

Memorandum



Date: July 14, 2009

To: Honorable Chairman Dennis C. Moss
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: George M. Burgess
County Manager 

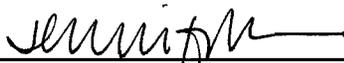
Subject: Supplement to Fire Protection Assessment Ordinance

BPS
Supplement to
Agenda Item No. 5A

As approved by the Board, for the past few months, the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department and the Office of Strategic Business Management have been working with Government Services Group, Inc. to analyze the feasibility of implementing a fire special assessment fee for the provision of fire suppression services within the Fire Rescue District. As we outlined to the Board in previous reports, the current fiscal structure that funds the operation and capital expansion of the Fire Rescue District has been impacted by the recent decline of the property tax roll, limiting its capacity to maintain current services. Although the BCC has the ability to provide the Fire Rescue District with the resources to maintain the current services within the limitations of the locally imposed three mill cap, it is clear that within the next few years the this cap will further undermine the ability of the Fire Rescue District to provide their critical services. It was under this framework that we recommended to the BCC exploring the merits of complementing the Fire Rescue District with a fire special assessment fee to cover the operational needs of fire suppression services and indicated that the ultimate decision on whether or not to implement the fire assessment fee would be made as part of the FY 2009-10 budget development process.

The Fire Protection Special Assessment Ordinance on this agenda for your consideration authorizes the imposition and collection of special assessments in the Miami-Dade Fire and Rescue Service District and establishes special assessment procedures which will govern the application and administration of fire protection special assessment on an ongoing basis. In addition to this ordinance, in order to implement a fire assessment fee, an Initial Assessment Resolution is also required to be adopted by the BCC which (among other things) describes the method of apportioning the Fire Protection Assessed Cost and the computation of the Fire Protection Assessment for specific properties and establishes an estimated assessment rate for the applicable fiscal year. Recognizing the economic environment under which this fee would have been implemented and the impact it would have had on the taxpayers residing within the Fire Rescue District in FY 2009-10, we have developed a proposed budget for the Fire Rescue District that avoids significant service impacts with only a slight adjustment to the millage rate for the District. Consequently, at this time, I am not recommending the imposition of this fee for FY 2009-10. It is recommended, however, that the Fire Protection Special Assessment Ordinance be adopted by the Board, at which point the option to implement this funding structure in the future will be available.

In the event that the BCC wishes to proceed with the implementation of a fire special assessment fee in a future year, most of the analytical work and legal research done by the department and the consultant in the past few months will not have to be revisited and funded. However, State Statutes do require that the County approve a new Resolution of Intent by January 1, prior to the fiscal year of implementation, or by March 1, if an extension is approved by the County Property Appraiser and the Tax Collector. In addition, the Initial Assessment Resolution and the Final Assessment Resolution would have to be adopted by the BCC as prescribed by State Statutes.


Jennifer Glazer-Moon
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