



MICHAEL W. RUIZ, Assistant County Administrator
 115 S. Andrews Avenue, Room 409 • Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301 • 954-357-7333 • FAX 954-357-7360

MEMORANDUM

DATE: Thursday, August 6, 2026

TO: Broward County Board of County Commissioners (Board)

THRU: Monica Cepero, County Administrator

FROM: Michael W. Ruiz, Assistant County Administrator *Michael W. Ruiz*

RE: **Process to Return the Broward County Fire Rescue Department Under the Operational Control of Broward County**

BOARD ACTION

An interlocal agreement between the County and the Broward Sheriff's Office was executed in 2003, titled *Interlocal Agreement Between Broward County and Kenneth C. Jenne as Sheriff of Broward County Providing for Delivery of Fire/Rescue Services* ("ILA") which grants the Broward Sheriff's Office (BSO) operational control of fire rescue services provided by the Broward County Fire Rescue (BCFR) Department. Per Article 11 Term of Agreement the ILA automatically renews every five (5) years. The current term ends in roughly two years on September 30, 2028.

Setting aside defaults of various natures, the ILA provides for two approaches to termination.

1. Article 11 Term of Agreement (11.1): Either party may provide "at least one (1) year's written notice to the other party that it intends not to renew the Agreement." If the Board were to choose to do so, the County would have until September 30, 2027, to provide BSO with notice.
2. Article 12 Termination (12.1): "The Interlocal Agreement may be terminated by either party after September 30, 2004, at any time during its initial term or any renewal term thereof, with or without cause, upon providing the other party with six (6) months written notice to the other party's Contract Administrator." If the Board were to choose to do so, the County could provide notice to BSO at any time.

To effectuate either approach to termination, the Board could approve a Motion to Authorize the County Administrator to draft and submit legally sufficient written notice to BSO, either not renewing or terminating the ILA. Such a motion could be placed on the agenda of a subsequent regular meeting. The effort necessary to affect a "smooth and harmonious transition", per article 12.4, however, would entail a great deal more communication, collaboration, and community engagement.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION

Given that BSO has been overseeing the operations of BCFR for nearly 25 years, the County recognizes that returning control of operations potentially impacts a lengthy list of external stakeholders. The list includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Broward Sheriff's Office
- Broward County Fire Rescue Personnel
- International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local 4321
- Fire Chiefs Association of Broward County
- Residents and Associations within the Broward Municipal Services District
- Elected Officials, City Managers, and Residents of Contract Cities
 - City of Dania Beach
 - City of Deerfield Beach
 - City of Hallandale Beach
 - City of Lauderdale Lakes
 - City of Pembroke Park
 - City of Weston
 - City of West Park
- Municipal Fire Rescue Agencies (Some municipal agencies provide service to other cities.)
 - Coral Springs
 - Davie
 - Fort Lauderdale
 - Hollywood
 - Lauderhill
 - Margate
 - Miramar
 - North Lauderdale
 - Oakland Park
 - Pompano Beach
 - Pembroke Pines
 - Plantation
 - Sunrise
 - Tamarac
- FLL and HWO Airlines and Federal Aviation Administration
- PEV Cruise Lines, Cargo Companies, Harbor Pilots, US Coast Guard, and Florida Fish and Wildlife
- All Hospitals within Broward County and Trauma Hospitals in Miami-Dade and Palm Beach
- Broward County School Board, Broward College, Nova Southeastern University, and Florida Atlantic University
- CFO/State Fire Marshal, Florida Division of Emergency Management, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, Florida Highway Patrol and Federal Bureau of Investigation Miami
- Miami-Dade County, Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue, Palm Beach County, Palm Beach County Fire Rescue, and Florida Forest Service
- Any other related State or Federal agency with a local presence

Communication with these stakeholders would be crucial to educate them about the transition and address any concerns. Engagement through existing organizations, such as the Broward League of Cities, Broward County City Managers Association (BCCMA), and the Fire Chiefs Association of Broward County could help disseminate information. However, individual meetings with the IAFF, contract cities, and other organizations would still be required.

LEGAL/CONTRACTUAL

The most immediate legal efforts would likely be the transition or assumption of contracts for fire rescue services with the contract cities of Dania Beach, Deerfield Beach, Lauderdale Lakes, Weston, and Pembroke Park / West Park. The County would initially look to transition the agreements “as is” in order to avoid disruption during the transition.

While these agreements are currently negotiated with BSO individually, moving forward after the transition, the County would explore negotiating agreements collectively through the BCCMA. This is the current model used by municipalities to negotiate reimbursement rates for Security Resource Officers (SRO) with Broward County Public Schools. It appears to improve transparency and reduce concerns among municipalities about fairness of treatment.

Legal support from the CAO would continue across all other areas of the transition, particularly with transitioning facility/equipment leases and assuming contracts for software and maintenance.

E-911 CALL-TAKING AND DISPATCH

The Broward County Regional Communication System (RCS) provides first responders in the county with E-911 call taking, dispatch, and radio systems. (Only three municipalities, Coconut Creek, Coral Springs, and Plantation do not participate in the RCS.) Given that the Broward Sheriff’s Office already participates in the RCS, the transition of BCFR to the County would be relatively seamless.

Some work would be required in the computer aided dispatch and fire records management systems to note the transition. The same might be true for radio channels. However, this work would be conducted behind the scenes by the County’s own Office of Regional Communications and Technology, in coordination with BSO.

PERSONNEL

Broward County Human Resource Division would need to familiarize itself with the IAFF collective bargaining agreement, create position classifications, update the County organizational chart, ensure continued training and certification requirements are maintained, apply for and acquire any necessary licensures, and onboard all existing personnel.

To avoid any disruption of day-to-day operations in the field, the County would seek to transition all existing BCFR personnel into their current positions, up to and including civilian support, Assistant Fire Chief(s), Deputy Fire Chief(s), and the Fire Chief. In addition, the County would seek to retain the

Medical Director and the Fire Marshal, if possible. BCFR leadership and personnel assigned to the BMSD, contract cities, FLL, PEV, and specialized units would similarly remain in their current assignments through the transition.

FACILITIES

Broward County owns and maintains the Public Safety Building (PSB) at 2601 West Broward Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale. This location currently houses the administrative offices of BCFR. To avoid disruption during the transition, the County would make no changes to the BCFR accommodation at the PSB.

The Real Property Division of the Public Works and Environmental Services (PWES) Department would need to complete an inventory of all BCFR fire stations and training locations. This would yield a list of leases, licenses, and operating agreements necessary to assume or update. In addition, the Construction Maintenance Division and Facilities Maintenance Division of PWES would need to survey these same facilities to understand future capital and maintenance needs. To avoid any disruption of day-to-day operations in the field, the County would seek to transition all rights to the use of existing BCFR facilities over to the County.

EQUIPMENT / MAINTENANCE

The need to purchase equipment would be limited, given that BCFR is fully operational. Ownership, lease rights, and related contractual changes would be assessed during the transition. Maintenance personnel and contracts for equipment would be similarly assessed. Perhaps the most high-profile transition would be the air rescue helicopters and hangar lease at Pompano Air Park.

SYSTEMS AND SOFTWARE

While generally a back-office concern, transfer of software system, licenses, and rights will be critical to a smooth and timely transition. This is particularly true for the systems managing daily timekeeping, assignments, and operation of fire rescue personnel and activities. Any need to independently procure software systems in support of payroll and operations would extend the transition period.

ADMINISTRATION / SUPPORT

Administrative support will be needed for the addition of roughly 900 personnel plus facilities and equipment. The Office of Management and Budget currently estimate from 30 to 40 additional Human Resources, Procurement, Accounting, Risk Management, Facility Maintenance, and Vehicle Maintenance personnel. It is possible that the County Attorney's Office and the County Auditor will also require increases. To the extent possible, the County would work with BSO to transition existing administrative and support personnel. The exact number and nature of the additional positions would be determined through the transition period. The cost of these positions would likely be offset by reductions from the BSO budget for these same positions.