



Legislation Text

File #: 17-1027, **Version:** 1

District Attorney recommending the Board:

- 1) Approve and authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute Amendment I (with an effective date retroactive to September 1, 2017) to Agreement for Services 455-S1710, with Capitol Tech Solutions for the provision of strategic digital and social media consulting and public information services in the not-to-exceed amount of \$37,200 for the period of May 1, 2017 through April 30, 2018; and
- 2) Approve a budget transfer to appropriate the use of Department of Justice Asset Forfeiture Funds. (Est. Time: 10 Min.)

FUNDING: Department of Justice Asset Forfeiture Funds.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

District Attorney recommending the Board approve and authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute Amendment I (retroactive to September 1, 2017) to Agreement for Services 455-S1710, with Capitol Tech Solutions for the provision of strategic digital and social media consulting and public information services in the not-to-exceed amount of \$37,200 for the period of May 1, 2017 through April 30, 2018.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

In 2014, the country bought into a grossly misleading news story regarding the death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. The “story” goes like this - Brown was murdered while holding up his hands and uttering “hands up don’t shoot” and the allegedly corrupt District Attorney covered it up using a grand jury.

Time magazine posted a narrative characterizing Brown as a “gentle giant.” In only two days, this false story was repeated again and again, until it became a socially constructed reality, or as is more commonly called, an “urban myth.” To fully appreciate the scope and depth of this false story, it must be noted that the United State Department of Justice led by then Attorney General Eric Holder, conducted an exhaustive independent investigation and concluded with an 83-page report that debunked the entire salacious narrative concerning the facts and circumstances surrounding the death of Brown.

Despite what we “know” actually happened, what followed the shooting was a public back and forth between police and protesters seemingly supported by the media. Purportedly, each side was acting in the pursuit of “justice.” The prosecutor, while factually correct in Officer Wilson’s justified use of force, unfortunately failed to adequately communicate this message.

Every day law enforcement officers put their lives on the line to keep us safe. Unfortunately, their job and the job of prosecutors has been getting more and more difficult over the last few years. The anti-law enforcement rhetoric sweeping the country has been fueled by some misguided politicians, special interest groups, and false news stories in the media. Through all of this, and many other similar instances, we have learned it is often extremely important to communicate quickly and directly to the public.

Over the last few years we have experimented with public engagement using social media through a blog, video production, and outreach programs. Our Most Wanted Wednesday posts for example are highly successful. Given the success of these programs, we developed a comprehensive public engagement strategy.

After meeting with Capital Tech Solutions and discussing the various methods and options to get information out to the public, it was determined that this consulting group will provide the necessary specialized services needed to guide us in promoting more effective communication with the public using their public relations experience, similar to the Sheriff's Office.

These outreach efforts are not only smart law enforcement practices, but also consistent with the needs of the citizens of El Dorado County. Again and again in the 2016 El Dorado County Citizen Engagement Survey, the community asked for better public safety outreach, transparency, communication, and engagement with the community. The contract with Capitol Tech Solutions, will help us achieve these goals.

The original agreement was effective May 1, 2017. The amendment increases the scope of services to be provided and increases compensation, effective September 1, 2017.

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

N/A

CAO RECOMMENDATION

The CAO recommended that the District Attorney use the County's Communications and Outreach Manager to assist him with his public communications and relations needs. The District Attorney prefers to contract out for these services.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no increase to Net County Cost as this expense will be paid with Department of Justice Asset Forfeiture Funds.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

No follow up action by the Clerk of the Board

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Public Safety

CONTACT

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