



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: August 28, 2012

Prepared By/Phone Number: David A. Salazar 854-4107

Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head: Sherri E. Fleming,
County Executive for Health and Human Services and Veterans Service

Commissioners Court Sponsor: Judge Samuel T. Biscoe

AGENDA LANGUAGE:

Consider and Take Appropriate Action on the Following Budget Issues in Health and Human Services and Veterans Service:

- A. Transfer \$28,000 from the FY2012 budget to ITS for the Purchase of Laptop Computers Instead of Desktop Equipment; and
- B. Authorize the Creation of 2 Full-Time Positions in the Family Support Services Division to Maintain and Enhance Current Levels of Service in Travis County Emergency Assistance Program.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:

- A. HHS&VS has a variety of programs and locations throughout Travis County, which require staff to be connected by computers as they maneuver throughout their business day. As the work of the department requires more mobility, HHS&VS has requested that ITS replace desktop computers with laptops on the normal replacement schedule. ITS has indicated that to do so would require an additional \$1,000 per laptop and supports the department converting from personal desktop computers to laptops. Funding for the additional \$1000 per unit would come out of the department budget.
- B. Through interdepartmental agreement, Transportation and Natural Resources (TNR) and Health and Human Services and Veterans Service (HHS&VS) have cooperated to coordinate the pickup and delivery of food from Capital Area Food Bank to the seven Travis County Community Center sites that operate Emergency Assistance programs for the benefit of County residents. Recently, it has become apparent that providing such service has been an undue hardship on TNR as their staffing has decreased at the same time as their workload has significantly increased (See attached memo from TNR, dated 8/22/2012). At this point, HHS&VS staff have formulated a plan that would include the creation of 2 new

AGENDA REQUEST DEADLINE: All agenda requests and supporting materials must be submitted as a pdf to Cheryl Aker in the County Judge's office, Cheryl.Aker@co.travis.tx.us by **Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m.** for the next week's meeting.

positions that will not only address and fill the need to maintain current levels of service with regard to delivery of food, but that will enhance the capacity of the department to serve its clients, put in place process efficiencies and provide cross-training opportunities to current staff members.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends that the Court approve of the following proposed requests:

- A. the Court authorize the transfer of funds from HHS' FY2012 budget to ITS in the amount of \$28,000 for the purchase of laptops computers instead of desktop equipment; and
- B. the creation of 2 Full-time positions in Family Support Services.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Please see attached memos.

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

- A. The cost of this requested transfer is \$28,000 from HHS line item 158054001 511441 (Outside Agency Contracts) to the ITS FY2012 Budget;
- B. The entry level cost for 2 full-time staff is \$86,111 (\$43,111) each, which would be added to the HHS&VS Budget for FY2013.

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

Leslie Browder, County Executive, Planning and Budget Office
Mary Etta Gerhardt, Assistant County Attorney

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**TRAVIS COUNTY HEALTH and HUMAN SERVICES
and VETERANS SERVICE
502 E. Highland Mall Blvd
P. O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767**

**Sherri E. Fleming
County Executive
(512) 854-4100
Fax (512) 854-4115**

DATE: August 23, 2012

TO: Members of the Commissioners Court

FROM: *Sherri E. Fleming* *by David A. Salazar*
Sherri E. Fleming, County Executive for
Health and Human Services and Veterans Service

SUBJECT: Computer Replacement Issues

Proposed Motion:

Consider and Take Appropriate Action on Request from Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service to Transfer \$28,000 from the FY2012 budget to ITS for the Purchase of Laptop Computers Instead of Desktop Equipment.

Summary and Staff Recommendations:

HHS&VS has a variety of programs and locations throughout Travis County, which require staff to be connected by computers as they maneuver throughout their business day. As the work of the department requires more mobility, HHS&VS has requested that ITS replace desktop computers with laptops on the normal replacement schedule. ITS has indicated that to do so would require an additional \$1,000 per laptop and supports the department converting from personal desktop computers to laptops. Funding for the additional \$1000 per unit would come out of the department budget.

Staff recommends that the Court authorize the transfer of funds from HHS' FY2012 budget to ITS in the amount of \$28,000 for the purchase of laptops computers instead of desktop equipment.

Budgetary and Fiscal Impact:

The cost of this requested transfer is \$28,000 from HHS line item 158054001 511441 (Outside Agency Contracts) to the ITS FY2012 Budget.

Issues and Opportunities:

Converting equipment from desktops to laptops gives staff more mobility, the ability to use their equipment and maintain an optimum level of productivity regardless of their location.

In addition, this would allow more flexibility with regard to disaster preparedness and continuity of service and would be responsive to the workforce's inquiry regarding future telecommuting.

Background:

Travis County ITS has, historically, operated a regular replacement schedule for technology. As HHS&VS' workforce includes more and more out-of-office functions, it has become increasingly important to utilize technology outside the office to access information, provide resources to clients, and enter case notes in the field. Upgrading currently scheduled desktop replacements to laptop units will allow staff to operate with greater efficiency and benefit to County residents.



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DATE: August 23, 2012

TO: Members of the Commissioners Court

FROM: *Sherri E. Fleming* *by David A. Saurin*
Sherri E. Fleming, County Executive for
Health and Human Services and Veterans Service

SUBJECT: Additional Staffing in Family Support Services

Proposed Motion:

Consider and Take Appropriate Action on Request from Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Service to Authorize the Creation of 2 Full-Time Positions in the Family Support Services Division to Maintain and Enhance Current Levels of Service in Travis County Emergency Assistance Program.

Summary and Staff Recommendations:

Through interdepartmental agreement, Transportation and Natural Resources (TNR) and Health and Human Services and Veterans Service (HHS&VS) have cooperated to coordinate the pickup and delivery of food from Capital Area Food Bank to the seven Travis County Community Center sites that operate Emergency Assistance programs for the benefit of County residents. Recently, it has become apparent that providing such service has been an undue hardship on TNR as their staffing has decreased at the same time as their workload has significantly increased (See attached memo from TNR, dated 8/22/2012). At this point, HHS&VS staff have formulated a plan that would include the creation of 2 new positions that will not only address and fill the need to maintain current levels of service with regard to delivery of food, but that will enhance

the capacity of the department to serve its clients, put in place process efficiencies and provide cross-training opportunities to current staff members.

Staff recommends that the Court approve this request for the creation of 2 Full-time positions.

Budgetary and Fiscal Impact:

The entry level cost for 2 full-time staff is \$86,111 (\$43,111) each, which would be added to the HHS&VS Budget for FY2013.

Issues and Opportunities:

HHS&VS served 25,400 clients with food pantries in 2011. It is expected that the demand for food pantries will exceed that number in 2012 due to the economic conditions in Austin for lower income or no income clients. The food pantry program is the second highest utilized service that HHS&VS offers County residents. Half the Centers get food on Tuesdays and half get food on Thursdays. TNR also returns the delivery boxes to the Food Bank. Once the Centers have the food, HHS&VS staff interview clients, determine their needs, sack and distribute the food to the clients.

TNR, along with the assistance of the Court-Ordered Community Service clients, have been providing pickup and delivery of the food to the Community Centers on a weekly basis for many years, but it no longer has the capacity and staffing to continue providing that service without negatively impacting its workload and mission. TNR has offered to loan HHS&VS a truck for this purpose, thus, the issue is the staffing for the program and the development of the skills (like certification to drive a truck) to assume the function. HHS&VS does not currently have a system to identify and supervise Court-Ordered Community Service clients, thus, this would have to be developed to be a functional resource.

Currently, HHS&VS does not have the staff to pick up and deliver food to the Centers without taking caseworkers or front desk staff from the eligibility process. HHS&VS has submitted a budget request this year for addition caseworker and front desk staff due to an ever growing length of time clients have to stay on a wait list before they are seen and helped. Pulling staff for this function would negate the effort to be better able to respond to client emergency needs. Additionally, many of the HHS&VS staff are not physically able to lift heavy boxes of food.

Additionally, efforts to change the pickup schedule of the food from the Capitol Area Food Bank have been met with resistance by the Food Bank due to their many area customers. Thus a full Tuesday and Thursday delivery schedule is firm to the Food Bank.

Although, pantry delivery is two days a week, presently, the demand for food at the Community Centers is expected to grow as the County population increases creating a need to expand the current delivery system to more than two days in the future. If additional requested staff is hired, these staff will be able to assist in other program

expansion activities, when they are not delivering food. These activities would free caseworkers to fully dedicate time to seeing clients and establishing eligibility. When not delivering food, the delivery staff could also pick up and deliver bread donations, expand new sources of food for the pantries, work in the pantries preparing the food allotments and distributing the food to clients, transporting food and prescriptions to medically fragile clients, and provide occasional transportation of clients to medical and employment appointments. If additional time is available, they could, also, do outreach education for the AirCheck program and reconcile food vouchers for payment.

Background:

HHS&VS has historically provided food pantries at the seven Community Centers, distributing food purchased from the Capitol Area Food Bank and food donated by various partner agencies. Food pantries are available to clients once every 90 days. HHS&VS strives to tailor the food provided to clients to meet their specific the nutritional needs within the limits of the food available at the time the client applies. To supplement clients with special dietary needs due to living conditions or medical conditions, HHS&VS uses a food voucher system.



TRANSPORTATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

STEVEN M. MANILLA, P.E., COUNTY EXECUTIVE, TNR

411 West 13th Street
Executive Office Building
P.O. Box 1748
Austin, Texas 78767
(512) 473-9383
FAX (512) 473-9436

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sherri Fleming, County Executive Health and Human Services

FROM: Donald W. Ward, P.E., Director of Road Maintenance and Fleet Services

SUBJ: TNR Assistance to HHS Commodity Programs

DATE: August 22, 2012

This memorandum will confirm the discussion regarding Transportation and Natural Resources Department's impending reduction of support to the Health and Human Services Department's Commodity Deliver Program. As you know, TNR initially supported HHS in this effort, by supplying a single truck and generally 2 employees, on Tuesday mornings only. However, as HHS Department's success in this program has grown, TNR's support requirement has reached a level that now routinely requires a commitment from TNR's Road Maintenance to supply the box vans/trucks and support vehicles and a compliment of 6 or more people for 8 hours per day, twice per week.

The success of your department within this program and the subsequent growth of the program has placed a tremendous strain on TNR Road Maintenance to continue to support the program at this level. The required TNR support at present levels is now impossible and Road Maintenance is unable to maintain the necessary response capability to the TNR's "primary mission" of work order responses to constituent complaints on county maintained roadways. Therefore effective October 1, 2012, the Road Maintenance Division will be unable to continue to provide the support at the level that HHS requires.

Additionally, we have lost approximately 7 FTEs over the last three fiscal years, these positions were from unfilled vacancies based on revenue reductions. Most of these positions were RMWs that performed right-of-way maintenance. This reduction in human resources has been a tremendous issue for us this year because we are no longer in a drought or no growth condition. Add in the expansion over the years of the HHS program and we have seen 2 days per week where we support the HHSD's commodity program in lieu of right-of-way maintenance being performed. Often times with Road Maintenance employees in addition to the CSR group. One offer is that we could support on a half day basis with 2 employees until HHSD staff can be obtained for the HHSD commodity program. We will continue to support as directed and I see consequences either way, however TNR is committed to the direction from Court to provide for the safety of the traveling public as our first responsibility within Road Maintenance.

We do appreciate the importance of this program and we will work with your group to assist in the transition to other possible support groups that were discussed as options.

Thanks again for your understanding and our staff will always be available for any future discussion.

Xc Steven Manilla, P.E., County Executive TNR
Howard Herrin, TNR Road Maintenance