



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: General Services
Department No.: 063
For Agenda Of: May 18, 2010
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Tme: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from: N/A
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: General Services Robert Nisbet, Director (805-560-1011)
Contact Info: Paddy Langlands, Assistant Director (805- 568-3096)
SUBJECT: SBCH Fire Recovery – Mural Conservation Contract—PDFIRE/8700
First Supervisorial District

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions: That the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Approve and authorize Chair to execute the Professional Services Agreement with the South Coast Fine Art Conservation Center, Inc. (a local vendor) to provide *fine art conservation cleaning*, for the Santa Barbara Courthouse, Mural Room, Groesbeck Murals, in the not to exceed amount of \$450,000 including reimbursable expenses.
- B. Approve Budget Revision Request #0000879 for \$500,000.00, recognizing revenue from insurance reimbursements for the cleaning of the painted murals in the Santa Barbara Courthouse by South Coast Fine Arts Conservation Center, Inc. and appropriating the expenses in the Capital Outlay Fund 0030.

Summary Text:

As a result of the January 2010 fire in an attic of the Santa Barbara Courthouse, the historic mural room lobby and mural room experienced heavy smoke damage. The recommended action of the Board will complete the recovery process. Conservation of painted *works of art* requires many steps be completed in a certain sequence. These steps include the thorough *conservation cleaning* with specific methods and products that insure that no further damage occurs to the paint layers, subsurface textiles and attachment elements of the art work. The conservation of *works of art* is a highly specialized profession, requiring years of technical training and experience—all of which South Coast Fine Art Conservation Center possesses. The cost of this project is being reimbursed by insurance funds through the County Insurance Fund. The not-to-exceed Conservation Services Agreement of \$450,000 includes all costs associated

with the cleaning of the mural, excluding scaffolding, lighting, County Architect observation time and General Services Facility time.

Conservation Background:

The Santa Barbara Courthouse (a National Historic Landmark) contains many works of art. The largest painted murals in Southern California are contained in the Board Assembly Room; which today is called the Mural Room. The artist (Dan Sayre Groesbeck 1879-1950) glued 4,100 square feet of muslin to the plaster walls and proceeded to paint scenes depicting the history over time of the Santa Barbara area, beginning with the Native American community of the 1600's through the acquisition of the California Territory by the United States Government in 1848.

The attic fire of Tuesday, January 5, 2010 generated smoke that filled the Mural Room resulting in a black soot coating the surface of the painted murals, ceiling, drapes, floor and furniture. All have been cleaned except the 4,100 square feet of mural. The damage to the painted surface is significant and if allowed to continue un-treated will lead to irreversible harm to the historic painting.

The conservation of painted *works of art* requires the application of specific methods and processes to insure that the paint surface or subsurface is not further damaged as a result of the conservation effort. Because of this specialized experience and knowledge, Conservators must have the training and experience to reach a level of competence in the execution of a conservation project. The major steps involved in the conservation of painted *works of art* include: (1) thorough condition assessments; (2) conservation cleaning using a myriad of appropriate products; (3) restoration of any subsurface damage; (4) restoration of paint layer damage; (5) restoration of paint colors; and finally (6) conservation protective coatings.

For the most part, when paintings are completed, the artist applies a protective varnish over the painted surface. This varnish coat protects the paint from harmful elements in the air, by oils from human touch and lengthens the color life of the paint pigments. In the Mural Room, the varnishing did not occur. The Artist, for some reason, did not apply the varnish layer and thus the painted mural has been in a state of decline since its completion in 1928. It is an important issue to understand because any "foreign" materials that affix to the surface can rapidly degrade the paint and ultimately the fabric support under the paint surface. Smoke damage on painted surfaces that are protected by a varnish layer is at risk, surfaces not protected are not only at risk at the paint layer, but also the canvas fabric layer supporting the paint layer is at risk of failure. If the fabric layer fails, the work of art may be impossible to retrieve.

With consultation of South Coast Fine Art Conservation Center and the concurrence of Fine Art Conservation Laboratories, a treatment plan has been approved to clean the 4,100 square feet of mural. The county insurance carrier hired Fine Art Conservation Laboratories to review the proposed conservation treatment plan submitted to General Services by South Coast Fine Art Conservation Center. All concerned have agreed that the treatment approach to clean the murals is appropriate and necessary to avoid further damage of the murals. Due to the nature of the work, a firm timeframe is not possible because each square foot of the mural has reacted to the smoke damage differently and may require varying treatment approaches to achieve a pre-fire condition. It is, however, estimated to take from three (3) months to five (5) months. To track the condition of each square foot, a grid reference system has been applied to photographs of the mural room supplied by the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. Conservators have advised that the top third of the room will show the greatest amount of damage with less degrees of damage toward the floor.

Fire Background:

In the late afternoon of Tuesday, January 5, 2010, a small fire ignited in the attic space above the Main Arch office space of the Santa Barbara County Public Defender. The cause of the fire was an apparent electrical short in the communications system located in the attic space. While the actual flames were small, the smoke generated by the fire caused extensive damage that the County is continuing to recover from; including the cleaning of valuable works of art, staff work areas and building support systems. The most impacted have been the Offices of the Public Defender. Most of the recovery work has been completed, or is very near completion.

Immediately following the fire event, General Services, working with the Insurance Company and Recovery Team, hired South Coast Fine Art Conservation Center (a local vendor) to assess the damage to the works of art and contributing historic features in the affected area of the fire-smoke damage. The Director of Conservation, Patty West, advised the services of a Textile Conservator to assess smoke damage to the 100+ year old drapes in the Mural Room. Additionally, South Coast Fine Art Conservation Center provided direction to the Recovery Team in the cleaning of other elements in the affected area not requiring the expertise of conservation professionals.

The not-to-exceed Conservation Services Agreement of \$450,000 includes all costs associated with the cleaning of the mural, excluding scaffolding, lighting, County Architect observation time and General Services Facility time. These costs are estimated at \$50,000 over the five month project duration. The total project costs are estimated at \$500,000 and reimbursable by the county's insurance carrier. The applicable insurance deductible was exceeded as part of the earlier work under this project.

Performance Measure:

Monitoring and measurement of performance will be measured as each square foot of cleaning is complete. Using the effective response of the mural to approved cleaning methods will help to project the ultimate time to complete the stated scope of work.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes

Fiscal Analysis:

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund			
State			
Federal			
Fees			
Other:			\$ 500,000.00
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 500,000.00

Narrative:

The funding for this part of the project is available the County Liability-Self Insurance Fund (063/1912/5780) and will be administered through the Capital Fund, Dept. 063, Fund 0030, Program 1930, Account 8700, Project 8700.

Special Instructions:

Please send one (1) duplicate original Conservation Services Agreement and one (1) copy of the minute order, to Robert Ooley, AIA County Architect, GS Support Services Division, Courthouse East Wing.

Attachments:

1. Conservation Services Agreement with the South Coast Fine Arts Conservation Center.
2. Budget Revision Request #0000879

Authored by:

Robert Ooley, AIA County Architect (805) 568-3085