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**Sponsor:** County Attorney's Office and Sheriff's Office

**Meeting Date:** 6/15/2021

**Title:** Grant Award from Minnesota Department of Commerce for Minnesota Auto Theft Prevention Program - Youth Intervention Project

**File Number:** 2021-298

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**Background and Rationale:**

This board action is one of two requests related to auto theft prevention grants from the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Commerce Fraud Bureau, Minnesota Auto Theft Prevention Program. Both the Sheriff's Office and County Attorney's Office applied for and were awarded grant funds from the Minnesota Auto Theft Prevention Program for the next two state fiscal years (July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023).

The Minnesota Automobile Theft Prevention Program is intended to reduce auto theft and auto theft related crimes. Under this state program, grant funds are awarded for programs and services that aid in the reduction of auto thefts, increase education and awareness of the community, respond to auto theft incidents, and prosecute offenders. This grant, administered by the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Commerce Fraud Bureau, provides financial support to communities that (1) engage in collaborative efforts to reduce auto theft and (2) have the greatest rates of automobile theft.

Ramsey County has some of greatest auto theft rates in the state:

- Ramsey County accounts for 9% of the state's population, but 28% of its auto thefts.
- Of the 417 law enforcement agencies in Minnesota, only six agencies responded to more auto thefts in 2019 than the Sheriff's Office.
- In the past year, approximately 40% of persons involved in auto thefts in Ramsey County were under the age of 25.
- Recent data suggests an increase in auto vehicle thefts accompanied by a more serious charge of aggravated robbery or assault (i.e., "car-jacking").
- Incidents of car-jackings in Ramsey County have mostly involved individuals operating as a group and under the age of 25.
- From 2018 to 2020, the number of juvenile auto-theft cases referred to the County Attorney's Office increased nearly 25%, accompanied by an increase in repetitive criminal conduct.

This grant provides a rare opportunity for the County Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, and the community to partner together to focus resources on intervention and prevention of auto theft and auto theft related offenses. In the past year, approximately 40% of persons involved in motor vehicle thefts in Ramsey County were under the age of 25. Recent data suggests an increase in motor vehicle thefts accompanied by a more serious charge of aggravated robbery or assault (i.e., "car-jacking").

Employing the fundamentals of an approach known as focused deterrence, this grant will implement a pilot project aimed at deterring and reducing juvenile and young adult motor vehicle thefts. The core components of this work incorporate three basic elements: community members with moral

authority over group members to deliver a credible message against violence; law enforcement to place individuals and groups on prior notice about the consequences of further group-involved violence for the group; and, support and outreach providers making a genuine offer of help to those who want it.

With this grant, funding will be provided for a focused deterrence Assistant Ramsey County Attorney (prosecutor), a focused deterrence Deputy Sheriff, a community-based partner (contract services), and a restorative justice specialist (contract services).

**Recommendation:**

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Accept a grant award of \$499,929.60 and approve a grant agreement with the Minnesota Department of Commerce for Auto Theft Prevention Program - Youth Intervention Program for the period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the grant agreement.
3. Approve an increase in the personnel complement of the Sheriff's Office by 1.0 FTE Deputy Sheriff.
4. Approve an increase in the personnel complement of the County Attorney's Office by 1.0 FTE Assistant County Attorney.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner MatasCastillo, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt.

Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Carter, Frethem, MatasCastillo, McDonough, McGuire, Ortega, and Reinhardt

By:   
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Abby Goldsmith, Interim Chief Clerk - County Board