
Sponsor: Sheriff's Office

Meeting Date: 12/17/2024

Title: Agreements for Law Enforcement Services and Public Safety Services

File Number: 2024-667

Background and Rationale:

For over 60 years, the Sheriff's Office has provided law enforcement and public safety services to municipalities within Ramsey County that do not operate a local police department. In doing so, the county, the Sheriff's Office, and the municipalities have entered into agreements for contract services. Minnesota state law authorizes such agreements.

Contracting for law enforcement and public safety services offers many advantages to the community, the county, and the municipality, including cost savings, sharing of resources, and enhanced emergency responses. In fact, it is a common practice across the seven-county metro, the state, and the nation for sheriff's offices and municipalities to enter into agreements for contract services. This method of contracting allows municipalities to select services that best meet the needs of the community. The sheriff's offices then provide services for the cost incurred. The services provided include but are not limited to patrol, investigations, crime prevention, community outreach, and animal control.

Currently, the cities of Arden Hills, Little Canada, North Oaks, Shoreview, Vadnais Heights, and the township of White Bear, known as the "Contract Communities," have agreements with the Sheriff's Office for law enforcement and public safety services. The city of Falcon Heights also has an agreement with the Sheriff's Office independent of the Contract Communities. All agreements expire on December 31, 2024 with no renewal options.

In 2024, the Sheriff's Office in partnership with the County Manager's Office, including Safety and Justice, the County Attorney's Office, Enterprise Risk Management, Finance, and the Contract Communities worked together to review all contract terms and conditions. This collective work resulted in updated and revised contract language. The major changes and updates to the agreements include:

- An improved and easier to read format.
- Revised recitals to incorporate legal authority and statutory references.
- A term limit of five years, requiring any new agreements to be brought before each governing body for approval.
- Placing all agreements on the same cycle for reauthorization by each governing body.
- Updated scope of services to reflect current service levels.
- Additional language regarding cost and payment information, including the incorporation of internal service fees, such as rent and information services, and insurance obligations.
- Updated defense and indemnification language designed to protect the county.
- Resolution of outstanding insurance coverage issues, including automobile and general liability.

In addition to each municipality paying for the costs of services provided by the Sheriff's Office, the Contract Communities continue to pay for a share of internal services fees, which are fees charged

by county departments. This includes rent, information services, workers compensation, mobile and handheld radio communication services, fleet services, and county manager fees, which include central services, such as finance, human resources, and other indirect costs.

The Contract Communities also pay for the costs associated with the county self-insuring automobile liability and general liability claims related to the services provided by the Sheriff's Office. The cost for self-insurance coverage increased as part of the updated agreements, which is funded by the Contract Communities. The rates charged by the county align with the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust and neighboring counties. By working together with county management, the Sheriff's Office, the County Attorney's Office, Enterprise Risk Management, and the Contract Communities, this has resulted in the resolution of insurance coverage.

This action requests Ramsey County Board of Commissioners approval of the agreements with the municipalities for contract services and the authority for the County Manager to use Law Enforcement Services Fund fund balance for the purpose of year-end reconciliation at fiscal close to reconcile actual costs for services provided to the Contract Communities under these agreements. This action is requested as a process improvement due to timing of various processes at year-end fiscal close, which includes payroll, accounts receivable, and accounts payable. This action will help to ensure financial activity is recorded in the current fiscal year. The request for County Manager authority to make fund balance transfers is limited to the Law Enforcement Services Fund and for the purposes of year-end reconciliation at fiscal close. There is no impact to the General Fund or any other fund. Finance is recommending approval of this action.

The Contract Communities and the Sheriff's Office are recommending approval of the agreements and are proud to work closely together to achieve the shared goal of community safety in the suburban communities of Ramsey County.

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Approve the agreements for law enforcement and public safety services with the cities of Arden Hills, Little Canada, North Oaks, Shoreview, Vadnais Heights, and the township of White Bear for the period of January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2029.
2. Authorize the Chair and Chief Clerk to execute the agreements.
3. Authorize the County Manager to use Law Enforcement Services Fund fund balance for the purpose of year-end reconciliation at fiscal close to reconcile actual costs for services provided to the Contract Communities under these agreements.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Ortega, seconded by Commissioner Xiong. Motion passed.

Aye: - 6: Frethem, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

By: 

Jason Yang, Interim Chief Clerk - County Board