the Property Use Categories to an Assessed Property.

"Building Area" means the actual area of a Building expressed in square feet and reflected on the Tax Roll or, in the event such information is not reflected or is determined not to be accurately reflected on the Tax Roll, that area determined by the City.

"Code Descriptions" mean the descriptions listed in the Fixed Property Use Codes and the descriptions listed in the Improvement Codes.

"Core Stations" are those fire stations within five road miles of at least two other stations.

"Commercial Property" means those Tax Parcels with a Code Description designated as "Commercial" in the Improvement Codes.

"Cost Apportionment" means the apportionment of the Fire Services Cost among all Property Use Categories according to the Demand Percentages established pursuant to the apportionment methodology described in Sections II.3 and III.3 of this Resolution.

"CPI Adjustment" means the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): U.S. City Average, All items (unadjusted). The CPI Adjustment will be computed annually by the City using the twelve-month period ending March 31st of the preceding fiscal year.

"Demand Percentage" means the percentage of demand for fire services, facilities, or programs attributable to each Property Use Category determined by analyzing the historical demand for Fire Services as reflected in Incident Reports in the State Database under the methodology described in Sections II.3 and III.3 of this Resolution.

"DOR Code" means a property use code established in Rule 12D-8.008, Florida Administrative Code, assigned by the Property Appraiser to Tax Parcels within the City.

"Dwelling Unit" means (1) a Building, or a portion thereof, available to be used for residential purposes, consisting of one or more rooms arranged, designed, used, or intended to be used as living quarters for one family only, or (2) the use of land in which lots or spaces are offered for rent or lease for the placement of mobile homes or the like for residential purposes.

"EMS Response" means an Incident Report that records a fire services response to Property that is assigned a "Situation Code", as set forth in the study (Appendix A), indicating an EMS-type response.

"FFIRS" means the Florida Fire Incident Reporting System maintained by the Florida State Fire Marshal.

"Fire Services Property Use Category" means the use codes developed by the City for the purpose of assigning a Fire Services Charge for collection on the Utility Bill.

"Fixed Property Use Codes" mean the property use codes used by FFIRS as specified in the study (Appendix B).

"Improvement Codes" mean the building use codes assigned by the Property Appraiser to Tax Parcels within the City as specified in the study (Appendix C).

"Incident Report" means an individual report filed with the Florida State Fire Marshal under FFIRS that is not an EMS Response.

"Industrial/Warehouse Property" means those Tax Parcels with a Code Description designated as "Industrial/Warehouse" in the Improvement Codes.

"Residential Property" means those Tax Parcels designated as "Residential" in the Improvement Codes.

"Non-Residential Property" means, collectively, Commercial Property and Industrial/Warehouse Property.

"Non-Residential Fire Response" means an Incident Report that records a fire services response to Non-Residential Property that is not an EMS Response.

"Parcel Apportionment" means the further apportionment of the Fire Services Cost allocated to each Property Use Category by the Cost Apportionment among the Tax Parcels under the methodology established in Sections II.3 and III.3 of this Resolution.

"Property Use Categories" means, collectively, Residential Property and all categories of Non-Residential Property.

"Recreational Vehicle Park" means (1) a place set aside and offered by a person, for either direct or indirect remuneration of the owner, lessor, or operator of such place, for the parking, accommodation, or rental of five or more recreational vehicles or tents; and (2) licensed by the Department of Health of the State of Florida, or its successor in function, as a "recreational vehicle park" under Chapter 513, Florida Statutes, as may be amended from time-to-time.

"Religious Institution" means any church, synagogue, or other established physical place of worship at which non-profit religious services and activities are regularly conducted and carried on.

"Residential Fire Response" means an Incident Report that records a fire services response to Residential Property that is not an EMS Response.

"Service Zones" mean the geographic areas defined to differentiate between the two levels of fire services provided within the County based upon proximity to Core Stations.

"State Database" means the incident data specific to the City derived from the FFIRS Incident Reports maintained by the Florida State Fire Marshal.

"Tax Parcel" means a parcel of property located within the City to which the Property Appraiser has assigned a distinct ad valorem property tax identification number.

"Zone 1 Properties" are those properties included in the geographic area defined by the boundaries representing five road miles from two or more Core Stations.

"Zone 2 Properties" are those properties located outside of the geographic area defined by the boundaries representing five road miles from two or more Core Stations.

Section 3. Provision and Funding of Fire Services.

(A) Upon the imposition of a Fire Services Charge against Property subject to the Fire Services Charge located within the geographic area of the City, the City shall provide fire services, facilities, or programs to such Property. All or a portion of the cost to provide such fire services, facilities, and programs shall be funded from proceeds of the Fire Services Charge. The remaining cost, if any, required to provide fire services, facilities, and programs shall be funded by available City revenues other than such proceeds.

(B) It is hereby ascertained, determined, and declared that each parcel of Property subject to a Fire Services Charge located within the geographic area of the City

will be benefited by the City's provision of fire services, facilities, and programs in an amount not less than the Fire Services Charge imposed against such parcel, computed in the manner set forth in this Resolution.

(C) The Commission does hereby find that the various legislative findings and determinations contained herein are found to have existed as of the original imposition of the Fire Services Assessment in 1999 and relate back thereto. Therefore, such findings shall be deemed to have been incorporated in the provisions of the Ordinance, and as previously codified in section 10-46 et seq., Tall. Code 1984, as if they had been set forth fully therein and continued thereafter.

(D) The Commission has adopted and hereby incorporates by reference the study entitled "City of Tallahassee Florida Fire Assessment Memorandum" prepared by Government Services Group, Inc., dated April 2023, which study is attached to this resolution and incorporated by reference. The purpose of the study was to establish a methodology and structure for estimating and apportioning Fire Service Costs and for calculating Fire Services Fees and Fire Services Assessments for the period commencing October 1, 2023 and extending through September 30, 2028.

Section 4. Determination of Fire Services Costs. It is hereby ascertained and declared that the Fire Services Cost is a reasonable estimation of the five-year average annual costs of providing fire services, facilities and programs to all parcels of improved property within the City commencing on October 1, 2023 and as adjusted on October 1, 2025.

ARTICLE II. FIRE SERVICES FEES ON GOVERNMENT PROPERTY

Section 1. Imposition and Computation of Fire Services Fees. A Fire Services Fee is hereby imposed against all Government Property within the City. Fire Services Fees shall be computed in the same manner set forth in this Resolution.

Section 2. Legislative Determinations as to Government Property Subject to the Fire Services Fee.

(A) It is hereby ascertained and declared that the Fire Services Cost for Government Property is a reasonable estimation of the five-year average annual costs of

providing fire services, facilities and programs to Government Property commencing on October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028. The structure and methodology utilized in establishing Fire Services Rates for the five-year period commencing October 1, 2023 underlies establishment of Fire Services Rates for the period commencing October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028.

(B) Upon the adoption of this Resolution determining the Fire Services Costs and identifying the Government Property to be billed a Fire Services Fee, the legislative determinations ascertained and declared in Section 8-65 of the Ordinance are hereby ratified and confirmed for the period commencing October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028.

(C) It is fair and reasonable to use the Fire Services Property Use Category to assign property use for a Fire Services Charge because the use codes are most compatible with the system of billing on the City Utility bill.

(D) It is fair and reasonable to use Fire Services Costs for the development of the Fire Services Fee and apply the Fire Services Fee for future fiscal years at the rates established in this Resolution because it is hereby determined that the actual annual cost of providing fire services, facilities and programs over the five-year period commencing October 1, 2023 through September, 2028 will be as great as or greater than the Fire Services Charges established herein.

(E) It is fair and reasonable and consistent with the decision of the Florida Supreme Court in the case of City of North Lauderdale v. SMM Properties, Inc., 825 So.2d 343 (Fla. 2002), to exclude from the Fire Services Assessed Cost amounts determined to constitute the cost of providing emergency medical services.

(F) It is fair and reasonable to not charge a Fire Services Fee to Government Property that is vacant as evidenced by the cessation of Utility services. The costs of administering and collecting Fire Services Fees from such vacant property exceed the anticipated Fire Services Fees that could be collected from such property. The City shall supplement the fire services budget from sources other than Fire Services Fees with amounts necessary to provide fire services, facilities and programs to such vacant property.

(G) Apportioning Fire Services Costs among classifications of Government Property based upon historical demand for fire services produces a fair and reasonable fee for services rendered to the Government Property.

(H) The Incident Reports are the most reliable data available to determine the potential demand for fire services from Government Property use and to determine the benefit to property use resulting from the availability of fire services to protect and serve Buildings located within Government Property and their intended occupants. There exists sufficient Incident Reports documenting the historical demand for fire services from Government Property. The Demand Percentage determined for each classification of Government Property by an examination of such Incident Reports is consistent with the experience of the City. Therefore, the use of Demand Percentages determined by an examination of Incident Reports is a fair and reasonable method to apportion the Fire Services Costs among Government Property.

(I) The suppression of fire on vacant property primarily benefits the Buildings within the adjacent improved property by the containment of the spread of fire rather than the preservation of the vacant property. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable not to apportion any of the Fire Services Costs to vacant property and the Incident Reports were omitted from the Demand Percentage calculation.

(J) The level of services required to meet anticipated demand for fire services and the corresponding annual fire services budget required to fund fire services provided to non-specific property uses would be required notwithstanding the occurrence of any incidents from such non-specific uses. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to omit from the Demand Percentage calculation the Incident Reports documenting fire services provided to non-specific property uses and vacant property.

Section 3. Methodology for Determining Fire Services Fees.

(A) The number of Incident Reports filed within a sampling period was determined for Government Property.

(B) A Demand Percentage was then determined for each Fire Services Property Use Category, including Government Property, by calculating the percentage that Incident Reports allocated to each category bear to the total number of Incident Reports

documented for all Fire Services Property Use Categories within the sampling period. The Demand Percentage for each Fire Services Use Category was then applied to the Fire Services Costs and the resulting product was the allocation of that portion of the Fire Services Costs allocated to each individual Fire Services Property Use Category. After determining the cost allocation for each property use category, the methodology detailed in the study (page 23) was applied to Government Property.

Section 4. Government Parcel Apportionment Methodology. The apportionment among Tax Parcels of Government Property of that portion of the Fire Services Costs apportioned to Government Property under the Cost Apportionment was consistent with the Parcel Apportionment methodology described and determined in the study (page 23), which Parcel Apportionment methodology is hereby approved, adopted, and incorporated into this Resolution by reference.

Section 5. Determination of Fire Services Fee Costs; Establishment of Fire Services Fees.

(A) The Fire Services Costs to be assessed and apportioned among Government Property pursuant to the Cost Apportionment and the Parcel Apportionment commencing on the effective date of this Resolution, is the same amount as determined in the study (page 23, table 19) and as adjusted for FY2025-26. The approval of the Fire Services Fee Rate by the adoption of this Resolution determines the amount of the Fire Services Costs. The remainder of such Fiscal Year budget, if any, for fire services, facilities, and programs shall be funded from available City revenue other than Fire Services Assessment proceeds.

(B) The Fire Services Fees specified in the study (page 23, table 19) and as adjusted for FY 2025-26 are hereby established to fund the specified Fire Services Costs determined to be assessed commencing on October 1, 2023 and continuing through September 30, 2028 and as adjusted on October 1, 2025. The Fire Services Fees for the following three-year period shall be established as follows: (1) the FY 2025-26 rate will equal the FY 2024-25 rate increased by 8.48%. (2) the FY 2026-27 and FY2027-28 rates will equal the FY 2025-26 rate.

ARTICLE III. FIRE SERVICES ASSESSMENTS ON ASSESSED PROPERTY

Section 1. Imposition and Computation of Fire Services Assessments. A Fire Services Assessment is hereby imposed against all Property except Government Property within the Property Use Categories within the City. Fire Services Assessments shall be computed in the manner set forth in this Resolution.

Section 2. Legislative Determinations of Special Benefit and Fair Apportionment for Fire Services Assessments. It is hereby ascertained and declared that the Fire Services Cost for Assessed Property is a reasonable estimation of the five-year average annual costs of providing fire services, facilities and programs to Non-Governmental Property commencing on October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028. The structure and methodology utilized in establishing Fire Services Rates for the five-year period commencing October 1, 2023 underlies establishment of Fire Services Rates for the period commencing October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2028.

(A) It is further hereby ascertained and declared that the fire services, facilities, and programs provide a special benefit to Nongovernment Property that is improved by the existence or construction of a building based upon the following legislative determinations:

(1) Fire services enhance the use and enjoyment of improved property, which constitutes a special benefit to Owners, commercial tenants, residential tenants, and occupants by the following:

a. Protecting the value of the improvements, structures, and contents through the provision of available fire services;

b. Protecting the life and safety of occupants, residential tenants and commercial tenants, in the use and enjoyment of the improvements and structures within improved parcels; and

c. Lowering the cost of fire insurance, including renter's insurance and property coverage for the repair and replacement of contents of improvements and structures within the improved parcels, by the presence of a professional and comprehensive fire services program within the City.

(2) The fire services of the City under its existing fire services program enhance the use and enjoyment of commercial tenants by protecting the continued commercial operations within improved parcels of property within the areas served by the City.

(3) The fire services of the City under its existing fire services program enhance the value of business and commercial interests, which accrues to Owners and lessees, by protecting the continued commercial operations within improved parcels of property within the areas served by the City.

(4) The legislative determinations of special benefit ascertained arising from the Fire Services Assessments, as set out and declared in Section 8-66 of the Ordinance are incorporated herein by reference and further ratified and confirmed.

(B) It is fair and reasonable to create Service Zones to reflect the level of service differentiation between a property located in a higher density area that receives fire protection coverage from multiple Core Stations and a property located in an area generally described as rural and typically serviced by a single fire station.

(C) It is fair and reasonable to use the Improvement Codes and the DOR Codes for the Cost Apportionment and the Parcel Apportionment because: (1) the Tax Roll database employing the use of such property use codes is the most comprehensive, accurate, and reliable information readily available to determine the property use and Building Area for improved property within the City, (2) the Tax Roll database within such property use codes is maintained by the Property Appraiser and is thus consistent with

parcel designations on the Tax Roll, and (3) the parcel descriptions on the Tax Roll are not incompatible with the property use descriptions on the City's Utility Customer Database which has been developed and maintained by the City and will be used to bill the Fire Services Fee.

(D) The data available in the Improvement Codes is more useful and accurate to determine Building Area than the data maintained in the DOR Codes because (1) the data maintained in the Improvement Codes reveals the existence of a Building with a different use than the use described in the DOR Codes, (2) the Improvement Codes represent records maintained by the Property Appraiser with the most information relative to Building Area regardless of property use, and (3) the City's Utility customer database does not contain Building Area data.

(E) It is fair and reasonable and consistent with the decision of the Florida Supreme Court in the case of City of North Lauderdale v. SMM Properties, Inc., 825 So. 2d 343 (Fla. 2002), to exclude from the Fire Services Assessed Cost amounts determined to constitute the cost of providing emergency medical services.

(F) Apportioning Fire Services Assessed Costs among classifications of improved property based upon historical demand for fire services, but not emergency medical services, is fair and reasonable and proportional to the special benefit received.

(G) It is fair and reasonable to use Fire Services Assessed Costs for the development of the Fire Services Assessment and apply the Fire Services Assessment for future fiscal years at, or based on, the rates established in this Resolution because (1) it is hereby determined that the actual annual cost of providing fire services, facilities and programs over the five-year period will be as great as or greater than the Fire Services Assessed Costs established herein; and, (2) the additional Fire Services Charges that may be received from Altered Assessed Property shall not exceed the actual cost of providing fire services, facilities and programs in future fiscal years.

(H) Apportioning Fire Services Assessed Costs among classifications of improved property based upon historical demand for fire services is fair and reasonable and proportional to the special benefit received.

(I) The Incident Reports are the most reliable data available to determine the potential demand for fire services from property use and to determine the benefit to

property use resulting from the availability of fire services to protect and serve Buildings located within Assessed Property and their intended occupants. There exists sufficient Incident Reports documenting the historical demand for fire services from Assessed Property within the Property Use Categories. The Demand Percentage determined for each Property Use Category by an examination of such Incident Reports is consistent with the experience of the City. Therefore, the use of Demand Percentages determined by an examination of Incident Reports is a fair and reasonable method to apportion the Fire Services Assessed Costs among the Property Use Categories.

(J) The suppression of fire on vacant property primarily benefits the Buildings within the adjacent improved property by the containment of the spread of fire rather than the preservation of the vacant property. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable not to apportion any of the Fire Services Assessed Costs to vacant property and the Incident Reports documenting historical fire services provided to vacant property were thus omitted from the Demand Percentage calculation.

(K) The level of services required to meet anticipated demand for fire services and the corresponding annual fire services budget required to fund fire services provided to non-specific property uses would be required notwithstanding the occurrence of any incidents from such non-specific uses. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to omit from the Demand Percentage calculation the Incident Reports documenting fire services provided to non-specific property uses and vacant property.

(L) It is fair and reasonable to not charge a Fire Services Assessment to Non-Government Property that is vacant as evidenced by the cessation of Utility services. The costs of administering and collecting Fire Services Assessments from such vacant property exceed the anticipated Fire Services Assessments that could be collected from such property. The City shall supplement the fire services budget from sources other than Fire Services Assessments with amounts necessary to provide fire services, facilities and programs to such property.

(M) The size or the value of the Residential Property does not determine the scope of the required fire services response. The potential demand for fire services is driven by the existence of a Dwelling Unit and the anticipated average occupant population.

(N) Apportioning the Fire Services Assessed Costs for fire services attributable to Residential Property on a per Dwelling Unit basis is required to avoid cost inefficiency and unnecessary administration and is a fair and reasonable method of Parcel Apportionment based upon historical call data.

(O) The demand for fire service availability is substantially the same for all Residential Property; therefore, it is fair and reasonable to use the combined Demand Percentages attributable to all types of Residential Property to determine Fire Services Assessments for Residential Property.

(P) The risk of loss and the demand for fire services availability is substantially the same for Buildings below a certain minimum size. Because the value and anticipated occupancy of non-residential Buildings below a certain minimum size is less, it is fair, reasonable and equitable to provide a lesser assessment burden on improved property containing such Buildings by the creation of specific Building Area classification ranges for such parcels.

(Q) The separation of improved Non-Residential Property into Building Area classification ranges is fair and reasonable for the purposes of Parcel Apportionment because: (1) the absence of a need for precise square footage data within the ad valorem tax records maintained by the Property Appraiser undermines the use of actual Building Area within each improved parcel as a basis for Parcel Apportionment; (2) the administrative expense and complexity created by an on-site inspection to determine the actual Building Area within each improved parcel assessed is impractical; (3) the demand for fire services availability is not precisely determined or measured by the actual Building Area within benefited parcels; and (4) the classification of parcels within Building Area classification ranges is a fair and reasonable method to classify benefited parcels and to apportion costs among benefited parcels that create similar demand for the availability of fire services.

(R) The demand for the availability of fire services diminishes at the outer limit of Building size since a fire occurring in a structure greater than a certain size is not capable of being suppressed under expected conditions and the fire control activities under

such circumstances are directed to avoid the spread of the fire event to adjacent Buildings. Therefore, it is fair and reasonable to place a cap on the Building Area classification of benefited parcels within Non-Residential Property.

(S) In accordance with Section 166.223, Florida Statutes, which mandates that cities treat Recreational Vehicle Park property as Commercial Property for non-ad valorem special assessments levied by a city, like the Fire Protection Assessment, it is fair and reasonable to treat each space within Recreational Vehicle Park property as a Building on Commercial Property and to assign the square footage of 191 square feet, the average size of a recreational vehicle, according to the Florida Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds.

(T) A "Place of Worship" located within property owned by a Religious Institution shall be exempt from the Fire Protection Assessment. Place of Worship shall mean: (a) the interior space (measured in square feet) (b) of a single worship hall, meeting room or auditorium space, and (c) which is used for religious services or activities. Only one Place of Worship shall be exempt on any property owned by a Religious Institution. The single worship hall, meeting room or auditorium space with the largest number of square feet shall be presumed to constitute the Place of Worship at any property unless the Religious Institution designates another, smaller interior space as the Place of Worship for purposes of the exemption. The City Manager is directed and authorized to adjust, or cause to be adjusted, any Fire Protection Assessment upon a Religious Institution to conform to the Place of Worship exemption set forth herein, effective as of October 1, 2025.

Section 3. Cost Apportionment Methodology for Fire Services Assessments.

(A) To correlate the Tax Parcels within the City to the Service Zones, the Incident Reports filed within a sampling period were geo-coded on the GIS system map based upon the address provided in the FFIRS database.

(B) Based upon such correlation by Service Zone, the number of Incident Reports filed within a sampling period were determined for each Service Zone.

(C) The Incident Reports were then weighted based on the average call duration differential between the Service Zones, to account for the difference in resources used in each call between the two zones, to determine the number of weighted Incident Reports

per zone. The number of weighted calls was applied to each zone and a Demand Percentage based on the now weighted calls was determined. The Demand Percentage was then determined for each Service Zone by calculating the percentage that Incident Reports allocated to each Service Zone bears to the total number of Incident Reports documented for both Service Zones during the sampling period. The Demand Percentage for each Service Zone was then applied to the Fire Services Assessed Costs and the resulting product is the cost allocation of that portion of the Fire Services Assessed Costs allocated to each Service Zone.

(D) To correlate the Property Use Categories with the State Database, the Code Descriptions within the Fixed Property Use Codes similar to Code Descriptions within the Improvement Codes that were used to determine the Property Use Categories were identified. Appendix C of the study contains a designation of Code Descriptions by Property Use Category with the Improvement Codes, and Appendix B contains a designation of Code Descriptions by Property Use Category with the Fixed Property Use Codes. Such correlation between Code Descriptions by Property Use Category between the Fixed Property Use Codes and the Improvement Codes is necessary to allocate the historical demand for fire services as reflected by the Incident Reports for Tax Parcels on the Tax Roll within the Property Use Categories.

(E) Based upon such correlation by Property Use Category between the Code Descriptions in the Fixed Property Use Codes and the Code Descriptions in the Improvement Codes, the number of Incident Reports filed during the sampling period was determined for each Property Use Category within each Service Zone.

(F) A Demand Percentage was then determined for each Property Use Category within each Service Zone by calculating the percentage that Incident Reports allocated to each Property Use Category within that Service Zone bear to the total number of Incident Reports documented for all Property Use Categories within that Service Zone during the sampling period. The Demand Percentage for each Property Use Category within each Service Zone was then applied to the Fire Services Assessed Costs for that Service Zone, and the resulting product is the cost allocation of that portion of the Fire Services Assessed Costs allocated to each individual Property Use Category within that Service Zone.

Section 4. Parcel Apportionment Methodology. The apportionment among Non-Government Property of that portion of the Fire Services Assessed Costs apportioned to each Property Use Category within each Service Zone under the Cost Apportionment shall be consistent with the Parcel Apportionment methodology described and determined in the study (pages 16-20), which Parcel Apportionment methodology is hereby approved, adopted, and incorporated into this Resolution by reference.

Section 5. Fire Services Assessments for Altered Assessed Property.

(A) Pursuant to the manner set forth in this Resolution, Fire Services Assessments shall be imposed on Altered Assessed Property.

(B) Fire Services Assessments shall be imposed on Altered Assessed Property consisting of a new Building at the next Utility bill issued subsequent to setting the permanent electrical meter.

(C) Fire Services Assessments shall be imposed on Altered Assessed Property consisting of additions or improvements to existing Buildings at the next Utility bill issued subsequent to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

(D) Fire Services Assessments shall be imposed on Altered Assessed Property that experienced a change in use upon such change being reflected on the Utility bill by the Utility Customer of Record or otherwise.

(E) Provided, however, in the event that the Property becomes Altered Assessed Property, a Fire Services Assessment shall be imposed on such property subsequent to the City Manager becoming aware of such change in property use through information obtained from a permit application or request for Utility services or any other means reasonably available when the City is not otherwise aware of such Altered Assessed Property Use as provided in subsections (A), (B), or (C) herein.

(F) The City Manager shall assign the Fire Services Property Use Category and the applicable rate of the Fire Services Assessment for Altered Assessed Property based on the information contained on any permit application, request for utility services, or other means reasonably available for such Altered Assessed Property and assign its Assessed Property Use Category and applicable fee from the Fire Services Assessment Rate Schedule Five-Year Average in the study (page 21, table 16) and as adjusted for FY2025-26.

Section 6. Determination of Fire Services Assessed Costs; Establishment of Fire Services Assessments.

(A) The Fire Services Assessed Costs to be assessed and apportioned among benefited parcels pursuant to the Cost Apportionment and the Parcel Apportionment commencing on the effective date of this Resolution, is the amount determined in the Fire Services Assessment Rate Schedule Five-Year Average in the study (page 21, table 16) and as adjusted for FY2025-26. The approval of the Fire Services Assessment Rate Schedule by the adoption of this Resolution determines the amount of the Fire Services Assessed Costs. The remainder of such Fiscal Year budget, if any, for fire services, facilities, and programs shall be funded from available City revenue other than Fire Services Assessment proceeds.

(B) The Fire Services Assessments specified in the Fire Services Assessment Rate Schedule Five-Year Average in the study (page 21, table 16) and adjusted for FY 2025-26 are hereby established to fund the specified Fire Services Assessed Costs determined to be assessed commencing on October 1, 2025 and continuing through September 30, 2028. The Fire Services Assessments for the following three-year period shall be established as follows:

(1) Residential Zone 1:

(a) the FY 2025-26 rate will equal the FY 2024-25 rate increased by 9.98%; and

(b) the FY 2026-27 and FY 2027-28 rates will be equal to the preceding year's rate increased by 1.50%.

(2) Residential Zone 2:

(a) the FY 2025-26 rate will equal the FY 2024-25 rate increased by 9.56%; and

(b) the FY 2026-27 and FY 2027-28 rates will be equal to the preceding year's rate increased by 1.08%.

(3) Commercial Zone 1:

(a) the FY 2025-26 rate will equal the FY 2024-25 rate increased by 12.46%; and

(b) the FY 2026-27 and FY 2027-28 rates will be equal to the preceding year's rate increased by 3.98%.

(4) Commercial Zone 2:

(a) the FY 2025-26 rate will equal the FY 2024-25 rate increased by 13.00%; and

(b) the FY 2026-27 and FY 2027-28 rates will be equal to the preceding year's rate increased by 4.52%.

(5) Industrial Zone 1:

(a) the FY 2025-26 rate will equal the FY 2024-25 rate increased by 31.02%; and

(b) the FY 2026-27 and FY 2027-28 rates will be equal to the preceding year's rate increased by 22.54%.

(6) Industrial Zone 2:

(a) the FY 2025-26 rate will equal the FY 2024-25 rate increased by 17.02%; and

(b) the FY 2026-27 and FY 2027-28 rates will be equal to the preceding year's rate increased by 8.54%.

ARTICLE IV. COLLECTION OF FIRE SERVICES FEES AND FIRE SERVICES ASSESSMENTS

Section 1. Application of Proceeds from the Fire Services Charge. Proceeds derived by the City from the Fire Services Charges will be utilized for the provision of fire services, facilities, and programs by the City. In the event there is any fund balance remaining at the end of the Fiscal Year, such balance shall be carried forward and used only to fund fire services, facilities, and programs provided by the City.

Section 2. Legislative Determinations as to Collection of the Fire Services Fee and the Fire Services Assessment.

(A) The use of the utility bills for the collection of the Fire Service Assessment and Fees is a method of collection that is reasonably related and directed to those that derive the benefit received by the property from the provision of fire services. The benefit to the property is not solely received by the owner of the property but also extends to all intended occupants, including but not limited to, tenants, leaseholders and others

occupying the property. There is a rational nexus between the use of the utility bill to collect the Fire Services Assessments and Fees from property and the intended occupants of the property, including but not limited to, owners, tenants, leaseholders and others occupying property, and the benefit they derive through the enhancement of their use and enjoyment of the property.

(B) The use of utility bills for collection also provides a convenient mechanism of payment and further relieving any potential economic burden by providing an opportunity to pay smaller fees in twelve (12) increments annually as opposed to one larger lump sum payment being collected annually.

Section 3. Collection of the Fire Services Fee and the Fire Services Assessment. Commencing with the Utility bills issued to customers on or after the effective date of this Resolution, the Fire Services Charge shall be collected against Property on the City's Utility bill in the manner provided in Section 8-67 of the Ordinance.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Resolution shall have effect and shall apply to all utility bills issued on and after, October 1, 2025.

ADOPTED by the City Commission of the City of Tallahassee this 3 day of Sept, 2025.

SEAL OF THE CITY OF TALLAHASSEE INCORPORATED A.D. 1840

CITY OF TALLAHASSEE

By: _____
John E. Dailey
Mayor

Attest:

By: _____
James O. Cooke, IV
City Treasurer-Clerk

Approved as to form:

By: _____
Amy Toman
City Attorney

CITY OF TALLAHASSEE

September 22, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL
LongV@leoncountyfl.gov

Vince Long
County Administrator
Leon County
301 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Re: Termination of the Interlocal Agreement Regarding the Provision of Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Dear Mr. Long,

At their September 17, 2025, meeting, the City Commission voted to provide notice to Leon County that it is terminating the Interlocal Agreement Regarding the Provision of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (Agreement) in accordance with the terms outlined in Exhibit E. With this notice, the Agreement will terminate at the end of the Current Term on September 30, 2028.

My staff and the City Attorney's staff are available to assist as needed with the transition effort. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Reese Goad
City Manager

CC: Mayor and City Commission
Fire Chief Gene Sanders, Tallahassee Fire Department
City Attorney Amy Toman
Leon County Board of County Commissioners
County Attorney Chasity O'Steen

CITY OF TALLAHASSEE

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

September 26, 2025

Via email: OsteenC@leoncountyfl.gov
Ms. Chasity H. O'Steen
County Attorney
Leon County Attorney's Office
301 S. Monroe Street, Room 202
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Re: Fire Service Fees and Assessments – Unbilled Properties

Dear Ms. O'Steen:

As you are aware, since 2009, the City of Tallahassee has billed fire service fees and assessments on a quarterly basis in areas where the City is not the utility provider. The City serves only as Leon County's billing agent for these County customers in the unincorporated area and depends on the County to provide the necessary information about how these properties are to be billed. Historically, this process has relied on parcel data identifying new improved parcels, new owners, and updated mailing addresses supplied by the County each quarter.

Beginning in January 2023, the files provided to the City included very few or no new improved parcels. In June 2023, City staff noted that the files provided to the City included new parcels that were unimproved. Because the fire service fee is assessed only on improved parcels where construction has occurred (for new structures or dwelling units), these records were not valid for billing. At that time, City staff attempted to assist County staff by explaining the type of information needed. However, City staff were unable to obtain the required information.

The City conducted an audit in 2024 and confirmed that many of these parcels had long-standing improvements that should have been billed in previous years, based either on the building dates recorded in the Leon County Property Appraiser's records or on their certificate of occupancy dates. The audit disclosed that approximately 439 premises were not billed fire service fees and assessments in a timely manner. This, combined with the lack of updated data between January 2023 and January 2024, has resulted in unbilled and unpaid fire service fees and assessments in the unincorporated area in the amount of approximately $369,658.56. Please see the spreadsheet attached to this email for more detailed information.

CITY HALL
300 S. Adams St., Box A-5
Tallahassee, FL 32301-1731
850-891-8554
TDD: 711 • Talgov.com

JOHN E. DAILEY, Mayor
REESE GOAD, City Manager
DIANNE WILLIAMS-COX, Mayor Pro Tem
AMY M. TOMAN, City Attorney
JACQUELINE "JACK" PORTER, Commissioner
JAMES O. COOKE, IV, City Treasurer-Clerk
CURTIS RICHARDSON, Commissioner
DENNIS R. SUTTON, Inspector General
JEREMY MATLOW, Commissioner

Since the fire service fees and assessments for these properties have been unbilled and unpaid, there is a deficiency in the fire service fund for which the County is responsible. We request that the County transmit payment for these unbilled and unpaid amounts promptly.

Sincerely,

Amy M. Toman
City Attorney

AMT/pb

attachment

cc: Vincent S. Long, County Administrator
Reese Goad, City Manager

Docusign Envelope ID: 371844FC-C801-423F-930E-45E119B1B114

Leon County
Board of County Commissioners
301 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32301
(850) 606-5300 www.leoncountyfl.gov

Commissioners

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District 4
Chairman

CHRISTIAN CABAN
District 2
Vice Chairman

BILL PROCTOR
District 1

RICK MINOR
District 3

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County Administrator

CHASITY H. O'STEEN
County Attorney

October 17, 2025

Amy Toman, City Attorney
300 South Adams Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Re: Fire Services Fees and Assessments – Unbilled Properties Correspondence Response

Dear Ms. Toman:

This correspondence and attached information are provided in response to your September 26, 2025, letter (Letter) and attached Excel spreadsheet, referenced in the Letter as a 2024 "audit" (Spreadsheet). The County appreciates the City's efforts to begin reviewing past billing practices and the opportunity for the County to provide clarity and additional information to the City regarding historical billing data fundamentals and processes based on the work of joint TLC-GIS staff.

For the reasons explained later in this correspondence, the County is not responsible for any alleged unbilled and unpaid assessments identified in the Letter. Instead, as explained below, based on the City's "audit," the City is responsible for substantial underbilling and undercollection, and the County demands that the City provide a revised accounting and documentation demonstrating that the City has transferred funds into the Fire Services Fund sufficient to correct the deficiency. Additionally, the County has determined that the City may have overbilled several properties and, to the extent overbilling occurred, demands that the City refund any overpayment to the property owners.

First, consistent with the Interlocal Agreement Regarding the Provision of Fire and Emergency Services (Interlocal Agreement), the County acknowledges that the City of Tallahassee (City) is responsible for the collection of fire service fees and assessments (collectively, assessments) on a quarterly basis in unincorporated areas of the County where the City is not the utility provider, unless otherwise collected utilizing the provision of section 197.3632, Florida Statutes. Since the City was responsible for billing and collection on the utility bill or via quarterly billing and was previously authorized (through September 30, 2024) to perform these functions for properties in the unincorporated area, the County relied upon the City to notify the County when a property owner had opted out or otherwise did not make payment via quarterly billing or a utility bill. The County would otherwise have no way of knowing which properties to bill on the tax roll. Case in point, the data reconciliation for City billing in the unincorporated area was performed solely by City staff prior to 2020.

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Second, there is no language in the Interlocal Agreement that obligates or requires the County to provide any data, such as data related to improved parcels, to the City for purposes of City billing for fire assessments in the unincorporated area. Nor is there anything in the Interlocal Agreement that entitles the City to rely on any such data. In my email response to you on September 26, 2025, acknowledging receipt of the Letter and Spreadsheet, I requested a number of records including "[a]ny and all records stating that the County is obligated, or that the City may rely upon the County, to provide information to the City when the City collects the City's fire services rescue fees and/or assessments for properties in the unincorporated area of the County." I have not received a response from you regarding any such record, or any of the other records requested, and the City has not identified a basis for its asserted reliance on data allegedly provided by the County to the City related to underbilling and unpaid assessments as asserted in the Letter. Just as the City is not responsible for any billing and collection by the County on the tax roll, the County is not responsible for any quarterly or utility billing or collection by the City.

Additionally, "County" staff has never provided improved property data to the City for City assessment billing purposes; that work has been performed by joint Tallahassee-Leon County GIS staff, i.e., TLC-GIS staff. In 2020, TLC-GIS staff identified anomalies in City billing and, as a courtesy, identified supplemental property data for the City to review and, in the discretion of the City, consider for billing. Beginning in 2021, the City began requesting, and joint TLC-GIS staff consistently provided, quarterly updates identifying changes in ownership and/or mailing addresses, and newly added properties, such as those created through land subdivision. Notably, since 2021 joint TLC-GIS staff also began providing, without being solicited by the City, an annual "PropertiesToBeBilled" file to the City which identified parcels located in the unincorporated area and outside the City utility service area that the City should have been billing quarterly for fire services (Additional Annual File).

Importantly, in accordance with the Interlocal Agreement and the Fire Services Fees and Assessments Rate Studies (Rate Studies), joint TLC-GIS staff rely on publicly available Property Appraiser data as the official source to provide updates on property ownership, mailing address changes, and identify new and improved parcels. This practice is consistent with the methodology and data source used in each of the Rate Studies to develop fire services rates. This is also the data that the County uses to calculate fire services assessments on the annual tax roll for properties in the unincorporated area; again, prior to the current fiscal year, the County only billed properties in the unincorporated area specified by the City when the City notified the County that property owners had not paid the City on a quarterly bill or a monthly utility bill.

In contrast, the City's 2024 "audit" used Certificate of Occupancy (CO) data, instead of the official records from the Property Appraiser, to assert that many properties should have been billed at an earlier date. The Rate Studies are not based on, nor do they even reference, CO data for the fire services methodology or the development of rates or billing. As the official Property Appraiser data is updated annually (typically between October – November in preparation for the tax roll), there may be a delay between when a CO is issued and when the official Property Appraiser records are updated to reflect a new structure, etc.

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Notwithstanding the information provided above, at the County's request joint TLC-GIS staff conducted an analysis of the Spreadsheet provided by the City on September 26th and the 439 properties identified therein and concluded the following:

- **225** properties have appeared in one or more previous Additional Annual Files since 2021. The City failed to add these properties to the billing cycle upon original receipt of updated property information in the Additional Annual Files. The County agrees with the City that these properties should have been billed but were not. But such underbilling is due to the City's negligence. The City received information from joint TLC-GIS staff that these properties should be billed, but the City did not take action to do so. Accordingly, the County demands that the City provide a revised accounting and documentation demonstrating that the City has transferred funds into the Fire Services Fund sufficient to correct the deficiency attributable to the City's failure to bill these properties based on the City's "audit" and data in the Additional Annual Files.
- **157** properties identified in the City "audit" improperly attribute assessment balances to properties based on a 2023 CO date. As previously stated, Property Appraiser data is updated annually in preparation for the tax roll and is the basis for the fire services assessment pursuant to the Interlocal Agreement and the Rate Study. Joint TLC-GIS staff correctly included these properties in the 2024 Annual Additional Files provided to the City. No underbilling or undercollection occurred for these properties.
- **21** properties identified in the City "audit" improperly attribute assessment balances to properties dating back to their 2022 CO date. In January 2023, joint TLC-GIS staff provided the 2023 Annual Additional Files to the City but these properties were not included in the Property Appraiser database at that time. Although the properties were included in the 2024 Annual Additional Files provided to the City, the City should conduct more in-depth analysis based on official Property Appraiser records to determine possible assessment balances for these properties during 2023.
- **1** property identified in the City "audit" showed "2019" in the YEARBUILT column in the 2022 Property Appraiser file and then showed "2022" in the 2023 Property Appraiser file, which likely indicates an old home was removed and new home was established in 2022. No underbilling or undercollection occurred for this property.
- **13** properties contain YEARBUILT field ranges from 1950-2022 (3-2022, 5-2021, 1-2020, 1-1999, 3-prior to 1999) which were previously not billed by the City. These properties were coded as Agricultural, and the official Property Appraiser data indicated that there was a single-family unit on the property. The City staff who maintained City billing in the unincorporated area prior to 2020 always exempted all agricultural coded property even when homes existed on them. The County agrees with the City's new position that these properties should have been billed. Accordingly, the County demands that the City provide a revised accounting and documentation demonstrating that the City has transferred funds into the Fire Services Fund sufficient to correct the deficiency attributable to the City's failure to bill these properties.

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- **10** properties were identified as mobile homes. Official Property Appraiser data reflects the property status varied from year to year (vacant to non-vacant, indicating the mobile home could have been tagged as a motor vehicle rather than real property), which impacted how the property was classified in a specific year and, as a result, whether a structure qualifying for assessment billing existed on the property. The County agrees that the City should conduct more in-depth analysis and, to the extent that some or all of the properties should have been billed, the County demands that the City provide a revised accounting and documentation demonstrating that the City has transferred funds into the Fire Services Fund sufficient to correct the deficiency attributable to the City's failure to bill these properties.
- **6** properties have religious institutions located on them. In 2024 joint TLC-GIS staff determined that there were portions of the structures on those properties that were not exempt from assessment and should be billed. The City had not been billing those 6 properties. Joint TLC-GIS staff sent information to the City with calculations for assessment on these properties in the 2024 Annual Additional File. To the extent that some portion of those properties were subject to the assessment, the City failed to correctly bill the properties, and the County demands that the City provide a revised accounting and documentation demonstrating that the City has transferred funds into the Fire Services Fund sufficient to correct the deficiency attributable to the City's failure to bill these properties.
- **2** properties have governmental structures located on them and should be billed for applicable fees by the City. In 2024, joint TLC-GIS staff concluded that those properties may not have been billed for those structures and sent information to the City in the 2024 Annual Additional File. To the extent that the properties were subject to the fee, the City failed to correctly bill the properties, and the County demands that the City provide a revised accounting and documentation demonstrating that the City has transferred funds into the Fire Services Fund sufficient to correct the deficiency attributable to the City's failure to bill these properties.
- **1** property identified in the City "audit" was included on the City's list of properties to be billed quarterly, but the City directed the County to bill this property on the 2023 tax roll due to non-payment. The County added this property to the tax roll beginning in 2023. The following year, joint TLC-GIS staff erroneously identified the property to be billed by the City in the Additional Annual File. Accordingly, this property owner may have been overbilled and would be entitled to a refund from the City if the property owner made payment to the City after 2023. If so, the County demands that the City refund the property owner for such overpayment.
- **1** property with a townhome structure was previously billed on the tax roll. In 2023, the property merged with a neighboring property and the newly merged property (with two residences) was correctly billed on the tax roll. Then, in December 2023, the property split again into two properties. In 2024, joint TLC-GIS staff noted the newly split property, and the townhome was added to the 2024 Annual Additional File for City billing since it appeared as a new property. In a separate effort in 2024, the property was flagged to TLC-GIS as a change and inadvertently added back to

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the tax roll; therefore, the property was billed on both City billing and the tax roll. The City's assertion that the County owes for 58 quarters is therefore flawed. Accordingly, this property owner may have been overbilled and would be entitled to a refund from the City if the property owner made payment to the City after 2023. If so, the County demands that the City refund the property owner for such overpayment.

- The remaining properties (**2**) in the City's "audit" were found to have address anomalies in the City's billing system, and joint TLC-GIS staff worked with City and County staff to correct the addresses.
    - One property was added to the County's 2025 tax roll at the request of the City due to non-payment. Prior to notifying the County to put this property on the tax roll, the City failed to collect assessments on this property and is inappropriately seeking County reimbursement of the Fire Services Fund.
    - Another property was added to the tax roll in 2024 when it was already on City billing. Accordingly, this property owner may have been overbilled for 2024 and would be entitled to a refund from the City if the property owner made payment to the City for 2024. If so, the County demands that the City refund the property owner for such overpayment. Prior to notifying the County to put this property on the tax roll, the City failed to collect assessments on this property and is inappropriately seeking County reimbursement of the Fire Services Fund.

The results of the review performed by joint TLC-GIS staff on the 439 properties identified in the City "audit" are reflected in the Excel spreadsheet provided with this correspondence (Updated Spreadsheet). In summary, the City failed to update its annual billing records for 225 properties, improperly attributed assessment balances to 179 properties based on CO data, should have billed 13 agricultural properties, improperly included 10 mobile home properties in its "audit" findings without sufficient documentation, did not correctly bill 6 religious institutions and 2 governmental structures, and may need to reimburse several property owners for overcollection. I am confident that joint TLC-GIS staff would be happy to walk through its work, the Additional Annual Files documentation, and the additional information in the columns added into the Updated Spreadsheet if the City has any follow-up questions.

The County looks forward to receiving a revised accounting and documentation demonstrating that the City has transferred funds into the Fire Services Fund sufficient to correct the deficiencies attributable to the City's failure to bill the identified properties and, to the extent overbilling occurred, refunded the property owners who may have overpaid.

As you know, the County has concerns about multiple other historic underbilling and undercollection practices and extends an invitation to the City to participate in a comprehensive and complete audit of all areas of concern to ensure accurate and consistent billing for all eligible properties and mutual agreement to take whatever measures are necessary to ensure the Fire Services Fund and Fire Services Reserve Fund are made whole. Such a joint effort will provide transparency for our respective Commissions and constituents and resolve any disputes about

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billing and collection practices in a conclusive and comprehensive manner. The County looks forward to receiving a response from the City regarding this invitation.

Sincerely,

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY
LEON COUNTY, FLORIDA

DocuSigned by:
Chasity H. O'Steen
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Chasity H. O'Steen
County Attorney

Cc: Vincent S. Long, County Administrator
Ken Morris, Assistant County Administrator
Roshaunda Bradley, Budget Director
Reese Goad, City Manager

Attachment: Updated Spreadsheet

Fitch Fire Services Report
Summary of VFD Recommendations and County Actions
Page 1 of 2

Fitch Recommendation	County Actions
Formalize training access and certification pathways to expand VFD training.	The County provides financial and logistical support for firefighting and emergency response training for the VFDs. Training has been enhanced through a partnership with the American Red Cross to provide high-level first aid training for volunteers. The County has also supported driver safety training, worked with TFD to schedule live-fire training in November 2026, scheduled a rural water supply course in January 2027, and provides training equipment and supplies. The County will continue to work with the VFDs to identify additional pathways that meet the on-going training needs of the VFDs, with a focus on the Florida VFD firefighter certification program.
Provide support to improve recruitment and retention of volunteers.	The County has supported volunteer fire department recruitment and retention through the Division of Volunteer Services, with the Volunteer Fire Truck Roundup and the Volunteer Firefighter of the Year Award and by providing volunteer management training. The County has recently expanded the recruitment program to highlight the volunteer opportunities available at the VFDs and is providing recruitment tools such as flyers, signs, and social media graphics. Volunteer opportunities are shared through the County website, social media, LINK newsletter, and Waste Pro mailings. Additional strategies and opportunities for supporting the recruitment and retention of volunteers, including incentive and recognition programs are being explored in coordination with VFD leadership.
Maintain the fire truck continuity and replacement program to ensure vehicle readiness.	At the September Workshop, the Board approved a legislative priority to support VFD legislative funding requests for critical emergency response equipment, including fire trucks. Under the existing Agreement with the City, VFDs lease surplus City fire trucks for $1 per year. Any future Agreement would maintain this access while clarifying ownership and maintenance responsibilities. VFD fire truck needs are included in implementation planning.
Improve rural water-supply capability to increase water access to fight fires.	The County allocates $150,000 annually to expand firefighting water supplies through the installation of new fire hydrants. This funding has also been used for the maintenance of dry hydrants and construction of water wells ensuring VFDs can access water during fire emergencies. Projects to construct additional fire hydrants and wells are in the design phase, with construction scheduled to begin immediately after design completion.
Update VFD report data to improve reporting to the State.	The County updated dispatch reports to meet state reporting requirements, allowing VFDs to complete their reports more efficiently and accurately. A process is in place for the VFDs to report errors, so the data can be validated and updated as necessary and support ongoing reporting. Technical assistance from the County is planned to assist VFDs with report submission.

Fitch Fire Services Report
Summary of VFD Recommendations and County Actions
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Fitch Recommendation	County Actions
Support firefighter protective gear and equipment readiness.	The County provides important response equipment to the VFDs. In 2026, the State Fire Marshal began the process of updating state rules for firefighter protective gear, including new requirements for gear safety, inspection, cleaning, and replacement. The County is assisting the VFDs to prepare for these changes and support VFD equipment needs as the new rules are finalized. Additionally, the County has created an automated process for VFDs to order medical supplies through the County and continues to evaluate opportunities to further assist the VFDs with readiness.
Assess VFD stations and facilities to preserve service levels.	County VFD stations are maintained and repaired by the County and are included in the County's process for identifying capital improvement, repair, and maintenance needs.
Provide administrative support to assist VFD leadership.	The County is supporting VFDs with records, purchasing, grant technical assistance, and other administrative needs. County purchasing contracts and cooperative buying programs allow the VFDs to purchase supplies and equipment at contracted prices. The County maintains records of VFD vehicles, equipment, and members to support insurance and other department needs. The County is identifying opportunities to streamline administrative processes.
Strengthen engagement with VFD members to build stronger relationships with volunteers.	Within the past several months, the County has enhanced engagement with the VFDs through monthly meetings with the VFD chiefs and by regularly attending department meetings. The County has a long history of hosting quarterly meetings with the VFD Chiefs, TFD, and other partner organizations which continue. Together, these meetings provide opportunities to discuss needs, coordinate efforts, provide support, and build stronger relationships.
Continue providing current County support to the VFDs.	The County provides direct financial and operational support to the VFDs and includes $482,479 in the annual budget to fund an annual allocation to each VFD; fire truck maintenance; worker's compensation, vehicle, and liability insurance; firefighter and medical training; station utility and maintenance expenses; water supply improvements; radio communications equipment; and volunteer recruitment activities.