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August 18, 2025

*VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL*  
longv@leoncountyfl.gov

Vince Long  
County Administrator  
Leon County  
301 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Re: Fire Service Fees & Assessments

Dear County Administrator Long,

I am writing to you as a member of the Administrative Management Committee as defined by the Provision of Fire and Emergency Services Interlocal Agreement. The 2025 Fire Service Fee Study was jointly commissioned and scoped by the City and County. The scope included: 1) Identifying Fire Services Costs based on a review of the budget, allowable expenditures, and cost drivers that could not have been anticipated in the 2023 study; 2) Determining Fire Protection Revenue Requirements; and 3) Calculating Proforma Schedule of Rates. At your August 12, 2025, Special Meeting, the Leon County Board of County Commissioners took action to reject all elements of the 2025 Fire Service Fee Rate Study results.

The County Commission also directed the County Attorney to withdraw its demand for arbitration regarding increases in the Fire Service Fees & Assessments based on her change in guidance that the issue is not arbitrable. Yet for the past three weeks thousands of dollars have been expended by the City and County for the arbitration process, including the cost of three arbitrators, with no result. The County Commission has now simply chosen to ignore the rate study, reject the results, and leave the Fire Service Fees & Assessments for properties in unincorporated Leon County unchanged, including not funding the cost for firefighters that has been much discussed by all County Commissioners.

As is well known, the City Commission ratified the collective bargaining agreement with the fire union after the 2023 rate study. The resulting wages are significantly higher than the projected wages in the 2023 rate study. While the County Commission has elected to ignore this fact, the City will fulfill its obligations under this agreement. Additionally, the most recent Interlocal Agreement, under which both the City and the County are currently operating, provides for the



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hiring of additional firefighters to staff stations 15 and 17. As was anticipated in the Third Term Rate Study and ratified by the City and County in the Interlocal Agreement, the City has already begun hiring these firefighters to ensure the availability of staff when these stations open. Ten additional firefighters have already been hired, and 12 offers of employment have been accepted bringing the total number of firefighters to 327. While the construction at stations 15 and 17 may possibly be delayed, the Tallahassee Fire Department has made personnel commitments consistent with previous plans and must honor these obligations. While these additional firefighters will be assigned to stations 15 and 17 when construction is completed, they will currently be programmed to staff our busiest stations in accordance with National Fire Protection Association standards.

Based on these commitments, my recommendation to the City Commission will be to exercise its authority and increase the Fire Service Fees & Assessments for properties within the City limits commensurate with the fiscal impact associated with the current collective bargaining agreement and current staffing level of the Tallahassee Fire Department and to postpone the expansion of Station 15 and construction of Station 17 and all related trucks and equipment. The necessary cost for firefighter personnel expenses and reduced expenses relating to postponing Station 15 and 17 will be based on the underlying budget information also used by the rate study. My recommendation will be included on the City Commission's budget item scheduled for September 3, 2025.

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  
Leon County Board of County Commissioners