



# **News Release**

**Alachua County Sheriff's Office**

**Sadie Darnell, Sheriff**

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**For Immediate Release:**

**Today's Date: July 22, 2016**

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**Release #: 2016-030**

**Update on Alachua County Sheriff's Office Appeal of Fiscal Year 2016 Law Enforcement Budget**

During the fiscal year 2016 budget process, Sheriff Sadie Darnell submitted a certified budget request for law enforcement funding to the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in the amount of \$26,277,071. Subsequent to budget discussions, the BOCC adopted a law enforcement budget of \$25,340,946 totaling \$936,125 less than what was certified by Sheriff Darnell. Included in the BOCC's cuts was funding specific to the staffing for twelve (12) previously existing and fully-funded law enforcement positions assigned to the Juvenile Relations Bureau in the amount of \$856,406. The BOCC's decision to cut funding specific to these positions was arbitrary and capricious, and is a violation of state statute and case law as ruled upon by the Florida Supreme Court. This is the basis of the appeal.

On January 22, 2016 Sheriff Darnell sent a letter to BOCC Chair Robert Hutchinson in which she offered to accept a cut to the law enforcement budget of \$392,214 as a compromise to settle the appeal. This offer was unilaterally rejected by the BOCC. Since that time, the BOCC has made no attempt to engage in further negotiations or provide any counter offers to reach a potential settlement to the budget appeal outside of the cabinet hearing process.

On July 14, 2016, Sheriff Darnell and members of her staff provided testimony on behalf of this appeal to a hearing panel represented by staff members from the Office of Governor Rick Scott, Attorney General Pam Bondi, Chief Financial Officer Jeff Atwater, and Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam. Subsequent to that hearing, the BOCC convened a special meeting yesterday, July 21, 2016, where they voted 3-2 to offer a compromise settlement to the Sheriff in the amount of \$156,021, along with additional financial caveats and restrictions on the Alachua County Sheriff's Office moving forward.

Despite the erroneous headline "County, Sheriff Reach Deal" appearing in the printed version of the Gainesville Sun on July 22, 2016, the Sheriff and the BOCC have not reached any agreement in this matter. Sheriff Darnell is meeting with staff regarding the BOCC's offer and expects to respond later this afternoon. The next hearing before the panel of cabinet aides is scheduled for Wednesday, July 27, 2016, at 9:00 AM at the Florida Capitol in Tallahassee.

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