



## Agenda Item Summary

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**File #: 23-00782**

**Agenda Date: 12/12/2023**

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**Agenda Item Name:**

**Creation of a new County Department of the Medical Examiner**

**Presenter:**

Claudia Tuck, Community Support Services Director, (352) 231-0058

**Description:**

The Medical Examiner's Office requested consideration to be added as a County Department.

**Recommended Action:**

Approve the creation of a department and to direct staff to prepare documents/budget to create a County department, conduct a compensation study, create a new fee operating cost, create FTEs and develop a transition plan for the Medical Examiner's Employees and operations.

**Prior Board Motions:**

NA

**Fiscal Note:**

Alachua County is responsible for a portion of the cost of the operation of the Medical Examiner's Office based on the percentage of deaths for the prior fiscal year. Currently, Alachua County is charged at 63.5% of the total expenses.

**Strategic Guide:**

Public Safety

**Background:**

Chapter 406, Florida Statutes, the "Medical Examiners Act", authorizes the creation of medical examiner districts throughout the state. District medical examiners are appointed by the Governor for a three-year term of office. District medical examiners and associate medical examiners are entitled to compensation and such reasonable salary and fees as are established by the board of county commissioners in the respective districts.

Alachua County is part of District 8 and is under a Three-Party Agreement among the University of Florida Board of Trustees and Thomas M. Coyne for Medical Examiner Services and Alachua County. The Medical Examiner Agreement delineates the responsibilities of each of the three parties previously mentioned in relation to the performance of mandated autopsy services. Six other counties (Baker, Bradford, Dixie, Gilchrist, Levy and Union) and the State of Florida Department of Corrections have similar agreements for these services.

The Medical Examiner and the University of Florida College of Medicine submit a budget annually to

each county and the State Department of Corrections for Administrative costs that include salaries and benefits, transportation, and facility costs. The costs associated with autopsies are separate, rate-based and require reimbursement. These charges are included as part of the agreements. Each county and the State are billed based on a percentage of utilization from the prior fiscal year.

An interest in moving the Medical Examiner Office to the County has been raised. The Medical Examiner is authorized to determine where to site the Office. Prior to moving under the auspices of the University of Florida, the Medical Examiner Office operated under Alachua General Hospital. Now that the County owns the building out of which the Office operates, there is a logical extension to relocation. If the Medical Examiner Office moves under the County, it would become a department under the Community & Strategic Initiatives group. They would also continue to bill all counties and the State who receive services for their apportioned share of costs