



OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

May 9, 2025

Chief Patrick J. Kennedy
Fire Rescue Administrator
Palm Beach County Fire Rescue
405 Pike Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33411

Dear Chief Kennedy:

The existing Interlocal Agreement for Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services by and between the Town of Jupiter and Palm Beach County (existing agreement) contains a termination clause (section 12.B.) requiring 36 months of notice. During contract negotiations in late 2022 and early 2023, the County changed the notice of termination in this section to 36 months from the 12 months that had been in several of the previous drafts, explaining that it would take PBCFR 36 months to redeploy personnel and assets currently serving the Town. The Town Council accepted this change and ultimately approved the agreement in April of 2023. The Town exercised this clause in September of 2023, causing the agreement to expire on September 30, 2026.

Enclosed please find a proposed Interlocal Agreement for The Transition of Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services to the Town of Jupiter (proposed ILA). This proposed agreement comes as a follow up to my meeting on Thursday, May 1, 2025 with District Chief Rowley and Chief Gonzalez, where I shared the transition plan and my letter to you dated April 25, 2025. In a follow up call the next day with Chief Rowley, I also shared that it was our intent to provide the County with the transition plan in the form of an Interlocal Agreement.

Because this matter is one affecting the health and safety of the residents we mutually serve, we ask that you review the proposed agreement with an appropriate sense of urgency. This proposed agreement is scheduled on the Jupiter Town Council agenda for Tuesday, May 20, 2025. Once the agreement is approved by the Town Council, the Town will forward it to you for you to place it on a Board of County Commission agenda for their approval and execution.

The Town believes that agreement on a mutually-beneficial transition plan across areas of service is the best way to ensure seamless delivery of fire and emergency medical

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Chief Patrick J. Kennedy, Fire Rescue Administrator, Palm Beach County

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services to Jupiter area residents, businesses, and visitors. To that end, the proposed ILA outlines areas of collaboration and timeframes for deliverables to ensure a successful transition process. These areas include but are not limited to automatic and mutual aid; a joint response initiative; transition of Stations 18 and 19 service areas; turnover of the Station 16 facility; implementation of the radio system; Knox Box processes; sharing of certain critical data; and transition of fire prevention and code enforcement services.

At the Palm Beach County EMS Advisory Council (EMS Council) meeting on March 20, 2025, the EMS Council considered the Town's application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (COPCN). The Town's COPCN application was filed with a requested effective date of August 1, 2026, in order to allow for a safe transition of services, as outlined in the proposed ILA. Assistant County Attorney Burrows explained, after a motion and a second were made to approve the application with an August 1, 2026 effective date and before a call for the vote, that the COPCN date was subject to the termination date of the existing agreement between the Town and the County (September 30, 2026). She stated that when the BCC considers the COPCN application, it could agree to an effective date of August 1, 2026.

With respect to your letter of May 6, 2025 (attached), you stated that it will not be necessary to discuss a transition plan until January, 2026, or eight months from now. In that letter you limit the transition activities to Station 16. The Town remains adamant that more planning and collaboration – not less – must take place between our teams in order to ensure a smooth transition of all of the areas outlined in the proposed agreement. Further, the Town strongly opposes a plan that effectively amounts to a “flip of the switch” on midnight, September 30, 2026, because it would not be in the best interest of the safety of residents and businesses. It is unrealistic to expect that type of approach will not come with unintended consequences to public health and safety. It also remains the Town's position that the collaboration required needs to start immediately, and have a goal of being complete by August 1, 2026 – sixty days prior to the date when JFRD assumes full responsibility for fire and emergency medical services in Jupiter. This early cooperation and collaboration will yield the best, most proactive, and safest possible outcomes for the residents and businesses in the Jupiter area.

I appreciate your commitment and assurance to providing excellent service to the Town of Jupiter. As a former Police Chief and first responder with over 40 years in law enforcement, I am committed to strengthening our partnership in a way that raises the bar on public safety service delivery for the residents of Jupiter, and the residents of Palm Beach County. I believe the transition plan, outlined in the enclosed proposed ILA, provides both of our organizations with the best possible path toward a smooth

transition, a seamless evolution of the delivery of services, and continued collaboration.
I look forward to receiving your comments soon.

Sincerely,



Frank J. Kitzerow
Town Manager

Attachments:

1. Letter from Chief Kennedy, May 6, 2025
2. Proposed Interlocal Agreement for The Transition of Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services to the Town of Jupiter

cc: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Jupiter Town Council
Honorable Mayor and Members of the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners
Verdenia Baker; County Administrator, Palm Beach County
Patrick Rutter; Deputy County Administrator, Palm Beach County
Todd Bonlaren; Assistant County Administrator, Palm Beach County
Darrel Donatto, Fire Chief, Town of Jupiter
Thomas J. Baird, Town of Jupiter Attorney
Sharon Burrows, Assistant County Attorney, Palm Beach County Legal Department