COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 7/22/2025

File #: 25-858

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Sheriff

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: 4/5th

SUBJECT:
Professional Services Agreement with Othram, Inc and Supplemental Budget in the Amount of $40,003 (4/5 Vote Required)

RECOMMENDATION(S):
That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve and authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute the attached Professional Services Agreement in the amount of $170,000 with Othram, Inc for the period of April 1, 2025 to September 30, 2025 (Attachment 1); and
2. Authorize the Purchasing Agent to execute any amendments, extensions, or modifications to the Agreement with approval by County Counsel, Risk Management, and the County Administrative Office (CAO); and
3. Approve the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 Supplemental Budget for the UHR Forensic Genetic DNA Test Grant 1100-221915 in the amount of $40,003 (4/5 Vote Required).

STRATEGIC PLAN:
This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Core Services/Other
Strategic Plan Category: 9999 - Core Services/Other

DISCUSSION:

In FY2024-25 the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) was awarded a grant to utilize Forensic Genetic Genealogy (FGG) to solve cold cases of Unidentified Human Remains (UHR) and consent to accept grant funds was given by the Board of Supervisors on September 24, 2024. At time of the award, HCSO had 20 cases to submit for FGG/DNA testing and profiling. As grant award agreements were underway, a new administration was taking shape in Washington. Grant processing was delayed, funds were under review, and new requirements outlined. This delayed the start of the performance period until final approval was received by the grantor on April 1, 2025.

HCSO is requesting the agreement be retro-actively approved to April 1, 2025. This aligns with the final grant approval performance period start date.

Prior to this grant, HCSO has worked with Othram, Inc on previous cases. Othram is the leading company performing FGG, is a U.S.-based biotech firm located in Texas specializing in forensic genetic genealogy for cold cases, unidentified remains, and unsolved violent crimes. Othram is one of the few companies that builds and controls its entire DNA sequencing and analysis pipeline from DNA extraction to genealogy. This allows better handling of degraded, contaminated, or trace DNA samples that traditional methods can't resolve.

Othram is a seamless partner with law enforcement and databases such as FamilyTreeDNA (FTDNA) for law enforcement uploads

and GEDmatch PRO which is dedicated to law enforcement use. They are also used in cases supported by government funding such as the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs). Othram has solved hundreds of cases where other companies show fewer cases and smaller volumes. Othram has a lab environment specializing in degraded DNA where other companies offer limited capabilities. In addition, Othram has solved hundreds of high-profile cold cases, decades old identifications, and they offer speed and reliability when handling cases. For all these reasons, HCSO is requesting a sole source exception for this agreement.

County Counsel notes the Othram agreement states it will be governed by the laws of the State of Texas rather than California and that all disputes relating thereto will be settled through binding arbitration rather than in a court of law.

Due to timing of the grant approval, HCSO is also requesting a supplemental budget in the amount of $40,003 to complete grant spending in FY 2025-26.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:
UHR Forensic Genetic DNA Test (1100-221915)

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Expenditures (1100,221915)	**FY24-25**	**FY25-26**
Budgeted Expenses	$24,997	$105,000
Additional Appropriation Requested	$0	$ 40,003
Total Expenditures	$24,997	$145,003

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*

Funding Sources (1100,221915)	**FY24-25**	**FY25-26**
UHR Grant Funds	$24,997	$145,003
Total Funding Sources	$24,997	$145,003

**Projected amounts are estimates and are subject to change.*

Narrative Explanation of Financial Impact:
Funding for this agreement in the amount of $105,000 was budgeted in FY 2025-26 in budget 1100-221915, however, delays from the grantor in approving additional required documentation impacted the timeframe for obtaining the draft agreement and to begin FGG UHR testing. This pushed these tasks and expenditures into FY 2025-26. A supplemental of $40,003 is requested to complete grant spending in FY 2025-26.

STAFFING IMPACT:
There is no impact to staffing other than shipping evidence for testing, notifying families of solved cases (both performed by extra help and budgeted) and entering invoices for payment.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:
Othram, Inc.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:
The Board may choose to not approve this Agreement, however this is not recommended as this would impact the possible resolution of Unidentified Human Remains cases which would bring closure to the families of these victims. Without these grant funds, due to the cost of FGG UHR testing, these cases may go unsolved.

ATTACHMENTS:
Attachment 1 - Agreement with Othram, Inc
Attachment 2 - Supplemental Budget

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:
Meeting of: 09/24/2024
File No.: 24-1302