

October 1, 2024
Through
September 30, 2027

CONTRACT BETWEEN

LEE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
and

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS
and PARAMEDICS
LOCAL 1826
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FIREFIGHTERS, INC.

Table of Contents

ARTICLE 1	5
PREAMBLE.....	5
ARTICLE 2	7
RECOGNITION	7
ARTICLE 3	8
MANAGEMENT RIGHTS.....	8
ARTICLE 4	11
STRIKE PROHIBITION AND WORK REQUIREMENTS	11
ARTICLE 5	12
NON DISCRIMINATION AND EMPLOYEE RIGHTS	12
ARTICLE 6	13
DUES DEDUCTION	13
ARTICLE 7	15
RULES AND REGULATIONS	15
ARTICLE 8	16
SENIORITY	16
ARTICLE 9	19
GRIEVANCE AND ARBITRATION PROCEDURE	19
ARTICLE 10	24
PERSONNEL REDUCTION	24
ARTICLE 11	25
OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES.....	25
ARTICLE 12	26
LEAVES OF ABSENCE.....	26
ARTICLE 13	27
SICK LEAVE	27
ARTICLE 14	31
BEREAVEMENT/JURY DUTY/WITNESS DUTY/MILITARY LEAVE	31
ARTICLE 15	33
INVESTIGATIONS & DISCIPLINE	33
ARTICLE 16	35
WORK WEEK AND OVERTIME.....	35
ARTICLE 17	41
SHIFT EXCHANGE.....	41
ARTICLE 18	44
VACATION LEAVE	44

ARTICLE 19	49
HOLIDAYS	49
ARTICLE 20	51
PAY PLAN.....	51
ARTICLE 21	56
INSURANCE	56
ARTICLE 22	59
PENSION.....	59
ARTICLE 23	60
TRAINING, LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION.....	60
ARTICLE 24	63
EDUCATIONAL REIMBURSEMENT	63
ARTICLE 25	64
WORKERS COMPENSATION	64
ARTICLE 26	67
UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT	67
ARTICLE 27	73
TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT	73
ARTICLE 28	74
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	74
ARTICLE 29	75
UNION BUSINESS.....	75
ARTICLE 30	78
ALCOHOL AND DRUG TESTING	78
ARTICLE 31	86
EMT TO PARAMEDIC PROGRESSION	86
ARTICLE 32	90
WORK ASSIGNMENTS	90
ARTICLE 33	97
QUALITY MEDICAL ASSURANCE/IMPROVEMENT.....	97
ARTICLE 34	102
ON-CALL EMPLOYEES	102
ARTICLE 35	105
STATIONS AND POST	105
ARTICLE 36	109
STAFFING	109
ARTICLE 37	113

SAVINGS CLAUSE	113
ARTICLE 38	114
AGREEMENT TO FUND	114
ARTICLE 39	115
EDUCATIONAL INCENTIVES	115
ARTICLE 40	116
SERVICE STANDARDS	116
ARTICLE 41	117
DURATION.....	117
ARTICLE 42	118
VETERAN’S PREFERENCE	118
ARTICLE 43	119
ENTIRE AGREEMENT	119
ARTICLE 44	120
EXECUTION AND RATIFICATION	120

ARTICLE 1

PREAMBLE

Section 1.1

In accordance with [Chapter 447, Part II of the Florida Statutes](#), this Agreement is entered into by and between Lee County Board of County Commissioners (hereinafter “County” or “Emergency Medical Service”) and the Southwest Florida Professional Firefighters and Paramedics, Local 1826, International Association of Firefighters, Inc. (hereinafter, the “Union”).

Section 1.2

It is the intended purpose of this Agreement to achieve and maintain harmonious relations between the County and the Union. It is contemplated that this Agreement will serve the public interest by maximizing the efficiency and productivity of employees and providing fair treatment and compensation, and provide a procedure for the resolution of claims that this Agreement has been violated by either party.

Section 1.3

The Union further recognizes the responsibilities imposed upon it as the exclusive bargaining agent of the employees who are covered by this Agreement. The Union recognizes that in order for the County to provide maximum opportunities for the continuing employment and good working conditions, the County must be in a strong position, which means it must do business at the lowest possible cost consistent with fair labor standards, a safe work place and quality patient care. Therefore, the Union, through its bargaining position, assumes a joint responsibility in the attainment of the aforementioned goals and agrees it will cooperate with the County through its agents and designated stewards by supporting the County’s efforts to achieve a fair day’s work by the employees covered by this Agreement, to actively combat

absenteeism, slowness, and all other practices by employees which restrict or tend to restrict productivity.

Section 1.4

The use of the male gender in this Contract includes both males and females. The use of the term discretion in this Agreement means at the sole discretion of management.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 2

RECOGNITION

The County hereby recognizes the Union as the exclusive bargaining agent for all employees of the County as certified by the Florida Public Employees Relations Commission in Case No. RC-95-034, Cert. No. 1113, November 1995.

The appropriate bargaining unit is comprised as follows:

INCLUDED: Emergency Medical Technician

Paramedic

EXCLUDED: Public Safety Deputy Director

Emergency Medical Service Operations Manager

Emergency Medical Service Training Manager

Emergency Medical Service Captains

Emergency Medical Service Lieutenants

All employees not specifically included in the above-described unit.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 3

MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

Section 3.1

The management of the Emergency Medical Service (“EMS”) and the direction of its work force, including but not limited to the exclusive rights to determine whether all or any part of the operations covered by this Agreement shall commence, cease, continue, reduce or increase; to remove the operation or any part thereof to any location; to establish new jobs; to abolish or change existing jobs; to increase or decrease the number of jobs or employees; to change materials, processes, products, service, equipment, work schedules and methods of operation; to introduce new materials, equipment, services or facilities; to assign work to be performed; to assign or reassign employees to shifts, increase or abolish shifts and rotate shifts; to require employees to work overtime; to establish and change hiring procedures; to set the work schedules; to transfer employees from job to job or shift to shift, either on a permanent or temporary basis; to evaluate and direct the work of the employees covered by this Agreement; to maintain, enforce, rescind or change EMS policies, procedures, rules of conduct, orders, practices, directives and other operational procedures, policies and guides not inconsistent with this Agreement; to establish the standards of conduct and work of employees; to establish or change operational standards; to determine the services to be provided by EMS; to discipline or discharge employees for just cause; to lay off employees from duty for lack of work or for other operational reasons; to establish requirements for employment; to promote and demote employees and to have complete authority to exercise those rights and powers incidental thereto, including the right to alter or vary past practices as the County may determine to be necessary for the orderly and efficient operation of EMS, shall be vested exclusively in EMS,

subject only to such restrictions governing the exercise of these rights as are expressly and specifically provided in this Agreement.

EMS's failure to exercise any right hereby reserved to it or its exercising any right in a particular way shall not be deemed a waiver of its right to exercise such right nor preclude EMS from exercising the same right in some other way not in conflict with the express provisions of this Agreement.

Section 3.2

There shall be complete regard for the right, responsibilities and prerogative of County management under this Agreement. This Agreement shall be so construed that there shall be no diminution or interference with such rights, responsibilities and prerogatives, except as expressly modified or limited by this Agreement.

Section 3.3

If, in the sole discretion of the County Manager or designee, it is determined that a civil emergency condition exists, including but not limited to riots, civil disorders, hurricane conditions or other catastrophes, the provisions of this Agreement may be suspended by the County Manager during the time of the declared emergency. Wage rates, monetary fringe benefits and just cause provisions shall not be suspended. During these times, bargaining unit employees shall be paid in accordance with County Policy 504.

Section 3.4

It is understood by the Parties that every incidental duty connected with the operations enumerated in job descriptions is not always specifically described and employees, at the discretion of management, may be required to perform other job related duties not specifically contained in their job description.

Section 3.5

Delivery of EMS services in the most efficient, effective, professional and courteous manner is of paramount importance. Accordingly, the Union agrees that it will instruct its members to work diligently in order that the services performed meet the above standards.

Section 3.6

Those inherent managerial functions, prerogatives and policy-making rights which EMS has not expressly modified or restricted by a specific provision of this Agreement are not in any way subject to the grievance and/or arbitration procedure contained herein.

Section 3.7

In the spirit of continued harmonious relations between the employees and EMS, EMS agrees to provide notice to the Union's President and District Vice President, in writing, of any change in EMS policies or rules of general application prior to implementation, which would affect members of the bargaining unit. If the changes affect wages, hours, terms or conditions of employment, absent exigent circumstances, written notice will be provided ten (10) business days before the change.

Section 3.8

Nothing contained in this Management Rights Article shall be interpreted as a waiver of the Union's rights to bargain pursuant to [Chapter 447, Part II, Florida Statutes](#), and interpretive cases. The request to bargain under this Section must be made within ten (10) business days of the notice under Section 3.7 or, if no notice is given, within ten (10) business days of the date the Union became aware of a proposed change that is subject to impact bargaining.

ARTICLE 4

STRIKE PROHIBITION AND WORK REQUIREMENTS

Section 4.1

The Union and bargaining unit members do not assert and will not assert or advocate any right to engage in any concerted work stoppage, slow down or strike, or to withhold services or otherwise hinder the County's operations. Each employee who holds a position with the Union occupies also a position of special trust and responsibility in maintaining and bringing about compliance with this Article and the strike prohibition of [Section 447.505, Florida Statutes](#) and the [Constitution of the State of Florida, Article 1, Section 6](#).

Section 4.2

Any and all employees who violate any provision of the law prohibiting strikes or this Article shall be disciplined, up to and including discharge, by the County, and any such action by the County shall not be grievable or arbitrable under the provisions of Article 9 - Grievance and Arbitration Procedure, except to determine if the employee engaged in a violation of Section 4.1.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 5

NON DISCRIMINATION AND EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

Section 5.1

Neither the County nor the Union shall discriminate against any employee covered by this Agreement because of Union membership or nonmembership.

Section 5.2

Employee rights as provided by local, state and/or federal laws are hereby preserved; provided that allegations of discrimination based on race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, gender or color will be resolved in the appropriate court or administrative agency and not under Article 9, the Grievance and Arbitration Procedure.

Section 5.3

In the spirit of harmonious cooperation between the County and the Union and in order to provide an atmosphere of safe and effective working conditions, the Union, its members, and its leadership shall do everything within their power to assist the County in guaranteeing a workplace free of discrimination based on race, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, gender or color. The Union, its members and leadership shall also insure no retaliation against any employee for bringing forth allegations or cooperating in the investigation of such alleged discrimination.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 6

DUES DEDUCTION

Section 6.1

The County shall deduct from the pay of all Union members who authorize such deduction, the monthly dues payable to the Union. The County reserves the right to bill the Union for the reasonable cost of dues deduction. Both parties agree to follow the provisions provided in Florida Statutes 447.

Section 6.2

Payroll deduction shall be accomplished once a month. The County will only be responsible for deducting dues associated with the paycheck schedule. There is no obligation for the County to deduct dues from specially prepared checks, such as early vacation pay.

Section 6.3

Employees desiring the dues deduction shall authorize it by completing an appropriate form prescribed by the County.

Section 6.4

The Union agrees to indemnify the County, and hold it harmless, from and against any liability, real or asserted, of any kind or nature whatsoever, to any person or party, on account of the County's compliance or efforts to comply with this Article. The County has no obligation to inform employees of the amount of Union dues or change of such dues.

Section 6.5

It shall be the Union's obligation to keep the County at all times informed, by certification by the Secretary/Treasurer of the Union, of the amount of the union dues. Dues will only be deducted for employees who comply with this Article and who authorize deduction of dues.

Section 6.6

The County's monthly transmission of dues money to the Union will be accompanied by a list of names of employees affected, and the amount transmitted with regard to each.

Section 6.7

The County will not deduct or transmit to the Union at any time any monies representing fines, fees, penalties, or special assessments.

Section 6.8

The obligation to commence making deductions on account of any particular authorization shall become effective with respect to the calendar month following the month in which the authorization is received, provided it is received on or before the 20th of the month by the County.

Section 6.9

Any employee may withdraw from membership in the Union at any time upon thirty (30) days written notice to the County and the Union. Upon receipt of such notification, the County shall terminate dues as soon as practical and notify the Union.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 7

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Section 7.1

All rules, regulations, memoranda, Standard Operating Procedures ("SOP") and Medical Protocols affecting EMS or its employees in effect on the effective date of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect, if not specifically in conflict with any Article or Section of this Agreement. Authority to change, modify or delete rules, regulations, memoranda, policies, procedures or protocols rests with the County, so long as it is not in conflict with the terms of the Agreement.

Section 7.2

Any rules, regulations, memoranda, SOP and protocols affecting EMS or its employees issued after the effective date of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect if not specifically in conflict with any Article or Section of this Agreement, so long as it is not in conflict with the terms of the Agreement.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 8

SENIORITY

Section 8.1

Seniority is recognized as continuous full-time service with the Lee County EMS plus those periods specified in Section 2 of this Article. The accrued seniority calculation shall include regular, full-time employment and time in a temporary position for the purposes of new employee training.

Section 8.2

In computing an employee's seniority, the following periods of time shall be included:

- A. Approved leaves of absence.
- B. Any holiday recognized in this Agreement.
- C. Vacation periods.
- D. Periods of temporary layoff for a regular employee up to one (1) year.
- E. Periods of off duty illness or accident up to one (1) year.
- F. Qualifying periods of service in the Armed Forces of the United States.
- G. Leave granted under the Family Medical Leave Act.
- H. Period of time necessary to reach maximum medical improvement arising out of a job related illness or injury.

Section 8.3

Unless otherwise stated, an employee shall be terminated and shall lose all accumulated seniority if:

- A. He/She voluntarily quits.
- B. He/She is discharged for just cause.
- C. He/She has been continuously laid off for a period of more than one (1) year.

- D. He/She fails to return to work on the date designated in a notification to return to work following lay-off, provided that a minimum notice to return to work of fourteen (14) calendar days shall be given. Such notification to return to work shall be by certified mail or telegram delivered to his/her last known address as shown in the County's records.
- E. He/She fails to return to work at the end of any period specified in Section 8.2 unless the employee has notified the Director or designee of his/her inability to return and the Director or designee agrees to extend the employee's absence from work.

Section 8.4

The first six (6) months of employment with Lee County EMS shall be considered probation. An employee will be off probation and considered a regular full-time employee upon receipt of a "meets expectation or above" evaluation, which is performed at six (6) months of employment. The probationary period may be extended up to an additional six (6) months in the sole discretion of the County. During the extension of probation, a person can be evaluated and made a regular employee at any time. During probation, including extension of probation, any disciplinary action taken against the employee that would entitle a regular employee to arbitration under Article 15, Section 15.1 shall not entitle the probationary employee to arbitration but shall not exclude the employee from Union representation. Evaluations should be performed by the end of the sixth (6th) month probationary period and/or by the end of the extended probation period.

Section 8.5

The County shall prepare a seniority list annually during the month of August. The seniority list shall be based on Section 8.1 through 8.3 above. All employees will use the seniority list for sector bid selection. Employees hired on the same date will use a random

number draw to determine seniority, except that employees with veteran's preference shall be placed on the list first. If multiple employees have Veterans Preference, the random number draw will determine their order.

The seniority list shall be used as required for the basis of action under other Articles of this Agreement. Paramedics who demote to EMT will be assigned the next sequential number behind all other EMT's who have the same date of hire. Once complete, this list shall be provided to the Union President and District Vice President. The seniority list shall be conclusively presumed accurate unless challenged by the Union within fifteen (15) days of its receipt by the Principal Officers of Local 1826, IAFF.

Section 8.6

While on layoff, it is the responsibility of the employee to maintain all licenses and certifications required by the job description and state requirements to retain recall rights under this Article. At the employee's option, without compensation, he/she can attend in-service training for the period of time eligible for recall.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 9

GRIEVANCE AND ARBITRATION PROCEDURE

Section 9.1

In a mutual effort to provide a harmonious working relationship between the Parties to this Agreement, it is agreed to and understood by both Parties that there shall be a procedure for the resolution of grievances between the Parties arising from any alleged violation of a specific term of this Agreement.

Section 9.2

Definition. For the purpose of this Agreement, a grievance is defined as a dispute, claim or complaint that any employee or group of employees may have as to the interpretation, application, and/or alleged violation of some express provision of this Agreement which is subject to the Grievance Procedure.

Section 9.3

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to prevent any employee from presenting, at any time, his/her own grievance in person or by a representative to EMS and having such grievances adjusted without the intervention of the bargaining agent; provided the adjustment is not inconsistent with the terms of this Agreement. If the grieved employee requests Union representation, the grievant will notify EMS. It is the responsibility of the County to notify the Union of any meeting called for the resolution of such grievances.

Section 9.4

- A. Every effort will be made by the Parties to settle all grievances as soon as possible. The time limits set forth shall be strictly complied with, and can only be extended by mutual agreement of the parties in writing. Any grievance shall

be considered settled at the last level considered if the grievant fails to timely process his/her grievance.

- B. The Union will not be required to process grievances for employees who are not members of the Union, but may be present at any meeting where the grievance may be settled. The County shall notify the union of any such meeting at least thirty six (36) hours prior.

Section 9.5

All grievances, as outlined above, must be in writing and must contain the following information:

- A. Article and Section of the Agreement alleged to have been violated;
- B. A full statement of the grievance, giving facts, dates and times of events, and specific violations with the remedy or adjustment desired;
- C. Signature of aggrieved employee and date signed; and
- D. Signature of the Union representative (Principal Officer, District Vice President or Assistant DVP) if the grievant requests Union representation.
- E. Any grievance not containing the information set forth above may be processed through the grievance procedure, but shall not be subject to arbitration absent the mutual consent of the parties.

Section 9.6

“Class Action Grievances”

“Class Action Grievances” shall be filed in the same manner as any other grievance. A “Class Action Grievance” must be signed by an elected union representative. “Class Action Grievances” may only be filed on a matter that directly effects 10 or more members of the bargaining unit.

Section 9.7

Grievances shall be processed in accordance with the following procedures:

- STEP 1: The grievant shall present in writing their grievance to the Chief and Deputy Chiefs or their designee, within ten (10) business days of the occurrence of the action, or when the employee or the Union became aware giving rise to the grievance. Discussions will be informal for the purpose of settling differences in the simplest and most effective manner. The Chief or designee shall reach a decision and communicate in writing to the grievant in ten (10) business days of the filing of the grievance.
- STEP 2: If the grievance is not settled at the first step, the grievant or the union representative, within ten (10) business days of the answer in STEP 1, may present it to the Director of Public Safety and Director of Human Resources. The Directors shall investigate the grievance and may conduct a hearing or meeting between the Directors, the Director's representative(s) as needed, and the grievant, and up to two Union representatives. The Director of Public Safety or designee shall notify the aggrieved employee and Union of his/her decision in writing no later than ten (10) business days following the submission of the grievance at step 2. Failure of the Director or designee to timely respond shall be considered a denial of the grievance and shall entitle the grievant to appeal to STEP 3.
- STEP 3: If a grievance, as defined in this Article, has not been satisfactorily resolved within the grievance procedures, only the Union may submit the grievance to arbitration for binding disposition, within ten (10)

business days after the response is received at STEP 2 of the Grievance Procedure, request a panel of seven (7) Arbitrators from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. A copy of the written request will be provided to the Director or designee.

Section 9.8

Upon receipt of the list, an Arbitrator shall be selected from such panel by alternately striking names from this list (the Union shall strike first) until the last name is reached.

Section 9.9

The following general rules are applicable to this Article:

- A. Any grievance involving suspension or termination must proceed directly to Step 2 and be filed within ten (10) business days of the notice of corrective action of suspension or termination with the Directors or designee.
- B. The Union or employee may abandon or settle a grievance. Grievances settled under this Article shall be non-precedent setting and cannot be offered as evidence or precedent in any subsequent arbitration case unless the Union and the County mutually agree in writing that the grievance is precedent setting.
- C. A grievance may be amended or supplemented once after the initial management response at STEP 1 (STEP 2 if it involves a suspension or termination) without the written consent of the Director or designee.
- D. The Arbitrator shall not have the power to add to, subtract from, modify, or alter the terms of this Agreement.
- E. The Arbitrator shall have no power to establish wage scales, rates of pay for new jobs, or to change any wage, except if he is specifically empowered to do so by both Parties.

- F. The Arbitrator shall have only the power to rule on grievances arising under this Agreement, as defined under Section 9.2 and which comply with the requirements of Section 9.4 (A), Section 9.5 and the time limits established by this Article.
- G. The Arbitrator shall determine each dispute in accordance with the terms of this Agreement and in accord with a Submission Agreement, if one can be agreed to. If there is no Submission Agreement, then the Arbitrator will rely on the grievance presented or as amended or supplemented prior to the written decision of the Director or designee (STEP 2 if the grievance involves a suspension or discharge).
- H. The Arbitrator shall deduct any unemployment compensation received by the grievant from back wages in a suspension or discharge case.
- I. The Arbitrator's sole authority with regard to monetary awards is to make the employee whole for all lost wages and other lost benefits of a monetary value. No other damages of any type whatsoever may be awarded.

Section 9.10

There shall be no appeal from the Arbitrator's decision; it shall be final and binding on the Union and on all bargaining unit employees and on the County; provided, however, that the Arbitrator's decision is not outside or beyond the scope of the Arbitrator's jurisdiction and authority as set forth in this Agreement.

Section 9.11

The costs for the Arbitrator's services shall be borne by the losing party. Expenses for witnesses, attorneys and requested transcripts shall be borne solely by the party requesting and/or utilizing them.

ARTICLE 10

PERSONNEL REDUCTION

Section 10.1

In the event of a reduction in force, probationary employees will be the first laid off. The County will then consider a number of relevant factors in determining selections for remaining layoffs, with the public interest to be of prime importance. Factors to be considered include:

- A. Conduct/disciplinary record for the last five (5) years;
- B. Seniority; and
- C. Veteran's Preference.

As between two (2) employees, if the County determines factors A and B are relatively equal at the time of layoff, then C shall prevail.

Section 10.2

Recall will be in reverse order of layoffs. No new bargaining unit employees will be hired by the County until all members of the bargaining unit who were laid off in the prior twelve (12) months are offered recall.

Section 10.3

For purposes of this Article, layoff and recall will be by classification. The County will declare a surplus in a classification and the provisions of Section 10.1 and 10.2 will then apply. For purposes of this Article, Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic are considered separate classifications.

ARTICLE 11

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Section 11.1

Employees shall at all times bear in mind that they are seen by the general public as personnel of the County and shall, at all times, conduct themselves in a manner so as to bring no discredit or unfavorable publicity to the County. The primary focus of this Section is employee conduct. It is not intended to address an employee's engaging in political activity nor protected First Amendment free speech rights.

Section 11.2

Employees accepting employment with any other employer while employed by the County shall do so only so long as the employment is not a conflict of interest, and shall follow County Policy 206 and County Policy 307. In such instances, the employee's primary obligation shall continue to be to the County and he/she shall arrange his/her affairs accordingly. An employee must give a written notification to the Director or designee within two (2) weeks of accepting employment but not later than commencement of outside employment. Outside employment must not prevent the employee from being mentally and physically able to work when the employee reports for duty with the County.

Section 11.3

No outside employment shall create a conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest in accordance with [Section 112.313, Florida Statutes](#), or County Policy 206 and County Policy 307.

ARTICLE 12

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Section 12.1

Leave of absence shall be governed by Lee County Policy 404 as adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. Such leave shall be independent of any leave available under FMLA Policy 405. Military leave shall be governed by Article 14.

Section 12.2

Family & Medical Leave shall be governed by Lee County Policy 405 and 405A as adopted by BOCC. Employees who exhaust Family and Medical Leave but have a reasonable expectation to return to work may request a leave of absence in accordance with County Policy 404. Administrative leave without pay may also be used at the County's discretion should additional time be necessary.

Employees who are unable to make benefit payments during a period of leave may contact the Human Resources Benefits Office to coordinate a repayment plan. Employees who do not return to regular, full-time employment will be responsible for any applicable costs.

The County will abide by all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 13

SICK LEAVE

Section 13.1

All regular full-time employees regularly scheduled on a fifty-six (56)-hour work week shall accrue five point six (5.6) hours of sick leave with pay per pay period. All regular full-time employees regularly scheduled on a forty-two (42)-hour work week shall accrue four point two (4.2) hours of sick leave with pay per pay period. All regular full-time employees regularly scheduled on a forty (40)-hour work week shall accrue four point zero (4.0) hours of sick leave with pay per pay period.

Section 13.2

Sick leave is accrued after the last day in the pay period. No limit is placed on the number of days that may be accumulated.

Section 13.3

For employees who were employed by the County prior to October 8, 1998, upon separation of employment with the County, employees will be paid for all available sick leave accrued prior to October 8, 1998, according to the following schedule:

- A. For employees with greater than six (6) years, the payment will be calculated at the rate of fifty percent (50%) of the current hourly base rate for the employee times the number of hours sold.
- B. For employees with less than six (6) years, the payment will be calculated at the rate of twenty-five percent (25%) of the current hourly base rate for the employee times the number of hours sold.

Section 13.4

Paid sick leave is not to be taken prior to the time of its accrual. Sick leave may only be utilized for employee sickness, sickness in the employee's immediate family (spouse, child or parent living in the immediate household or where the employee's presence is required to attend to a child under parental custodial care outside the immediate household), necessary medical appointments, injury, disability, pregnancy, including post-birth for the female to the extent considered medically necessary by her doctor, or for quarantine by health authorities or a physician and as permitted for an employee's own serious illness by Article 13, Section 13.5. Employees may be required to supply proof of sickness, injury or disability, including the employee's spouse, child or parent and the appropriate proof that the employee's presence is required, by submitting, within five (5) business days of a written request, at their own expense, a treating physician's statement or prescription receipt:

- A. When there is a pattern or practice of sick leave usage; or
- B. When there is a basis to form a reasonable suspicion that sick leave is being abused.

Employees may be sent to a physician of the County's choosing for such purpose, in which event the Employee Health Services will pay the expenses thereof. Any employee sent to a physician selected by the County must agree to permit Employees Health Services to talk to the physician in reference only to the reason an employee was sent to a physician of the County's choosing and obtain only information regarding the reason an employee was sent by the County and if the employee's illness/injury is a danger to fellow employees or the public and about work limitations, and expected date of return to work.

Section 13.5

To receive full sick leave pay on a day of absence that qualifies for sick leave, the employee must make the notification provided in Policy 202 at least ninety (90) minutes prior to his/her starting time of the inability to report to work. Failure to provide the minimum of ninety (90) minutes notification shall result in one (1) hour loss of sick pay for each half-hour increment of no call-in prior to starting time. An employee who is absent and fails to notify the supervisor at least ninety (90) minutes prior to the start of their shift, shall be docked two (2) hours of sick leave for every hour of unreported absence during the shift in addition to the three (3) hours charged for failure to call in ninety (90) minutes prior to the beginning of the employee's shift. Absence due to doctors' appointments or other foreseeable causes must be approved prior to the use of sick leave; provided, however, absent an emergency, employees working any schedule other than day time Monday through Friday must schedule medical appointments during non-work hours. Nothing in this Section will prohibit the County from taking normal disciplinary action.

Section 13.6

Bargaining unit employees may participate in the County-wide sick leave pool (Lee County Policies and Procedures Manual 401:2) (See Attachment 1).

Section 13.7

Employees who call in sick but do not have accrued available sick leave hours must utilize available accrued compensatory or vacation hours to cover any portion of the absence. Regardless of whether the employee has received pay for the leave, the use of leave in this manner is just cause for discipline.

Section 13.8

Annually during HR benefits open enrollment, employees shall be eligible to convert and utilize up to three (3) accrued but unused sick leave days into up to three (3) vacation leave days to be utilized in accordance with Lee County Policy 402: Vacation Leave.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 14

BEREAVEMENT/JURY DUTY/WITNESS DUTY/MILITARY LEAVE

Section 14.1 Bereavement

A regular employee shall be granted, upon request, up to seventy-two (72) hours of bereavement leave with pay, due to the death of his/her spouse, child, or parent. For the employee's sibling, grandparent, grandchild, step parent, stepchild, stepbrother or stepsister; the employee's spouse's child, foster child, parent, guardian, sibling, grandparent, grandchild or for any person for whom the employee is the legal guardian, bereavement leave with pay shall be granted, upon request, up to forty-eight (48) hours. Such request must be submitted to the shift commander prior to the leave.

An employee requesting bereavement leave shall provide a statement in writing to his/her immediate supervisor giving the name of the deceased and his/her relationship to the employee, as well as the location (city and state) of the memorial. This information shall be attached to the leave request form kept in the official personnel record for the employee located in the Department of Human Resources. Additional bereavement leave may be provided by the County upon request by the employee. Each situation will be evaluated on its own merit and shall set no precedent on other requests.

Section 14.2 Jury Duty

When a regular employee is required to serve on jury duty, the employee shall be relieved of responsibility for his or her regular work shift and the County shall pay the employee the amount that would have been received had the employee worked his/her regular work shift. All employees who are required to serve on jury duty shall report to their supervisor that they have been subpoenaed for jury duty within twenty-four (24) hours of receiving such notice,

when possible, but in no event later than the beginning of the next work shift. When an employee is released or is excused from jury duty for the remainder of a work day or permanently, the employee shall, as soon as possible, notify the on-duty supervisor of availability for work. Payments received by the employee for jury duty, except for meals, travel and lodging expenses, shall be endorsed to the County.

Section 14.3 Witness Duty

Employees who are required or requested to attend any legal proceeding on duty as the result of the work they perform for the County, or are subpoenaed to any legal proceeding involving or concerning their work with the County, shall be paid their regular hourly rate of pay and be relieved from normal work responsibilities until they are released from said legal proceeding, provided their personal interests are not adverse to the County. In the case of an off duty obligation to attend a legal proceeding arising out of work performed for the County where the employee's personal interests are not adverse to the County, the employee shall be paid his/her regular hourly rate of pay for all hours spent attending the legal obligation with a two (2) hour minimum. It shall be the employee's responsibility to notify his/her scheduling supervisor and provide a copy of the legal documentation. For any court appearance, it shall be the employee's responsibility to document the following: time arrived, time released, and a signature from the party requiring their attendance. The County will provide the form for this documentation. Payments received by the employee for witness duty, except for meals, travel and lodging expenses, shall be endorsed to the County. All employees who are representing the County in any legal proceeding will wear their EMS issued daytime uniform.

Section 14.4 Military Leave

Military Leave shall be in accordance with federal and state law as may be amended from time to time.

ARTICLE 15

INVESTIGATIONS & DISCIPLINE

Section 15.1

Disciplinary actions of the County shall be subject to arbitration.

Section 15.2

The County retains the right to discipline any employee with just cause. The County will follow a progressive discipline approach when assigning disciplinary actions and may include verbal warnings, written warnings, suspensions without pay and discharge. Discipline must be proposed within ten (10) business days of the time the County completes the investigation. An investigation shall not take longer than thirty (30) business days except in extenuating circumstances, which as example include unavailability of witnesses due to FMLA or military leave, in which case the Union will be notified of the anticipated completion date. The Union will be notified upon commencement and completion of the investigation.

Section 15.3

In determining the appropriateness of discipline, the County shall consider the seriousness of offenses; the employee's work performance; conduct and disciplinary record; and any other factor relevant to fair and appropriate discipline. It is the intention of the County to use progressive discipline in an effort to rehabilitate employees. However, where circumstances warrant, immediate termination with just cause may be utilized.

Section 15.4

Except in exceptional circumstances (i.e., when the employee's presence or continued presence on the County property may create a danger to County employees or the public), an employee shall have the right to an informal hearing prior to the issuance of discipline of suspension without pay, disciplinary demotion or termination.

At least thirty-six (36) hours prior to any hearing, the employee and the Union will receive written notice of the time and the place of the hearing. The notice will include:

- A. The reasons for the proposal of disciplinary action under consideration; and
- B. The general facts which form the basis of the proposed disciplinary action.

Union representation consisting of up to two representatives may be present during any such hearing.

If no disciplinary action is warranted, no record of the alleged charge(s) will be placed in the employee's personnel files.

Section 15.5

Whenever a bargaining unit member is being interviewed the following will be adhered to:

1. Written notice will be provided to the Bargaining Unit member no less than 24 hours in advance of a meeting, which will be made to the employee's County email, with a phone call to the employee's primary telephone number on file. For the purpose of requesting leave under Article 29, the Union shall have the right to request Union Time Bank hours within this window to be present for the meeting.
2. All interviews must be conducted at a reasonable time of day, preferably when the bargaining unit member is on duty.
3. Bargaining unit members must be permitted a 15-minute rest period every 2 hours.
4. All parties will behave professionally.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 16

WORK WEEK AND OVERTIME

Section 16.1

Employees in the classifications Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and Paramedic shall work one of the following regular schedules:

- A. Twenty-four (24) hours on duty followed by forty-eight (48) hours off duty in a repeating rotating schedule.
- B. Twelve (12) hours on duty followed by twelve (12) hours off duty with the number of days as scheduled by EMS Operations. This schedule will result in the employee being regularly assigned to work thirty-six (36) and forty-eight (48) hour weeks, twelve (12)-hours on duty followed by twelve (12) hours off duty in a 3/2/2 rotating schedule.
- C. Twenty-four (24) hours on duty followed by seventy-two (72) hours off duty in a repeating rotating schedule.
- D. If any other shifts are started other than as set forth above, the County will advise the Union immediately upon management's decision.

Section 16.2

For purposes of this Agreement, work includes regularly scheduled duty shifts as outlined in Section 16.1, as well as continuation and non-continuation overtime.

Section 16.3

Regardless of shift assignment, employees who work in excess of forty (40) hours in any week, shall be paid time and one-half (1-1/2) their regular hourly rate of pay for every hour actually worked in excess of forty (40) hours. Leave time, whether paid or unpaid, will not be counted as time worked for overtime purposes where an employee works outside of, or above

and beyond, his or her regularly scheduled work hours. An employee shall be paid at an overtime rate for regularly scheduled work hours in excess of forty (40) hours in a week even if he or she utilizes vacation leave or compensatory time in the same week.

Section 16.4

The work week will begin at 07:00 hours Thursday and end one hundred sixty-eight (168) hours later.

Section 16.5

The Union agrees to allow the County to implement the seven (7) minute rounding rule associated with an employee's scheduled start and end times.

Section 16.6

Employees who report to work late will receive no pay for the time missed, subject to the rounding rule in Article 16.5. Employees stopping to assist an emergency incident that can be verified will not be penalized and will report to work as soon as situation permits. Such delays will require the employee to notify Shift Command and/or designee prior to the start time of their individual shift.

Section 16.7

Employees who have actually left their assigned duty station after completing a shift and who are notified after leaving that they must return to work in order to work another shift shall receive a minimum of two (2) hours pay at the appropriate rate. This minimum does not apply to an employee's recall to work to correct or complete daily work product, to administer disciplinary action, or to answer routine telephone inquiries from a supervisor related to work the employee performed. Thus, the minimum does not apply if the employee has failed to complete their work at the time they leave or return, for example, to return keys to an ambulance taken by mistake. The employees called in for an overtime shift from off-duty and are sent home due to scheduling error, as well as employees who have overtime cancelled less than one

hour before the designated start time, shall be paid two (2) hours pay at the appropriate rate. Employees called in to a required meeting (quality assurance review, investigation, EVOG practical sessions, etc.) shall be paid a minimum of two (2) hours at the appropriate rate. For virtual meetings or telephone calls, employees will be paid based on the duration of the meeting, but will be paid no less than fifteen (15) minutes.

Section 16.8

Continuation overtime is defined as a holdover at the end of a regularly assigned shift until such time as another employee reports to duty. Absent reasons acceptable to management, continuation overtime will normally be assigned to the employee performing the function during his/her regular shift. Continuation overtime greater than ninety (90) minutes will be considered and paid as mandatory overtime. Employees working a 48-hour shift may not exceed a one (1) hour continuation maximum.

Section 16.9

Non-continuation overtime will be offered and then assigned in a fair and equitable manner such that each qualified employee is given an equal opportunity to work all overtime.

On-call employees are not eligible for mandatory overtime pay as described in the balance of this section.

The County reserves the right to offer mandatory overtime pay for voluntary overtime assignments. The failure to offer mandatory overtime pay for a voluntary overtime assignment does not prevent the use of the rest of this section. Employees who volunteer to work these assignments shall be paid double their regular hourly rate of pay for all hours worked on this voluntary assignment.

The County reserves the right to assign mandatory overtime in a rotating basis starting with the least senior employee in the classification where overtime is required on a rotation basis only if no qualified employee in any bargaining unit job classification can be found to

work the overtime. A running list of this rotation will be maintained to prepare an employee for impending overtime. Employees forced to work mandatory overtime shall be paid double their regular hourly rate of pay for all hours worked on mandatory overtime.

If an employee is forced to work mandatory overtime at a different duty station following their assigned shift with no break in continuous service, the employee shall receive no lapse of pay during transfer to their next assigned duty station. Employees who feel that they have lost pay and/or related benefits due to unfair, inequitable or an incorrect overtime offer/assignment may address the issue through the Grievance and Arbitration Article outlined elsewhere in this Agreement.

Employees shall not be permitted (outside the conditions outlined in Article 3, Section 3.3 or as a result of continuation overtime) to work more than forty-eight (48) hours in any rolling seventy-two (72) hour period as the result of non-continuation overtime or shift exchange. It is a mutual responsibility of the employee and the supervisor to advise/determine the number of hours worked.

Section 16.10

Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted as a guarantee of any number of hours of work per day or per week.

Section 16.11

EMS employees assigned to twelve (12) or twenty-four (24) hour shifts, shall be permitted to rest or sleep between calls providing all regular shift duties, including training, have been completed for the shift.

Section 16.12

Compensatory time off is paid time off the job which is earned and accrued by an employee in lieu of immediate cash payment for employment in excess of the statutory hours for which overtime compensation is required by section 7 of the FLSA. Compensatory time is

paid at a rate of one and one-half hours for each hour of employment for which overtime compensation is required by section 7 of the FLSA,. The Director or his/her designee has the sole discretion to determine when compensatory time will be offered, but the Director will not eliminate all compensatory time altogether and will administer compensatory time in accordance with SOP 202 and this Article. The County will provide 30 days' notice of any change to SOP 202, and the Union may seek to bargain any negotiable impact in accordance with Section 3.8.

An employee is not required to accept the offer of compensatory time off, in which case overtime compensation will be paid in accordance with article 16.3. When compensatory time off is offered, the employee must inform his/her supervisor of the election of overtime compensation prior to the start of the shift, or when signing up.

No County employee may accrue more than 160 hours of actual overtime hours worked (accrued at time and one-half equal 240 total compensable hours) in a fiscal year. Any overtime hours worked in excess of 160 hours in a fiscal year will be paid as overtime compensation in accordance with article 16.3. Any compensatory time not used by the end of the last full pay period in September will be paid out in the next payroll period. Additionally, all compensatory time must be used prior to the effective date of any change in the employee's straight-time hourly rate from what it was when the compensatory time was earned. If the compensatory time is not used by the effective date, then it will be paid out in the next payroll period prior to any pay increase.

Any employee who has accrued compensatory time off at the time of his or her separation of employment with the County will be paid for the unused compensatory time at their current regular rate of compensation. Employees who have requested the use of their compensatory time off shall be permitted to use such time in accordance with Article 18 of this agreement.

Accrued Comp time may not be used during the annual vacation bid process.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 17

SHIFT EXCHANGE

Section 17.1

The trading of time between employees will be permitted in accordance with the following provisions:

- A. EMT's may only exchange shifts with each other. Paramedics may only exchange shifts with each other.
- B. All exchanges must be requested electronically.
- C. Shift exchanges shall be unlimited with the following exceptions: No employee may be off duty for more than seven (7) consecutive twenty-four (24) hour shifts or 14 consecutive twelve (12) hour shift exchanges except for educational purposes and in regular swaps arranged during months when both parties are scheduled to work in Boca, Alva, CFR, St. James City, Sanibel, future assignments on fire department ALS engines.
- D. Employees will be responsible for all record keeping of proper exchanges as permitted by the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- E. Shift exchanges for employees reporting late for work will not be permitted.
- F. It shall be the sole responsibility of an employee working for another employee as the result of a swap to make contact with any other employee who may be affected by their arriving late at the next shift as the result of a swap. This contact shall be made in each and every case and shall be made as early in the shift prior as possible. If the employee they are relieving is unable to stay over and cover for the employee involved in the swap, that employee shall bear the sole responsibility to contact another employee to come in early for them so as

to allow them to make their second shift on time. Under no circumstances shall employees be paid overtime for holding over for another employee who is late to arrive at their station due to a shift exchange. Employees who develop a pattern of causing their fellow employees problems related to their failure to arrange hold-over coverage, may, at the discretion of the County, have their ability to enter into shift exchanges suspended for a period as determined by Management.

- G. Shift exchange for shift exchanges are not permitted except in situations where the employee is unable to cover the swapped shift due to situations as outlined in (17.5). In such situations, the employee who is scheduled to cover the shift must get approval from the on-duty Captain prior to arranging the shift exchange for shift exchange.
- H. If an employee is working a swap and has reached the end of the hours outlined in the swap then the employee will be paid overtime in accordance with this Contract.

Section 17.2

An employee scheduled to work a shift exchange is not eligible for any type of paid leave.

Section 17.3

In the event an employee scheduled to work for another does not report to work, the employee who agrees to cover the hours as provided in Section 17.2 will be charged vacation leave at a rate of one point five (1.5) hours for each hour that the employee failed to work (eighteen (18) hours for failure to report on a twelve (12)-hour shift and thirty-six (36) hours for failure to report on a twenty-four (24)-hour shift). If mandatory call-in is required to cover the vacancy, the employee will be charged double time against their vacation hours. If vacation

leave is exhausted, it will be deducted from “first earned” hours of future accrual. The County policy relating to tardiness, call-ins and absenteeism under Article 13 will be applicable. Employees on bereavement are exempt from their exchange obligation. They will be charged normal bereavement time at the rate of hour for hour and will not be charged vacation time or bank time. If an employee is out due to illness or injury and can provide proof of the same by a primary health care physician, clinic, ER visit or admission to the hospital then the swap time will be covered as sick time for the employee when they are scheduled for that swap.

Section 17.4

The County will not be responsible for any monetary loss incurred by any employee due to the failure of an employee to pay back shift exchange time for any reason. Employees owed shift exchanges must get exchanges paid back within one (1) month of the promotion of either employee involved in the shift exchange or forfeit the return exchange, provided that any return exchange after promotion will not require the County to incur any overtime nor will the County be required to change any schedule in order to accommodate a return exchange.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 18

VACATION LEAVE

Section 18.1

Regular, full-time employees on the active (*i.e.*, receiving a regular paycheck) payroll shall accrue vacation hours according to the following schedule:

LENGTH OF SERVICE	ANNUAL VACATION HOURS		ACCRUAL PER PAY PERIOD	
	42	56	42	56
0 Year	126.0	168.0	4.85	6.46
1 Years	130.2	173.60	5.01	6.68
2 Years	134.4	179.2	5.17	6.89
3 Years	138.6	184.8	5.33	7.09
4 Years	142.8	190.4	5.49	7.32
5 Years	151.2	201.6	5.82	7.75
6 Years	155.4	207.2	5.98	7.97
7 Years	159.6	212.8	6.14	8.18
8 Years	163.8	218.4	6.30	8.40
9 Years	168.0	224.0	6.46	8.62
10 Years	176.4	235.2	6.78	9.05
11 Years	180.6	240.8	6.95	9.26
12 Years	184.8	246.4	7.11	9.48
13 Years	189.0	252.0	7.27	9.69
14 Years	193.2	257.6	7.43	9.91
15 Years	201.6	268.8	7.75	10.34
16 Years	205.8	274.4	7.92	10.55
17 Years	210.0	280.0	8.08	10.77
18 Years	214.2	285.6	8.24	10.98
19 Years	218.4	291.2	8.40	11.20
20 Years	226.8	302.4	8.72	11.63
21 Years	231.0	308.0	8.88	11.85
22 Years	235.2	313.6	9.05	12.06
23 Years	239.4	319.2	9.21	12.28
24 Years	243.6	324.8	9.37	12.49
25+ Years	252.0	336.0	9.69	12.92

Employees accrue vacation hours from their first day of full-time employment. It is available for use upon recording.

Section 18.2

Employees may select vacation dates for Annual Bid up to a maximum number of hours equal to their annual accrual rate. Annual Vacation Bids can be individual dates, consecutive dates, or any combination of shifts. Requests for Annual Vacation must be received in the Administrative Office between November 1 and November 15. These bids will be submitted electronically and compiled on a database to be awarded by seniority basis. It will be the employee's responsibility to ensure they have accrued the hours of leave prior to the actual time off. If the employee does not have the leave time available, the employee must report to work. Hours awarded to an employee during the annual bid process must be used as vacation time or cancelled by the employee, these hours may not be switched to compensatory time.

Section 18.3

Individual vacation dates will be considered on a first request/first honored basis after the Captains have completed the annual bid process and notified personnel of dates approved. These requests must be submitted electronically. Employees must have the vacation hours accrued at the time of the request. The EMS Shift Captain or designee will respond to non-annual vacation requests via e-mail or the electronic scheduling system within twenty-four (24) hours of employees' submission.

As long as the maximum number of people off on vacation as set forth in Section 18.5 has not been exceeded and the employee has vacation time available, the EMS Shift Captain or designee can approve vacation leave with at least 96 hours notice. Vacation requests may be considered if requested with less than 96 hours' notice, but will be approved or denied based on the operational needs of the Department. If approved, the date of the request shall be considered granted on the date that supervisor or the EMS Operations Manager electronically approves the request form submitted by the employee.

Section 18.4

Vacation leave must be taken in minimums of twelve (12)-hour increments. In the event Union Time Bank is used for a portion of a shift, an employee may take less than the minimum number of vacation hours above to complete the shift.

Section 18.5

Employees who request vacation hours described in Article 18.2 or 18.3, shall be considered “locked in” for those hours once approved, unless a voluntary change to the shift assignment is made.

The following table outlines the maximum number of employees allowed off per 12 hour increment on vacation leave as described in Article 18.2 or 18.3:

	<u>Number of Employees Off Per Day</u>		
	<u>Paramedic/EMT</u>	<u>Paramedic</u>	<u>EMT</u>
24 hour shift	2	3	3
12 hour day shift	1	2	2
12 hour night shift	1	1	1
Paramedic assigned to helicopter	1		
Paramedic or EMT assigned to MIH	1		
Paramedic assigned to critical care	1		

Section 18.6

Employees shall not carry forward more than twelve (12) normally scheduled workweeks for their position of accrued vacation leave into the next calendar year. An employee may accrue more than the maximum allowed carryover vacation hours during a

calendar year, however, all excess vacation hours will be forfeited if not used by the last date of the first full pay period in the next calendar year. Each employee is responsible for monitoring his/her accrued hours.

Section 18.7

No employee shall be granted Annual Vacation Leave during the same holiday period in two (2) consecutive years. For the purposes of this Section, holiday periods shall be defined as follows:

HOLIDAY	VACATION PERIOD INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION
Fourth of July	July 1 st through July 7 th
Thanksgiving	4 th Tuesday in November through the 4 th Sunday in November
Christmas	December 21 st through December 28 th
New Year's	December 29 th through January 3 rd

Employees who are granted Annual Vacation Leave during one of the periods listed above will not be granted Annual Vacation Leave in the same period in the following year, unless no other employee requests vacation dates during these periods.

Section 18.8

Employees who are moved to another shift by management to fill an open position and have been approved for vacation leave prior to the change of shift, shall be granted the same time frame of vacation leave on their new shift. Vacation leave will be honored even if granting the leave causes more employees to be off for that time period than would otherwise be permitted.

Section 18.9

Employees, including non-probationary employees who are dismissed for reasons other than theft, or who resign or retire, shall be paid up to a maximum of five hundred (500) hours of vacation upon dismissal, resignation or retirement. Employees that elect to cash out accrued vacation either at the entry of DROP and/or at the time of retirement, are limited to a total maximum payment of 500 hours vacation leave. Employees who die while employed with the County shall have all accrued vacation hours earned but not yet taken at the time of their death, paid to their designated beneficiary. Such compensation shall be paid at the employee's current rate of pay at the time of separation.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 19

HOLIDAYS

Section 19.1

Employees are entitled to the following paid holidays on an annual basis:

New Year's Eve Day	December 31
New Year's Day	January 1
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Fourth Thursday in November
Day after Thanksgiving	Fourth Friday in November
Christmas Eve Day	December 24
Christmas Day	December 25
Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday	Third Monday in January

Employees will be entitled to receive paid holidays for any other holidays not identified above that the Board of County Commissioners designate as an additional holiday.

Section 19.2

Employees on an unpaid leave of absence or on layoff are not eligible to receive holiday pay. Absence for any reason other than approved vacation, bereavement or civic duty on the day before the holiday, the holiday, or the day after the holiday will result in the loss of holiday pay. Employees that work the holiday will receive holiday pay.

Section 19.3

Employees will be paid holiday pay on the average number of hours regularly scheduled to work per week as set forth below:

- A. Forty (40) hours average per week - Eight (8) hours
- B. Forty-Two (42) hours average per week - Ten (10) hours
- C. Fifty-six (56) hours average per week - Twelve (12) hours

If an employee works on a scheduled holiday, he/she will receive time and one-half (1-1/2) for all hours worked on the holiday up to the maximum set forth in subsections (A.) through (C.) above, in addition to the holiday pay set forth above. All hours worked on a holiday in excess of the hours set forth in (A.) through (C.) above will be paid at the straight-time rate.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 20

PAY PLAN

Section 20.1

Employees will be paid according to the same schedule as all other County employees.

Section 20.2

Employees on each pay day will receive, in addition to their check, a statement showing gross pay, deductions and net pay. Federal and Social Security taxes will be deducted automatically. No other deductions will be made unless required or allowed by law, contract or employee obligation. Employees may elect to have additional voluntary deductions taken from their pay only if they authorize the deductions in writing, and if the additional deductions are approved by the County.

Employee's pay statements will be provided electronically by the County.

Section 20.3

Employees who discover a mistake in their paycheck, should notify Public Safety Fiscal immediately. In the case of a mistake, the error will be processed in the next payroll processing period after notification.

Section 20.4

- A. The minimum and maximum range for classifications within the bargaining unit are contained within Section 20.5. The hourly rate is based on the employee's annual wage divided by 2,912 for fifty-six (56) hour workweek employees, the employee's annual wage divided by 2,184 for forty-two hour workweek employees, and an annual wage divided by 2,080 for forty (40) hour workweek employees. The pay plan is fixed for the term of the contract.

- B. The County reserves the right and discretion to slot a newly hired paramedic in an appropriate step up to step 10 based upon education, experience, skill, and training. An employee's years of service under this section is calculated based on the employee's last full-time date of hire, to include time in a temporary position for the purposes of training on a full-time basis and any additional steps granted by the County pursuant to the preceding sentence for newly-hired paramedics. Years of service will be rounded up to the whole year (i.e. 8.01 years equals 9 years), so long as the employee has completed six (6) months of service. Employees who move to an on-call position and subsequently return to full-time employment, and remain in good standing with the County (i.e. meet service, training requirements), will be placed in the step based on their previous full-time experience; time in an on-call position will not contribute toward the step calculation unless granted additional steps by the County as allowed for newly-hired paramedics.
- C. Effective in the first full pay period after the agreement has been ratified by both parties, employees will move to the next step in the plan in Article 20.5. The pay plan in Article 20.5 will become effective in the first full pay period following ratification of this agreement by both parties.
- D. For Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and for Fiscal Year 2026-2027, effective with the first full pay period following October 1st, employees will move to the next step in the plan.
- E. Each step level calculation is based on base salary only, and does not include adders for assignments, educational incentives, or other adders described in this agreement. These adders, in addition to the employee's base pay, may exceed the maximum of the range.

- F. Employees covered by this agreement will receive only the compensation and increases, if any, set forth in this Agreement. No employee shall receive a merit, cost of living increase, general wage increase, or any other compensation provided to non-bargaining unit employees.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

Section 20.5

The pay plan for bargaining unit employee is as follows:

Step	EMT (7.5% + 2.5% Step)	Paramedic (17% +2.5% Step)
1	\$ 48,248.52	\$ 63,000.00
2	\$ 49,454.74	\$ 64,575.00
3	\$ 50,691.10	\$ 66,189.38
4	\$ 51,958.38	\$ 67,844.11
5	\$ 53,257.34	\$ 69,540.21
6	\$ 54,588.78	\$ 71,278.72
7	\$ 55,953.49	\$ 73,060.69
8	\$ 57,352.32	\$ 74,887.20
9	\$ 58,786.13	\$ 76,759.38
10	\$ 60,255.79	\$ 78,678.37
11	\$ 61,762.19	\$ 80,645.33
12	\$ 63,306.24	\$ 82,661.46
13	\$ 64,888.90	\$ 84,728.00
14	\$ 66,511.11	\$ 86,846.20
15	\$ 68,173.90	\$ 89,017.35
16	\$ 69,878.24	\$ 91,242.78
17	\$ 71,625.20	\$ 93,523.85
18	\$ 73,415.83	\$ 95,861.95
19	\$ 75,251.22	\$ 98,258.50
20	\$ 77,132.51	\$ 100,714.96
21	\$ 78,259.01	\$ 103,232.84

Section 20.6

When an employee is promoted or demoted to a classification, his/her current wage shall be adjusted to the same step as described in County's Section 20.5.

Section 20.7

Employees transferred between the work shift schedules hourly rates of pay changed accordingly:

- A. The employee's base annual wage is calculated by multiplying their hourly rate, (minus any adders) by the work shift variable defined in Section 20.4(A) of this Article.

B. This base annual wage should then be divided by the new work schedule's variable to produce their new base hourly rate.

If applicable, adders will be totaled into this amount to reveal the new total hourly rate for the employee.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 21

INSURANCE

Section 21.1

The County will provide each full-time eligible employee on the active County payroll group life insurance coverage for bargaining unit employees at no cost to the employee. If benefits are insured by an insurance company, all benefits are subject to the provisions of the policies between the County and the insurance company.

Section 21.2

The County will provide health, dental, vision, prescription medication, short- and long-term disability insurance and life insurance for full-time employees in the manner in which those benefits are provided to all other full-time County employees. In addition, the County will continue to provide shared-cost health insurance for Dependents in accordance with County policy.

Section 21.3

Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment insurance benefits that are based on the employee's annual salary, will be calculated to include the employee's annual regular occurring overtime, rounded up to the next \$1,000.00.

Section 21.4

The County will provide full-time eligible employees on the active County payroll with long term disability coverage at no cost to the employee. If these benefits are insured by an insurance company, all benefits are subject to the provisions of the policies between the County and the insurance company.

Section 21.5

The County retains the right to cancel or modify any of the insurance contracts, policies or coverages set forth in Sections 21.1, 21.2, 21.3 and 21.4 and replace it with a new policy, provided the same change is made for non-contractual County employees. In the event a change is made, there will be no lapse in coverage and the County will give notice to impact bargain the changes made. It is recognized that certain management personnel have a different life insurance program than that set forth in Section 21.3.

Section 21.6

The County will continue to provide employees with no-cost life insurance in accordance with the levels as outlined in the County's worker's compensation insurance policy and in other County policies.

Section 21.7

Full-time employees will be eligible for insurance coverage's set forth in Sections 21.1 through 21.5 no later than the first of the month following one (1) full month of employment with the County.

Section 21.8

The County agrees to continue to provide the option to purchase term life insurance. If benefits are insured by an insurance company, all benefits are subject to the provisions of the policies between the County and the insurance company.

Section 21.9

Employees will continue to be permitted to participate in the Pretax Premium Plan that allows medical, vision, and dental insurance premiums to be deducted from the employee's gross pay before taxes are calculated. This benefit will be provided only so long as the County continues to offer these programs to all County employees.

Section 21.10

If there is any conflict between the provisions of this Contract and the provisions of any insurance policy which provides coverage under this Article, the provisions of the insurance policy will apply.

Section 21.11

In the event an employee should receive an on-duty injury/illness which qualifies them for Federal disability benefits, or die in the line of duty, the County agrees to work closely with the employee's family and the Union in an effort to secure any and all benefits available under the Department of Justice Public Safety Officer Death/Disability Benefit. The County will not be obligated for any costs under this Section.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 22

PENSION

Section 22.1

During the term of this Agreement, eligible employees shall continue to participate in the Florida Retirement System.

Section 22.2

The County will contribute as required by the provisions of the plan.

Section 22.3

The County agrees to provide employees the ability to participate in the Nationwide IAFF/FC Deferred Compensation plan or any other county-approved Deferred Compensation plans. If any are stopped or modified for all other County employees, the same change will affect the bargaining unit. If an additional plan is offered to all other County employees, it will also be offered to the bargaining unit.

(THE REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY)

ARTICLE 23

TRAINING, LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION

Section 23.1

Employees within the bargaining unit are required, as a condition of continued employment, to maintain currency in all certifications and licenses required by federal or state statute, rule or regulation and all necessary or special requirements of the job description including Medical Directors requirements for the position in which they are currently employed at the County. It is the employee's responsibility to assure that copies of all certifications and licenses required for employment are current and on file with the EMS Administrative Assistant or designee. The County will provide the employee with a receipt documenting the date and time of compliance if not within a self-service portal.

Section 23.2

Employees will have thirty (30) business days from posting of any training material to successfully complete any associated assignment and testing. Successful completion of testing is defined as obtaining a test score of 80 percent or higher or a document pass/fail result based on objective criteria.

The County will provide sufficient training every two years to meet the continuing education requirements for recertification with the Florida Department of Health and, if held, the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians. If the employee fails to complete any training entirely within timeframes specified herein, no CEU credit will be awarded for that training.

Section 23.3

It is the responsibility of the employee to comply with all statutes, rules and regulations for renewing their Florida EMS certification. The employee must complete any application

process on time and provide all necessary documents for renewal. The County will pay for fees required for Florida EMS certification.

The County will supply employees with required documentation of all County-sponsored programs successfully completed. Recertification documents will contain Medical Director approval; proof of successful completion; date of class completed; and assigned number of Continuing Education Units (CEU).

Section 23.4

Distributive Education (DE) Training is a method of delivering EMS education where the educator and student are not able to interact in real time. Examples include online courses, pretests, journal article reviews, and videos. The County reserves the right to assign twelve (12) Distributive Education (DE) training programs. The County will provide online training resources at no charge to the employee. CEU's will be awarded based on the value assigned by the online training resource. County assigned online training is only authorized to be conducted while on duty. Employees shall make a reasonable effort to complete assigned training while on duty. If an employee is not able to complete this training on-duty, they shall notify their supervisor to see if an operational accommodation can be made to complete the training. If not, the employees may request approval from the Deputy Chief of the Office of the Medical Director to complete the training off-duty. Overtime will be paid, and the minimum of two (2) hours of overtime in Article will not apply to overtime granted for this purpose.

Section 23.5

The County will provide in-service programs during the course of each year. EMTs and Paramedics attending live in-service sessions will be paid their regular hourly rate; and if applicable, overtime as specified in Article 16, Section 16.4.

Each general in-service session will be recorded and made available for on-duty review. All Paramedics and EMTs are required to complete the following items after the posting of the materials:

- A. View the in-service recording; if not attended during the live presentation;
- B. Successfully complete the on-line test;
- C. Complete any make-up assignments

Paramedics and EMTs who do not complete this assignment within thirty (30) business days are not exempt from completing the work assignment; will be held accountable for all material provided during the in-service; will be subject to disciplinary action as specified in Article 15.

Section 23.6

Employees desiring CEU credit for outside programs must submit a written request to the Deputy Chief of Training or designee within five (5) business days of completing the course. Each request must include the following:

- A. Course outline or objectives.
- B. Instructor(s) and sponsoring agency.
- C. Course brochure or flyer.
- D. Proof of attendance.

Section 23.7

Employees who have obtained instructor levels in EMS related certifications may be utilized by the County in continuing educational or public educational classes or training programs sponsored by the County.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 24

EDUCATIONAL REIMBURSEMENT

Section 24.1

Bargaining unit employees will be entitled to education reimbursement as all other Lee County employees in accordance with Lee County Policy 211 dated June 20, 2017.

Section 24.2

The County will sponsor a Brian Brunick memorial ALS competition team each year. This team will participate in ALS competitions, including the CLINCON competition. A selection committee for the team will be comprised of two (2) EMS Lieutenants and two (2) members of the Bargaining Unit selected by the Union. The committee will determine the requirements for team members each year. Team members may be asked to assist with recruitment or promotional activities at these competitions.

Team members will receive two (2) team polo shirts to wear at the competition and associated events.

All team members will commit to pre-determined practices. If team members have conflicting schedules, management will make every attempt to approve swap and/or cover that employee's position for the purpose of practice sessions.

All travel reimbursement will be consistent with County policy.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 25

WORKERS COMPENSATION

Section 25.1

Any employee injured while engaged in the course and scope of his/her employment shall be paid for the employee's full schedule of hours for the day of the accident if a County workers' compensation authorized physician advised that he/she could not or should not return to work that day.

Section 25.2

Once cleared for limited or light duty, employees shall return to light duty work if a light duty position is available within the County and if the individual is qualified to perform the duties without negatively impacting the illness or injury. Employees who sustain an on-the-job injury and are then placed on light or limited duty, will receive their regular wage for all hours worked in accordance with Section 25.4 below. Employees who sustain an on-the-job injury and are then placed on light or limited duty will be eligible to receive additional workers' compensation benefits as provided by law and may supplement payments with sick leave and then vacation leave sufficient to provide the employee's pre-injury wage. Human Resources, in cooperation with the Director or designee, may place the employee in a limited duty position within the employee's stated restrictions and qualifications, if available. While the employee is off duty due to illness or injury, the employee will stay in weekly contact with the Director or designee, Risk Management and the County's designated Claims Adjuster to update status. When a physician advises that an employee is ready to return to work, the employee will provide Employee Health Services with a return to duty work slip notice from the employee's physician, stating any physical limitations. The return to work slip will be

presented to Employee Health Services prior to returning to work. The employee will receive a Return to Duty release from Employee Health Services.

Section 25.3

Employees placed in limited duty work positions as per Sections 25.2 or 25.3 of this Article will not be required to work more hours per week than they would normally average over a two (2) week period while on full regular duty. Employees working in limited duty positions because of a work related injury or illness may have their earned wages supplemented by Worker's Compensation wage loss benefits under the provisions of [Florida Statutes, Chapter 440](#).

Section 25.4

If an employee sustains a job related injury or illness and, in the judgement of the treating physician, the time to return to full duty is expected to surpass the next pay period, the County will make every attempt to transition the employee to a forty-hour (40) schedule in the next full pay period and adjust the employees rate of pay in accordance with Article 20. Conversely, when an employee returns to full duty, the County will transition the employee back to their appropriate rate of pay for the schedule they are returning to retroactive to the beginning of the current pay period.

Section 25.5

Employees who sustain a job related injury or illness or are involved in a job related accident shall immediately inform their supervisor of the injury or accident. A Worker's Compensation Notice of Injury form shall be completed immediately and forwarded to Risk Management.

Section 25.6

Employees who are receiving Temporary Total Disability (TTD) benefits, as outlined in [Florida Statutes, Chapter 440](#), may elect to utilize accrued sick and/or vacation time to make up the difference between their regular gross wages and their TTD benefits.

Section 25.7

The County will cover any swap currently approved for an employee who sustains a workers' compensation-approved injury or illness.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 26

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

Section 26.1

The County will furnish all new full-time employees in job classifications Paramedic and EMT the following:

Uniforms:

- Six (6) Pair Uniform Pants
- One (1) Black Uniform Belt
- One (1) Uniform (Class A/B) Shirts
- One (1) Uniform (Class C) Shirt
- One (1) Jacket
- Six (6) Polo Style Shirts
- Two (2) Jump Suit
- One (1) Name Tag/Collar Brass

Equipment:

- One (1) Badge
- One (1) Protective Rain Jacket
- One (1) Protective Extrication Jacket and pant
- One (1) set of Incident Command Accountability Tags
- One (1) pair of extrication gloves
- One (1) Protective Helmet
- One (1) Mattress Pad/Protector

All items that require patches to be sewn on will be done prior to issuance to the employee.

The Polo style shirt will be worn on duty, except when directed by the County for legal proceedings and other assignments

Section 26.2

Uniforms will be replaced on an annual basis when signs of wear or damage exist, in a one-for-one exchange with Public Safety Logistics. Issued uniforms and equipment damaged due to negligence or loss shall be replaced at the employee's expense. Issued uniforms and

equipment damaged in the line of duty will be replaced by the County. Employees who misplace collar brass may receive a replacement set once per every twelve (12) months.

For any item listed in 26.1 that the County vendor is not able to provide (such as due to clothing size), the employee may obtain pre-approval to purchase the item and be reimbursed. Once the employee has provided receipts for the item(s) purchased, the County will reimburse the employee in a timely manner.

The County agrees to provide employees who notify the County that they are pregnant, three (3) new maternity uniform pants, three (3) new maternity shirts, and one (1) new jumpsuit.

The County will consult the elected DVP or Principal Officers regarding uniforms before beginning any scheduled procurement processes. The County and Union agree to meet to mutually agree to a new light weight polo style shirt. The new polo shirt will not have the employees' name on it.

Section 26.3

Equipment listed in 26.1 previously will be replaced on an as-needed basis. Employees requesting equipment replacement shall be required to exchange their old equipment in order to get it replaced. Equipment damaged due to negligence or loss shall be replaced at the employee's expense.

Section 26.4

Employees who turn in uniforms for cleaning or disposal in accordance with the County Bio-Hazard Protocol shall have the uniform replaced or returned within a reasonable amount of time.

Section 26.5

Employees shall always be permitted to purchase, at employee cost, additional uniforms as outlined in this Article from a supplier selected by the County, if the employee requires or desires uniforms in excess of those provided in this Article.

Section 26.6

In October of each year during the term of this Agreement, the County will provide employees with a yearly stipend of \$250.00 which they may utilize to purchase black uniform boots or shoes (as defined by the CBA and SOP).

Section 26.7

When the employment relationship is terminated for whatever reason, the employee will be responsible for the return of all items furnished under this Article to the County. All equipment and identifying uniforms must be returned prior to receipt of the final County paycheck.

Section 26.8

Employees will be required to wear issued uniforms while on duty, special assignments or engaged in County business. Employees are to report to work in a clean non-wrinkled uniform with a neat appearance and non-faded lettering. The employee will be required to wear a white crew neck T-shirt under his/her Class A uniform top, but not under their Polo style shirt. When wearing night uniforms the crew members may wear a navy blue or white color short or long sleeve crew neck T-shirt under the night uniform. A black belt is part of the day uniform and footwear will consist of black shoes or boots with non-slip type soles. Heels on the footwear are limited to a maximum height of one and one half inches (1 ½"), and the toes must be closed to prevent injury to the foot. Shoes must be kept clean and in good repair. Footwear must be free of accessories such as chains, large buckles, toe caps etc. Employees must wear solid dark blue or black socks if it is visible.

All employees must also report to work with a watch that contains a second counter and black ink pens as required for paperwork.

In extreme weather conditions employees are allowed to supplement their uniforms with long underwear that is to be worn under the uniform. Long underwear tops or sweat shirt colors

will consist of solid dark blue or white. Wearing of uniforms off duty is prohibited with the exception of coming to or leaving work, or as otherwise directed or approved by the EMS Chief or a Deputy Chief.

Personnel assigned to air operations will be issued a flight suit and helmet to be worn during all operations of helicopter per protocol.

No regular jumpsuit will be worn until dusk hours unless otherwise directed.

Section 26.9

Except as provided herein, no jewelry of any type may be worn while on duty. A wedding ring, wristwatch and/or medic alert bracelet may be worn. Necklaces shall be permitted so long as they remain tucked into the employee's t-shirt. Employees may wear one pair of matched post earrings, one in each ear, not to exceed 3/16 inch in diameter.

Section 26.10

Employees are responsible for the damage or loss of property or equipment due to misconduct or misuse of the equipment on the part of the employee. Equipment is defined as any material good(s) owned and operated by Lee County. Property is defined as any valuable right and interest of the County, its residents or visitors. An employee may be required to pay up to a maximum of \$250.00 for equipment or property that is lost or damaged due to misconduct or misuse of the equipment or property on the part of the employee. The amount to be paid may not exceed \$250.00. The County is responsible to provide the employee a receipt upon request showing the cost of replacement or the reasonable cost to repair the property. If the employee is charged, the item must either be replaced or repaired. Deductions may not be less than \$25.00 per paycheck.

The Director, or designee, will make the determination regarding the appropriate level of employee fiscal responsibility based on the following:

- A. Willful Misconduct:

1. The damage or loss of equipment or property was the result of willful misconduct on the part of the employee.
 2. The incident may also result in disciplinary action. The monetary fine may be considered as part of the disciplinary action.
- B. Failure to Take Reasonable Precaution:
1. The damage or loss of equipment or property was caused because the employee failed to take reasonable precautions to prevent the incident, but no willful misconduct existed.
 2. The incident may result in disciplinary action. The monetary fine may be considered as part of the disciplinary action.
- C. Extenuating Circumstances:
1. The damage or loss of equipment or property was caused because the employee failed to take reasonable precautions but extenuating circumstances existed which made the loss or damage very difficult to prevent.
 2. In extenuating circumstances, the employee will not be responsible for monetary damages.

Section 26.11

Employees will maintain their hair in a clean and groomed condition. Employees who choose to have long hair shall keep it pulled back so as to prevent it from falling into an employee's face/eyes. Hair must be maintained as required in SOP 204. Facial hair will be permitted so long as it is maintained in a clean and neat appearance and complies with the grooming standards outlined in the EMS standard operating procedures manual and complies with all Federal and State regulations regarding infectious/biohazardous disease control and respiratory protection.

Section 26.12

Employees who are promoted or assigned to a new position shall have two (2) polo shirts and uniform items appropriate to the rank provided at no cost to the employee.

Section 26.13

The County agrees to install window-tinting on existing front-line ambulances, critical care and/or community paramedic SUVs to which bargaining unit members are regularly assigned.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 27

TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Section 27.1

When authorized by the County to use their personally owned vehicles for official business or approved training, employees will be compensated at the rate per mile as established by County Policy.

Section 27.2

During the course of a shift, when required by the County to use their personally owned vehicles for official business or approved training not at their regularly scheduled station, employees will be reimbursed for the cost of tolls. Reimbursement will be in accordance with the EMS procedures for petty cash reimbursement, and will require a receipt with the appropriate forms to satisfy petty cash reconciliation processes approved by the Lee County Clerk of Courts.

Section 27.3

When traveling outside of Lee County on approved business for the County and not being paid their hourly rate of pay, employees will be paid a per diem rate per day of travel/business equal to the amount set by County Policy.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 28

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Section 28.1

The employees will be provided with the opportunity to utilize the County's Employee Assistance Program. Any employee who desires confidential, professional help with life problems, may contact the Employee Assistance Program provider directly.

Section 28.2

All information relative to each participant's program involvement will only be recorded in a confidential medical file, with access limited as required by law.

Section 28.3

If the County mandates the employee to participate in the Employee Assistance Program, the employee must waive confidentiality and agree that the County can communicate with the employee Assistance Program to verify only participation in the Employee Assistance Program following recommended treatment program and whether employee can return to work.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 29

UNION BUSINESS

Section 29.1

Members of the bargaining unit shall have the right to join the Union or not join the Union.

Section 29.2

The County agrees to maintain a Union Time Bank. The hours shall carry over from year-to-year. In December of each year, the County will provide an accounting of the Union Time Bank hours. In January of each year, the Union will notify the County in writing of the required time bank contribution to be deducted from each union member, up to a maximum of four (4) hours, as well as a current list of union members. Failure to notify the County during the required time frame will result in no deduction for the calendar year. Contributions to the Union Time Bank deducted from Union members shall not cause the Union Time Bank to exceed 2,000 hours.

Leaves as listed above shall be granted from the Union Time Bank so long as hours remain in the bank each calendar year. Once hours in the bank are exhausted to zero (0), no leave shall be granted from the Union Time Bank until contributions are made to the bank next January.

Deductions from the Time Bank will be taken from the Union Time Bank as provided in Section 29.3 and will be charged on an hour for hour basis. Deduction requests from the Time Bank must first be approved by the Union's District Vice President before the request is submitted to the County under Section 29.3.

Section 29.3

Union Representatives and up to three (3) members shall be allowed time off to engage in Union business or activities. The request must be in writing and must be received twenty-four (24) hours in advance. Time off for such purposes will be charged to the Union Time Bank. If such time off causes the County to incur overtime to cover the Union representative and up to three (3) members, the Union Time Bank shall be charged one and one-half hours for each hour of time off to cover such overtime. Use of Union Time Bank will count as approved leave and shall not adversely affect an employee, such as an employee's ability to earn pay at an overtime rate or an employee's ability to receive holiday pay.

Section 29.4

To preserve the delivery of service and in accordance with [Section 447.509, Florida Statutes](#), the Union, the members, agents or representatives or any persons acting on their behalf are prohibited from the following acts: conducting Union business during working hours, distributing literature during working hours in areas where the actual work of public employees is performed such as offices, fire stations, and any such similar public installations. The internal mail system cannot be used for the distribution of Union literature or material.

Section 29.5

A complete list of Union Representatives will be furnished to the Deputy Director of Public Safety or his/her designee.

Section 29.6

Once a quarter, the members of IAFF Local 1826 District 2 Lee County EMS, shall be granted space within the Emergency Operations Center or another suitable building to conduct membership meetings. The use of the space shall be granted so long as a request for its use is made to the Deputy Director of Public Safety no later than four (4) days prior to the date of the

meeting(s) and so long as the requested space is not otherwise in use. Permission can also be withdrawn in the event of a hurricane or other natural disaster.

Section 29.7

The County will permit the Union to post bulletin boards as set forth in Article 34, Section 34.4. Postings of notices on the bulletin board shall be restricted to:

- A. Notices of Union meetings.
- B. Notice of Union elections and results of such elections.
- C. Notice of Union recreational and social affairs.
- D. Notice of Union appointments and other official Union business.

All notices shall be signed by an officer of the Union before they are posted. No materials, notices or announcements shall be posted which contain anything of a controversial nature and which adversely reflects upon Lee County or Lee County Emergency Medical Services, the elected officials of Lee County or any Lee County employees.

Section 29.8

The Union shall be granted one (1) hour of time on County property during EMS new employee orientation to explain to new employees issues concerning union membership, collective bargaining and the union contract. The Union presentation shall be pre-approved by the County and County management shall be present during the presentation. During this period of time Union representatives may distribute Union literature.

Section 29.9

The employee shall have the ability to vote at designated union polling places for Local 1826 issues provided it is in their regular coverage area or the unit is in the area of the designated polling place, provided there is no negative impact on ambulance coverage.

ARTICLE 30

ALCOHOL AND DRUG TESTING

Section 30.1

Lee County and the Union recognize that our employees are our most valuable resource. It is our goal to provide a healthy, safe and efficient working environment in which to provide our diverse services to the citizens of the County. We also recognize *drug/alcohol* abuse and/or addiction can pose serious risks to an employee's health and safety and can have detrimental effects on co-workers. *"Drug" means alcohol, including distilled spirits, wine, malt beverages, and intoxicating liquors; amphetamines; cannabinoids; cocaine; phencyclidine (PCP); hallucinogens; methaqualone; opiates; barbiturates; benzodiazepines; synthetic narcotics; designer drugs; or a metabolite of any of the substances listed herein. (Florida Statute-112.0455(5)(a), 440.102(1)(c)). An employer may test an individual for any or all of such drugs (440.102(1)(c)).* The County acknowledges its responsibility to provide appropriate assistance to its employees to the greatest extent possible. Therefore, it is the policy of the County to:

- a) Assure that employees are not impaired in their ability to perform assigned duties in a safe, healthy and productive manner;
- b) Create a workplace environment free from the adverse effects of substance drug abuse or dependency;
- c) Prohibit the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, selling, using, buying or transferring of drugs and/or alcohol; and
- d) Provide an employee assistance program available to employees whose personal problems, including drug or alcohol abuse or dependency, adversely affect their ability to perform their duties.

Section 30.1.1

Lee County, recognizing that drug and alcohol abuse is a growing problem within our nations' workforce, urges self-referral to the employee assistance program for any employee who is concerned that he or she may have a problem with substance abuse, and mandates managerial referral to the employee assistance program when job performance is affected.

Section 30.2

Employees are required to report to work drug free and in a state of mind and physical condition so as to be able to perform their assigned duties safely and competently. Employees whose behavior or performance suggests the influence of drugs may be required to submit to a drug or alcohol test, if approved by the Public Safety Director, or designee. Refusal to submit to such test shall be considered insubordination, and shall be considered an admission of a positive drug and/or alcohol test.

All employees, to include those in safety sensitive positions or performing safety-sensitive functions, shall be subject to drug or alcohol tests if there is reasonable suspicion that he or she is impaired while on duty. Impairment is defined as being unable to perform duties safely and competently due to the use of drugs. Reasonable suspicion is a belief based on objective of facts observed by two (2) supervisors who concur that the employee's ability to perform the functions of the job is impaired or such that the employee's ability to perform the job safely is reduced.

Section 30.2:1

In accordance with the provisions contained herein, Management may require that the employee submit to a breathalyzer test, blood test, urinalysis at a qualified laboratory chosen by the County. If testing is conducted based on a reasonable suspicion, the County should promptly detail in writing the circumstances which formed the basis of the determination that reasonable suspicion existed to warrant the testing and who witnessed the circumstances and

who is ordering the testing. A copy of this documentation should be given to the employee prior to testing, but no later than twenty four (24) hours after the occurrence of the test. Refusal by an employee to submit to a breathalyzer test, blood test, and/or a urinalysis shall be considered insubordination and shall be considered an admission by the employee of a positive test result. In the event of a test refusal the employee shall be placed on administrative leave with pay, and subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Section 30.2:2

Upon ratification of the Collective Bargaining agreement a Random Drug Testing program shall be implemented by the County without the requirement of impact bargaining. Random testing as defined in “Drug-Free Workplace Act” means a drug test conducted on employees who are selected through the use of a computer generated random sample of an employer’s employees (Florida Statute 112.0455(5)(j)).

If an employee is on duty on the day his or her name is selected for random drug testing, he or she shall be escorted, by at least one Public Safety Supervisor for testing prior to the completion of their scheduled shift. If an employee is not on duty on the day his or her name is selected for a random drug testing, he or she shall be tested on the first shift he or she is back on duty. If a randomly selected employee is not tested within the time frames established in the preceding two sentences, he or she shall not be tested as a result of that random selection. The number of random selections during any fiscal year shall not exceed the of bargaining unit employees as of the first day of the same fiscal year.

Section 30.2:3

The County shall provide employees a ninety (90) day notice period before beginning the Random Testing Program as stated in Florida Statute 112.0455(6)(a).

Section 30.3

Bargaining unit employees shall be subject to drug or alcohol testing for any of the following reasons:

A. Reasonable suspicion –

“Reasonable suspicion drug testing” – as defined in Florida Statute 112.0455(5)(k) and 440.102(1)(n) means drug testing based on:

1. Observable phenomena while at work, such as direct observation of drug use or of the physical symptoms or manifestations of being under the influence of a drug.
2. Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior while at work or a significant deterioration in work performance.
3. A report of drug use, provided by a reliable and credible source, which has been independently corroborated.
4. Evidence that an individual has tampered with a drug test during employment with the current employer.
5. Information that an employee has caused, or contributed to, an accident while at work.
6. Evidence that an employee has used, possessed, sold, solicited, or transferred drugs while working or while on the employer’s premises or while operating the employer’s vehicles, machinery, or equipment.

Reasonable suspicion drug testing may not be required except upon the recommendation of a supervisor who is at least one level of supervision higher than the immediate supervisor of the employee in question.

B. On-duty work-related incident with injury requiring treatment by a physician or a physician extender;

- C. Motor vehicle crash with injury requiring treatment by a physician or physician extender;
- D. Medication inventory discrepancies;
- E. A pattern of excessive disbursement of controlled substances during patient care;
- F. Job applicant drug testing;
- G. During annual employee provided physicals;
- H. Follow up drug testing. If the employee in the course of employment enters an employee assistance program for drug-related problems, or a drug rehabilitation program, the employer must require the employee to submit to a drug test as a follow up to such program, unless the employee voluntarily entered the program. In those cases, the employer has the option to not require follow up testing. If follow up testing is required, it must be conducted at least once a year for a 2-year period after completion of the program. Advance notice of a follow up testing date must not be given to the employee to be tested.
- I. Random Testing-employee's holding Mandatory-testing positions as defined in Florida Statute 440.102 Drug-free Workplace Program will be subject to testing at any time on a random basis.

"Mandatory-testing position" means, with respect to a public employer, a job assignment that requires the employee to carry a firearm, work closely with an employee who carries a firearm, perform life-threatening procedures, work with heavy or dangerous machinery, work as a safety inspector, work with children, work with detainees in the correctional system, work with confidential information or documents pertaining to criminal investigations, work with controlled substances, or a job assignment that requires an employee security background check, pursuant to Florida

Statute 110.1127, or a job assignment in which a momentary lapse in attention could result in injury or death to another person.

Section 30.3:1

Employees required for drug or alcohol testing, shall be monitored and escorted immediately for testing by a supervisor. The employee will be notified of their right to request a Union representative be present during testing; however, the employee will be required to submit to the test with or without a union representative present. Upon completion, the employee shall be placed on administrative leave with pay until results are obtained and/or cleared to return to duty.

Section 30.4

Any employee who refuses to submit to a breath, blood, and/or urine, shall be considered insubordinate, placed on administrative leave with pay and subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. Refusal by an employee to submit to a breathalyzer test, blood test, and/or a urinalysis shall be considered insubordination shall be considered an admission by the employee of a positive test result. In the event of a test refusal the employee shall be placed on administrative leave with pay, and subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Section 30.5

In order to promote safety, health and security concerns, the County may search lockers, County vehicles and any other County-owned or supplied areas. Refusal by an employee to submit to a breathalyzer test, blood test, and/or a urinalysis shall be considered insubordination and shall be considered an admission by the employee of a positive test result. In the event of a test refusal the employee shall be placed on administrative leave with pay, and subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Section 30.6

All employees who must use a non-prescription, over-the-counter, or prescription drug(s) or medication (*prescription or nonprescription medication means a drug or medication obtained pursuant to a prescription as defined by Florida Statute 893.02 or a medication that is authorized pursuant to federal or state law for general distribution and use without a prescription in the treatment of human diseases, ailments, or injuries. 440.102(1)(l)*) that causes adverse side effects (drowsiness or impaired reflexes or reaction time) shall inform Employee Health Services in writing that they are taking such medication on the advice of a physician.

If requested by Employee Health Services, the employee must provide a statement from the prescribing physician or physician extender that the employee can safely perform all of the employee's normal job functions, to Employee Health Services prior to starting work.

Section 30.6:1

Failure of an employee to notify Employee Health Services before beginning work when taking medications or drugs which may interfere with the safe and effective performance of duties may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

Section 30.7

The cost of drug and alcohol tests (initial and confirmation) required by the County will be paid by the County. An employee shall pay the costs of any additional drug tests not required by the employer.

Section 30.8

The County retains the right to discipline up to and including discharge any employee who uses, possesses, dispenses, sells or buys illegal drugs, whether on or off duty, or who uses or possesses alcohol while on duty, or who reports to work under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol.

The existence of an Employee Assistance Program does not affect the right of the County to impose discipline, up to and including termination, for violating this Article.

Section 30.9

Employees on or off duty are strictly prohibited from engaging in the manufacture, distribution, dispensing (except as necessary during the performance of their job), possession, using, buying, selling or transferring of prohibited drugs on or off County Property and during both working and non-working hours. The use, possession, purchase, sale or transfer of alcohol during regular work hours, including breaks or meal periods, on County property is strictly prohibited. This includes County vehicles or while in County uniform, working under the influence of drugs or alcohol or using drugs or alcohol on their own time in a way which causes them to report for work under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Section 30.9:1

An employee who is convicted, pleads guilty or nolo contendere (no contest) to any criminal drug statute violation, whether on or off duty, must notify the Director of Human Resources no later than five (5) days after such conviction. Failure to do so will be cause for appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Once the County receives such information, the County will make the appropriate determination as to what disciplinary action, if any, is to be taken.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 31

EMT TO PARAMEDIC PROGRESSION

Section 31.1

This Article defines the process for progression from EMT to Paramedic and the regression of Paramedic to EMT. Upon acceptance or placement into the FTO Program, the EMT or Paramedic forfeits his/her assigned sector rotation and is assigned a relief position. No EMT or Paramedic in the FTO Program is eligible for the annual sector bid if enrolled in the FTO Program during the annual sector bid process.

Section 31.2

Any Lee County EMS EMT, after one year of credentialed status that desires to enter the FTO Program to advance to the Paramedic position must meet all requirements for the Paramedic position. If residual space in the FTO program is available, an employee with six (6) months of credentialed status may request entry into the program for promotion.

Any EMT that meets the above requirements will be eligible to request entry into the FTO Program for purposes to progress to the Paramedic position, providing there is an open paramedic position, or for currently full-time EMTs, entry into the FTO program for the County to prepare for anticipated open Paramedic positions, if applicable. To request entry into the FTO Program, the EMT will complete the application package provided by the Training Manager.

Within thirty (30) days of receipt of the request, the EMT requesting entry will be scheduled for pre-entry testing. Each section must be passed with a score of at least eighty percent (80%).

If any one section of the testing is not passed, retesting on the failed section may be reattempted once within thirty (30) calendar days. If all sections are not completed within thirty

(30) calendar days, all sections must be retaken. The Paramedic candidate will be allowed six (6) months to complete all parts of the EMT to Paramedic process, provided that the candidate had an opportunity to function as a lead provider with direct FTO supervision at least 70 percent of the time. Extensions or re-application to the process will be granted at the sole discretion of the County.

After the EMT requesting entry into the FTO Program passes the pre-entry criteria, they will be placed into the program at the first available opportunity based on date of completion of the pre-entry testing. In the event more than one (1) candidate completes pre-entry testing on the same date, seniority will take precedence. No EMT applying for the FTO Program for purposes of promotion to Paramedic position will be allowed to displace a current employee in the FTO Program regardless of seniority.

Section 31.3

If at any time the Paramedic candidate fails to progress through the outlined training program a meeting will be held between the Paramedic candidate and the Chief or designees. The employee is entitled to Union representation, up to two members. A three-week improvement plan will be developed and presented to the Paramedic candidate. If the Paramedic candidate does not demonstrate measurable improvement within the three-week period, the Paramedic candidate will be removed from the FTO Program. Extensions to the process will be granted at the sole discretion of the County.

Section 31.4

- A. Upon successful completion of the FTO Program, the Paramedic candidate will be required to pass a credentialing examination which may include written exam and/or scenario based simulations.
 - 1. The Director, or designee, will determine the content of the operational requirements.

2. The Medical Director(s) will determine the content of the clinical requirements.
 3. The Medical Director(s) shall make the final recommendation for promotion of the employee to function as a Paramedic under his license.
 4. The examination process will be recorded for further review, if necessary.
 5. The county will provide written notification to the union if the county intends to change or modify credentialing requirements.
- C. If the Paramedic candidate fails Credentialing, subsequent attempts will be allowed, unless this will exceed the six (6)-month time frame to complete all program requirements. At the discretion of the Deputy Chief of the Office of the Medical Director, a specific training or remediation plan may be prescribed to continue the candidate in the program or the candidate may be moved from the program.
- D. Upon successful completion of the requirements, the Paramedic candidate shall be granted full privileges as a Paramedic.
- E. The Paramedic who successfully completes the promotional process may be assigned to a mentor to ensure the success of the Paramedic. As such, the County reserves the right to schedule the newly promoted Paramedic to work with other Paramedics for up to six (6) months.

Section 31.5

Personnel in a Paramedic position that wish to regress to the EMT position will be required to satisfy all of the following parameters:

- A. An EMT position must be available within Lee County EMS.
- B. The employee must be in good standing with the Medical Director(s).

Section 31.6

The County agrees to evaluate the feasibility of a Lead EMT position within 12 months of ratification of this contract.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 32

WORK ASSIGNMENTS

Section 32.1

Work Assignments are assignments in which an employee meets specific qualifications, testing processes and requirements set forth by this article. Employees assigned to fill a work assignment take on additional and/or differing work and are described within this article. The additional and/or differing work will occur during the employee's regularly scheduled workweek.

Section 32.2

The provisions in this article apply specifically to those employees who are assigned to the specific work assignment. All other articles and sections of this collective bargaining agreement will pertain to employees unless modified by this article.

Section 32.3

Employees will be assigned a Work Assignment at the sole discretion of the County. The number of employees assigned to a specific Work Assignment will be determined at the sole discretion of the County.

Section 32.4

An Employee may only be removed from a Work Assignment for Just Cause and the process must follow Article 15 of the CBA, unless the County is reducing the total number of employees in the specific assignment, or an employee voluntarily rescinds the assignment. An employee removed from a work assignment shall receive no assignment pay as described in this Article.

If an employee is removed from a Work Assignment due to a reduction in number of employees in the specific assignment, the employee is subject to recall to the assignment, so

long as they continue to meet the minimum requirements, for a period of no less than 12 months. The county may not hold additional testing for a specific work assignment if an employee is available for recall. A recall eligible employee will not be required to retest for the assignment.

If an employee who is removed from their Work assignment for any reason is unable to remain in their current sector/station bid, they will assume a relief position on the same shift. If the employee is able to stay in their current sector/station bid, they will remain.

Section 32.5

An employee must have two (2) years, full time credentialed experience at Lee County EMS to be eligible to apply and/or be selected for a work assignment.

Section 32.6

The application process for a work assignment will be as follows:

A. The County will notify the employees within the bargaining unit, in writing of their intent to open the testing process for a specific assignment. The county will provide the notice no less than 5 business days prior to the opening of the application period. The notice will include, work assignment being tested for, application period dates, testing dates, whether the testing is to fill immediate openings and/or to create an eligibility list. If there is an eligibility list, the county must provide the dates the list will be valid for. If testing is for immediate openings, the number of openings will be included in the notice.

B. The application period for a Work Assignment will be open for 10 business days. Employees interested in applying for a work assignment will submit a resume that outlines experience and the reason(s) why the candidate desires the assignment. Included with this resume, the candidate must include copies of all required/ preferred certifications.

The entire application package shall be forwarded to the EMS Deputy Chief of OMD on or before the closing date. Any tenure requirements set forth by this article must be met by the date the items above are due to be submitted.

Section 32.7

The testing/selection process will be comprised of a written test, practical/simulation test and interview/oral test. The content of each test should be tailored to the work assignment being tested for. (Example, FTO may have a teaching scenario for practical/simulation test). An employee's past performance, education, certifications and longevity should be reviewed and considered during the selection process. Previous disciplinary records that do not rise to a Corrective action warning, should not be considered and/or counted against employee if issued more than 12 months prior.

The selection process will be weighted as follows:

1. Written Test 25%
2. Practical/Simulation Test 35%
3. Interview/Oral Test 20%
4. Performance, educations, certifications 15%
5. Longevity 5%

Union Representatives will be allowed to observe/monitor the testing/selection process.

Section 32.8

Assignments of FTO, Flight Paramedic, Critical Care Paramedic, and Community Paramedic will follow the framework set forth above. Any newly created assignments shall also follow the same process. Any newly created assignments will be subject to impact bargaining.

Section 32.9

Employees assigned to the Field Training Officer (FTO) assignment shall work a regularly scheduled work shift pattern of twelve (12) or twenty-four (24) hours. In addition, employees assigned to the FTO position will be called upon to mentor, evaluate, and train Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's) and Paramedics during the daily operations while in

the process of being a new hire employee, promotional employee or remedial employee. Training will take place on scene of emergency calls as well as in the didactic setting and daily work environment. The employees in the FTO position must possess the ability to make rapid, accurate, and prudent assessments as to emergency care, transportation, and management of resources on scene. The employees in the FTO position will also be required to attend meetings, seminars, classes, etc., as assigned by the EMS Deputy Chief of the Office of Medical Director or designee. The FTO shall also participate in EMS continuing education sessions, training programs and refresher classes

Section 32.9.1

While assigned to the FTO position, employees will be paid an incentive equal to ten percent (10%) of base pay. This pay adder is in addition to their regular wages.

Section 32.9.2

In addition to all required certifications FTOs shall maintain or participate in at least one (1) or more of the following:

1. ACLS Instructor
2. BLS Instructor
3. PALS Instructor
4. EVOC Instructor
5. SIM Lab Instructor
6. EMS Level Instructor

Section 32.9.3

Newly assigned FTOs who are currently assigned to a twelve (12) hour unit, will remain in their position. Newly assigned FTOs not assigned to a twelve (12) hour unit, will select, from the current vacancies, their rotation/station/shift by seniority.

Section 32.10

Employees assigned to a Flight Paramedic Assignment will normally work a twelve (12) hour scheduled as described in Article 16, Section 16.1. Flight Paramedics will work two (2) weeks of days from 0700-1900 hours, followed by two (2) weeks of nights from 1900-0700 hours, followed by two (2) weeks working in a relief position from 0700-1900, at the sole discretion of the County.

Flight Paramedics must comply with all rules and regulations set by the helicopter vendor at all times. Flight Paramedics must meet standards established by the vendor at all times during their selection for and assignment to the aircraft, including crew rest, training, and physical requirements. Specific limitations on air crew rest will not be applicable to the Flight Paramedics while in a ground assignment, except when such an assignment will conflict with scheduled Flight Paramedic assignments.

Assignments to Flight Paramedics will be filled by selection upon vacancy, and not in a typical sector bid process.

Section 32.10.1

All employees assigned as a Flight Paramedic will be paid in accordance with Article 20 and Article 16 of this Agreement, plus an additional five (5%) percent adder and any other applicable 12-hour shift differential.

Section 32.10.2

When the aircraft is out of service for any reason, the Flight Medic will remain at the hangar to facilitate an immediate return to service. Such down time should be utilized to complete on-going clinical and professional development programs. In the event the aircraft is out of service for more than twelve (12) hours, nothing in this section will prevent the County from reassigning the Flight Medic to ground operations.

Section 32.10.3

In the event air medical services are suspended or otherwise interrupted, all staff assigned to the air medical operations will remain on a 12-hour schedule, unless the employee requests reassignment. Following any interruption or suspension of services, employees who were displaced and meet all requirements of the vendor will be considered first for reassignment, based on seniority.

Section 32.10.4

The costs of all additional training and certifications required by the vendor shall be borne by the County.

Section 32.11

Employees assigned as a Critical Care Paramedic will work a twelve (12) hour shift pattern as described in Article 16, Section 16.1.

Section 32.11.1

All employees assigned to Critical Care will be paid in accordance with Article 20 and Article 16 of this Agreement, plus an additional five (5%) percent adder and any other applicable 12-hour shift differential.

Section 32.11.2

All employees assigned as a Critical Care Paramedic will be required to obtain and maintain the IBSC Certification for Critical Care Paramedic (CCP-C) within (18) months of assignment or Flight Paramedic (FP-C), if also assigned as a Flight Paramedic.

Section 32.12

Employees assigned as a Community_Paramedic will work a twelve (12) hour shift pattern as described in Article 16, Section 16.1.

Section 32.12.1

All employees assigned as a Community Paramedic will be paid in accordance with Article 20 and Article 16 of this Agreement, plus an additional five (5%) percent adder and any other applicable 12-hour shift differential.

Section 32.12.2

All employees assigned as a Community Paramedic will be required to obtain and maintain the IBSC Certification for Community Paramedics (CP-C) within (18) months of assignment.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 33

QUALITY MEDICAL ASSURANCE/IMPROVEMENT

Section 33.1

Where mandated by local ordinance, state rule or regulation or customer demand, it is the goal of the County to measure, analyze and report the performance of all components of the EMS care delivery system. The County and the Union agree that participation in quality assurance/improvement activities is vital to the maintenance and improvement of the delivery of EMS to the citizens and visitors of Lee County.

Section 33.2

Empowering an employee's certification is within the discretion of the Medical Director(s) hired or contracted with the County. Revocation of an employee's certification empowerment or Medical Director(s)' privileges will be for just cause based on a violation of any rule of the department: and unprofessional conduct, including, but not limited to, any departure from or failure to conform to the minimal prevailing standards of acceptable practice of the department, including undertaking activities that the emergency medical technician, paramedic, is not qualified by training or experience to perform, by the Medical Director(s) under contract with the County and if revoked as per the provisions of this Article shall be subject only to the grievance procedure in Article 9 and only up to STEP 3 of Section 9.6, to the Director of Public Safety; not the arbitration procedures outlined elsewhere in this Agreement.

Section 33.3

The assessment of an individual's performance will be based on standards established, outlined or selected by the Medical Director in a process known as "recredentialing". All EMTs

and Paramedics must successfully demonstrate required competencies during any twenty-four (24) month period to maintain the credentials with the Medical Director(s).

For recredentialing, the County will use clinical competencies to measure an employee's performance. Employees will be given a minimum of ten (10) business days written notice prior to any scheduled component of the recredentialing process. Employees who are on approved leave will be required to make up the components of the recredentialing process within fifteen (15) business days of their return to work.

Employees who have not worked clinically for more than 120 days may, at the County's discretion, be assigned to a Field Training Officer for the completion of any clinical competencies that are due. The assignment is limited to no more than two shifts or the completion of the competencies. This assignment may not cause a change in the employee's shift or work schedule.

A. Clinical Competencies

Effective with the execution date of the contract, clinical competencies must be demonstrated by all EMTs and Paramedics within twenty-four (24) months unless otherwise specified. EMTs will complete Basic Life Support Competencies, and Paramedics will complete both Basic and Advanced Life Support Competencies.

Clinical competencies may be incorporated into and completed during Monthly In-service Training or Distributive Education, when appropriate.

B. Quality Improvement

Feedback and comments received by EMS from medical staff, physicians, other public safety agencies or the public regarding patient care, procedural efficacy, interagency staff relations, demeanor, etc. Remedial actions

may be prescribed and implemented as needed. If disciplinary in nature, such actions will be subject to the grievance and arbitration procedure; provided that remedial action or revocation of privileges by the Medical Director(s) will be for just cause based on, and subject only to the grievance procedure as outlined in Section 33.2 above, and not the arbitration procedure.

C. Field Observation

Field observation of service delivery may be accomplished by any personnel with operational responsibility. Every Lee County EMT and Paramedic is required to monitor the care provided while on the scene. It is the responsibility of all care providers to report all deviations from the standard of care or protocol, situational anomalies, etc., witnessed during duty shifts through written reports, evaluations, incident reports, or additional methods as prescribed by order, guideline, policy, protocol or procedure.

On scene, the highest-ranking medical authority is primarily responsible for all care delivered by the crew members on their ambulance. This includes, but is not limited to, probationary or non-probationary EMTs, Paramedics, other public safety personnel, and student riders. The highest-ranking medical authority shall have the sole right to limit the care delivered by probationary or non-probationary participants in patient care.

During transport, the individual providing care is required to monitor the care provided with the best interest of the patient(s) in mind.

In addition, EMTs and Paramedics will complete evaluation reports on student trainees.

D. Clinical Incident Investigation

The following process shall be utilized in clinical investigations . The process outlined herein shall be utilized in response to incidents relating to medical treatment and/or deviations from established protocols and standing orders as outlined by the Medical Director(s). Remedial Action ordered by the Medical Director(s) as the result of an investigation will be for just cause subject only to the grievance procedure outlined in Section 32.2 above and not arbitration procedure. The investigation process shall not be utilized *solely* for investigations into incidents/complaints that arise from incidents involving violations of operational guidelines, incidents involving public relations or violations of rules and regulations. However, when operational and quality assurance issues arise out of the same incident or event, the operational and clinical investigations may occur at the same time.

The decision of the Medical Director(s) to revoke an employee's privileges to work under the Medical Director(s)' license in any classification shall be final and binding except to the extent that such a revocation may be grieved as provided in this Section. In any grievance/ arbitration procedure arising out of the County's action following revocation of privileges by the Medical Director(s), the sole issue before the arbitrator will be whether or not the Medical Director(s) followed the procedures under this Article. If the procedures were followed, an arbitrator shall not disturb any action taken by the Medical Director(s) nor the County's action implementing the Medical Director(s)' action. Any disciplinary action in excess of the action necessary to implement the Medical Director(s)' decision will be subject to arbitration.

If the Medical Director revokes the privilege of the employee to work under the Medical Director(s)' license as a Paramedic or an EMT, the County's decision to demote or terminate as necessary to implement the Medical Director(s)' action will not be considered disciplinary action and will not be disturbed.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 34

ON-CALL EMPLOYEES

Section 34.1

For the purpose of this article, on call employees are employees who have worked for the County full-time and transition to an on-call status for the purposes of covering overtime requirements caused by vacation and sick leave.

For the purpose of this article, temporary employees are employees who commence employment and are participating in the NEOP and FTO Program as they prepare to transition into Full Time Employment.

Section 34.2

The County reserves the right to utilize on-call employees to perform EMT and Paramedic bargaining unit work. The County will not use on-call employees while there are qualified employees on layoff eligible for recall. For the purposes of this Section, “qualified” will be interpreted as set forth in Article 8, Section 8.6 and Article 10, for example; no temporary on-call employee will be hired while employees in that classification are on lay-off and eligible for recall, nor will the County use on-call employees if the number of employees in the bargaining unit falls below the number that was in the bargaining unit on the date of certification of the Union as exclusive bargaining agent in PERC Case Number RC-95-034, Certificate Number 1113.

The County agrees to limit its selection of employees to those who:

- Currently possess LCEMS Medical Director privileges and required certifications, and
- Have completed and been released from the entire Lee County EMS / F.T.O. / Field Training Program for at least one (1) year, and
- Works with a local ALS service functioning under the County’s ALS provider License, or

- Who recently retired from, or left the full time employ of Lee County EMS.

Any on-call Paramedic or EMT must participate in departmental in-services, training and must maintain certifications as required by job description and/or departmental or Medical Director policy and procedure.

The primary purpose of on-call employees will be to cover overtime requirements caused by vacation and sick leave. On-call employees will be required to abide by Article 23 and all mandatory training that is required of full time employees.

Section 34.3

On-call employees will be paid no less than the minimum hourly rate for the classification

Temporary employees will be paid at step one as described in Article 20 for the classification and work schedule (twelve (12)-hour or twenty-four (24)-hour) assigned. Temporary employees will be eligible for holiday pay as described in Article 19. Benefits, except to the extent required by law, will not be paid to on-call employees.

Section 34.4

On-call employees shall serve at the will of the County.

Section 34.5

The County agrees to limit the total number of EMS on-call employees employed, to a number not to exceed eighteen percent (18%) of the number of full-time bargaining unit positions.

Section 34.6

The County agrees that employees working in on-call EMT or Paramedic positions shall not work more than forty-eight (48) hours in any two (2)-week pay period. On Call Employees are required to work at least one (1) weekend day (Saturday/Sunday) a month. If an on-call

employee completes all training requirements and is credentialed by the Medical Director, the County may, at its discretion, move the employee to a full-time status to immediately fill a vacancy.

Employees who move from temporary to full-time status must complete a probationary period as defined in Article 8, Section 8.4.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 35

STATIONS AND POST

Section 35.1

During the term of this Contract, the County will maintain stations spread geographically throughout the County. Each station will be equipped as set forth in Section 35.3. The County agrees to provide regular, preventative maintenance and repairs as needed so as not to cause health or safety hazards to employees.

Section 35.2

The County retains the right to identify primary station locations for twenty-four (24)-hour units or primary posting locations for twelve (12)-hour units that meet the minimum requirements of the strategic plan for stations. The County may close or change primary station locations or open new primary station locations as the system's needs change. If a new primary station location is established, the County agrees to equip it as outlined in Section 35.3. If a primary posting location is established, the County agrees to equip it as outlined in Section 35.4. There is no requirement to equip secondary or standby posting locations.

Employees that are assigned to work 24 hour shift but reassigned to a 12 hour night time shift will only be assigned to a station with a bed.

Section 35.3

Twenty-four (24)-hour operational stations shall be supplied with the following minimum equipment and services:

- One (1) bed per crew member
- Air conditioning and heat
- Microwave oven
- Full-size refrigerator
- In stations where a stove is not permitted, but an outside gas grill is permitted, said gas grill and a propane tank will be provided. Employees will be responsible for providing the propane.
- Radio Alerting System

- Assortment of dishes, to include plates, drinking glasses, coffee cups, knives, forks and spoons.
- Color television with cable service, satellite, or internet access.
- Telephone (local service)
- Sink /Counter combination for kitchen area
- Water service
- Bathroom with bathing facilities
- Assorted cooking pans and utensils
- One (1) night stand/lamp per bed
- Electric service
- Desk area for paperwork with lamp
- Shift lockers - three (3) to nine (9) as space permits
- Chairs for desk and tables, recliners for the day area (one per person on duty)
- One (1) Union bulletin board (to be supplied by the Union)
- Properly secured location for storage of personal equipment bags. The employee is responsible for unsecured equipment stored at EMS stations while not on duty.

Section 35.4

Each primary posting location for twelve (12)-hour operational stations shall be supplied with the following minimum equipment and services:

- Air conditioning and heat
- Microwave oven
- Radio Alerting System
- Assortment of dishes, to include plates, drinking glasses, coffee cups, knives, forks and spoons
- Color television with cable service, satellite, or internet access.
- Telephone (local service)
- Sink /Counter combination for kitchen area
- Water service
- Refrigerator
- Bathroom facilities
- Electric service
- Desk area for paperwork with lamp
- Chairs for desk and tables, recliners for the day area (one per person per duty)
- One (1) Union bulletin board (to be supplied by the Union)
- Location for storage of personal equipment bags, where space is available.

The employee is responsible for unsecured personal equipment stored at EMS stations while not on duty.

As new primary locations are identified and opened, the location will be equipped as soon as it can reasonably be done; provided that where applicable the landlord does not prohibit the listed equipment and services.

Section 35.5

The above equipment and services as set forth in Sections 35.3 and 35.4 may be supplied either directly by the County or provided by the organization owning the building housing the EMS unit. The County, in cooperation with personnel assigned to the twenty-four (24)-hour stations or the twelve (12)-hour stations will work together to ensure that the equipment owned by the County listed in Sections 35.3 and 35.4 is maintained in good working condition.

Section 35.6

Employees may be assigned a daily/weekly cleaning schedule by EMS management at any station or primary posting location. The cleaning assignment may also be accomplished under the direction of fire department/hospital supervisors for employees housed in stations located in fire stations or hospitals.

Section 35.7

The County will establish an EMS Station Employee Engagement Team (EET) to plan, review and improve new and existing stations according to the current strategic plan. The EET will conduct station inspections and make recommendations on new and existing stations to Management.

Section 35.8

The County will do a station review every twelve (12) months to assure cleanliness and to keep a maintenance log on all EMS stations. After each review EMS management will repair or replace items identified. Employees will only be responsible for routine maintenance as identified in the applicable SOP, and preventative maintenance will be done by appropriate departments or services. The County will provide a SOP to identify and correct maintenance items. The Union will be afforded the opportunity to accompany the County during annual station inspections.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 36

STAFFING

Section 36.1

During the month of August each year, the County and the Union will evaluate and reconfigure the sectors as needed based on call volume and geographical location. Personnel assigned to these sectors will work the twenty-four/forty-eight (24/48) schedule.

Stand-by assignments will be tracked via the CAD and be counted towards workload on corresponding ambulance.

The County will establish a starting time of no earlier than 0630 hours and no later than 0730 hours for all twenty-four (24)-hour shifts. Once established, the starting time will not be permanently changed unless a minimum of fifteen (15) business days advance notice is given to those affected by the change.

Employees assigned to a Sector will rotate through each station monthly on a continual basis. Relief personnel may be required to work on either a twenty-four (24)- or twelve (12)-hour unit, depending on operational needs. On-duty twenty-four (24)-hour personnel will not be assigned as relief to a twelve (12)-hour night shift.

A. Twelve (12)-hour Shifts.

Each twelve (12)-hour shift crew will be assigned a posting location. Subject to the above, the crews will initially work one of the following shift schedules:

1. 09:30 to 21:30
2. 10:00 to 22:00
3. 19:00 to 07:00
4. 08:00 to 20:00
5. 07:00 to 19:00
6. 09:00 to 21:00
7. 06:00 to 18:00
8. 18:00 to 06:00
9. 20:00 to 08:00

The County reserves the right to add additional twelve (12)-hour units during the term of the contract. Employees permanently assigned to the twelve (12)-hour shifts will not rotate among the regularly scheduled starting times. Such starting times may be temporarily changed due to unforeseen operational requirements. If a twelve (12)-hour shift starting time is permanently changed, a minimum of fifteen (15) business days notice of the change will be given to those affected.

Employees permanently assigned to the twelve (12)-hour shifts will receive a five percent (5%) differential added to their regular straight time while so assigned. The differential will be included in the base rate for overtime purposes and may cause the employee's pay to exceed the maximum of the range.

B. All employees will pick their Sector or twelve (12)-hour shifts by seniority, subject to the following restrictions:

1. Two (2) Paramedics will not be assigned to work together as a crew on a shift within a Sector, or twelve (12)-hour shifts until each of the crews has a Paramedic assigned.
2. Assuming sufficient personnel is available, each twenty-four (24)-hour shift will have a minimum of nine (9) Paramedics assigned to relief.
3. Assuming sufficient personnel is available, each twelve (12)-hour shift will have a minimum of five (5) employees assigned to relief, including 3 paramedics and 2 EMTs.
4. As vacancies occur after the annual bid/ assignment, the County reserves the right to transfer personnel as necessary based on the County's demonstrated operational needs. If a Paramedic or EMT is required, the

County will offer the position to those relief personnel on that shift in order of seniority beginning with the most senior employee. Employees who vacate a sector assignment must remain on relief for a minimum of six (6) months, or until the next sector bids. If no employee selects the open sector position, then the employee within the classification with the least seniority shall be transferred to that open sector position. If the Paramedic or EMT vacancy is on a twelve (12)-hour shift, the vacancy will be filled by the least senior Paramedic / EMT from a Sector that has more than the minimum required number of Paramedics / EMTs. Nothing in this paragraph will preclude the County from selecting volunteers.

5. In the interest of preventing untoward consequences, employees who are married, engaged, living together, or dating are prohibited from working together on an ambulance or special detail without prior authorization. For special events, it is permissible to schedule both employees to work if they will be paired with other employees.

Section 36.2

Between October 1 and October 15 of each year, all Paramedics and EMTs will bid for a sector, relief, or twelve (12)-hour schedule, including starting time. The County is responsible to notify each employee one (1) week in advance of the bid via the County's e-mail system. Requests for sector assignments must be received electronically by the prescribed deadline. The Union and County agree to meet within three (3) business days following the end of the bid process and make assignments. Once announced, employees have three (3) business days to bring any issues to the attention of the County before the sector assignments are considered locked. It is the goal of the Union and the County to finalize the sector bids before the start of

vacation bids. Any associated shift or sector assignments will take place at the beginning of the first full pay period in January of each year.

- A. If an employee fails to submit their request by the established due date, he/she will be assigned to relief.
- B. If the employee is on FMLA, Bereavement or Military Leave, and they are unable to submit a bid, the Sector Bid Committee will make every attempt to contact the employee and honor their request via the phone. If unable to make contact, the employee will be placed on relief on the shift they were previously assigned.

Section 36.3

The Parties recognize that the implementation of the Contract and continued implementation of twelve (12)- and twenty-four (24)-hour units may result in unforeseen issues. Therefore both Parties, as part of a mutual effort to provide the citizens of Lee County with the best EMS service available, will meet as necessary to resolve issues which may be created; provided that there will be no change in contract language without the mutual agreement of the Parties.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 37

SAVINGS CLAUSE

Section 37.1

If any Article or Section of this Agreement should be found invalid, unlawful, or not enforceable, by reason of any existing or subsequently enacted legislation or by judicial authority, all other Articles and Sections of this Agreement shall remain in full force for the duration of this Agreement.

Section 37.2

In the event of invalidation of any Article or section, both the employer and the Union agree to meet within thirty (30) days of such determination for the purpose of arriving at a mutually satisfactory replacement for such Article or Section.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 38

AGREEMENT TO FUND

Section 38.1

The County agrees to allot, secure and provide funding necessary to satisfy and keep whole all articles of this Agreement during the duration of this Agreement.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 39

EDUCATIONAL INCENTIVES

Section 39.1

Employees meeting and maintaining any of the following educational requirements or certifications shall have the following educational incentive pay as reflected in the schedule below:

- A. Two percent (2%) Increase = A.S. Degree or A.A. Degree in related Aviation, emergency, medical study field, or business administration/management.
- B. Four percent (4%) Increase = Bachelors Degree in related Aviation, emergency, medical study field, or business administration/management.

The above incentives will be included in the base rate of pay for overtime purposes.

Section 39.2

Employees may receive the educational incentive pay as stated in Section 39.1 for an Associate degree or a Bachelor degree but not both, i.e., the maximum total incentive under this Article is four percent (4%).

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 40

SERVICE STANDARDS

Section 40.1

Both the Union and the County recognize the importance of maintaining the best possible response times to calls for service in Lee County. As such, the bargaining unit employees agree to work diligently and safely to insure the best possible response times. In addition, the County recognizes that the EMS system design and staffing must continue to meet the increasing demands for service.

Section 40.2

Lee County EMS response times will be reviewed on an on-going basis. The County and Union agree to use as benchmarks, the criteria defined within Lee County Ordinance No. 08-16 as amended hereafter. In addition to these benchmarks, the County will consider 2,400 responses per ground ambulance per year on average, as a workload indicator.

Section 40.3

In the instance that benchmarks go unmet, the County will complete an analysis to determine the method most beneficial in addressing the unmet benchmark. The method employed will be an operational analysis to determine the cause and corrective action to be taken. If this fails to address the issue, then the EMS Program will request additional resources; provided however, that the decision to grant additional resources is at the sole discretion of the Board of County Commissioners.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 41

DURATION

Section 41.1

It is understood by and between the Parties that this Agreement shall be effective upon ratification of the agreement by both parties, and shall continue until September 30, 2027. This Agreement shall be automatically renewed annually provided, however, that either Party may give written notice by December 1, 2026, of its intention to renegotiate the Agreement or specific Article(s) of the Agreement. Such written notice shall include an enumeration of the Article(s) to be renegotiated and only those Article(s) identified in the notice shall be subject to negotiations. Written proposals on all opened Article(s) shall be provided by April 1, 2027. The failure of a Party to provide written proposals on or before that date or Article(s) that Party opened shall prohibit that Party from proposing changes to that Article.

Negotiations will commence no later than April 10, 2027.

The Contract shall be effective upon ratification of the agreement by both parties, and shall remain in full force and effect through September 30, 2027. It supersedes and replaces the previous Contract in place during the term of October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2024.

This Agreement may be amended at any time by mutual consent of the Parties, but no such attempted amendment shall be of any force or effect until placed in writing and numbered, dated, and signed by the responsible Parties.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 42

VETERAN'S PREFERENCE

Section 42.1

The County and the Union acknowledge that the County is required to comply with Chapter 295, Florida Statutes.

Section 42.2

The parties agree that for the purposes of layoff, the preference shall be to credit a employee eligible for preference with one-quarter (0.25) of a year of service for each qualifying year of military service upon which the preference is requested. For purposes of promotions, the preference shall be as established by statute.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 43

ENTIRE AGREEMENT

Section 43.1

The Parties acknowledge that, during the negotiations which resulted in this Agreement, each had the right and opportunity to make proposals with respect to subjects or matters not removed by law from the area of collective bargaining. The understandings and agreements arrived at, by the Parties after the exercise of such right and opportunity, are set forth in the Agreement.

Section 43.2

This Agreement may be amended by mutual agreement of the Parties. Any amendment must be in writing and signed by the duly authorized representatives of the Parties before it will be effective.

(REMAINDER OF THIS PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK)

ARTICLE 44

EXECUTION AND RATIFICATION

Section 44.1

This Agreement shall become a tentative Contract upon being signed by the County designated representative for the County and the Union representative.

Section 44.2

This Agreement shall not become a final and binding contract until its ratification by the majority of the employees in the bargaining unit and its approval by the Lee County Board of County Commissioners at its first meeting following the ratification by the employees.

RATIFICATION

This is to certify that a majority of the bargaining unit employees voting, approved the Agreement on May 30, 2025.

WITNESSED BY:

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA PROFESSIONAL
FIREFIGHTERS AND PARAMEDICS
LOCAL 1826, IAFF, INC.

BY: Henry Garcia
Henry Garcia, President
Local 1826

BY: Tim Jones
Tim Jones, Vice President
Local 1826

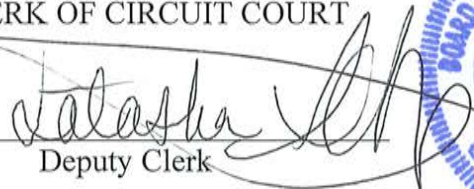
This is to certify that the Lee County Board of County Commissioners approved the Agreement at its meeting on **June 17, 2025**.

WITNESSED BY: LEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

BY: 
Dave Harner, County Manager

BY: 
Kevin Ruane, Chair
Lee County Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST: KEVIN C. KARNES
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

By: 
Deputy Clerk



Approved As to Form For The
Reliance Of Lee County Only

BY: 
Office of the County Attorney