



Budget Change Request

Change request information

Title Increased Autopsy, Indigent, & Extra Help Budget
Number B-12-01 Department 12 - Coroner
Requester Lauren Brady
Published by Jennifer Smith Publish Date 2023-08-24
Change Type Policy Change

Board outcome *(to be entered by budget after Board action)*

Board Decision

Board Changes

Funds affected

Fund 0010 - General Fund
General Fund Affected? Yes More Than One Fund Affected? No

Policy request priority and connection to the strategic plan

Priority # 1 Strategic Plan Effective County

Does this request include federal, state, or private grants?

Grant Funded? None

Grantor and timeframe

Does this request affect current positions or propose new positions?

HR Payroll e-mailed? No Position Impact None

Current position numbers affected

What do you need and why? Include any unexpected and external requirements.

Statement of Need

In 2022, the Board of County Commissioners approved a new Forensic Pathologist position and reduced the autopsy budget to \$50,000 to cover any outsourcing for autopsies in the absence of the Forensic Pathologist. This position has remained unfilled since Board approval and the \$50,000 has been depleted. This request is for increased budget funding of \$375,000 to cover projected 2024-2025 autopsy costs.

An increase in the extra help budget is requested to allow for the hiring of additional personnel under the part time/extra help category in place of additional FTE personnel.

We are requesting an increase in the budget amount to cover the cost of cremation for indigent decedents who die in our county and the cost of cremation is paid for by the Coroner's Office.

How will this change the performance of your office or department?

Statement of Need

Autopsy

- No change in performance. Autopsies will still be conducted, and the County is required to pay for them per RCW 68.50.010 and RCW 68.50.104.

Extra Help

- Utilizing extra help is an efficient way to accomplish the necessary work of the Coroner's Office in place of hiring additional FTEs which would put an unnecessary burden on the County for additional funding. Extra help personnel can assist in covering sick call-outs and vacation days of current FTEs, reducing the overtime that would normally be paid to cover those shifts. Extra help personnel would allow for a two-person response to death scenes which will reduce injury risks and safety concerns. Having extra help personnel helps to minimize physical, mental, and emotional strain on current FTEs while increasing morale and efficiency as our current personnel work tirelessly under an ever-increasing caseload.

Indigent

- With additional funding, we will continue to operate within our budget. Our current budget allows for 21 indigent cremations. In 2022, we had 56 indigent decedents. The number of indigent deaths is expected to rise slightly each year.

Expenditure, FTE and revenue assumptions plus current budget level

Assumptions

- Autopsy costs in 2022 = \$502,450. Autopsy costs for 1st & 2nd quarter 2023 = \$291,100. 2023 projection = \$704,000

The \$375k being requested is only enough if both Indigent and Extra Help Costs requests are approved. Prior years autopsy budget were made whole by using leftover budget from other expenditure's budget.

- Extra Help costs in 2022 = \$16,774. Extra Help costs for 1st & 2nd quarter 2023 = \$5,652. 2023 projection = \$12,152

- OT costs in 2022 = \$85,950. OT costs for 1st & 2nd quarter 2023 = \$11,841. 2023 projection = \$53,143
To help offset the overspending in OT the Extra Help budget is requesting to be increased. This will help save money by budgeting into Extra Help because money spent won't be at time and a half.

- Indigent costs in 2022 = \$30,432. Indigent costs for 1st & 2nd quarter 2023 = \$8,250. 2023 projection = \$30,800

Current Budget Level

Autopsy = \$50,000

Extra Help budget = \$25,554

OT = \$8,000

Indigent Costs = \$11,800

What happens if this isn't funded? Are there other options?

Impacts and Alternatives

Autopsy

- There are no alternatives. Autopsies and professional service fees are currently reimbursed at 40% and autopsies and professional service fees for children ages three and under are reimbursed at 100%.
2022 Autopsy and professional services cost: \$563,368
2022 reimbursement to the County: \$235,103

Extra Help

- An alternative would be to fund an additional one or two FTE positions.

Indigent

- There are no alternatives. We contract with 5 local funeral homes who offer a significant reduction in fees for indigent cases.
The current contract price is \$550 per cremation.

How does this request affect other offices and departments?

Impact to Other Departments None

Which Other Departments are Affected?

Operating Transfer Needed? No

Operating Transfer Coding and Amount

Personnel Information

FTE	Number	Name	Start Date	End Date
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Operating Revenue Line Items

Org Code	Object Code	Object Description	Project Code	2024	2025
0112B303	33606D	336.06.92 AUTOPSY COST		202,000	202,000.00
Total:				202,000.00	202,000.00

Capital Revenue Line Items

Org Code	Object Code	Object Description	Project Code	2024	2025
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Operating Expenditure Line Items

Org Code	Object Code	Object Description	Project Code	2024	2025
0112B300	516000	EXTRA HELP		25,000	25,000.00
0112B303	541000	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES		375,000	375,000.00
0112B306	541000	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES		20,000	20,000.00
Total:				420,000.00	420,000.00

Capital Expenditure Line Items

Org Code	Object Code	Object Description	Project Code	2024	2025
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