




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
Department No.: 032
Agenda Date: September 16, 2025
Placement: Administrative Agenda
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Department Director: Bill Brown, Sheriff-Coroner 
Contact: Lieutenant Jeff Greene, County Air Support Unit
SUBJECT: Request for Waiver of Competition for the Purchase of Aviation Fuel

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Purchasing, County Fire

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 aviation fuel for the County Air Support Unit (ASU-Sheriff / Fire) from the **Avfuel Corporation**, the contracted fuel supplier for the Santa Ynez Valley Airport, for up to \$400,000 per year, without being required to conduct a formal competitive bid process pursuant to County Code Section 2-39, for a term of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2028; and
- b) Determine this action is exempt for 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:

Under County Code section 2-39, the Sheriff's Office (SBSO) is requesting that the Board authorize the County's Purchasing Agent to purchase fuel from the **Avfuel Corporation** as a sole source procurement. The County Air Support Unit (ASU) operates several helicopters and one fixed wing aircraft out of its base at the Santa Ynez Valley Airport. Fuel for these aircraft is acquired from the Santa Ynez Valley Airport, via the Avfuel Corporation. Fuel is also obtained from other Fixed Base Operators (FBOs) throughout California, depending on the location and mission of the aircraft. The

Santa Ynez Valley Airport Fuel Service (Avfuel Corporation) is the most cost-effective fueling location, and the most convenient as it is the only fuel vendor stationed at the ASU's primary base of operation (Santa Ynez). Under existing County purchasing rules, the Purchasing Agent may waive bidding requirements where there are limitations on the source or supply, or for other valid reasons, for expenditures that exceed \$25,000, with approval from the Board of Supervisors.

Discussion:

The Sheriff's Office has maintained an agreement with the Santa Ynez Valley Airport since July 2014. The Board of Supervisors previously approved a bid waiver with the Santa Ynez Valley Airport for up to \$400,000 per year, expiring June 30, 2025. The Santa Ynez Valley Airport fuel costs are less expensive than other FBOs in the County and often less expensive than the government fuel prices. On August 1st, 2025, the retail price per gallon of Jet A fuel at the Santa Ynez Airport was \$5.98, while the price at Santa Barbara Airport was \$7.86 and Santa Maria Airport was \$5.56 per gallon whereas the negotiated price per gallon with the Avfuel Corporation was **\$4.62** for all three locations. Fuel prices fluctuate weekly.

Without the ability to purchase fuel from the Santa Ynez Airport, the ASU must drive a Fire Department Fuel Tender to either Santa Maria or Santa Barbara and fill the Tender. This process takes either an aircrew member or a firefighter from Fire Station 32 out of service for at least three hours to drive the Fuel Tender to another airport to fill. Flying to the other airports to refuel is not feasible due to the high cost of flight hours, weather conditions that at times can ground the aircraft, and the fact that the aircraft should be refueled after each flight (requiring refueling after returning to base).

Background:

With the Firehawk (Copter-964) now being in service for over three years with the other aircraft, the County ASU spent \$191,177 on overall fuel costs in FY 2024-25, \$240,734 in FY 2023-24, and \$150,691 in FY 2022-23. In the last three fiscal years there have been varying degrees of ASU services needed for natural disasters, such as fires, thus the amounts vary significantly from year to year. For instance, between June and July of this fiscal year, ASU spent \$40,557 on overall fuel costs, primarily due to recent fires in the northern county area. At this rate, ASU will surpass its BPO limit of \$25,000 by early September, which will preclude the ASU from purchasing fuel with the Santa Ynez Valley Airport (through the Avfuel Corporation) for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Pursuant to County Code 2-39, we are requesting your Board waive the requirement for a competitive bid for the purchasing of Aviation Fuel from the Santa Ynez Valley Airport through the **Avfuel Corporation**. There are no other aviation fuel vendors that operate from the Santa Ynez Valley Airport. The nearest aviation fuel vendors are in Santa Maria or Santa Barbara. The General Services Purchasing Division has verified that no other aviation fuel vendors operate at the Santa Ynez Valley Airport.

County Fire ASU managers and CFAO Brunick were consulted and have given concurrence with the establishment of this contract.

Performance Measure:

Over the last contract period, ASU Lt. Greene tracked the overall savings with the Avfuel Corporation to be over \$1.50 per gallon with the Santa Ynez Airport fuel and nearly a \$1.00 less per gallon with the Santa Barbara Airport fuel prices. In FY 2024-25, ASU purchased 59,591 gallons of fuel from the Avfuel Corporation, which saved the County over \$59,500 in fuel costs. Between June and July of this year, ASU purchased 9,080 gallons of fuel, which has saved the County over \$9,000. The Avfuel Corporation is responsive to needs and requests made by ASU and continues to be a more cost-effective and readily available fuel source.

Contract Renewals:

The County can discontinue using services at any time and if services are not satisfactory, the County is not obligated to continue using the vendor or fully expend the contract. No significant risk factors are identified with this waiver request.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Partially.

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Source	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2027-28	Total
General Fund	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$600,000
State				
Federal				
Fees				
Fire District	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$600,000
Total	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$1,200,000

Fuel for the aircraft in the ASU is included in the operating budget of the Sheriff's Office and totals \$333,400 for FY 2025-26. This contract will allow for unbudgeted expenses due to disasters and address the unanticipated price fluctuations. The cost of unbudgeted overages is split between the Sheriff's Office and Fire Department. The ASU has the ability to purchase fuel from multiple locations depending on aircraft location and specific missions. The Santa Ynez Valley Airport (whose fuel is supplied by the Avfuel Corporation) contract will allow the ASU to maximize the fuel budget by purchasing fuel at the lowest possible price from the vendor located at its home base of operations.

Special Instructions:

Clerk of the Board: Please send a copy of the minute order to:

- 1) Hope Vasquez, Chief Financial Officer, Sheriff's Office
- 2) Phung Loman, Chief Procurement Officer, General Services at ploman@countyofsb.org.

Attachments:

None

Contact Information:

Jeff Greene
Lieutenant, Sheriff's Office
jdg2891@sbsheriff.org

cc:

Jennie Brunick, CFAO Fire Department