

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Olivia Byron-Cooper, MPH
Director



MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 24, 2024

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors
Tiffany Schmid, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Olivia Byron-Cooper, Director of Health & Human Services *OBC*

SUBJECT: Retroactive Agreement for Services – Item 24-0184, 2/27/24
Animal Services Hearing Officer Agreement for Services #8437

This memo is to notify you that retroactive contract 8437 with William Wright, doing business as The Wright Law Office for the service of Animal Services Hearing Officer has been requested by the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) Animal Services division and is on the Board of Supervisor's Agenda for February 27, 2024 (File ID: 24-0184).

This proposed Agreement 8437 is a new contract with The Wright Law Office, with the retroactive term effective September 1, 2023 through December 31, 2024, to ensure continuation of necessary Hearing Officer services, including facilitating pre- and post-seizure hearings and appeals to impound hearings. The retroactive term is being requested due to the previous Manager of Animal Services determining that Agreement 4580 would not be renewed, following his plan that Hearing Officer services would be transitioned and conducted by HHSA staff. (Said Hearing Officer services would not require a licensed attorney to perform if the County had in house staff trained that are removed from the case and can act as a neutral 3rd party.) Animal Services staff were not notified or aware that Agreement 4580 had expired or did not get renewed.

Further, no HHSA employees were trained to conduct these hearings. Beginning in September 2023, not realizing that there was not an active contract in place, Animal Services staff utilized the services of The Wright Law Office to adjudicate active dog dispute cases. Following said service delivery, it was later discovered that there was no active agreement in place with this vendor. Subsequently, Animal Services attempted to piggyback off of Code Enforcement's contract with this vendor, which delayed the contract renewal request process, and got eventual confirmation that their contract was specific to Code Enforcement needs and could not be utilized for vendor payment.

The Health and Human Services Agency remains focused on process and procedure improvements to reduce retroactive requests within our control and improve upon our contractual commitments. Animal Services is working to build in safeguards to prevent similar issues from occurring in the future.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything further.