



Village of Indiantown

Mayor

Janet Hernández

Vice Mayor

Jackie Gary Clarke

Council Member

Anthony Dowling

Council Member

Guyton Stone

Council Member

Susan Gibbs Thomas

Village Manager

Howard W. Brown, Jr,
ICMA-CM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FIRE RESCUE AND EMS

Why is the village of Indiantown considering establishing their own fire rescue department?

In 2019, the village council developed a strategic plan, and part of that strategic plan was to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a fire rescue department and look at the fiscal sustainability of the village. The council unanimously agreed that a consultant was necessary to assist in the evaluation because the village does not currently have a fire department. The village council retained the services of the Center for Public Safety Management (CPSM) to assist with evaluating fire rescue services. The service requested was to do a study of Station No. 24. During this period, the village requested through public records CAD data. This data was analyzed by CPSM's data scientist. The study looked at statistics related to Station No. 24. The consultant also recommended that the village issue an RFP to outsource fire/EMS to a private vendor because of the cost savings involved. The purpose was to see exactly how much a private vendor would cost. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, we received no bids for completely outsourcing fire and EMS. Shortly after that, the village manager wrote a letter to Taryn Kryzda requesting a performance report for these services.

Office of the Village Manager

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Why is the village council focused on savings?

It is part of being financially responsible. If the village moves forward with fire rescue and EMS, it would be a tremendous savings to the village (nearly \$1 million per year) after the first couple of years. Those monies could be used to redo every street in Indiantown over a five-year period. We could enhance our park operations and completely redo all of our park fields in just one year. We could also create recreational programs that benefit our youth and seniors. There are so many other things that can be realized by establishing our own fire service or renegotiating the agreement with Martin County.

Did the village ever request information about Martin County Fire Rescue Department?

On September 4, 2019, the village manager requested a report from Chief Schobel requesting the call type, number of calls, calls per day, etc. from a certain time period. The village manager advised the chief that the information requested would be from April 2018. This was in an effort to provide an activity report to the council because the village manager was receiving similar statistics from the sheriff's office. On May 4, 2020, the village manager made several requests to the county for statistical information such as call activities, response times, operating costs, performance measures, and service outcome measurements. This information would have provided invaluable insight and could have assisted in evaluating fire rescue service delivery within the municipal boundaries, but we never received it. The village manager was told that monthly reports and service delivery activities such as these could not be provided because the county does not track such data as these statistics are only collected on a "countywide basis."

Why did the village of Indiantown agree to this arrangement?

After incorporation, the village agreed to maintain the relationship with Martin County Fire Rescue on a year-to-year basis, with the provision that in any year the village could terminate the arrangement and establish its own fire/EMS department. Notice of this termination must be provided to the Martin County Board of County Commissioners in any given year before May 1 to be effective the same year on October 1. Simply put, the village has a yearly arrangement with Martin County to provide fire rescue services. It is important to note that when the village incorporated there were four services provided by the county under similar arrangements: parks, roads, stormwater, and fire rescue. As of 2019, the



village took over providing three of those four services. The only county-provided service among these remaining from incorporation is fire rescue/EMS.

Who is the fire rescue consultant and why is a firm needed?

The company retained by the village is the Center for Public Safety Management (CPSM). CPSM is an expert at analyzing and advising on the efficient use and delivery of public safety services for communities across America. This company assists local elected officials that are data-driven and provide public safety technical assistance. While they are not a Martin County firm, they have done work in Florida and all over the United States with the exact same project in Indiantown. The CPSM team brings actual experience in fire service, data, and management to the table. The village does not currently have such a person on staff but it is very common for local governments to use consultants to assist in decision-making. I believe Martin County has used a similar type of consultant in the past to assess consolidated services with the city of Stuart.

How much does the village of Indiantown pay for fire rescue?

The amount of taxes currently paid within the village of Indiantown for fire rescue services is based on the county fire rescue MSTU millage rate. For the past three years, the amount of taxes assessed to village of Indiantown taxpayers for county fire rescue services are as follows:

2018 - \$5.9 million

2019 - \$5.3 million

2020 - \$5.3 million

Has the village requested specific budget information from Martin County on Station No. 24?

Yes, the village requested this information last year. On March 31, 2021, the village received the following:



	FY21 Actuals & Budget	FY20 Actuals
Actual personnel for those currently assigned to Station 24 salaries and benefits	\$ 3,618,131.15	\$ 3,618,131.15
Portion of Field Supervision (Battalion Chief and EMS Captain)	\$ 334,201.56	\$ 334,201.56
Portion of Administration (Fire Rescue operations only: Fire Chief, Training Chief, Medical Director, etc.)	\$ 104,016.17	\$ 104,016.17
Portion of Hazmat/Special Operations Response & Readiness teams	\$ 541,872.14	\$ 543,601.98
Average operating cost for Station 24 (electricity, fuel, janitorial, medical supplies, etc.)	\$ 246,152.64	\$ 255,666.73
Portion of fleet maintenance and logistics	\$ 70,961.55	\$ 68,323.09
Portion of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) (equipment & apparatus replacement only)	<u>\$ 213,422.64</u>	<u>\$ 232,835.84</u>
Total	\$ 5,128,757.85	\$ 5,156,776.52

How much will it cost Indiantown property owners for fire rescue services?

In our analysis of the information we received from Martin County on March 31, 2021, the actual cost for personnel is \$3.6 million. The other costs are not actual—they are estimates, averages, and portions. It is not clear if these are paid for out of the county’s general fund or the fire MSTU. Also, the information provided does not take into account the service responsibilities of Station No. 24 into the unincorporated areas of the county outside of Indiantown. We estimate that 30 percent of the calls responded to by Station No. 24 were outside the village.

What type of fire and EMS service delivery system is being considered for the village of Indiantown?

The village is considering a combination model for delivering its services. In this model the village will operate its own fire department. This will be a “combination” fire department in that it will utilize both paid career fire fighters and volunteer fire fighters. The combination system is very effective and is utilized in more than 300 locations throughout Florida. Systems of this type operate in neighboring communities such as Clewiston, Lake Placid, and Sebring. This system will jointly operate with a private ambulance provider who will respond with state-licensed paramedics who are trained and qualified by the same guidelines used by Martin County Fire Rescue. Private ambulance companies operate throughout the state of Florida including in the neighboring counties of Palm Beach, Lake, Lee, Pasco, Sumter, Santa Rosa, Walton, Broward, Dade, Brevard, Orange, Polk,



Hillsborough, Charlotte, St. Johns, Leon, Duval, and many others.

What is the timeline for establishing an Indiantown fire and EMS system?

The village is in the planning phase of this operation and is taking every step to ensure a seamless transition. The goal is to have the entire system in place by October 1, 2022. This will allow ample time to hire new personnel, purchase necessary vehicles, tools, and equipment and to obtain the necessary licensing and insurances.

What are the benefits of an Indiantown fire and EMS system?

The goal is to provide a system that is designed by and serves the needs of the village. This is a system that will be under the control of the village council and village manager. This system will provide local employment opportunities and will be built around prevention, customer service, transparency, and cost-efficiency.

How will the new Indiantown fire and EMS system affect insurance rates?

The system being designed should not impact individual homeowners' insurance premiums, unless they are beyond 1000 feet from a fire hydrant and more than 5 miles from a fire station. The final determination will be made after the new system is in place and an evaluation of that system is made. According to Mike Morash with ISO, 90 percent of the insurance companies utilize ISO. However, how they use it in establishing premiums is difficult to determine. Different insurance companies use it differently.

With one fire truck what would the HazMat response be when needed?

Indiantown Fire Personnel will be trained as HazMat first responders. This level of training is often termed as the "Operations Level". This is a required training for all firefighters that operate in Florida. This is the level of training of those personnel assigned to Station 24. If a higher level of training is required, the Martin County Regional Hazardous Materials team will be requested. They are trained at the "Technician Level". This team is part of the Statewide Mutual Aid program and was funded through Homeland Security grant funding which has stipulations to provided these services on a regional basis. When requested, a pre-established hourly fee would be charged for these services.



How many personnel would be responding when an ambulance is called? And what is their required training/certification?

On a typical medical emergency, an ambulance crew of two people will respond. These personnel will be trained to provide advanced life support and will utilize Florida State certified paramedics and EMT's. This is the same level of training that is currently held by Martin County Rescue personnel. If there are multiple patients or the incident involves a car accident or extrication is needed, an additional ambulance along with a fire truck will respond.

Will our insurance rating stay the same?

It is very likely that the insurance rating will remain the same. However, those properties that are beyond 5 miles from the Indiantown Fire Station or are beyond 1,000 feet from a fire hydrant, may see higher insurance premiums. Different insurance companies utilize ISO ratings differently. It will depend on your particular insurance provider as to how premiums will be affected.

What does mutual aid mean and does it apply to us?

Mutual Aid is typically a written agreement in which agencies who are signatories to the agreement may request assistance from other signatories for those larger or more significant calls in which one agency is unable to deliver the needed resources to manage the incident. Indiantown is a signatory to the Statewide Mutual Aid Program. Martin County is also a signatory to this agreement along with Palm Beach County Fire Rescue, Highland Fire & Rescue and St Lucie County Fire Rescue. Being a part of a mutual aid agreement does not mean that there is a requirement to provide assistance when requested. You may choose to deny a request if you feel at the time of the request, that your local needs require your resources and you cannot provide assistance. Mutual aid is not utilized very often, however in most systems when a mutual aid request is made it is almost always honored.

In case of a serious fire (i.e. brush fire) and more trucks than our one is needed, what do we do?

In the event that a brush fire exceeds that capacity of the Indiantown resources, a mutual aid request will be made to the Florida Division of Forestry and neighboring fire agencies through the Statewide Mutual Aid program.



What is the charge when an ambulance responds to a call and they do not transport them to the hospital? (i.e. someone fell and needed help up, feeling bad blood pressure check, low blood sugar, etc.)

Typically, ambulance companies do not charge for services if a transport does not take place. This determination will be made by the Indiantown Village Council and will be specified in the contractual agreement with the ambulance company that operates in Indiantown. This contract will establish the fee schedule for ambulance transports and if a response charge (typically call a stand-by fee) is charged when there is no transport.

Who will be back up when our Ambulances or fire truck is out on a call? What is the cost?

The designed Indiantown system is capable of handling two EMS calls and one fire call at the same time. This level of call activity does not occur very often in Indiantown. If there are multiple incidents in which additional resources are needed, a request for off duty personnel will be made along with a mutual aid request from neighboring agencies. Typically, mutual aid responses do not incur a charge, however the Statewide Mutual Aid program has reimbursement schedules when extended operations are required.

What are we going to do for a fire station?

The current plan is to lease an existing structure in the Village that could house fire trucks and ambulances. Portable living quarters and dormitories may be needed to supplement this facility in order to provide temporary accommodations until a permanent structure can be built or purchased.

In no case and no matter what happens the residents will get the same level of service or better.

Prepared by: Village of Indiantown

Source: Public Records, Expert testimony, etc

Date: April 17, 2021