



Village of Indiantown

March 3, 2021

Stacey Hetherington, Chair
Martin County Board of County Commissioners
2401 SE Monterey Rd.
Stuart, Florida 34996

Re: Negotiations Concerning Future Provision of Fire/EMS Services within the
Village of Indiantown

Dear Chair Hetherington:

As you may be aware, at a special meeting held last week, the Village Council of the Village of Indiantown directed our Village Manager to begin work in earnest to implement certain alternative options for the provision of Fire and EMS services within the Village. Specifically, the Village Council directed that work begin to establish an Indiantown Fire Department, and to contract with an experienced EMS service provider for the provision of EMS services within the Village.¹

This decision was ultimately driven by the fact that historically, the Village's taxpayers have paid substantially more for Fire and EMS services than it costs for the County to provide such services within the Village. Over the past year, the Village has worked with the Center for Public Safety Management ("CPSM"), a public safety consulting firm affiliated with ICMA, to advise the Village in evaluating its options. CPSM has concluded and advised that pursuing the option the Village Council has selected will result in a meaningful reduction in costs for the provision of Fire and EMS services within the Village, enabling the Village to ultimately reduce the tax burden on the Village's taxpayers, and/or to otherwise redirect those savings to provide for increased services for the residents and businesses of the Village.

This decision was not made lightly, nor was it made without substantial efforts to find a financially viable path for the Village to remain with the County for Fire and EMS services. For over a year, the Village Manager, at the Village Council's direction, has attempted to negotiate with the County Administrator concerning the pricing of the County's provision of Fire and EMS services. Throughout that time, the County Administrator has expressed an unwillingness to negotiate. This unwillingness was at some level understandable, although unfortunate in the long run. Without the development of viable alternatives, the County was the only game in town, and

¹ Please note that implementation of these alternative options will take some time. This correspondence is not an official notification of the Village's intent to withdraw its consent to the Village's inclusion within the Martin County Fire-Rescue MSTU and MSBU, or its election to terminate any interlocal agreements with the County. Such notification, if at all, would be by separate instrument, and would not be anticipated to occur until some time in 2022.

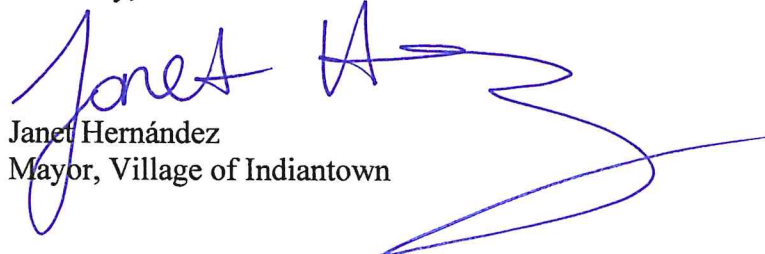
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thus the County Administrator had no incentive to negotiate financial terms, even as the taxpayers of the Village were paying substantially more than what it cost the County to provide Fire and EMS services. In the absence of a willingness to negotiate on the part of the County, the Village has been forced to proceed in earnest to develop viable alternatives to County-provided Fire and EMS services, leading us to our current state of affairs and our plans to go our own way.

Nevertheless, at the same meeting last week, the Village Council also decided that while we proceed at full speed with the plans mentioned above, the Council should also reach out directly to the Board of County Commissioners to make one last attempt to negotiate a more equitable pricing arrangement for the County's continued provision of Fire and EMS services within the Village.

As such, I am writing to formally ask whether the Board of County Commissioners is willing to negotiate with the Village of Indiantown concerning pricing for the County's continued provision of Fire and EMS services within the Village. While implementation of our alternative options will take some time, the Village will have to start making substantial capital expenditures in pursuit of those plans in the very near future, crossing the point of no return. As such, I respectfully request on behalf of the Village Council that the Board of County Commissioners schedule an agenda item at which the BOCC can discuss and decide on its willingness to negotiate with the Village, and advise me no later than Wednesday, April 14, 2021, of the BOCC's decision.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janet Hernández", followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right and then loops back under the signature.

Janet Hernández
Mayor, Village of Indiantown

cc: Vice Chair Doug Smith
Commissioner Harold Jenkins
Commissioner Sarah Heard
Commissioner Edward Ciampi
Taryn Kryzda, County Administrator
Sarah Woods, County Attorney
Village of Indiantown Council Members
Village Manager
Village Attorney