

## AGENDA



Thursday, September 24, 2009

**Police  
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION****Item No. 56**

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**Subject:** Authorize an execution of Amendment No. 1 to the Interlocal Agreement between the City of Austin and Travis County, in the amount of \$6,800 per month, for continued reimbursement funding of a sixth Fulltime Forensic Chemist position that performs drug analysis at the Austin Police Department Forensic Science Division Laboratory and for Forensic Chemist overtime for cases worked on behalf of Travis County.

**Amount and Source of Funding:** Funding for the sixth forensic chemist will be provided by Travis County on a reimbursement basis at the rate of \$5,800 per month; compensation for partial months will be prorated. Overtime will be billed only as used and not to exceed \$1,000 per month.

**Fiscal Note:** There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

**For More Information:** David Carter, Chief of Staff / 974-5030

**Prior Council Action:** May 17, 2007 original Interlocal Agreement.

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The Austin Police Department Forensic Science Division Laboratory currently performs drug analysis for "Rocket Docket" cases submitted by the Austin Police Department. "Rocket Docket" cases involve defendants in pre-trial confinement who have been charged with drug-related offenses. This Interlocal Agreement with Travis County will continue full funding for a sixth Forensic Chemist position at the Austin Police Department Forensic Science Division Laboratory whose priority will be performing analysis on "Rocket Docket" drug evidence submitted by the Austin Police Department and the Travis County Sheriff's Office. The agreement also provides for up to \$1,000 per month in overtime for Chemists working on behalf of Travis County.

This relationship is beneficial to both the City and the County, as adding this new Forensic Chemist will decrease the turnaround time between the submission of "Rocket Docket" drug evidence for analysis and the completion of such analysis. Defendants in pre-trial confinement who have been charged with drug crimes are often unwilling to dispose of their cases until a laboratory analysis of drug evidence has been completed. Delays in completing laboratory analyses of drug evidence result in an increase in the length of pre-trial confinement time; thus, significantly increasing jail costs for taxpayers. In sum, decreasing pretrial incarceration times will significantly reduce jail costs related to "Rocket Docket" cases.

This Agreement, contingent upon future funding by the Commissioners Court, shall begin October 1, 2009, and the agreement shall thereafter automatically renew on October 1 of each year for succeeding terms of one year; unless earlier terminated by either party pursuant to the terms of the agreement. A copy of the Interlocal Agreement is attached as back-up material.