



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 12/16/2025

To: The Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County

Department or Agency Name(s): County Counsel

Staff Name and Phone Number: Elizabeth Coleman, Deputy County Counsel, (707) 565-2421

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

First Amendment to Legal Services Agreement with Kaplan Kirsch LLP

Recommended Action:

- A) Authorize County Counsel to execute a First Amendment to the Legal Services Agreement with Kaplan Kirsch LLP to increase the contract maximum to \$250,000 per year

Executive Summary:

County Counsel's Office entered into a Legal Services Agreement (LSA) with the Kaplan, Kirsch & Rockwell, LLP law firm on March 21, 2024, due to their expertise in airport law and Federal Aviation Administration requirements. The original agreement was executed using County Counsel's delegated authority to enter into LSAs not to exceed \$50,000 per year. Because the contract not to exceed amount is being increased to \$250,000 per year, Board authority is needed for County Counsel to execute the agreement. Additional revisions to the amended LSA include revising the name of the law firm to reflect their current name of Kaplan Kirsch LLP, updating the attorney rates, and extending the term of the agreement to allow for two one-year options to extend.

Discussion:

County Counsel's Office provides legal representation, advice and counsel to the County, its governing Board of Supervisors, County Departments, special districts, and other public agencies, as mandated and authorized by California statutes and local ordinances. From time to time, the County has retained various outside law firms to represent the County in a variety of legal matters. Outside law firms are retained only when County Counsel either does not have the capacity, lacks the expertise to handle these lawsuits in-house, or has an ethical conflict. Law firms are selected to provide outside counsel based upon their recognized expertise, proven legal ability and specific experience with public entity representation.

Kaplan Kirsch LLP is a national law firm with recognized expertise in airport law. In 2024, County Counsel determined that outside counsel was necessary to represent the County with regard to matters of compliance with Federal Aviation Administration requirements, legal issues arising out of operation of the Sonoma County Airport and other related Airport matters. The initial LSA allowed Kaplan Kirsch to provide legal services in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 per year for a period of three years. This item requests Board authority to enter into a first amendment to the LSA to increase the contract not to exceed amount to \$250,000. The \$250,000 funding to cover the adjustment will come from the Airport Enterprise Fund balance.

Other revisions to the first amendment to the LSA include updating the name of the entity to reflect the current name of Kaplan Kirsh LLP, updating the attorney rates and extending the term of the agreement to include two one-year options to extend past the current termination date of July 1, 2027.

Based on the foregoing, this item requests the Board of Supervisors authorize County Counsel to enter into a first amended LSA with Kaplan Kirsh LLP.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Pillar: Choose an item.

Goal: Choose an item.

Objective: Choose an item.

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

No

Prior Board Actions:

N/A

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY25-26 Adopted	FY26-27 Projected	FY27-28 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$56,950	\$250,000	\$250,000
Additional Appropriation Requested	\$193,050		
Total Expenditures	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The need for increase legal services with be funded through regularly collected fees for charges and services by the Airport. The Airport's current fund balance will also support the increase in the current fiscal year through the Airport's fund balance.

Agenda Date: 12/16/2025

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

First Amendment to Legal Services Agreement with Kaplan Kirsh LLP

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

Click or tap here to enter text.