



Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0904, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrator's Office
Staff Name and Phone Number: Sheryl Bratton 565-2241
Vote Requirement: 4/5th
Supervisorial District(s): All

Title:

Legal Services Agreement between County of Sonoma and Renne Public Law Group LLP

Recommended Action:

Authorize the Chair to execute a Legal Services Agreement with Renne Public Law Group LLP to represent the County of Sonoma by retaining their legal expertise in election matters, police reform, and government law issues regarding the constitutional and statutory powers of government officials, in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 for a one-year term. (4/5th Vote Required)

Executive Summary:

The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors determined outside counsel's assistance is needed in connection with government law matters related to potential litigation threatened by Sheriff Mark Essick with respect to the Evelyn Cheatam IOLERO Ordinance ballot measure and possible implementation as well as a dispute regarding his request for appointment of counsel at public expense. Due to the threat of litigation between clients (Sheriff and Board of Supervisors), County Counsel declared a conflict of interest under the Rules of Professional Conduct so is unavailable to handle the matter.

Discussion:

As indicated in Sheriff Essick's August 11, 2020 request to the Board for appointment of outside counsel, he is considering litigation against the Board of Supervisors regarding its decision to place the Evelyn Cheatam IOLERO Ordinance on the ballot. The Board did not approve the Sheriff's request for appointment of counsel, as the Board did not consider the area of potential litigation to be within the scope of performance of his duties. The Sheriff has now filed a writ petition asking the court to order the County to appoint such counsel. Due to the litigation now filed and previously the threat of litigation, the County Counsel's office recused itself from representing either the Sheriff or Board in this matter, as required under the Rules of Professional Conduct. The Board therefore needs legal representation to represent it in both in the writ petition and any subsequent litigation filed with respect to the proposed IOLERO Ordinance ballot measure. The Renne Public Law Group is a recognized expert in public law, including election law and the respective authority of government officials. This Board item authorizes a contract with the firm to represent the County in these actions.

Prior Board Actions:

None.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 20-21 Adopted	FY21-22 Projected	FY 22-23 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	\$50,000		
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	\$50,000		
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance	\$50,000		
Contingencies			
Total Sources	\$50,000		

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Contract is over a one-year period and the amount spent will depend on the scope and pace of any filed litigation. Funds will be appropriated in the CAO budget from the Litigation Fund during Consolidated Budget Adjustments.

Staffing Impacts: None.			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Legal Services Agreement with Renne Public Law Group LLP.

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

None.