



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

April 29, 2014

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From:  Christine Daniel, City Manager

Submitted by: Michael K. Meehan, Chief of Police, Police Department

Subject: Contract: Serological Research Institute for DNA Testing Services

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a three-year contract and any amendments with Serological Research Institute to provide evidence testing services through deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) analysis for the period of April 1, 2014 to June 30, 2017, in an amount not to exceed \$300,000, with an option for two one-year extensions for a total five-year contract, for an amount not to exceed \$500,000, subject to the City's annual budget appropriation process.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the recommendation would support an ongoing operating expense required for solving criminal cases in a timely manner. Funding for the remainder of FY 2014 is available in the State Proposition Fund (367-7202-420.30-38). Funding for subsequent fiscal years (FY 2015 – FY 2017), will be available in the General Fund (010-7301-420.30-38) and State Proposition 172 Fund (367-7202-420.30-38 and is subject to the appropriation of those fiscal year's budgets by the City Council. The contract has been entered into the City's Contract Management System (CMS) and is assigned CMS No. S3VJF.

CURRENT SITUATIONS AND ITS EFFECTS

The Berkeley Police Department currently procures forensic DNA testing services from the Alameda County Sheriff's Crime Laboratory and Forensic Analytical Sciences, Inc., and it would be a proactive measure to add another laboratory accredited by the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors/Laboratory Accreditation Board as a viable resource in its crime prevention efforts. Serological Research Institute, located in Richmond, California, provides state-of-the-art forensic services, professional consultation services, laboratory analysis and expert testimony for clients.

While maintaining compliance with the FBI Quality of Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing, Serological Research Institute has one of the fastest average case turnaround times, with most cases being completed in six weeks or less. If granted the consent to enter in to a contract with this laboratory, the department could avoid the current backlog in testing services and ensure efficient DNA testing services required for solving criminal cases in a timely manner.

BACKGROUND

Since 1995, the Berkeley Police Department has submitted evidentiary material to Alameda County Sheriff's Laboratory for forensic testing. The department's proficiency in solving criminal cases is dependent on the efficient and effective processing of this forensic evidence. The department is completely reliant upon the skills and testing execution of laboratories, and when laboratories experience challenges in making deliverables, it is incumbent upon the department to seek other resources. The department recently received DNA test results from Alameda County's lab for various cases one year after submission. The delayed receipt of these tests results directly impacts the validity of evidence and negatively impacts the criminal justice process. The department has a long-standing working relationship with Alameda County, and will continue using their services for non-DNA evidence until the backlog is successfully alleviated.

Forensic Analytical Sciences, Inc., located in Hayward, California is another reputable laboratory the department currently uses for forensic testing services. However, their testing services are limited. Forensic Analytical Sciences, Inc. does not have the capability to upload DNA profiles into the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). The Local DNA Index (LDIS), State DNA Index (SDIS), and the National DNA Index (NDIS) are components of CODIS. LDIS, SDIS, and NDIS are databases that contain offender, arrestee, and forensic DNA profiles. DNA found at crime scenes are compared to the profiles known to CODIS. This enables the potential identification of a suspect based on DNA found at a crime scene.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Serological Research Institute provides and maintains an extensive online test request submission and products ordering option. These online forms reduce the amount of paper required to forward requests. By reducing the amount of paper used by both agencies, the effort to achieve zero waste sent to landfills by 2020 is well supported.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The cost associated with DNA testing services is an operational expense for which the Berkeley Police Department is currently responsible. Based on the amount and type evidence submitted for testing, the cost associated with forensic DNA testing services can range from \$300 per item to \$1,000 per item. Services such as expert testimony and expedited orders also incur additional expenses. In an effort to solve criminal cases without any impediments due to a lack of lab resources, it is optimum to have various labs with which the department can submit evidence. By approving the recommendation, the Berkeley Police Department would be able to enlist the expert lab testing services of Serological Research Institute.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

The department has reviewed alternatives and will continue using both Alameda County Sheriff's Crime Laboratory and Forensic Analytical Sciences, Inc. to perform various testing services for which they are better staffed and equipped. The department also

considered NMS laboratories. However, this laboratory is located in Pennsylvania, and the cost associated with delivering evidence to their facility, either by mail or designated courier, would not be cost-effective.

CONTACT PERSON

Rico Rolleri, Lieutenant, 981-5733

Attachment:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONTRACT: SEROLOGICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR DNA TESTING
SERVICES

WHEREAS, the Police Department is responsible for the investigation of criminal cases in Berkeley; and

WHEREAS, the use of forensic deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) testing is essential to solving violent crimes; and

WHEREAS, the department currently enlist the services of two other laboratories, Alameda County Sheriff's Crime Laboratory and Forensic Analytical Sciences, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, it is beneficial to include an additional accredited laboratory in order to ensure the consistent processing of DNA evidence; and

WHEREAS, the department has identified DNA testing services as an operational expense for which the department is responsible and funds for the remainder of FY 2014 are in the State Proposition 172 fund (367-7202-420.30-38) and funds for subsequent fiscal years FY 2015 – FY 2017 will be available in the General Fund (010-7301-420.30-38) and State Proposition 172 Fund (367-7202-420.30-38); CMS No. S3VJF.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is authorized to execute a three-year contract and any amendments with Serological Research Institute to provide evidence examinations through deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) analysis for the period of April 1, 2014 to June 30, 2017, in an amount not to exceed \$300,000, with an option for two one-year extensions for a total five-year contract, for an amount not to exceed \$500,000, subject to the City's annual budget appropriation process.