



COUNTY OF SONOMA

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 7/16/2024

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Regional Parks and County of Sonoma Sheriff's Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: Bert Whitaker, 707-565-2041 and Connie Newton, 707-565-8884

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Memorandum of Understanding between County of Sonoma Regional Parks and County of Sonoma Sheriff's Office.

Recommended Action:

A. Authorize the Director of Regional Parks and Sheriff to execute the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County of Sonoma Regional Parks and the Sheriff's Office to provide law enforcement and patrol services within County Parks. The MOU does not have an ending term but does include the requirement that either party provide written notice of no less than one year in advance of the termination.

B. Authorize Regional Parks Department and Sheriff's Office to execute amendments to the MOU with the written consent of both departments.

C. Adopt a resolution amending the Sheriff's Office Department FY 2024-25 Position Allocation List to add 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent Sheriff's Sergeant and 4.0 Full-Time Equivalent Deputy Sheriff II allocations, effective July 16, 2024, specifically to establish a new County Regional Parks Unit.

Executive Summary:

The Regional Parks Director and Sheriff are requesting approval to execute a Memorandum of Understanding under which a dedicated County Regional Parks Unit will be established within the Sheriff's Office to provide law enforcement and dedicated patrol services within the Sonoma County Regional Parks system, which include all land or water owned, leased, managed, or controlled by Sonoma County Regional Parks.

Discussion:

On January 27, 1975, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 47787 authorizing the Director of Regional Parks and Park Rangers to arrest and issue citations. On July 8, 1983, Regional Parks issued a policy stating that Park Rangers shall be considered Peace Officers pursuant to California Penal Code sections 830 and 830.31.

On May 21, 2024, Regional Parks proposed to update its Park Ranger job series to a Public Officer model for existing and future employees to increase recruitment potential by eliminating peace officer training requirements, status, and law enforcement duties, while preserving statutory immunity and maintaining

employee safety.

The County of Sonoma Regional Parks' Park Ranger position is centered on community engagement, physical presence, outreach, and visibility of staff on parks and trails. The highest value of the Park Ranger job classification is that of being a steward of the environment and an expert on the geography and recreational opportunities within the Regional Parks. Park Rangers have the ability to enforce rules and regulations, write and issue administrative and parking citations, and rely on response and support from local law enforcement.

In order to clarify the Park Ranger position's roles and responsibilities, in today's agenda item number 16, the Board is considering the adoption of an ordinance changing the designation of park rangers from peace officers to public officers.

To adequately cover law enforcement responsibilities within Sonoma County Parks, the Regional Parks Director and the Sheriff recommend entering into a MOU for the establishment of the dedicated County Regional Parks Unit in the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office that will provide routine patrols and a general law enforcement presence in County Parks to deter criminal behavior. Duties will include but are not limited to general preventative patrols, responses to in-progress crimes, field interviews, investigations, issuance of criminal citations, preparation of reports, and general traffic enforcement responsibilities.

The new County Regional Parks Unit will include 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent Sheriff's Sergeant and 4.0 Full-Time Equivalent Deputy Sheriff IIs to be added to the Sheriff's Office staff allocation. The County Regional Parks Unit will maintain consistent communication with Parks to evaluate and prevent incidents within the County's Regional Parks facilities. Crime reports will be made available to Park Rangers to the extent allowed by laws and regulations. Regional Parks may request the new County Regional Parks Unit staff to track various relevant measurables to allow for evaluation of the support services.

This MOU between the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office and Sonoma County Regional Parks establishes the operational schedule and financial responsibilities for providing law enforcement services within the parks. As set forth in the MOU, the Sheriff's County Regional Parks Unit will operate daily from 1:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., with shifts structured from Sunday to Wednesday and Wednesday to Saturday, overlapping on Wednesdays for larger operations, meetings and training sessions both within the Sheriffs' Office and with Regional Parks staff. The Sergeant's schedule may vary to accommodate additional duties.

When the Sheriff's County Regional Parks Unit is not scheduled or within the vicinity, local law enforcement agencies within their jurisdictions will continue to provide services for any critical law enforcement responses at park locations, as well as address law enforcement issues that fall outside the responsibilities of regional parks staff.

Regional Parks will reimburse the Sheriff for all costs related to staffing, training, and equipment, as detailed in Exhibit B in the MOU. Additional patrol coverage can be requested by Regional Parks management and will incur extra charges. The Sheriff will issue monthly invoices detailing the costs and services provided.

The MOU allows for termination by either party with a one-year notice, during which time both parties will collaborate to ensure a smooth transition of the new County Regional Parks Unit staff.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

None

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY24-25 Adopted	FY25-26 Projected	FY26-27 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$1,024,362	\$1,055,092	\$1,086,745
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$1,024,362	\$1,055,092	\$1,086,745
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF	\$774,362	\$797,592	\$821,519
State/Federal			
Fees/Other	\$250,000	\$257,500	\$265,225
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$1,024,362	\$1,055,092	\$1,086,745

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Regional Parks proposes utilizing salary savings in FY 2024/25 in the amount of \$774,362 from 5.0 FTE vacant Park Ranger I allocations and \$250,000 from an existing agreement with Sonoma County Water Agency for Regional Parks to operate their park facilities (Spring Lake and Riverfront Regional Parks). Several key operational issues regarding this MOU will be coordinated between the two agencies (staffing, equipment and vehicle purchases) with Regional Parks returning at a future date with additional budget details.

Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)		Addition (Number)	Deletions (Number)
Sheriff's Sergeant	\$10,613.01 - \$12,898.40		1.0	0.0
Deputy Sheriff II	\$9,092.89 - \$11,051.30		4.0	0.0

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

Approval of this item will add 1.0 Full-Time Equivalent Sheriff's Sergeant and 4.0 Full-Time Equivalent Deputy

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Sheriff II allocations to the Sheriff's Office Department Allocation List.

Attachments:

Resolution Amending the Sheriff's Office Department Allocation List
Memorandum of Understanding

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None