

**RESOLUTION No. 2023/2024-\_\_**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE TERMINATION OF THE INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN BAKER COUNTY, THE CITY OF JACKSONVILLE, CLAY COUNTY, NASSAU COUNTY, AND ST. JOHNS COUNTY REGARDING THE NORTHEAST FLORIDA FIRE WATCH COUNCIL AND TRANSFER OF ANY REMAINING NON-MONETARY ASSETS TO THE FLORIDA NOT FOR PROFIT CORPORATION, THE FIRE WATCH PROJECT, INC.**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners in Baker, Clay, Nassau, and St. Johns County and the City of Jacksonville (the “*Counties*”) in 2019 sought to establish the Northeast Fire Watch Council (the “*Fire Watch Council*”) by Interlocal Agreement for the purposes of promoting programs to reduce the number of suicides among military veterans living in Northeast Florida; and

**WHEREAS**, effective on November 6, 2019, the Counties entered into the Interlocal Agreement Regarding Veterans' Suicide Prevention, which established the Fire Watch Council, a multi-jurisdictional governmental entity (the “*Interlocal Agreement*”); and

**WHEREAS**, in May 2020, the Fire Watch Council launched several veteran suicide prevention programs including, most notably, the Watch Stander program, an upstream, early intervention network of community volunteers trained to identify risk factors of veterans in crisis and to direct those veterans to the resources they need; and

**WHEREAS**, in April 2024, the Watch Stander program surpassed 6,500 trained volunteers, of which more than 4,500 are residents of the Counties; and

**WHEREAS**, in its April 2024 report of 2022 vital statistics, the Florida Department of Health reported that, for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive year, Veteran suicides in the Counties were 25% below the 2019 level, the year of the Council’s founding, and that this decline far outpaces both Veteran and non-Veteran suicide decreases throughout the state; and

**WHEREAS**, by this same Florida Department of Health data, 103 fewer veterans within the Counties have died by suicide since the Fire Watch Council created its programs when compared to 2019 levels, a number which, according to a University of Kentucky study of suicide bereavement in veterans and military families that shows 135 people are affected by every suicide, means that nearly 14,000 fewer community members in the Counties are now suffering the loss of a veteran friend or loved one; and

**WHEREAS**, it was the intention of the Fire Watch Council since its founding to incubate innovative veteran suicide prevention programs, prove their efficacy, and then transition them to a private sector successor better structured and equipped to expand those programs geographically; and

**WHEREAS**, the Fire Watch Council has been successful in its efforts aligning together and using a cooperative, coordinated, and collaborative approach to suicide prevention through a number of programs and initiatives and has grown to the point where it is no longer necessary to maintain its status as a multi-jurisdictional governmental entity; and

**WHEREAS**, the Interlocal Agreement requires an instrument in writing, executed by the Counties which may be executed in identical counterparts to terminate the Interlocal Agreement and approve the transfer of any remaining non-monetary assets to the Fire Watch Project, Inc. to grow the Watch Stander program and other suicide prevention initiatives across Florida; and

**WHEREAS**, Clay County determines that it is in the best interest of Clay County to comply with the request of the Fire Watch Council to terminate the Interlocal Agreement and execute this instrument in writing to allow the Fire Watch Council to approve the transfer of any remaining non-monetary assets into the Fire Watch Project, Inc. and terminate the Interlocal Agreement.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Clay County, Florida, that:

- Section 1.** The above Recitals are incorporated by reference into the body of this Resolution and such Recitals are adopted as legislative findings of fact.
- Section 2.** The Board of County Commissioners is hereby authorized to terminate the Interlocal Agreement subject to the execution of similar authorization by the Counties by similar resolution.
- Section 3.** Clay County approves the transfer of any residual non-monetary assets of the Fire Watch Council to The Fire Watch Project, Inc.
- Section 4.** To the extent that there are typographical and/or administrative errors and/or omissions that do not change the tone, tenor, or context of this Resolution, then this Resolution may be revised without subsequent approval of the Board of County Commissioners.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** by the Board of County Commissioners of Clay County, Florida, this \_\_\_\_ day of August, 2024.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
OF CLAY COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**ATTEST:**

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**Jim Renninger, Chairman**

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**Tara S. Green  
Clay County Clerk of Court and Comptroller  
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board**