



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Board Report

File #: A 22-040, **Version:** 1

a. Authorize the Contracts/Purchasing Officer or the Contracts/Purchasing Supervisor to sign Amendment 2 to Agreement A-13884/A14549 by and between Amar Forensics for the provision of forensic pathology services and autopsy reports, adding \$929,000 for a new not to exceed total of \$2,657,000 and extend agreement to June 30, 2023.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

a. Authorize the Contracts/Purchasing Officer or the Contracts/Purchasing Supervisor to sign Amendment 2 to Agreement A-13884/A14549 by and between Amar Forensics for the provision of forensic pathology services and autopsy reports, adding \$929,000 for a new not to exceed total of \$2,657,000 and extend agreement to June 30, 2023.

SUMMARY/DISCUSSION:

The Board approved the original agreement with Amar Forensics for pathology services and autopsy reports with Board Action A-13884; however, due to the pandemic COVID-19, autopsies in the Coroner's Office have significantly increased and an amendment is required. Roughly 373 autopsies in 2019, 472 in 2020 and 465 in 2021 were done. The Coroner's Office is currently performing around 42 autopsies per month, or a 26.5% increase from the pre-pandemic period.

The Sheriff is a combined Sheriff/Coroner's Office and is therefore responsible for provision and supervision of the coroner function. The Sheriff fulfills the coroner duties by utilizing the services of the independent contractor who performs the forensic pathology function for Monterey County. The coroner is charged with the investigation and the Forensic Pathologist with the autopsy of any reportable or inexplicable deaths and must determine the cause and manner of the death. The pathologist performs all autopsy and post-mortem examinations, which include external examination, internal dissection and microscopic examination. These findings are then compiled into an autopsy report. A team of detectives and deputies act upon any cases requiring investigation or prosecution. If the death is ruled a homicide, the information gathered will be used in future court proceedings, if the death is ruled COVID related that information is submitted to the Health Department. This increase in autopsy costs was identified during the FY 2021-22 budget process, however, the department's augmentation request was not funded at that time.

In late March 2020, the State of California halted the intake and/or transfer of inmates from county jails into state prisons to reduce the risk of COVID-19 entering the state prison system. In circumstances where CDCR cannot accept the intake and/or transfer of an inmate from the county jail, the state is required to reimburse counties for holding inmates. During FY 21, the Sheriff's Office received over \$3.3 million from the State Controller's Office for housing state prison inmates while CDCR's intake was closed. The Sheriff's Office has received additional "state hold" revenue in FY22. As of this report, CDCR intake is closed again so there could be additional unbudgeted revenue. The state hold received thus far is unbudgeted and we are recommending it be used to fund the remaining need for Amar Forensics above what is available from ARPA funds.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

The agreement has been reviewed by County Counsel as to legal form and by the CAO Budget Office as to fiscal terms.

FINANCING:

On January 26, 2022, the budget committee unanimously approved Sheriff's Office request to increase appropriations by \$329,000 in the Sheriff-Coroner's FY 2021-22 Adopted Budget financed by a reallocation of unspent American Rescue Plan Act funds from FY 2020-21 in the amount of \$226,682 and the remaining \$102,318 to be funded by the unbudgeted State Hold Revenue. Another \$600,000 will be included in the upcoming FY 2022-23 budget request. This will ensure the County's appropriate and timely public safety response to the pandemic COVID-19 in the Coroner's Office.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Mark a check to the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

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Approved by: Steve Bernal, Sheriff/Coroner, Extension #3750

Attachments:

Board Report

Attachment A - Original Agreement with Board Orders and Amendment 1

Attachment B - Amendment 2