



# The Greater Clark Foundation

AMBITION FOR A VIBRANT COMMUNITY

To: City of Winchester, KY  
Hon. JoEllen Reed, Mayor  
Commissioner Hannah Toole  
Commissioner Kenny Book  
Commissioner Shannon Cox  
Commissioner Kitty Strode  
William Dykeman, City Attorney  
Chris Whiteley, City Fire Chief  
Mike Flynn, City Manager

Clark County, KY Fiscal Court  
Hon. Les Yates, County Judge-Executive  
Magistrate Daniel Konstantopoulos  
Magistrate Ernest Pasley  
Magistrate Steve Craycraft  
Magistrate Mark Miller  
Magistrate Chris Davis  
Magistrate Robert Blanton  
William Elkins, County Attorney  
Steve Asbury, Clark County Fire Chief

From: Jen Algire, The Greater Clark Foundation

Date: August 24, 2023

Re: Joint City-County Meeting Monday, August 28, 2023

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Greetings.

Please find enclosed materials that will be presented and discussed at the Joint City-County Meeting Monday, August 28, 2023. I wanted you to have time to review the materials prior to the meeting.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you.

# Invitation to Participate in a Feasibility Study to Assess Unifying the Clark County and the City of Winchester Fire Departments

Presentation to a Joint Meeting of the Clark County Fiscal Court and Winchester City Commission  
Monday, August 28, 2023



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## Opportunity: Unified Fire/EMS

- County, City and GCF share goal of ensuring high quality services for all residents of Clark County.
- Concurrence of timing = opportunity to think big and do something that will benefit the entire county.
- Unifying City and County Fire/EMS would provide real, tangible, and long-lasting benefits to all residents of Winchester and Clark County regardless of where they live.



July 5, 2023

Hon. Les Yates, Judge Executive  
Magistrate of Clark County Fiscal Court  
Mr. Steve Ashby, Fire Chief  
Clark County Courthouse  
34 South Main Street  
Winchester, KY 40391

Hon. Jeffrey Reed, Mayor  
Mike Flynn, City Manager  
City Commission  
36 Clark Winchester, Fire Chief  
32 Wall Tower  
Winchester, KY 40391

via email and hand delivery  
Dear County and City Leaders:

I am writing today with an offer and an invitation that supports the Clark County Fiscal Court, the City of Winchester, and The Greater Clark Foundation's shared goal(s) of ensuring the highest quality of services for the residents of Clark County, KY.

Based upon conversations with County Fire Chief Ashby and County Judge Executive Yates, we understand the Fiscal Court is in the process of evaluating the feasibility of acquiring Fire Station #1, including potential land acquisition and site planning. Concurrently, from our conversations with City Fire/EMS Chief Winchester and other City officials including City Manager Flynn, we understand the City of Winchester is also looking to acquire property for a new fire station. No understanding in that each entity is evaluating business within a similar geographical area to serve its respective constituents. We believe these concurrent needs has present a unique opportunity to seriously consider the feasibility and benefits of unifying the County and City Fire and EMS services to provide the highest level of emergency services to ALL residents of Clark County.

In conversations with the respective Fire Chiefs, each expressed an interest in exploring a countywide unified Fire/EMS service, acknowledging that the long term benefits to the community could be significant. Both Chiefs expressed that it would be a challenging undertaking yet would be worth our community's time and investment. We understand this is a complicated process, but one worth pursuing.

You may be aware that GCF owns property at the intersection of Strawn Road and Colby Road. This property, known as The Perennial Trail, is currently used for passive recreation via a 1-mile paved path around the property. We believe the property is within the search parameters for the location of both the County and the City's emergency services. While GCF has its own hopes and dreams for this property, we believe the fate of all people is served together. To facilitate the unification of Fire and EMS services, the Foundation is willing to allocate a portion of the property to be used for a public safety complex. We believe this could save roughly \$1 million in acquisition costs that could be redeployed as part of a unification process. With this in mind, we invite Clark County and the City of Winchester to explore this option in partnership with GCF. To facilitate this process, The Greater Clark Foundation is willing to provide a portion of the funding to assess the feasibility and necessary processes.

The potential benefits to unification are significant. First and foremost, the goal would be to provide a consistent, high level of services across the entire geography of Clark County. Doing so will, in unified Fire/EMS would benefit from greater efficiencies; better staffing, better resource capabilities, streamlined communications, and - with strategically placed stations and appropriate staffing - improve the ESD rating for the entire County. A unified organizational structure would allow for a unified strategic plan. There would be one common vision for the entire County with all resources aligned toward that vision. Strategic deployment of resources countywide can eliminate unnecessary redundancies and lead to more effective and efficient use of tax dollars. For example, unification would create space to redeploy two of the County's suppression apparatus, currently located

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## Anticipated Benefits

- Unified strategic plan -- one common vision for the entire County with all resources aligned toward that vision.
- Unified organizational structure – consistent SOP, better staffing, stronger career path for employees
- Better rescue capabilities
- Streamlined communications
- Reduce or eliminate redundant capacity.
- Efficient, consistent, high level of service across the entire geography of Clark County.



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## GCF's Interest in this issue

- GCF believes the fate of all people is woven together. We look for opportunities to inspire vision and action for a compelling future.
- Residents need to see that the County and City can work together effectively on forward-looking projects with shared vision and common goals. This project is a chance to do that.
- Common sense solution to a challenge faced by both County and City.



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## Incentives for Joint Fire/EMS



  
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- GCF, County and City jointly share in costs of Fire/EMS unification feasibility assessment.
- If unification is feasible, GCF willing to provide land to incentivize this municipal collaboration and support the goal of unifying the departments.
- \$2 million in savings on land acquisition between County and City.

## Approach

- Request that the City and County participate in good faith in a feasibility study to assess if merging the two fire departments is a worthwhile endeavor.
- GCF willing to fund 70% of the study and willing to hold and administer the contract. Asking City and County to contribute the remaining 30% (15% each, not to exceed \$25,000).
- Will use feasibility study will determine next steps.
- Invite us to resist getting too far ahead of ourselves in terms of “what if?” and “who’s in charge?” questions.

  
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## Roles and Responsibilities

- Draft RFP: Greater Clark Foundation
- Final RFP Approval: City, County, GCF
- Initial Vendor Screening: GCF
- Vendor Recommendation: Feasibility Study Committee
- Final Vendor Selection: Fiscal Court & City Commission
- Contract Administration: Greater Clark Foundation
- Scope of Work Oversight: Feasibility Study Committee
- Final Report Approval: Fiscal Court & City Commission



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## Proposed Feasibility Study Committee

- 13 Members
- GCF to serve as neutral convener
- Members commit to full and good faith participation
- Suggested Composition of committee:
  - Chief Fire Official for City and County (2)
  - City and County Administrator (City Manager and County Judge Executive) (2)
  - 2 Magistrates to be appointed by Clark County Fiscal Court (2)
  - 1 Commissioner to be appointed by City Commission (1)
  - Mayor (1)
  - 3 At-large and/or subject matter experts (3)
    - GIS director, Stephen Berry
    - Bluegrass Emergency Response Team, TBD
    - 911 Dispatch, TBD
  - 2 GCF Trustees (2)



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# Questions and Discussion



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# Thank you.

Questions or for more information:

[jalgire@clarkambition.org](mailto:jalgire@clarkambition.org)



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