



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
Department No.: 032
For Agenda Of: 09/19/2023
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time:
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisor
FROM: Department Bill Brown, Sheriff-Coroner (805) 681-4290
Director(s)
Contact Info: Lieutenant Selim Celmeta (805) 681-4047
SUBJECT: **Second Amendment with Telmate LLC to provide inmate communication services**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Yes

As to form: Risk Management

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve, ratify, and authorize the Chair to execute a Second Amendment to an Agreement with Telmate LLC to continue providing inmate communication services at Sheriff's Office facilities for a period effective from September 01, 2023, through August 31, 2025; and
- b) Determine that the activity is not a "Project" subject to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review per CEQA Guideline Sections 15378(b)(4) and 15378(b)(5), since the activity is an organizational or administrative activity of government and governmental fiscal activities or funding mechanisms that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment and which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant impact on the environment.

Summary Text:

Telmate LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Global Tel*Link (GTEL), currently provides products and services for the Sheriff's Office. Telmate facilitates inmate communications services and associated account funding including inmate telephones, friends and family web-based account portal, inmate telephone web-based platform with Sheriff's Office access to call data, reports, and recordings, the inmate video visitation at Northern Branch Jail, and correctional-grade inmate tablets at both Main Jail and

Northern Branch Jail. This item is before your Board to extend the contract with Talmate for two additional years.

Background:

On September 28, 2018, the Sheriff's Office entered into an agreement (Attachment C) with Telmate LLC, to provide our inmate communications services for the Sheriff's Office Main Jail and the Northern Branch Jail.

Traditionally, inmate communication services have solely included inmate telephone services. Technological advancements have changed the inmate telephone communication landscape and many vendors now offer inmate tablets and/or kiosks that allow inmates to communicate with friends, family and corrections facility staff. These advancements also provide access to resources, education, and entertainment, which enhances the quality of life for inmates within correctional facilities. Known advantages of utilizing tablets in correctional facilities include the following:

1. Access to educational resources: Tablets can provide incarcerated individuals with access to educational materials, such as e-books, online courses, and educational apps. This can help them acquire new skills, improve their knowledge, and increase their chances of successful reintegration into society upon release.
2. Communication with loved ones: Tablets can enable incarcerated individuals to stay connected with their families and friends through video calls, emails, and messaging apps. This helps maintain important relationships, reduce feelings of isolation, and provides emotional support.
3. Vocational trainings and job readiness: Tablets can offer incarcerated individuals access to vocational training programs, job search resources, and resume-building tools. This can help them develop marketable skills, increase their chances of finding employment after release, and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.
4. Mental health support: Tablets can provide access to mental health resources, such as therapy apps, meditation guides, and self-help materials. This can help incarcerated individuals cope with stress, anxiety, depression, and improve their overall well-being.
5. Entertainment and personal development: Tablets offer a range of entertainment options, including movies, music, games, and e-books. Engaging in recreational activities can help alleviate boredom, reduce tension, and promote growth.

Inmates and/or their friends and family members may purchase services directly from the vendor for telephone and/or entertainment services. Inmates may also purchase services through the contracted commissary provider. Inmates within the County jails have an institutional account in which money can be deposited under their name to purchase goods and services. Payments made from individual inmates for these goods and services are transferred from the inmate's institutional account to the vendor by the Sheriff's Office. Several apps such as FM radio, edovo education platform, commissary, e-books, religious content, dictionary, calculator, sudoku and crossword puzzles are available for free to those who have no funds in their custodial account. In accordance with California Penal Code Section 4025(d), the Sheriff's Office Inmate Welfare Fund reconciles with the vendor monthly and records their portion of revenue.

Funds generated from this agreement are deposited into the Inmate Welfare Fund (Fund 0075). The money deposited into the Inmate Welfare Fund must be expended by the Sheriff's Office primarily for the benefit, education and welfare of the inmates confined within the jail, pursuant to California Penal Code §4025(e).

On September 01, 2021, Sheriff's Office and Telmate LLC entered into a first amendment (Attachment B) extending the contract for a period of two years to August 30, 2023. At that time, Sheriff's Office along with its contracted management consultant Praeses, LLC, negotiated with Telmate LLC for implementing correctional-grade tablets at no cost to the Sheriff's Office.

On May 1, 2023, Telmate LLC started the tablet implementation project in both Santa Barbara County Correctional Facilities—Northern Branch Jail and the Main Jail. The tablet implementation project was completed on June 22, 2023. Use of electronic tablets in the jail facilities has proven to be a very effective tool in managing inmate population. Through tablets we allow incarcerated individuals maintain their family and social ties while incarcerated. Maintaining family and social ties is crucial for inmates' wellbeing, it reduces feelings of isolation and increases chances of a successful reintegration into society.

Tablets provided by Telmate are a significantly better product compared to the Edovo tablets that have been in use for quite some time in the jail facilities. In addition to being free of charge, there is now a tablet available for every incarcerated individual in the jail facilities a significant increase compared to the 200 Edovo tables the jail facilities had in the past. The Sheriff's Office is now asking for a second extension of the contract with Telmate LLC. The extension period is for two (2) years.

Performance Measure:

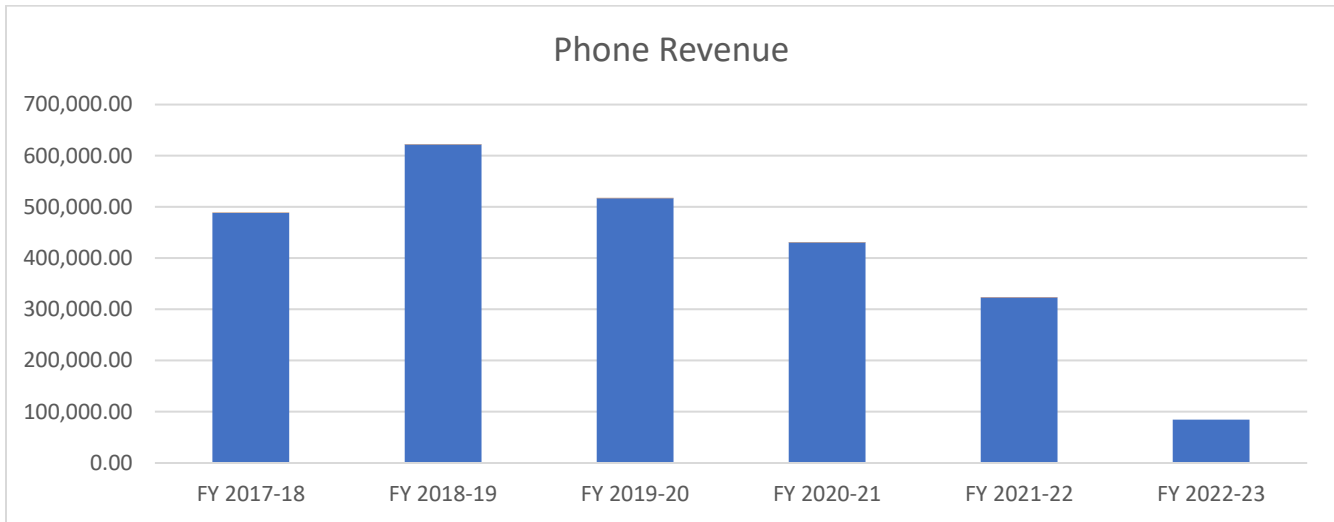
Telmate provides essential telecommunications services to the incarcerated population within Sheriff's Office Jail facilities. The most essential measure of their performance is relative to maintaining equipment that functions effectively for the population, minimizing telephone outages and ensuring that they provide appropriate responses and troubleshooting should an outage occur. During the period of the contract, Telmate has provided service responses to outages in compliance with the service escalation matrix within the contract. The Sheriff's Office utilized a telecommunications contract monitoring provider (Praeses, LLC) to monitor the performance, responses, and billing of this contract.

Contract Renewals and Performance Outcomes:

During the past fiscal year, the contractor had only one telecommunications outage, which was corrected within hours. Within the last few months, this contractor installed infrastructure (network equipment) and delivered approximately 800 tablets to the inmate population within both the Main Jail and Northern Branch Jail. The contractor ensures that there is a tablet available for every inmate. During installation of the tablets, the contractor installed equipment and went live with tablets prior to their anticipated completion date at both facilities. The contractor has provided satisfactory service; therefore, the Sheriff's Office recommends an extension to this contract.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: Yes **Fiscal Analysis:** Narrative: In 2021, the California Public Utilities Commission (CA PUC) revised the fees associated with intrastate calling from correctional facilities, which implemented a cap on calling rates. In August 2021, the CA PUC 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. As a result of the new CA PUC regulations, Inmate Welfare Fund revenues have declined significantly, and the Fund required use of existing fund balance to close the past two fiscal years. The estimated telephone services revenues for Fiscal Year 2023/2024 are budgeted at \$91,200, in comparison to actual revenues received totaling \$517,231 in Fiscal Year 2019/2020, before the price cap went into effect.



The Inmate Welfare Fund currently has a balance of \$3,038,564. The Fund should be able to sustain operations at current expenditure levels for several years; however, given the ongoing reduction in revenues, expenditure reductions are likely necessary to ensure the fund continues to remain solvent in the long term. The Sheriff’s Office is actively working to assess alignment between future revenues and expenditures within the Inmate Welfare Fund and its long-term viability, for the continued provision of much-needed services to individuals incarcerated within Santa Barbara County Jail facilities.

Special Instructions:

Clerk of the Board: Please send two (2) copies of the official executed agreement amendment and two (2) copies of the Minute Orders to the Sheriff’s Office, Attention CFO Hope Vasquez, and Lt. Selim Celmeta.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Second Amendment for Service of Agreement with Independent Contractor
- Attachment B: First Amendment for Services of Agreement with Independent Contractor
- Attachment C: Original Agreement
- Attachment D: Board Contract Summary Form
- Attachment E: Certificate of Liability Insurance

Authored by:

Selim Celmeta, Lieutenant, Custody Support Division
County of Santa Barbara Sheriff’s Office