

RESOLUTION NO. 2001-133

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING AND DIRECTING A BUDGET TRANSFER FROM THE COUNTY'S GENERAL FUND RESERVES TO THE BUDGET OF THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY TO PROVIDE RAISES FOR THE DEPUTY AND ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEYS AND THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY (PARALEGAL) IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY, EFFECTIVE WITH THE PAY PERIOD BEGINNING JULY 8, 2001 AND TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FUNDS THAT ARE NECESSARY TO CONTINUE THE SERVICES OF THE COUNTY'S OUTSIDE ATTORNEYS.

WHEREAS, St. Johns County, Florida is a southern coastal tourist area that attracts over 2 million visitors a year; and

WHEREAS, a large number of those visitors discover that St. Johns County is an ideal community in which to retire or establish a business; and

WHEREAS, the population of the County has increased by more than 30% during the past decade and the County continues to experience unrelenting growth pressures; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and appropriate that the Board of County Commissioners continue to address the pressures for growth that exists in northeast Florida by continuing to provide, improve and enforce the County's land development regulations; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners recognizes that regulating land development in a coastal county in northeast Florida requires a staff of experienced competent attorneys; and

WHEREAS, there currently exists more than 35 lawsuits and administrative proceedings in which the County is a party and which are either being litigated directly by the office of the county attorney or the litigation is being coordinated by the office of the county attorney; and

WHEREAS, the contractual relationships between the Board of County Commissioners and third parties continue to increase in number, in complexity and in monetary significance; and

WHEREAS, in February 2000 the office of the county attorney lost its assistant county attorney to a private law firm in Jacksonville, Florida; and

WHEREAS, due to the continuing rapid growth in the County and the resulting proliferation of legal issues and growth related lawsuits, the number of attorneys in the office of the county attorney has been increased to three; a deputy county attorney and two assistant county attorneys; and

WHEREAS, the continuing increase in legal work that is required to be performed by the office of the county attorney has highlighted the need to retain efficient, experienced and reliable legal and paralegal staff support; and

WHEREAS, it is of critical concern to the County that the Board of County Commissioners have sufficient experienced and reliable legal staff to provide legal advice to the Board, to the Board's agencies and advisory boards, and to county administration staff; and

WHEREAS, the county attorney is aware that the executive secretary (paralegal) for the office of the county attorney and the assistant county attorneys have been, are being, and/or will in all likelihood continue to be, recruited by private law firms seeking to capitalize on the experience and the expertise that these lawyers and paralegal have in local governmental law; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate and in the public interest that the County's paralegal and deputy and assistant county attorney's be compensated at rates that are commensurate with their skills, their legal expertise and their experience; and

WHEREAS, the billable hours attributable to the County's outside attorneys historically varies from year to year depending on need; and

WHEREAS, this years expenses for outside counsel will exceed the amount that is currently included in the budget of the county attorney; and

WHEREAS, the office of the county attorney budget must be increased in order to provide fair and competitive salaries to the County's deputy and assistant county attorneys and paralegal and to continue the ongoing services of the County's outside attorneys.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS COUNTY, FLORIDA, as follows:

Section 1. County staff is directed to increase the county attorney's current budget by \$60,000 for outside attorneys and to increase the county attorney's current budget in an additional amount of \$15,576 in order to provide raises, plus associated benefits, for the County's paralegal, deputy county attorney and two assistant county attorneys commencing with the pay period beginning July 8, 2001.

Section 2. County staff is further directed to transfer funds from the County's general fund reserves to the budget of the office of the county attorney to accomplish the purposes set forth in section 1.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of County Commissioners of St. Johns County,
State of Florida, this 26th day of June, 2001.

BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS OF ST. JOHNS
COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: Marc J. Malone
Chair

ATTEST: Cheryl Strickland, Clerk

By: Patricia DeGrade
Deputy Clerk

