



Legislation Text

File #: 2024-0284, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Health Services
Staff Name and Phone Number: Tina Rivera, 707-565-4774
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Sonoma County Animal Services Body Worn Camera Agreement

Recommended Action:

Delegate authority to the Department of Health Services Director, or designee, to execute the necessary contracts to implement a Body Worn Camera program supporting Animal Control Officers' services. The value of the contracts shall not exceed a total of \$93,798 for a term of July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2029.

Executive Summary:

Sonoma County Animal Services plays a crucial role in safeguarding the well-being of people and animals within the community. In response to increased concerns regarding response times, communication, and animal treatment the Department is implementing a Body-Worn Camera Program to increase transparency, accountability, and staff safety. The Department of Health Services is requesting authority to execute contracts for the purchase of equipment and maintenance for a total budget not exceeding \$93,798 for the period of July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2029.

Discussion:

The Department of Health Services (hereinafter "the Department" or "DHS") Sonoma County Animal Services (SCAS) unit is entrusted with safeguarding the welfare and proper care of animals within the region. The organization's duties span a wide spectrum, from animal control and shelter management to resolving public concerns related to animals.

Body Worn Camera Program

SCAS has faced increasing public complaints over the years, which stem from various concerns such as response times, communication, and perceived deficiencies in the treatment of animals. Resolving these complaints is vital for maintaining public trust and support. Implementing a Body-Worn Camera Program is essential for transparency, accountability, and staff safety. Increased public complaints underscore the need for a clear record of interactions between SCAS personnel and the community. SCAS complaints have increased over the last five years. The scarce SCAS staff are tasked with addressing complaints stemming from unverifiable accounts. On multiple occasions both County Counsel and the District Attorney's office have asked for SCAS to implement a Body Worn Camera program. The request comes from multiple investigations spanning several years where evidence and information was needed to bolster the cases and aid in prosecution and or dispel false claims or accounts of interactions with field staff. The County received an

\$18,484 grant from Jameson Human for the first year of the program. On January 9, 2024, the Board approved budgetary resolutions in the amount of \$18,484. The Department anticipates future year funding and will continue to seek grant opportunities to continue this program to bolster public trust and aid in resolving complaints effectively.

Body-worn cameras are increasingly being used by various law enforcement agencies such as the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office, to enhance transparency and accountability. While the primary focus has been on their use by police officers, some animal services jurisdictions have also started to adopt them for animal control officers. The Department solicited information from jurisdictions that have implemented body worn cameras for Animal Control Officers. Jurisdictions responding with programs include City of Westminster, City of Perris, Sacramento City, San Diego Humane, Contra Costa County, and LA County and City. Similar programs are also in use by Animal Control Officers in Nevada County and by Wildlife Officers in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

On April 19, 2024, SEIU 1021 was notified of the Department's intent to acquire and deploy body-worn cameras to Animal Control Officers and given the opportunity to meet and confer on the issue. The Department and Human Resources did meet with SEIU 1021 on May 21, in accordance with the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act.

The Department is requesting the Board delegate authority to the Department of Health Services Director, or designee, to execute the necessary contracts to implement a Body Worn Camera program supporting Animal Control Officers' services. The value of the contracts shall not exceed a total of \$93,798 for a term of July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2029. See agreement in Attachment 1.

The Department is coordinating with County Counsel on a Departmental policy and guidelines for the use of portable audio/video recording devices by Sonoma County Animal Control Officers while in the performance of their duties. Portable audio/video recording devices include all recording body-worn camera systems.

The Purchasing Agent approved a single source waiver for this purchase.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

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

No

Prior Board Actions:

On January 9, 2024, the Board authorized a resolution authorizing budgetary adjustments in the amount of \$12,042,570 to the fiscal year 2023-2024 adopted budget to reflect revenues and expenditures associated with Public Health grants awarded to the Sonoma County Department of Health Services.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY23-24 Adopted	FY24-25 Projected	FY25-26 Projected
Budgeted Expenses		18,759	18,759
Additional Appropriation Requested			

Total Expenditures		18,759	18,759
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies		18,759	18,759
Total Sources		18,759	18,759

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The Agreement with Axon will be funded by an \$18,484 grant from Jameson Human for year 1 and years 4-5 will be funded through a continued grant from Jameson Human. Future year funding is not guaranteed. If the grant funding is not continued, the Department will return to the Board to request additional appropriations. FY 2024-2025 revenue and expenditures is included in the Department’s FY 2023-24 budget.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - Draft Axon Agreement

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

N/A