

**COUNTY OF SONOMA
AGENDA ITEM
SUMMARY REPORT**

Clerk of the Board Use Only
Meeting Date **Held Until**
 / / / /
Agenda Item No: **Agenda Item No:**

Department: County Clerk-Recorder-Assessor

() **4/5 Vote Required**

Contact:
Janice Atkinson

Phone:
(707) 565-1877

Board Date:
06/23/09

Deadline for Board Action:
06/23/09

AGENDA SHORT TITLE: Electronic Campaign Filing System for the Registrar of Voters

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION: Authorize the County Clerk/ Recorder/Assessor to sign a contract with SouthTech Systems, Inc. to provide an Electronic Campaign Filing System (CampaignDocs) for the Registrar of Voters Division in the amount of \$65,113.

CURRENT FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL IMPACT

EXPENDITURES

ADD'L FUNDS REQUIRING BOARD

Estimated Cost \$ 65,113

Contingencies \$
(Fund Name:)

Amount Budgeted \$

Unanticipated Revenue \$
(Source:)

Other Avail Approp. \$ 65,113
(Explain below)

Other Transfer(s) \$
(Source:)

Additional Requested: \$

Add'l Funds Requested: \$

Explanation (if required): Salary savings are available in current year appropriations.

Prior Board Action(s):

None.

Alternatives - Results of Non-Approval:

The department would not take advantage of technology solutions designed to automate the "Campaign Filing and Disclosure" process and increase departmental efficiency.

Background:

The Registrar of Voters Office is responsible for registering voters and maintaining the voter registration files, conducting federal, state and local elections held in Sonoma County, providing information to candidates on the nomination process and campaign reporting laws, and filing campaign finance statements (itemized listings of candidates' and committees' contributors and expenditures).

In line with the County of Sonoma Strategic Plan, the County is implementing technology solutions designed to improve the cost effectiveness and efficiencies of Sonoma County Departments. The Sonoma County Clerk-Recorder-Assessor wishes to automate the Fair Political Practices Commission mandated "Campaign Filing and Disclosure" process by procuring an electronic filing system for campaign documents and forms.

The Registrar of Voters office conducts elections throughout the year and files campaign statements for hundreds of candidates, campaigns and committees. Currently, the Department utilizes a manual data entry system that is labor intensive and lacks the capability to create electronic files that are easily accessible to the public. There is one staff member that tracks and maintains all campaign statement filings, does cursory audits, sends reminder notices, and fines filers if and when appropriate. Without automation, the Registrar of Voters does not have the staff resources required in order to manually redact information, make digital copies and post these files to the internet, making them accessible to the public via the Sonoma County website. A request for this improvement has been made by the League of Women Voters of Sonoma County and has been discussed by members of the Board.

The Registrar of Voters sent out a Request for Proposals and received responses from two vendors – SouthTech Systems and NetFile. The SouthTech Systems proposal was rated higher by all members of the evaluation team, and was the overall lower cost alternative. NetFile's solution over a 5-year period will cost \$200,000, whereas SouthTech's solution will cost \$108,000. Additionally, the NetFile system is a hosted solution; whereas the SouthTech system will be maintained in-house. The NetFile system did not rate as high as the SouthTech system for the functionality factors that are necessary to create the efficiencies and save staff time at the local level.

NetFile has filed a protest on the basis that the vendor selected is not certified by the State of California for electronic filing. Counties are not mandated to provide an electronic filing system for campaign filing for candidates or committees. Should the State mandate counties to provide electronic filing, the State would have to provide funding. The Purchasing Division has reviewed the RFP process and NetFile's letter of protest. The Purchasing Agent agrees that the basis of their protest has no grounds.

Attachments:

On File With Clerk: Contract with SouthTech Systems, Inc.

CLERK OF THE BOARD USE ONLY

Board Action (If other than "Requested")

Vote:

Background: (Continued)

Implementation of the CampaignDocs filing system is expected to free up approximately 800 hours of staff time per year, reducing reliance on extra help and overtime during busy election seasons. These savings have been factored into the FY 09/10 proposed budget. The investment in this system is estimated to be completely recovered through salary savings in 5 years. The Registrar of Voters division has sufficient current FY 0809 salary savings to pay for this improvement.

Contracting with SouthTech Systems to provide an electronic filing system for campaign documents will allow the Registrar of Voters to pursue the goals set forth in the County Strategic Plan and to improve efficiencies within the department.

Recommendations:

Authorize the County Clerk/ Recorder/Assessor to sign a contract with SouthTech Systems in the amount of \$65,113 to provide an Electronic Campaign Filing System for the Registrar of Voters Division.