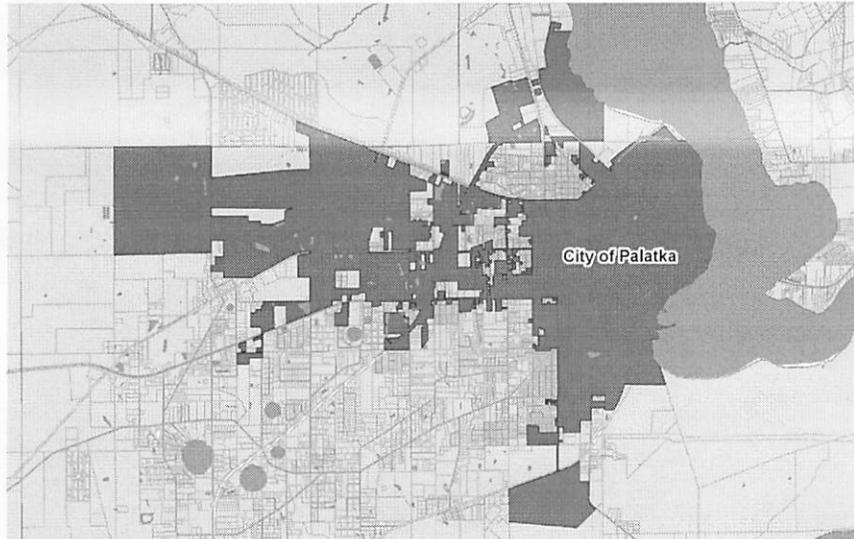


# NOTICE OF HEARING TO IMPOSE AND PROVIDE FOR COLLECTION OF NON-AD VALOREM SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS TO FUND IN PART THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONTINUAL READINESS TO PROVIDE FIRE PROTECTION



The property subject to assessment lies within the City of Palatka, Florida.

Last year the City Commission of the City of Palatka, Florida (the "City"), adopted a special or non-ad valorem assessment to defray a portion of the annual operating and capital costs associated with the Palatka Fire Department. The City Commission's goal was to put in place a supplemental and alternative means to deal with budget shortfalls and depletion of reserves, and so that the rates of assessment for benefited parcels could remain reasonable and flexible and might efficiently change over time. City policies, practices, the annual fire department budget, the overall budget for the City, and other conditions in making these fire protection services and facilities constantly available within our community will continue to test our fiscal stewardship for several years. Accordingly, provision of fire services, facilities, and improvements will in all likelihood continue next year to be funded, in part, by special non-ad-valorem assessments against property located within the City limits. The remainder of the fire protection budget can then be funded with other legally available revenues (most of which are ad valorem property taxes) of the City. This is a challenging balancing process this community must address annually. Please read further.

The special assessments for each parcel of property will be based on the same benefits or burdens analysis as last year which is associated with the availability of fire protection constantly made available every day to all tax parcels. The City will assess properties based on the same two-tier rate structure as last year, which was the subject of final judicial approval prior to the initial bill for collection being sent last November for FY 2015-16. Tier 1 is based on the relative improvements value associated with each tax parcel (no land value is generally used in this calculation) focused on variable and only some fixed costs. Tier 2 is a fixed rate per tax parcel focused on fixed costs. If you wish to learn more, a more detailed description of the assessment program is available in City Ordinance No. 15-14, and Resolution No. 2015-11-59 and on the City's website.

On April 14, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. the City Commission will hold a public hearing in City Commission Chambers at City Hall, 201 N. Second Street, Palatka, Florida, for the purpose of annual process of receiving comments on the proposed assessments and to consider collection of the fire protection assessment by the tax collector pursuant to the tax bill collection method authorized by Section 197.3632, Florida Statutes. You are invited to appear at the public hearing, and/or to file written objections with the City Clerk and addressed to the City Commission within 20 days of this notice. If you decide to appeal any decision made by the City Commission with respect to any matter considered at the hearing, you will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made, including the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be made.

Each parcel of property assigned an identification number by the county property appraiser is considered one (1) tax parcel. The City Commission will not increase the rates from those used last year. If approved by City Commission after the hearing, the rate of assessment for each tax parcel is proposed to be the sum of (i) \$2.46 per \$1,000 of the value of improvements attributed to the tax parcel by the county property appraiser (Tier 1), plus (ii) \$125.00 per tax parcel (Tier 2), together with (iii) any unpaid FY 2015-16 Fire Service Assessment balance and (iv) a share of administration and collection costs associated with the annual assessment. The dollar amount and other information concerning the proposed non-ad valorem assessment attributable to each and every tax parcel in the City is also available online at <http://quicksearch.enlead-data.com/palatka> or <http://www.palatka-fl.gov/257/Fire-Service-Assessment> or by computer terminal upon inquiry at the offices of the City Clerk, at City Hall. The total revenue the City expects to collect by the assessment, less statutory discounts, amounts payable to property appraiser and tax collector, administrative costs and prior year delinquencies, is approximately \$1,350,000. This annual assessment will fund only about 60% of the City's fire protection budget, and is for the purpose of funding the continual readiness and availability of essential services and capital facilities and equipment associated with fire protection.

Payment is anticipated to be due and collected on the same bill as taxes to be mailed around November 1, 2016. As a courtesy reminder, please be reminded that until paid, these fire assessments constitute a lien against assessed property equal in rank and dignity with the liens of all state, county, district, or municipal taxes and other non-ad valorem assessments. These assessments become delinquent in the same manner as for unpaid taxes, and failure to pay the upcoming assessment will cause a tax certificate to be issued against the property which may result in loss of title. Property owners may still bring any unpaid amount for the FY 2015-16 current assessments now due until the next assessment roll is certified for collection in early August.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES NEEDING ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE HEARING SHOULD CONTACT THE CITY CLERK AT LEAST 48 HOURS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING AT (386) 329-0100.

PUBLISHED AT THE DIRECTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION, CITY OF PALATKA  
By: /s/ Betsy J. Driggers, City Clerk

**FISCAL YEAR 2016-17**  
**NOTICE OF ANNUAL HEARING AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Thank you for reading this information on the flipside of your direct bill for your FY 2015–16 fire service assessment. The amount of the bill for the current fiscal year on the flipside of this Notice is now due.

Going forward, the City Commission also expects to continue the fire service assessment next year for the FY 2016-17 budget year. By this Notice the City's rate structure used this year for your tax parcel for the fire service assessment will remain the same; so, the total amount to be levied upon your tax parcel next year may decrease from that shown on the reverse side of this Notice, but will not increase.

The City will also update and provide the proposed fire service assessment roll for FY 2016-17 and make it available at the City Clerk's office at City Hall and at <http://www.palatka-fl.gov> early in March of 2016.

**On April 14, 2016 at 6 PM, the City Commission will hold a public hearing in the City Commission chambers at City Hall, 201 N. 2nd St., Palatka, Florida, for the purpose of again receiving comments on proposed fire service assessments for FY 2016-17 (our next budget year).** You are invited to attend and/or file written objections with the City Clerk and address them to the City Commission prior to that date. If you decide to appeal any decision made by the City Commission with respect to any matter considered at the hearing, you will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made, including the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be made.

To recap, this is how the City's fire service assessment works: Each parcel property in the City assigned identification number by the county property appraiser is considered one (1) tax parcel. If approved by the City Commission after the public hearing, the rate of assessment for each tax parcel is proposed not to exceed the sum of (i) (Tier 1 - for variable and fixed costs of making fire protection services and facilities available) a variable rate of \$2.46 per \$1,000 of the relative value of the improvements associated with the tax parcel (no land value); (ii) (Tier 2 - for more fixed costs of making fire protection services and facilities available) \$125 fixed or flat rate for each tax parcel; and (iii) and a share of the City's administration and collection costs and expenses associated with the fire service assessment program, which shall not exceed \$5 per tax parcel.

All three amounts together make up what the City will impose to fund only about 60% of our City's total fire protection related budget. In FY 2016-17 the City expects to collect approximately \$1.6 million for that portion of its fire protection program at the assessment rates described in this Notice, excluding any recovery of delinquencies. In addition, there are typically charges and discount adjustments imposed and required to comply with general law each year as these non-ad valorem assessments are collected, and those amounts can range from as little as 4% to as much as 8% percent of the amount to be collected annually.

As shown on the flipside of this Notice, the City is billing you directly for the fire service assessment for this year (FY 2015–16) which is now due and payable. If you do not pay the this first year's assessment in full, the City has no intent to spend precious resources on collections, but rather will use its ability to collect an amount equivalent to what is unpaid along with next year's fire service assessment on the same bill as your property taxes. Waiting to pay all or any part of this year's fire service assessment (shown on the flipside of this Notice) makes it more difficult for the City's budgetary, financial and cash flow operations, and will likely unnecessarily increase the amount you pay at a later date by between 4% and 8%. Please consider avoiding these additional charges and costs, and promptly pay the amount due on the flipside of this Notice TODAY. Thank you so much.

Payment for next year's fire service assessment is anticipated to be due and collected on the same bill as taxes to be mailed around November 1, 2016. General law requires us to always remind you that: Until paid, the fire service assessment will constitute a lien against assessed property equal in rank and dignity with the liens of all state, county, district, or municipal taxes and other non-ad valorem assessments. Assessments become delinquent in the same manner as for unpaid taxes, and failure to pay a non-ad valorem assessment will cause a tax certificate to be issued against the property which may result in loss of title. Government property is not subject to the fire service assessment.

The City's fire service assessment charges will only be used for the purpose of fire protection related expenditures. However, because the City has entirely funded fire protection services and facilities through its general fund for so long, the assessment really helps to improve the City's financial health by taking some (not all) pressure off our City's general fund and helps to better position our City's finances and budget which would otherwise be vulnerable – particularly in the event of a natural disaster. Thank you for reviewing this information.