



MEMORANDUM

Date: September 14, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Commissioners

From: Ronald Ramsingh
City Attorney

Sponsor: Commissioner Billy Wardlow

Subject: **Naming the Firehouse Museum the Alex Vega Firehouse Museum at the Key West Historic Firehouse**

Introduction

This Resolution names the museum at the Old Historic Firehouse to be The Alex Vega Firehouse Museum at the Key West Historic Firehouse.

Background

Alex Vega's journey with the Key West Fire Department began on December 3rd, 1975, when he was 22 years old. Armed with a certification from the Ocala State Fire College, he embarked on his career with a starting annual salary of \$8,000. Interestingly, Alex's connection with firefighting was nurtured from the young age of 10, when his father introduced him to his first fire. In 1992, his dedication was recognized when he was honored as the Firefighter of the Year. Throughout his career, he was surrounded by a tightly-knit family of fellow firefighters, a group that included his father Frank Vega, uncle Carlixto Garcia, cousins Marco Diaz and Manuel Bazo, brothers-in-law Craig Marston and Alan Vidal, and nephew Ray Alvarez. His journey concluded with his well-deserved retirement on December 31st, 2005.

In 1992, the City of Key West started discussions on demolishing the historic 135-year-old firehouse, prompting Alex's intervention. His efforts initiated the restoration and preservation of Fire Station No. 3, leading to the establishment of the nonprofit organization Old Fire House Preservation, Inc. Through his resourcefulness, grants were secured from both Tallahassee and local benefactors. It took years of hard work and dedication from countless volunteers and other retirees to establish the museum.

A dedicated historian and community advocate, Alex has devoted his life to safeguarding the history of his hometown. His extensive background as a second-generation firefighter, combined with his deep knowledge of local history, makes him an invaluable asset to the Museum. His familiarity with the firefighting profession and his family's involvement in it provide a rare insider's perspective that resonates with visitors. He serves as a bridge between the past and the present, connecting generations through stories, artifacts, and interactive displays. He is an irreplaceable figure in the museum's journey.

Alex Vega currently holds the position of President at the Key West Firehouse Museum. This role has been a labor of love for him, spanning nearly three decades of passionate service.

Procurement

There are no direct financial implications to the Resolution.

Recommendation

The recommendation of the City Attorney is to pass the attached Resolution to recognize the significant contributions of Alex Vega in establishing the Firehouse Museum in Key West.