



## SUMMARY REPORT

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**Agenda Date:** 4/6/2021

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**To:** Sonoma County Board of Supervisors  
**Department or Agency Name(s):** Clerk-Recorder-Assessor  
**Staff Name and Phone Number:** Deva Marie Proto, (707) 565-3246  
**Vote Requirement:** Majority  
**Supervisory District(s):** Countywide

**Title:**

Resolution to Authorize Credit Card Payment Fees for Clerk-Recorder-Assessor

**Recommended Action:**

Adopt a resolution to authorize the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor to charge a credit card processing fee at 4.9% of the transaction, plus \$0.30 per transaction for the online purchase of documents, data, and records provided by the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor-Registrar of Voters.

**Executive Summary:**

To expand online payment options for customers, the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor requests the Board of Supervisors to authorize an online credit card processing fee of 4.9% of the transaction, plus \$0.30 per transaction. This fee is necessary to utilize the online credit card payment services offered by CityGrows Inc. and Strip, Inc., and would allow CRA to pass the charged processing fee onto the customer. The utilization of this service will allow CRA to offer another online credit card payment option for specified records and give the option of faster, more convenient service for the public.

**Discussion:**

The Clerk-Recorder-Assessor ("CRA") currently has agreements with LexisNexis VitalChek Network, Inc. ("VitalChek") and Automated Merchant Systems, Inc. ("AMS") to provide online and in-person credit and debit card payments for specified records. VitalChek credit card transactions are for online requests of birth, death and marriage records and for in-office credit card transactions. AMS credit card transactions are for records existing or being created in the Tyler Technologies Eagle Recorder ("Tyler") system.

In addition to providing these documents, the CRA has been working to find solutions for the public to purchase data and copies of documents not contained within the Tyler system, such as Assessor and Registrar of Voters data, reports and documents, as well as documents recorded prior to 1964. These types of records are currently available to be purchased in-person or by mail. With the increase of virtual services in order to better accommodate the public and COVID-19 precautions, the CRA would like to offer the public the ability to complete these transactions over the internet.

The CRA has been working with CityGrows to develop an online payment solution. CityGrows is a workflow automation software designed for local governments and is integrated with the payment processing company Stripe, Inc. The software would allow customers to pay online for all records and data not currently covered by VitalChek and AMS/Tyler.

### **VitalChek**

The Recorder's Office began using VitalChek Network, Inc. in 1988 to provide credit card processing services for the purchase of vital records. In 2006, the Board approved an addendum to the agreement that added an in-person debit/ATM card payment option, which was then expanded to credit cards in 2009, and followed by the agreement being renewed in 2017. Currently, online orders for vital records include an identity authentication and have a \$12.95 processing fee that is charged directly to the customer. The in-person debit/credit card processing fee is \$2.50 per transaction and is charged directly to the customer.

### **AMS/Tyler**

In April of 2014, the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor's office purchased Tyler Eagle software as their Recording, Vital Records, and Cashiering system. Since the purchase of the system, Tyler has released software updates and developed new system enhancements. One of the available options is an eCommerce Module, which allows for the online purchase of document copies. In September of 2017, a contract was executed with Automated Merchant Systems, Inc., which works together with Tyler to provide an integrated payment processing system for members of the public to go online, search the document indexes, and then choose to purchase a copy. Once the payment information has been received and processed, the customer can download the image(s), or is mailed the record, depending on the type of record requested. The fee for this service is currently \$2.00 per transaction and is charged directly to the customer.

### **CityGrows**

In 2021, the CRA identified CityGrows as a solution for online credit card processing for data and documents not currently covered by VitalChek and AMS/Tyler. The customized software would allow CRA to expand their virtual services and create more convenience for customers. Transactions would be able to occur quickly, without waiting for mail service or requiring that customers appear in-person to pay. The system includes a credit card processing fee, which would be charged directly to the customer. The CityGrows' fee would be 4.9% of the transaction, plus \$0.30 per transaction.

The CRA requests the Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution to authorize an online credit card processing fee of 4.9% of the transaction, plus \$0.30 per transaction, to cover the costs to provide this service for specified online payments.

### **Prior Board Actions:**

09-12-2017 - Authorized the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor to execute contracts with Automated Merchant Services and

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LexisNexis VitalChek Network, Inc., and charge specified credit card processing fees

09-15-2020 - Authorized the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor to execute a contract with Automated Merchant Services

09-15-2020 - Authorized the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor to execute a contract with Automated Merchant Services

**FISCAL SUMMARY**

<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>FY 20-21 Adopted</b>	<b>FY21-22 Projected</b>	<b>FY 22-23 Projected</b>
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:**

There is no impact to the Clerk-Recorder-Assessor budget. Fees are charged by CityGrows/Stripe directly to the customer.

<b>Staffing Impacts: N/A</b>			
<b>Position Title (Payroll Classification)</b>	<b>Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)</b>	<b>Additions (Number)</b>	<b>Deletions (Number)</b>

**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

Not applicable

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1 - Resolution establishing fees

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

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