

**EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT
BETWEEN
MARTIN COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AND
ELYSSE A. ELDER**

THIS AGREEMENT, made and entered into on November 2, 2025, by and between the Board of County Commissioners of Martin County, Florida, a political subdivision of the State of Florida, hereinafter called "County", and Elysse A. Elder, Esq., hereinafter called "County Attorney", both of whom understand as follows:

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, Martin County desires to employ the services of Elysse A. Elder, Esq. as Martin County Attorney; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the County, to provide certain benefits, to establish certain conditions of employment and to set working conditions of County Attorney; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Board of County Commissioners to 1) secure and retain the services of County Attorney, and to provide inducement for her to remain in such employment, 2) to make possible full work productivity and independence by assuring County Attorney's morale and peace of mind with respect to future security, and 3) to provide a just means for terminating County Attorney's services at such time that County may desire to terminate her employ; and

WHEREAS, County Attorney desires to accept employment as Martin County Attorney.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants herein contained, the parties agree as follows:

Section 1: Appointment

Pursuant to Section 125.01(1)(b), Florida Statutes, the Board of County Commissioners hereby appoints Elysse A. Elder to be employed as the County Attorney of Martin County, Florida, effective October 21, 2025 (anniversary date).

Section 2: Powers and Duties of the County Attorney

County hereby agrees to employ Elysse A. Elder, Esq. as County Attorney of Martin County to perform the functions and duties of County Attorney as required by law and established by the Board of County Commissioners from time to time. Employment shall commence on the 21st day of October 2025. County Attorney shall perform other such duties as may be required by the Board of County Commissioners, and which are not inconsistent with the laws of the State of Florida. The County Attorney shall be responsible to the Board of County Commissioners for the proper administration of all affairs of the Martin County Attorney's Office. County Attorney is a Department Essential position. County Attorney is required to report to her designated work location to ensure operation of essential department functions when the County has suspended normal operations in the event of an emergency.

Section 3: Term

- A. The term of this Employment Agreement shall be for an initial period of one year commencing on October 21, 2025 and expiring on October 20, 2026. Thereafter, the Agreement will renew automatically for additional terms of one year unless the County gives written notice to the County Attorney by July 21 of any year that the Agreement will not be renewed the following October 21. The County's failure to renew the Agreement shall constitute termination without cause under Section 4 (A) below, and the County Attorney shall be entitled to the termination benefits provided in that section.
- B. If the Agreement is not renewed, upon mutual consent of the parties, Elysse A. Elder may continue to function in the role of County Attorney until a permanent replacement is selected by the Board of County Commissioners, or through the remainder of the agreement's term then in force. In the absence of such mutual agreement, Elysse Elder shall be free of all obligations of service to the County, but shall be entitled to severance in accordance with Section 4 (A) below.
- C. Nothing in this agreement shall prevent, limit or otherwise interfere with the right of the County to terminate the services of County Attorney at any time, subject only to the provisions set forth in Section 4 of this Agreement.
- D. Nothing in this Agreement shall prevent, limit or otherwise interfere with the right of the County Attorney to resign at any time from her position with County, subject only to the provisions set forth in Section 5 of this Agreement.

Section 4: Termination and Severance Pay

- A. The County may at any time whatsoever, terminate the employment of the County Attorney, without cause, by an affirmative vote, upon notice, of not less than three (3) members of the Board of County Commissioners. If such event should occur, the County Attorney will be given written notice of the decision of the Board of County Commissioners not less than thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of the termination. Upon termination, the County Attorney will be entitled to: 1) a severance payment equal to twenty (20) weeks of base salary and deferred compensation under Sections 6 and 7 below, and 2) a lump sum payment at the County Attorney's hourly rate of base salary and deferred compensation for all annual leave hours accumulated but unused as of the date of termination, and 3) continuation of the County Attorney's health insurance for a period of twenty (20) calendar weeks following the date of termination. The County may elect to pay the severance payment in (1) lump sum or periodic payments for a period not to exceed twenty (20) weeks. Notwithstanding the language contained in this section no severance pay shall be made when the officer, agent, employee, or contractor has been fired for misconduct, as defined in Section 443.036(29), Florida Statutes, by the unit of government, i.e. County.
- B. The Board of County Commissioners may also, for cause, terminate the employment of County Attorney at any time whatsoever, by affirmative vote, of not less than three (3) members of the Board of County Commissioners. County Attorney shall be entitled to a hearing before the Board of County Commissioners if, within five (5) business days, she so requests in writing to the County Administrator. In the event County Attorney is terminated for cause, County shall be under no obligation to pay severance pay. The term "for cause" shall be deemed to include: gross negligence in the handling of County affairs;

willful violation of the provisions of law; willfully disregarding a direct and lawful order, demand, or policy of the Board of County Commissioners; conduct unbecoming a public employee; habitual drug abuse; conviction of a felony; or conviction of any crime involving moral turpitude or relating to official duties. For the purposes of this paragraph, if the County Attorney pleads guilty or nolo contendere or is found guilty of a felony, she shall be deemed to have been convicted, notwithstanding a suspension of sentence or a withholding of adjudication. Upon termination for cause, County Attorney will be entitled to only a lump sum payment at County Attorney's hourly rate of base salary for all paid time off accumulated but unused as of the date of termination.

- C. Should the County Attorney be permanently disabled or otherwise unable to perform her duties because of sickness, accident, injury, mental incapacity or health for a period of four successive weeks beyond any accrued leave, the Commission shall have the right to terminate this agreement subject to the severance provisions in Section 4A above.
- D. The terms of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect and hold over until employment is terminated under the terms herein, or a new Agreement has been negotiated and entered into by the County Attorney and Commission.

Section 5: Resignation

In the event County Attorney voluntarily resigns her position with the County before expiration of the aforesaid term of her employment, the County Attorney hereby agrees to give the County not less than thirty (30) days notice prior to the effective date of any voluntary resignation, unless the parties agree otherwise.

Section 6: Compensation

- A. The County shall pay County Attorney \$255,600.00, payable in equal installments pursuant to County policy.
- B. County shall contribute on County Attorney's behalf to a deferred compensation program designated by County Attorney in the maximum amount allowed by law.

Section 7: Retirement

Consistent with County policy, the County shall contribute to a retirement account on the County Attorney's behalf, at the same rate established each year for Senior Service Management Class Employees by the Florida Retirement System for its Investment Plan members.

Section 8: Other Benefits

- A. Except as may be amended by this Agreement, County Attorney shall be entitled to paid time off, sick leave, holidays, and such other benefits as are granted generally to other employees of the County, in accordance with adopted County policy, except as provided in this Contract. Effective November 2, 2025, the County Attorney shall receive eighty (80) hours of paid time off (PTO).
- B. The County Attorney shall have the ability in her sole discretion to annually liquidate up to eighty (80) hours of accrued PTO hours every calendar year. This shall be in addition to

any ability to liquidate PTO afforded all employees in accordance with an adopted County policy.

- C. County Attorney shall accrue and accumulate paid time off (PTO) at the rate of 9 hours per pay period without limitation.
- D. The County shall reimburse County Attorney for use of a personal vehicle for official business in the amount of \$500.00 monthly, payable in accordance with County policy, for costs including insurance, operation, maintenance and licenses. The County Attorney will be allowed to utilize County vehicles should travel more than ninety miles be approved in accordance with the County's travel policy.
- E. The County shall provide the County Attorney with a cellular phone stipend for official business in the amount of \$90 monthly, payable in accordance with County policy.
- F. Upon expiration of this Agreement, termination pursuant to Section 4 above or resignation pursuant to Section 5 above, County Attorney shall be paid a lump sum at County Attorney's hourly rate of base salary for all paid time off hours accumulated but unused as of the date of the Agreement's expiration or termination.
- G. The County, in consultation with the County Attorney, may fix any such other terms and conditions of employment as it may determine from time to time relating to performance of County Attorney, provided that such terms and conditions are not inconsistent with or in conflict with the provisions of this Agreement or other applicable law.

Section 9: Insurance

The County shall provide term life insurance at no cost to County Attorney in the amount of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000), as well as medical and dental insurance (individual and dependent coverage) available to County employees on the same terms as other non-bargaining unit(s) Martin County employees.

Section 10: No Reduction of Benefits

The County Commissioners shall not at any time during the term of this Agreement reduce the salary, compensation or other financial benefits of County Attorney, except to the degree of such a reduction across-the-board for all employees of the Board of County Commissioners.

Section 11: Professional Development

County agrees to budget for and to pay the professional dues, travel and subsistence expenses of the County Attorney associated with the Florida Bar and the Federal Bar, as well as for professional participation and travel, meetings and occasions adequate to continue her professional development. Said participation on County time to include, but not limited to continuing legal education, attendance at Local Government Section Seminars and functions, and participation in the Florida Association of Counties and the Florida Association of County Attorneys.

The County Attorney agrees to remain in the exclusive employ of the Board of County Commissioners of Martin County. The term "employed" however, shall not be construed to include

occasional teaching, writing, speaking or consulting, even if outside compensation is provided for such services, if such activities are approved in advance by the Board of County Commissioners.

Section 12: Performance Evaluation

The Board of County Commissioners shall review and evaluate the performance of the County Attorney no later than sixty (60) days after the anniversary date of each year. Said review and evaluation shall be in accordance with such specific criteria developed jointly by County and the County Attorney. Said criteria may be added to or deleted from as County may from time to time determine, in consultation with the County Attorney.

County agrees to increase base salary and/or benefits of the County Attorney at time of said review, in such amounts and to such extent as the Board of County Commissioners may determine that it is desirable to do so, in light of performance by Elysse A. Elder. The County Attorney will be entitled to base salary adjustments that are provided to the non-bargaining unit(s) employees in the form of a market adjustment or Consumer Price Index.

Annually, the Board of County Commissioners and the County Attorney shall jointly define such goals and performance objectives that they determine necessary for the proper operation of the Martin County Legal Department, and in the attainment of the Board of County Commissioner's policy objectives and shall further establish a relative priority among those various goals and objectives; said goals and objectives to be reduced to writing. They shall generally be attainable within the time limitations as specified, and the annual operation budget and capital budget and appropriations provided.

Section 13: Suspension

The County may suspend the County Attorney with full pay and benefits at any time during the term of this Agreement, but only if three (3) Commissioners and County Attorney agree. In the alternative, the County may suspend the County Attorney after a public hearing if three (3) of the Commissioners vote to suspend the County Attorney for "just cause", provided, however, that County Attorney shall have been given written notice setting forth any charges at least ten (10) days prior to such hearing, by the Commission members bringing such charges.

Section 14: Indemnification

If allowed by law, the County shall defend, hold harmless and indemnify Elysse A. Elder against any tort, professional liability claim or demand or other legal action, whether groundless or otherwise, arising out of an alleged act or omission occurring in the performance of Elysse A. Elder's duties as County Attorney. The County will compromise and settle any such claim or suit and pay the amount of any settlement or judgment rendered thereon. Said indemnification shall survive and extend beyond termination of employment, and the otherwise expiration of this Agreement, to provide full and complete protection to Elysse A. Elder, by the County of Martin, as described herein, for any acts undertaken or committed in her capacity as County Attorney, regardless of whether the notice or filing of a lawsuit for such tort, claim, demand, or other legal action occurs during or following Elysse A. Elder's employment with Martin County.

Section 15: General Provisions

A. The text herein shall constitute the entire Agreement between the parties.

B. If any provisions, or any portion thereof, contained in this Agreement is held unconstitutional, invalid or unenforceable, the remainder of this Agreement, or portion thereof, shall not be affected and shall remain in full force and effect.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have executed this Agreement on the dates set forth below.

COUNTY ATTORNEY

WITNESS

ELYSSE A. ELDER

WITNESS

Date:_____

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS,
MARTIN COUNTY, FLORIDA

CAROLYN TIMMANN, CLERK
OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND
COMPTROLLER

SARAH HEARD, CHAIR
Date:_____