



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

Submitted on:
(COB Stamp)

Department Name:	Sheriff-Coroner
Department No.:	032
Agenda Date:	September 23, 2025
Placement:	Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time:	
Continued Item:	No
If Yes, date from:	
Vote Required:	Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director: Bill Brown, Sheriff-Coroner
Contact: Selim Celmeta, Lieutenant
SUBJECT: Inmate Welfare Fund Annual Statement: Fiscal Year 2024-25

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file the Annual Statement for the Inmate Welfare Fund for Fiscal Year 2024-25; and
- b) Find that the proposed actions do not constitute a "Project" within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to 14 CCR 15378(b)(5), in that they are government administrative activities that will not result in direct or indirect changes to the environment.

Summary Text:

California Penal Code §4025 requires that the Board receive and file information pertaining to the Inmate Welfare Fund annually. The purpose of this fund is primarily for the educational/vocational benefit of inmates, and to provide other services for inmates in the custody of the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office.

The Inmate Welfare Fund began Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 with a balance of \$2,706,583.67 and closed with a balance of \$2,505,338.13. This net decline to the fund balance of \$201,245.53 is primarily due to a structural imbalance in the Fund, with operating expenditures outpacing revenues in recent years. Inmate Welfare Fund revenue for Fiscal Year 2024-25 was \$1,821,463.66. During the same time frame, a total of \$2,022,709.19 in general and administrative expenditures were used for the benefit, education, recreation, and/or welfare of the inmates pursuant to Penal Code §4025. The

shortfall of \$201,245.54 was drawn from the fund balance.

Discussion:

Funds for the Inmate Welfare Fund come from four primary sources: 1) telephone and tablet funds from a contracted telephone provider, 2) inmate commissary sales commissions from a contracted provider, 3) commission from Jail Advertising Network (bail bondsman signs), and 4) printshop revenues (services within County departments, government agencies, and non-profit organizations).

In recent years, the Inmate Welfare Fund has experienced a decline in pay phone fee rates due to legislative changes and the implementation of a price cap on inmate communication rates. In October 2021, the CA Public Utilities Commission decreased domestic calling rates from \$0.16 to \$0.07 cents per minute, and international calling rates from \$0.75 to \$0.21 cents per minute. Because of the applied price cap, in FY 2023-24 the domestic phone call rates were reduced by 56% and international calling rates were reduced by 72% compared to the previous fiscal year. In June 2023, the Sheriff's Office moved to a tablet system, where incarcerated individuals could purchase books and entertainment shows through tablets, and this revenue source has helped offset some of the losses from paying phone fees. The option of electronic messaging through tablets at a lower rate is also contributing to revenue reduction from the phone service.

Additionally, from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, the Keefe Commissary Network contract commission percentages decreased from 35% to 30%, and contractor fees increased from \$2.99 to \$5.00 per transaction; this decrease in commission impacts the Inmate Welfare Fund by an estimated \$50,000 per fiscal year.

The Sheriff's Office Printshop was re-opened in November of 2022, after being closed for five years due to the Printshop Supervisor position being vacant. Although Printshop costs currently outpace associated revenues, it provides a valuable vocational training for inmates, in addition to helping the Sheriff's Office with printed documents for internal use. Inmate training in the Printshop started recently, and there have been several inmates who have completed this training (this number is limited due to safety reasons requiring that the Printshop Supervisor only supervise one inmate at a time). Those inmates trained in the Printshop have not returned in custody, providing a 100% success rate. As mentioned before, the Sheriff's Office is exploring other options to expand the variety of products made by the Printshop, including expanding services to include engraving cups, stamping t-shirts, and designing award plaques. However, expansion of Printshop products requires the acquisition of new equipment. While implementing these new expanded services could increase Printshop revenue, it would not increase the number of inmates trained through the printshop, given the capacity limits placed due to safety concerns.

The implementation of new programs such as Behavioral Health Units (BHUs), Solar Installation Vocational Training, and tattoo removal necessitated an increase in expenditures for educational materials, equipment, and accessories compared to the previous years. BHUs also expanded to different housing units.

The staff positions funded through the Inmate Welfare Fund include the program manager, three Sheriff's Treatment Program (STP) counselors, an inmate services department business specialist (DBS), printshop supervisor, and the outreach coordinator (Custody chaplain). The newly hired Custody chaplain provides spiritual and emotional support to incarcerated individuals and plays a major role in crisis interventions which often results in de-escalating conflicts among inmates.

Background:

California Penal Code section 4025 (d) states: "There shall be deposited in the inmate welfare fund any money, refund, rebate, or commission received from a telephone company or pay telephone

provider when the money, refund, rebate, or commission is attributable to the use of pay telephones which are primarily used by inmates while incarcerated.”

Section 4025 (e) continues, “The money and property deposited in the inmate welfare fund shall be expended by the Sheriff primarily for the benefit, education, and welfare of the inmates confined within the jail. Any funds that are not needed for the welfare of the inmates may be expended for the maintenance of county jail facilities. Maintenance of county jail facilities may include, but is not limited to, the salary and benefits of personnel used in the programs to benefit the inmates, including, but not limited to, education, drug and alcohol treatment, welfare, library, accounting, and other programs deemed appropriate by the sheriff. Inmate welfare funds shall not be used to pay required county expenses of confining inmates in a local detention system, such as meals, clothing, housing, or medical services or expenses, except that inmate welfare funds may be used to augment those required county expenses as determined by the sheriff to be in the best interests of inmates. An itemized report of these expenditures shall be submitted annually to the board of supervisors.”

Attachment A fulfills this statutory reporting requirement for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

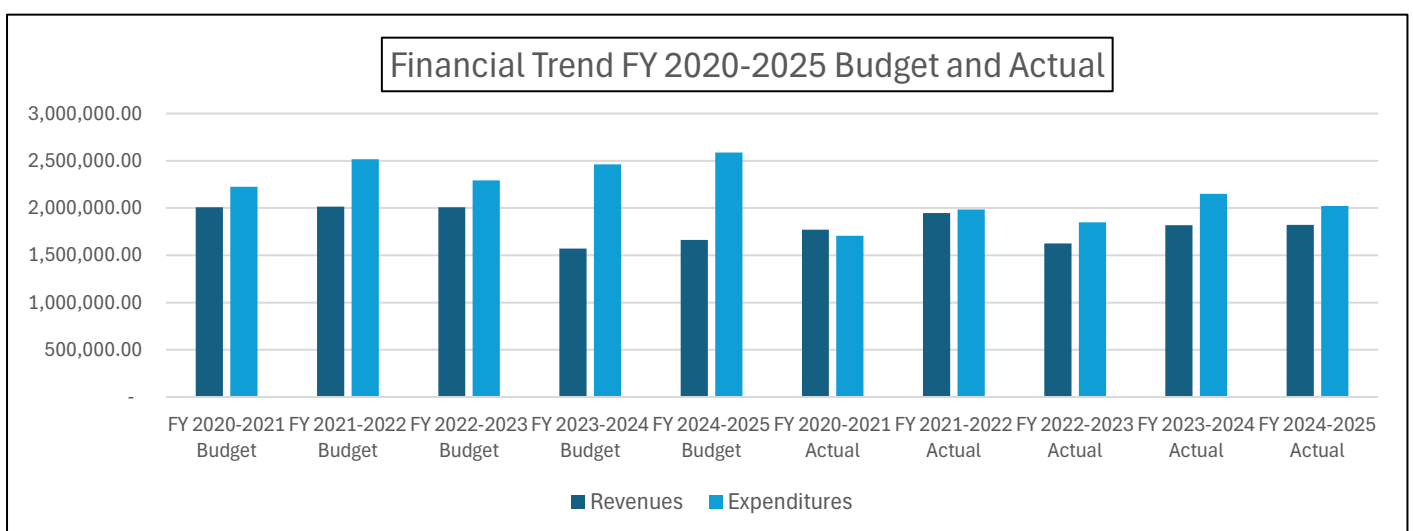
Budgeted: N/A

Fiscal Analysis:

There are no fiscal or facility impacts associated with the acceptance and filing of this report. The Inmate Welfare Fund balance was \$2,505,338.13 as of June 30, 2025, which is sufficient to sustain operating costs in the upcoming fiscal years. However, expenditures have outpaced incoming fund revenues for the past three years, due in part to legislative constraints and reduced pay phone revenue.

To address this, the Sheriff’s Custody Branch is working to align expenditures with anticipated revenues and will continue monitoring Fund performance. In particular, Sheriff’s Custody and fiscal staff will work with the CEO’s Office to evaluate the viability of sustaining Printshop operations, given that Printshop costs (\$172,991 in FY 2024-25) continue to outpace revenues (\$96,337 in FY 2024-25) and the program’s benefit to the inmate population is limited in scope. Based on current trends, the Fund can sustain operations at current expenditure levels for several years, but new funding sources or program reductions will likely be necessary to ensure long-term solvency.

The chart below shows the past five years of Inmate Welfare Fund budgeted and actual revenue and expenditures. In FY 2024-25, salaries and benefits comprised 38% of total actual expenditures, while services and supplies were 62%.



Special Instructions:

Clerk of the Board: Please send an official Minute Order to the Sheriff's Office. Attention: CFO Hope Vasquez, and Lieutenant Selim Celmeta.

Attachments:

Attachment A: Inmate Welfare Fund Annual Statement Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025

Authored by:

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