



Mendocino County

Legislation Text

File #: 20-0565, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Sheriff-Coroner

Meeting Date: June 23, 2020

Department Contact: Matthew C. Kendall

Phone: 463-4085

Item Type: Regular Agenda

Time Allocated for Item: 15 mins

Agenda Title:

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Repurpose of the Sheriff's Office Training Room (Building II, Donovan Room) into a New Courtroom; Development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Mendocino County Superior Court for the Use of the Proposed Courtroom for Inmate Judicial Hearings; and Direction to MCSO Staff to Pursue Potential Non-General Fund Alternatives for the New Courtroom (Sponsor: Sheriff-Coroner)

Recommended Action/Motion:

Approve the repurpose of the Sheriff's Office Training Room (Building II, Donovan Room) into a new courtroom; subject to the development of a five year (minimum) MOU with the Mendocino County Superior Court for their use of the proposed courtroom for inmate judicial hearings; subject to the development of a favorable cost/benefit analysis that includes impacts to the District Attorney, Probation, and Public Defender and relocation costs; subject to MCSO staff successfully securing non-General Fund to pay for the costs associated with constructing and setting up this new courtroom.

Previous Board/Board Committee Actions:

During the 2020-21 budget conferences, the Board received preliminary information on this concept and requested that the Sheriff's Office return with a cost/benefit analysis and MOU with the courts for use of the courtroom.

Summary of Request:

The Sheriff's Office desires to repurpose the Sheriff's Office Training Room (Building II, Donovan Room) into a courtroom facility for the purpose of conducting judicial hearings, motions and other judicial proceedings for inmates within the MCSO jail.

MCSO is responsible for the transportation of inmates to the Mendocino County Superior Court. Mendocino County has superior courts in Ukiah and Fort Bragg. While transportation to the Ukiah court is relatively close to the jail, Ft. Bragg court is 56 miles from the Mendocino County Jail.

The Sheriff's Office transportation unit consists of a Sergeant, who schedules transports, and two correctional deputies. This unit is regularly augmented with additional personnel, typically using overtime. The transportation unit is responsible for an average of 60 trips per week to the courts. The reported personnel cost for transportation, which includes straight time and overtime, is approximately \$36,000 per month or \$432,000 per year. Additional expenses relating to vehicle replacement, fuel, and maintenance are estimated

to be \$2,891 per week or \$150,359 per year. In total, the annual cost of transporting inmates for judicial proceedings is approximately \$600,000.

The personnel and transportation costs of inmate judicial proceedings could be significantly reduced by having a courtroom located at the Sheriff's Office Correctional Facility. This courtroom will provide a significant cost savings to the County by eliminating the need to transport inmates to and from the Ukiah Courthouse and the Fort Bragg Judicial Center for all court appearances except jury trials.

MCSO staff projects that repurposing the Sheriff's Office Training Room (Building II, Donovan Room) will cost approximately \$250,000. Anticipated one-time expenses include, but are not limited to, relocation of radio equipment, ADA improvements, increasing facility security, and purchasing needed furniture and metal detectors.

MCSO staff calculates that future savings through the reduction of overtime and vehicle costs relating to the transportation inmates for judicial proceedings have the potential to significantly reduce MCSO's expenditures. MCSO is working with the Courts, DA, Probation, and Public Defender to understand their operational impacts from utilizing this new courtroom, and this information will be included in a cost/benefit analysis that is underway.

The expense of creating this new courtroom could be funded with asset forfeiture and civil funds.

Another funding alternative could allocate overtime savings toward the cost of these improvements. However, it is anticipated that the overtime funding for FY 2020-21 might not be adequate to meet historical need. In the FY 2019-20 Jail Budget, overtime costs are anticipated to exceed \$1,200,000.00. The overtime dollars budgeted in the FY2020-21 Jail Budget is significantly less than the amount expended in FY 2019-20.

The purpose of this discussion is to seek the Mendocino County Board of Supervisor's approval to potentially repurpose this Sheriff's Office facility for a new courtroom in an effort to save costs to the County's General Fund, to begin discussions to find funding for the repurposing the Sheriff's Office Training Center into a courtroom, and to seek approval to begin discussions with the Mendocino County Superior Court on developing a Memorandum of Understanding for use of the new courtroom.

Alternative Action/Motion:

Provide direction.

Supervisory District: All

vote requirement: Majority

Supplemental Information Available Online At: N/A

Fiscal Details:

source of funding: TBD

current f/y cost: N/A

annual recurring cost: N/A

budget clarification: Cost of creating this new courtroom estimated at \$250,000. This expenditure would significantly reduce operational costs to the Sheriff's Office. The budgetary impacts to the DA, Probation, Public Defender are being analyzed.

Agreement/Resolution/Ordinance Approved by County Counsel: N/A

CEO Liaison: Executive Office

CEO Review: Yes

CEO Comments:

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Executed By: Atlas Pearson, Deputy Clerk I

Final Status: **Withdrawn**

Date: June 30, 2020

