



Office of the
**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR**

Jason E. Brown, County Administrator
Michael C. Zito, Assistant County Administrator

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Jason E. Brown
County Administrator

DATE: June 23, 2022

SUBJECT: Local Support Grants Program – Medical Examiner’s Facility

Background

The District 19 Medical Examiner serves a four-county region including; Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin and Okeechobee counties. The Medical Examiner has identified deficiencies in the current facility which limit the ability to continue to serve the growing needs of the four counties over the coming years. On May 3, 2022, upon request from the Medical Examiner, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a resolution supporting funding sources for the design and construction of a new facility for District 19. The resolution further directed the County Administrator to enter into discussions with the other counties to design and construct a new facility and support and submit requests for state and federal funding these costs.

Discussion and Analysis

Pursuant to Board Direction, staff, along with the Vice Chairman Earman, met with the Medical Examiner Task Force on May 19, 2022 to discuss a funding plan going forward. The meeting included Senator Gayle Harrel, Representative Dana Trabulsy, staff and elected officials from all four counties, the Medical Examiner, State Attorney Bakkedahl, and Indian River State College representatives. At the meeting, it was agreed that the counties would include funding for their share of the cost of a Preliminary Design and Engineering (PD&E) Study to determine the appropriate size of the facility and complete design plans for construction of a facility. We were provided with an estimated total cost of \$2 million to conduct the PD&E Study.

During this past Session, the Legislature included a new initiative in the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 General Appropriations Act for a Local Support Grants Program. This program will enable members of the

Legislature to request nonrecurring funding for local governments, education entities, or privately operated programs to support local initiatives within our communities.

After internal discussions with our State Legislative Delegation it was suggested to submit the PD&E for the Medical Examiner's Office for \$1 million. With that being said there are few items to take into consideration on this grant:

- The grant requires the project to be sponsored and submitted by our state representatives to the local support grant portal
- House Rule 5.14 is being used as guidance for determining the qualifications of the projects
- A 50% match, while not required, will likely improve the likelihood of receiving funding for such requests.
- **The application submission deadline is July 15th**

St. Lucie County has agreed to take lead in ensuring the submission of this grant to their State Delegation as well as serving as the recipient fiscal agent if this grant is to be successful. St. Lucie County has requested a letter of support and completed attestation form from each county.

Funding

The funding request of \$1 million represents 50% of the total estimated cost for the PD&E Study (\$2 million). Senator Harrell and Representative Trabulsy recommended that the counties allocate funding for the total cost of the study in the event that an appropriation is not secured due to the urgent need to move forward with plans for a new facility. County staff plans to recommend an allocation of \$500,000 for the PD&E Study in the FY 2022/23 budget to be funded from Optional Sales Tax. This should be sufficient to fund the County's portion of the overall cost of the project. The current estimated cost of construction for a new facility stand at \$16-\$20 million. This estimate will be refined as we move through the design process. It is important to note that the County does not have funding for our share of construction costs in the five-year capital improvements program. At this time, total funding of construction will likely be dependent upon securing state or federal grant or appropriation dollars.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners authorize the Chairman submit a letter of support for submission of this grant to St. Lucie County, and also authorize staff to submit the Local Support Grant Attestation Form signed by the County Administrator.