



## Marion County Board of County Commissioners

Fire Rescue ▪ Headquarters

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November 18, 2024

The Honorable Kirby Smith, Chair  
Lake County Board of County Commissioners  
315 W Main Street  
Tavares, FL 32778

Dear Chair Smith,

On behalf of Marion County, I would like to take a moment to update you on the new Medical Examiner's building project and the new development discussed at last week's meeting, which will change the course of this project.

On Wednesday, November 13, 2024, the Medical Examiner Advisory Committee met in Wildwood. During agenda item 6.1 (Attachment A), a discussion occurred after Lake County Commissioner Sabatini shared with the committee that it was the will of his commission to leave District 5 and join Seminole in District 24. Also, Seminole County Chair Zembower shared that this is an option both counties are exploring. This information comes after all parties have entered into a new interlocal agreement (Attachment B) for cost share of medical examiner services and related matters. For the past few years, the parties, through the committee, have been engaged in detailed conversation to site, design, and construct a new modern facility that will accommodate the anticipated workload and the workspace needed for the efficient functioning of the Medical Examiner team with directions given every step of the way to move forward. This news alters the path of the new Medical Examiner's building. During the discussion, it was decided to halt all efforts related to the new building and not to incur any additional expenses until the committee members meet with their respective Board of County Commissioners for direction on how each county would like to proceed.

To be clear, the medical examiner's new facility is on hold until further notice.

This project has already incurred the following expenditures, and a discussion will be needed to determine the recoupment of expenses, if the project is discontinued. Marion County advanced \$6,000,000 from its general fund to the Medical Examiner budget on December 19, 2023, to start the design and purchase the land at the approved location, with reimbursement anticipated at the time the bond is acquired for construction and all other expenses.

**Advanced funding from Marion County: \$6,000,000**

Summary of expenditures to date from Marion County advanced funding:

- Design (architecture studios): \$ 91,447.03
- Land purchase: 2,960,794.95
- Property appraisal: 2,975.00
- **Total:** **\$3,055,216.98**

Contractual obligation:

- Construction manager (CM) fees, if the project is discontinued: **\$69,010.00**

Other soft costs incurred by Marion County, which have not been billed to ME yet:

- Rispoli & Associates conceptual site plans and evaluations: **\$1,750.00** (Facilities fund)

**Total of expenditures and obligation: \$3,125,976.98**

Costs incurred by the ME budget for planning and consulting:

- Guerra Development Corporation land options (3 sites): **\$6,500.00** (ME operating fund)
- Rispoli & Associates:
  - Review current ME facility for expansion versus construction at a new location: **\$9,975.00** (PO 2001007 - paid from ME operating fund)
  - Phase II proposed floor and site plan for new building and site location: **\$18,855.00** (PO 2100419 - paid from ME operating fund)

**Total of costs incurred for planning and consulting: \$35,330.00**

Available funding in the ME budget:

- Open purchase order for project design: **\$1,166,552.97** of \$1,258,000.00 remains unused.
- Medical Examiner project budget (MEC000001): **\$1,778,230.05** (portion of Marion County transfer)
- ME office generator fund (FMC000047): **\$16,824.00**
- Capital improvement funding in ME operating fund: **\$2,324,329.00** (as of November 18, 2024)

**Total available funding in the ME budget: \$5,285,936.02**

At the upcoming meeting on February 12, 2025, Marion County would like to review the finances of this project with all the members of the district and develop a reimbursement method for the portion of the \$6,000,000 advanced funding that is not Marion County's obligation. Also, we expect that members of the committee would be prepared to share the position of their respective governing boards regarding the makeup of District 5 and the continued partnership with District 24.

I hope you find this information useful as you discuss this matter with your boards. Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



James Banta  
Fire Chief

2 Enclosures

cc: Honorable Craig Estep, Chair, Sumter County  
Honorable Elizabeth Narverud, Chair, Hernando County  
Honorable Holly Davis, Chair, Citrus County  
Honorable Jay Zembower, Chair, Seminole County  
Honorable Kirby Smith, Chair, Lake County  
Honorable Michelle Stone, Chair, Marion County  
Honorable Anthony Sabatini, Lake County  
Honorable Jeffrey Bogue, Sumter County  
Honorable Jerry Campbell, Hernando County  
Administrator Bradley Arnold, Sumter County  
Administrator Jeff Rogers, Hernando County  
Administrator Mounir Bouyounes, Marion County  
Administrator Steve Howard, Citrus County  
Manager Darren Gray, Seminole County  
Manager Jennifer Barker, Lake County