



# COLLIN COUNTY

Fire Marshal's Office  
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2/27/13

Re: Fireman's Association Payout

Honorable Court:

Currently the contract between Collin County and the Fireman's Association establishes payouts for fire protection services based on total calls per quarter. The members of the Association turn in the calls for service on a quarterly basis. With numerous annexations throughout the county it is becoming increasingly difficult to ascertain if the call was outside the incorporated city limits of a jurisdiction as the county is only making payment for calls in the unincorporated areas of Collin County. Also the budgeting of these funds is somewhat difficult in the fact that the amount of funding to a particular jurisdiction may rise or fall per quarter depending on the number of calls that were received.

I have been working with closely with the Fireman's Association and Fire Chief's Committee to establish a better system for payment. Chapter 352 of the Local Government Code states that a county may contract directly with an incorporated volunteer fire department or municipality for fire protection services. Section 352.004 addresses liability for responders when furnishing fire protection services. The responder is acting as an agent of the county when responding to a call for service in the unincorporated area of their district. We have researched such contract agreements in counties similar to Collin County. The vast majority do establish fire protection services through contracts directly between the county and the responding fire department.

The current structure for establishing payment based on calls is somewhat subjective. Under the new proposed contract payment will be established by population served and square mileage. By dedicating a portion of county funds to square mileage and the remainder to population served annual payments more closely reflect funding total averages of past years.

I request the Commissioners' Court to consider and approve changing to contracting directly with the fire departments to provide fire protection services in the unincorporated areas of Collin County. Included in the new contract payment would be established by population served and square mileage. There are many advantages to this new system which would include:

1. Improved auditing of funds distributed. Currently the contract is with the Association but does not extend past the Association to name what fire departments are members of the Association.
2. Improved budgeting of funds received. Currently the funding is paid quarterly. A fire department does not know what amount of funding they will receive until calls are turned in and payment is made. Payments would still be on a quarterly basis however with fixed numbers and funding a fire department would have a solid budget with known funding for the next year.
3. County oversight. By contracting directly with the fire departments the Fire Marshal's office will be able to provide dispute resolution and oversight to responders on calls in the unincorporated areas of Collin County.
4. Accurate establishment of payment. Payment would be based on the most accurate data provided by Collin County GIS.
5. Fire protection services provided by contract. The new contract will define a standard for a minimum response. If a department fails to meet the minimum standard for response the Fire Marshal will have the ability to redefine the unincorporated fire district of that department and compensate the new fire district/responding department according to the added population and square mileage.

Respectfully,

Jason Browning  
Fire Marshal  
Collin County