

## **Board of Directors Meeting**

**July 24, 2025**

### **Approve Amendments and Budget for Legal Counsel with Johnson, Pope, Bokor, Ruppel & Burns Agreement**

#### **Item IV.C.**

---

**Recommended Action:** Approve Amendments and Budget for Legal Counsel with Johnson, Pope, Bokor, Ruppel & Burns Agreement

**Strategic Plan Alignment:** Organizational Capacity

---

On June 1, 2015, Juvenile Welfare Board (JWB) staff requested approval to enter into a new contract with Johnson, Pope, Bokor, Ruppel & Burns, LLP under a sole-source exception to JWB's Purchasing Policy. This exception was based on the firm's unique prior experience, expertise, and professional stature, which could not be easily replicated. The contract was approved by the Finance Committee and subsequently ratified by the Board on June 11, 2015. The agreement maintained the original hourly rate of \$210, as established in 2008, and included a termination clause, allowing either party to terminate the contract with thirty-day written notice. At the time of approval, the estimated expenditure on this contract was \$90,000.

#### **Current Financials, Contract Revisions, and Proposed Adjustments:**

Since the Board approved the agreement in 2015, the agreement has undergone three amendments, none of which have been presented to the Board:

- Amendment 1: Effective 10/01/2021, increasing the hourly rate to \$250 and updating required language in the agreement
- Amendment 2: Effective 10/01/2023, increasing the hourly rate to \$280
- Amendment 3: Effective 10/01/2024, increasing the hourly rate to \$295 and adding insurance requirements to the agreement

The annual budget allocated for these legal services has grown from \$90,000 in FY15 to \$125,000 in FY26.

To ensure transparency regarding the budgetary increases and incremental rate adjustments, JWB is now presenting the proposed contract amendment to the Board for approval. The amendment outlines an increase in the hourly rate from \$295 to \$305, effective October 1, 2025. This represents a three percent adjustment, which aligns with industry standards for annual rate increases, typically ranging from three percent to six percent, driven by factors such as rising operational costs that generally increase with inflation.

Furthermore, this adjustment is consistent with market practices, as outlined in the Florida Bar's 2022 Economics and Law Office Management Survey, which found that 85 percent of respondents reported hourly rates exceeding \$275, and 54 percent reported rates above \$350. Ensuring compliance with financial policies and maintaining competitive legal counsel services remain priorities for JWB.

**Recommended Action:**

JWB suggests the Board approve the proposed amendment and grant authorization for future adjustments to the hourly rate, provided such revisions remain within the industry-standard range of three percent to six percent. Additionally, JWB requests that the expenditure limit for general counsel and legal services be reviewed and approved annually, as part of the Board's budget approval process.

Staff Resources: Robbi Stivers  
Lorra Hayes