



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:** Sheriff-Coroner  
**Department No.:** 032  
**For Agenda Of:** November 7, 2023  
**Placement:** Administrative  
**Estimated Time:** N/A  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Department Bill Brown, Sheriff-Coroner, ext. (805) 681-4290  
Director(s)  
Contact Info: Lieutenant Jarrett Morris, Executive Adjutant, (805) 681-4136

**SUBJECT:** Request for Waiver of Competition for the Purchase of Randox Toxicology Multistat Analyzer

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Purchasing: CEO Budget

As to form: Yes

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Authorize the Purchasing Agent to procure a Randox Toxicology Multistat Analyzer for the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office for a one-time cost of \$46,000 and an additional \$10,000 per year on an ongoing basis to purchase biochip cartridges, without being required to conduct a formal competitive bid process;
- b) Approve Budget Journal Entry BJE-0009382 transferring the funding between object levels to complete the capital purchase; and
- c) Determine this action is exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15378(b)(5), which are organizational or administrative activities of governments that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment.

**Summary Text:**

The Sheriff's Office currently contracts our Coroner toxicology testing and analysis to private laboratories. We have determined that new technologies have become available that will allow us to simultaneously save money and improve timeliness of Coroner investigations. At present, the Randox Toxicology Multistat Analyzer is the sole product of its kind that aligns seamlessly with the stringent accuracy criteria demanded by the Sheriff's Coroner Bureau, a validation substantiated by its widespread success of use by agencies nationwide. The one-time purchase of an Evidence Multistat Analyzer will

provide immediate and long-term cost savings, as well as significantly improve the efficiency of toxicology testing and analysis within the Coroner Unit. Pursuant to County Code Section 2-39, the Sheriff's Office (SBSO) is requesting that the Board authorize the County's Purchasing Agent to forego the competitive bidding process and purchase the Randox Toxicology Multistat Analyzer via a sole source-procurement process. The Sheriff's Office has researched this subject thoroughly, attempting to find other potential vendors for RFP, but found none that would meet our needs or match the performance of this product. The equipment will be an invaluable tool used by the Sheriff's Office to conduct drug screening in postmortem investigations, allowing detectives to conclude investigations more rapidly.

This purchase also requires the transfer of \$46,000 in existing Sheriff's Office General Fund from Services and Supplies to Capital Assets-Equipment for the initial purchase of an Evidence Multistat Analyzer for the Coroner's Bureau.

**Background:**

The Sheriff's Office conducts over 700 death investigations each year, fulfilling its role as the County Coroner. Each year, the office conducts death investigations related to natural causes, accidental deaths (which include overdose deaths) traffic related deaths, suicides, and homicides. When conducting a death investigation, the detectives assigned to the Coroner's Bureau often review medical records and medical reports. Additionally, the detectives will conduct and review x-ray scans, draw blood, urine, and vitreous and submit to a private lab for analysis.

The Sheriff's Office sends approximately 201 cases for toxicology testing annually and spends close to \$60,000 utilizing Redwood Toxicology Laboratories and Pacific Diagnostic Laboratories to conduct the necessary testing. Currently, costs range between \$232 and \$298 per decedent for toxicology laboratory testing. Additionally, each laboratory test takes approximately six to eight weeks to provide results.

In recent years, significant advancements have occurred in end-user toxicology testing. Randox Toxicology Laboratories has developed a Multistat Analyzer, which would allow us to test blood, urine, or vitreous at the Coroner's Bureau. It would reduce the cost of each test to \$19.50 and we would receive the results of the test in 17 minutes.

The features of the Multistat Analyzer include:

- Reduced cost of each test from \$298.00 to \$19.5
- Allow staff to complete cases within days rather than weeks
- Will be able to conduct six samples per hour
- Results provided in 17 minutes

An additional benefit of this instrument will be the ongoing cost savings to the County of Santa Barbara and the Sheriff's Office. By purchasing this instrument, ongoing toxicology costs will decrease from approximately \$60,000 to \$10,000 annually.

It should be noted, we will continue to utilize confirmation testing with a traditional toxicology laboratory for all homicides, cases associated with prosecution, and in-custody deaths. We retain all blood samples related to homicides and in-custody deaths indefinitely, all other samples are retained for three year and will be available for confirmation testing should it become necessary.

Pursuant to County Code 2-39, the Sheriff’s Office is requesting your Board to waive the requirement for a competitive bid for the purchasing of a Randox Toxicology Multistat Analyzer as a sole source-procurement as the Sheriff’s Office has researched this subject thoroughly, attempting to find other potential vendors for RFP, but found none that would meet our needs or match the performance of this product.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

Budgeted: Yes; budget revision BJE-0009382 transfers the funding between object levels to complete the capital purchase.

**Fiscal Analysis:**

<b>Estimated Annual Toxicology Cost</b>	<b>Outside Laboratory Cost</b>	<b>Estimated Multistat Analyzer Cost</b>
Average Annual Toxicology Tests	201	201
Aprox Cost per Test	\$ 298.00	\$ 19.50
Subtotal	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
Maintenance & Supplies	\$ -	\$ 6,000.00
<b>Aproximate Annual Total</b>	<b>\$ 60,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 10,000.00</b>

<b>Yearly Cost After Purchase</b>	<b>Outside Lab Testing</b>	<b>with Multistat Analyzer</b>	<b>Yearly Savings w/ Multistat</b>
Year 1	\$ 60,000	\$ 56,000	\$ 4,000
Year 2	\$ 60,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 50,000
Year 3	\$ 60,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 50,000
Year 4	\$ 60,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 50,000
Year 5	\$ 60,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 50,000
<b>Five Year Testing Cost (Avg.)</b>	<b>\$ 300,000</b>	<b>\$ 96,000</b>	
<b>Five Year Savings with Multistat</b>			<b>\$ 204,000</b>

**Narrative:**

Currently, the cost of each test sent to a private laboratory range between \$200 to \$300, with an average of 200 cases annually, for an average annual cost of approximately \$60,000. These tests take an approximate six to eight week turnaround time. The Coroner’s Bureau is streamlining the process toward efficiency and cost saving by bringing the testing and analysis in-house. A one-time purchase of an Evidence Multistat Analyzer and ongoing purchase of consumables will reduce the cost per test to \$19.5, and the turnaround time would reduce to 17 minutes. The purchase of the Analyzer entails an ongoing maintenance service plan and purchase of testing supplies totally about \$6,000 annually. Even with these additional costs for maintenance and supplies, the total annual ongoing cost of Coroner toxicology testing is expected to decrease from \$60,000 to \$10,000. Total cost savings over five years is projected to be approximately \$204,000.

The Sheriff's Office has budgeted funding in FY 2023-24 under Services and Supplies for the outside testing; Budget Revision BJE-0009382 moves appropriations of \$46,000 from Services and Supplies to Capital Asset-Equipment for the purchase of the Evidence Multistat Analyzer.

**Special Instructions:**

Send Original Minute Order to Hope Vasquez, CFO Sheriff's Office.

Send Certified Copy of the Minute Order to the Purchasing Agent.

**Attachments:**

- A) Radox Toxicology Proposal for the Placement of a Multistat Analyzer
- B) Budget Revision BJE-0009382

**Authored by:**

Jarrett Morris, Lieutenant, Adjutant ext. (805) 681-4146  
Santa Barbara County Sheriff-Coroner

**CC:**