

PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Meeting Date: 6/23/2015 [X] Consent [] Regular
[] Public Hearing
Department
Submitted By: COUNTY ATTORNEY
Submitted For:

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Motion and Title: Staff recommends motion to: approve a Settlement Agreement, inclusive of attorney’s fees and costs, in the total amount of \$80,000 in the personal injury action styled Bruce McDonald vs. Palm Beach County, Case No. 502014CA004287XXXXMB AB.

Summary: This accident occurred on January 16, 2013, on the Palmetto Park Bridge in Boca Raton. Plaintiff was riding his bicycle over the bridge when he saw a gate arm start to descend. The gate briefly stopped its descent and plaintiff incorrectly assumed the bridge tender saw him. The gate completed its descent and struck plaintiff in the head. Plaintiff was transported to a local emergency room. He treated with several doctors and was diagnosed with neurological injuries. Past medical bills total \$32,278 and future medical bills may exceed \$100,000.

Staff, including the Risk Management Roundtable Committee, concurs that this settlement is in the best interest of Palm Beach County. Countywide (SCL)

Background and Justification:

This accident occurred on January 16, 2013, on the Palmetto Park Bridge. Plaintiff was riding his bicycle over the bridge when he saw the gate arm start to descend. The gate stopped its descent momentarily and plaintiff assumed the bridge tender saw him. The bridge tender failed to see him and continued lowering the gate which struck plaintiff in the head, knocking him off his bike. (Continued on Page 3)

Attachments:

- 1. Settlement Agreement and Release of All Claims
- 2. Budget Availability Statement

Recommended by: [Signature] 6/9/15
County Attorney Date

Approved by: N/A
Date

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Capital Expenditures					
Operating Costs	\$80,000				
External Revenues					
Program Income (County)					
In-Kind Match (County)					
NET FISCAL IMPACT	\$-20,000				
# ADDITIONAL FTE POSITIONS (Cumulative)					

Is Item Included in Current Budget? Yes ☒ No ☐

Budget Account No.: Fund 5010 Department 700 Unit 7130 Object 4511

Reporting Category_____

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

C. Departmental Fiscal Review: _____

III. REVIEW COMMENTS

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Development and Control Comments:

Sheng Bao
50 69 619 OFMB

Dr. J. Jacobson
Contract Development and Control
6-12-15

B. Legal Sufficiency:


Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review:


Department Director

THIS SUMMARY IS NOT TO BE USED AS A BASIS FOR PAYMENT.

Background and Justification (Continued from Page 1)

The bridge tender testified that his finger slipped off of the control button causing the gate to pause in its descent. The Plaintiff sustained neurological injuries and is a surgical candidate for a cervical laminectomy and nerve root decompression.

Therefore, it is recommended that the County approve the Settlement Agreement in the amount of \$80,000.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT made and entered into this 13th day of May, 2015, by and between PALM BEACH COUNTY (the "COUNTY"), a political subdivision of the State of Florida, and BRUCE McDONALD.

WHEREAS, Bruce McDonald sued the COUNTY in a lawsuit presently styled Bruce McDonald v. Palm Beach County, Case No. 502014CA004287XXXXMB AB, in the Circuit Court of Palm Beach County, Florida (the "Pending Lawsuit"), for damages arising from an incident that occurred on January 16, 2013, on the Palmetto Park Road Drawbridge, in Boca Raton, Palm Beach County, Florida;

WHEREAS, the COUNTY has denied liability and raised several affirmative defenses in the Pending Lawsuit; and Bruce McDonald and the COUNTY acknowledges that Bruce McDonald has not made any claim for lost wages or loss of future earning capacity and that the sum total of \$80,000 represents payment, in compromise, for the personal physical injury of the Plaintiff Bruce McDonald.

WHEREAS, the parties hereto wish to amicably resolve that portion of the Pending Lawsuit that involves PALM BEACH COUNTY without further litigation of the claims made and defenses raised therein.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants hereinafter set forth, the sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

1. The foregoing recitals are true and correct and incorporated herein by reference.

2. Within a reasonable time, Alexander Hunt, Esq., shall execute and deliver to the Palm Beach County Attorney's Office the 1) Settlement Agreement, 2) Release of All Claims, and 3) the Stipulation and Final Order of Dismissal with Prejudice.

3. Within a reasonable time of full execution and receipt hereof, and subject to final administrative approval, the COUNTY shall pay to Bruce McDonald the amount of Eighty Thousand Dollars (**\$80,000.00**), by a check made payable to Bruce McDonald and Goldman & Daszkal, P.A., Trust Account.

4. Alexander Hunt, Esq. shall not disburse, and Bruce McDonald shall not accept, any proceeds from the settlement check described in paragraph 3 unless and until the Release of All Claims has been delivered to the COUNTY and the Final Order of Dismissal with Prejudice has been filed and served in accordance with paragraph 2 above.

5. Bruce McDonald acknowledges and agrees that he is responsible for the payment of any liens against this settlement and that the COUNTY shall not be

responsible for any portion of said liens. Bruce McDonald, on behalf of himself and his officers, agents, employees, heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, further agree to indemnify, defend, and hold the COUNTY, its officers, agents, elected officials, employees, their heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, harmless from and against all suits, actions, proceedings, claims, demands, and damages, including attorneys fees, arising out of or related to such liens or claims of lien.

6. **FURTHERMORE, the undersigned Plaintiff, Bruce McDonald, being of lawful age, agrees to hold harmless and indemnify the Defendant, Palm Beach County, for any pre-settlement Medicare conditional payments and/or reimbursements demanded or required by the Medicare Secondary Payer Recovery Contractor (MSPRC), CMS, collection agencies, or any other governmental entity, currently known, discovered, or demanded in the future.**

7. **FURTHERMORE, the undersigned Plaintiff, Bruce McDonald, being of lawful age, agrees to be responsible for any claims or liens by Medicare and agrees that he will defend and hold harmless the Defendant, Palm Beach County, from any liens, suits, or actions arising under the Medicare Secondary Payer Statute (MSPRC), CMS, collection agencies, or any other governmental entity, currently known, discovered, or demanded in the future.**

8. Each party shall bear its respective attorneys fees and costs.

9. This Settlement Agreement does not constitute an admission of liability by any party.

10. In any litigation brought to enforce the terms or remedy a violation of this Settlement Agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to an award of reasonable attorney's fees in addition to any other recovery.

11. Bruce McDonald declares and acknowledges that the terms of this Settlement Agreement have been completely read, fully understood, discussed with counsel, and voluntarily accepted as a full and final compromise of any and all claims they may have against the COUNTY.

12. This Settlement Agreement shall be binding on the parties hereto, his assigns, transferees, heirs, and other successors in interest.

13. The parties represent that no claim that has been, or could have been, raised in the Pending Lawsuit, and no claim to which this Settlement Agreement applies, has been assigned or otherwise transferred to any other person or entity not a party hereto.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this Settlement Agreement to be executed as of the date first set forth above.



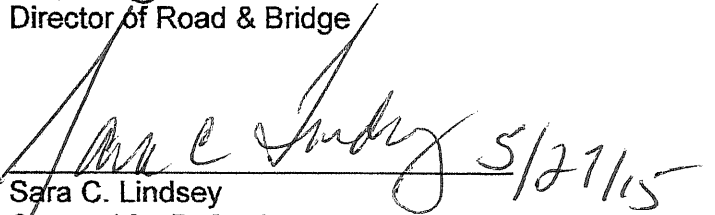
Plaintiff, Bruce McDonald



Alexander Hunt
Counsel for Plaintiff
Florida Bar No. 50206
1630 W. Hillsboro Blvd.
Deerfield Beach, FL 33442
Service.hunt@adinjurylaw.com



Daryl Dawson
Director of Road & Bridge



Sara C. Lindsey
Counsel for Defendant
Florida Bar No. 43580
300 N. Dixie Hwy., Ste. 359
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
slindsey@pbcgov.org

ATTEST:
Sharon R. Bock, Clerk & Comptroller

PALM BEACH COUNTY, a Political
Subdivision of the State of Florida

BY: _____

BY: _____

RELEASE OF ALL CLAIMS

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That the Undersigned, **BRUCE McDONALD**, being of lawful age, for the sole consideration of **EIGHTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$80,000.00)**, to the Undersigned in hand paid, the receipt and sufficiency whereof is hereby acknowledged, does hereby and for his executors, administrators, successors and assigns, release, acquit and forever discharge **PALM BEACH COUNTY**, (hereinafter referred to as "the Releasees"), and their officers, agents, employees, heirs, executors, administrators, successors and assigns, none of whom admit any liability to the Undersigned, but all of whom expressly deny any such liability, from any and all claims, demands, rights, damages, costs, loss of service, expenses, compensation, actions, causes of action or suits of any kind or nature whatsoever, which the Undersigned may now have or which may hereafter accrue or develop, particularly on account of or in any way growing out of any and all known and unknown, foreseen and unforeseen, bodily and personal injuries, and property damages, and any and all consequences thereof, resulting or to result from an alleged event or incident that occurred on or about **January 16, 2013**, on the Palmetto Park Road Drawbridge, in Boca Raton, Palm Beach County, Florida.

FURTHERMORE, the Undersigned agrees that each party shall bear its own costs and attorney's fees, and the Undersigned shall bear sole responsibility for any and all hospital, physician, diagnostic, rehabilitation, training, maintenance, medical or pharmaceutical expenses, bills, statements, liens or subrogable interests, of any nature whatsoever, which are or may be outstanding and payable on the date of execution of this agreement, or which may be incurred and payable in the future. The Undersigned further agree(s) to indemnify and save harmless the Releasees from any requests for payment or attempts for collection therefrom. Should legal action be instituted against the Releasees for payment or collection of the aforementioned expenses, the Undersigned agrees to indemnify and save harmless the Releasees for any attorney's fees, costs and/or judgments, which may be entered against the Releasees.

FURTHERMORE, the Undersigned understands and agrees that this settlement is the compromise of a doubtful and disputed claim, and that the payment made shall not be construed as an admission of liability on the part of the Releasees, and that the Releasees deny any liability and merely intend to avoid further litigation and buy their peace.

FURTHERMORE, the Undersigned hereby declares and represents that any injuries ~~sustained are or may be permanent and progressive and that recovery therefrom is uncertain and indefinite~~ and in making this Release the Undersigned understands and agrees that the Undersigned relies wholly upon the Undersigned's own judgment, belief, and knowledge of the nature, extent, effect, and duration of any injuries and liability therefore, without reliance upon any statement or representation by the Releasees, or by his representatives or by any physician or surgeon employed by him. The Undersigned further declares and represents that no promise, inducement, or agreement not herein expressed has been made to the Undersigned, and that this Release contains the entire agreement between the parties hereto, and that the terms of this Agreement are contractual and not merely a recital.

FURTHERMORE, the Undersigned states that while he hereby releases any and all claims against the Releasees and their officers, agents, employees, heirs, executors, administrators, successors and assigns, for both past and future losses, including medical expenses, health care expenses, and related expenses, the necessity for future medical treatment and expenses incurred is speculative and unknown at this time and therefore, as a

result, the Undersigned reserves the right to pursue and recover all future medical expenses, health care expenses, and related expenses, from any person, firm, or organization who may be responsible for payment of such expenses, including any first-party health or automobile insurance coverage, but such reservation specifically does not include the Releasees.

FURTHERMORE, notwithstanding the language contained in this Release, this release shall not be construed as releasing any medical providers for potential claims which may arise based upon treatment and care rendered as a result of the accident which is the subject of this Release. Moreover, this Release shall not be construed as releasing any health insurance carrier or other insurer from medical and lost wage benefits to which the Releasor(s) is entitled.

FURTHERMORE, the undersigned Plaintiff, Bruce McDonald, being of lawful age, agrees to hold harmless and indemnify the Defendant, Palm Beach County, for any pre-settlement Medicare conditional payments and/or reimbursements demanded or required by the Medicare Secondary Payer Recovery Contractor (MSPRC), CMS, collection agencies, or any other governmental entity, currently known, discovered, or demanded in the future.

THE UNDERSIGNED hereby declares that the Undersigned has completely read, fully understood, and voluntarily accepted the foregoing Release of All Claims for the purpose of making a full and final compromise settlement and adjustment of any and all claims disputed or otherwise on account of the injuries and damages set forth above, and for the express purpose of precluding forever any further or additional claims against the Releasees arising out of the aforementioned incident.

THE UNDERSIGNED hereby accepts the tendered settlement draft as final payment of the consideration set forth above.

13 IN WITNESS HEREOF, I, Bruce McDonald, have hereunto set my hand and seal this day of MAY, 2015.

IN THE PRESENCE OF:

PLAINTIFF:

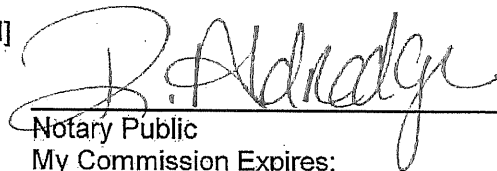
WITNESS

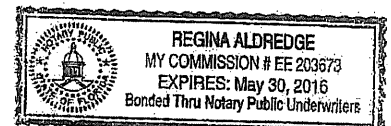

Bruce McDonald

STATE OF FLORIDA)
COUNTY OF PALM BEACH)

The foregoing Release of All Claims was acknowledged before me, an officer duly authorized in the State and County aforesaid to take acknowledgments, this 13 day of MAY, 2015, by Bruce McDonald, who ☒ is personally known to me; OR ☐ has produced _____ as identification; and who freely and voluntarily executed the within Release of All Claims for the purposes therein recited.

[seal]


Notary Public
My Commission Expires:



BUDGET AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
RISK MANAGEMENT


REQUEST DATE: 5/27/15 REQUESTED BY: County Attorney

REQUESTED FOR: Bruce McDonald v. Palm Beach County, Case No. 502014CA004287XXXXMB AB

REQUESTED AMOUNT: \$80,000 AGENDA DATE: June 23, 2015

BUDGET ACCOUNT NUMBER:

FUND: 5010 DEPT: 700 UNIT: 7130 OBJ: 4511

BAS APPROVED BY:  DATE: 5/27/2015