

## ITEM 25



# Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

**Meeting Date:** November 13, 2012

**Prepared By/Phone Number:** Judge Brenda P. Kennedy, 512-854-9494

**Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head:** Judge Brenda P. Kennedy, 403<sup>rd</sup>  
District Court

**Commissioners Court Sponsor:**

### **AGENDA LANGUAGE:**

**Consider and take appropriate action on acceptance of a donation of \$10,000 from Paul Larkin for the benefit of the 403<sup>rd</sup> District Court Youthful Offender Program.**

### **BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:**

The Criminal Courts request approval to accept a \$10,000 donation from Mr. Paul Larkin. Mr. Larkin is presenting this donation to assist the 403<sup>rd</sup> Youthful Support Court to provide incentives and tangible rewards to participants, as recommended by evidence based practices.

The Youthful Offender Court, created in June 2011, is a team effort between Travis County Adult Probation, the District Courts, Counseling and Treatment agencies, and various community stakeholders. Our ultimate goal is to reduce probation revocations and prevent incarceration in prison by providing judicial support and specialized intensive supervision. The age range of this population is 17 to 26 years of age. The majority of the clients are from non-supportive and criminally-oriented environments; 75% or more have not obtained their GED or high school diploma; lack adequate medical, mental, or dental assistance; and, none have the resources or support system to be successful on probation without assistance. Furthermore, without intervention and assistance, these participants will not become productive members of the community.

The Youthful Offender Court would like to provide tangible incentives to participants to encourage them to achieve small goals that will assist them to make positive life choices. Incentives would include: educational, vocational, and/or technical scholarships to assist with enrollment at learning institutions; bus passes to provide basic transportation; medical/dental rewards to enable the purchase of eyeglasses; vaccinations for entrance into institutions of higher learning; grocery store rewards; movie passes; and tickets to cultural venues to aid in exposure to community activities. Currently, the program lacks the funds to provide these incentives.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

N/A

**FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:**

There is no negative fiscal impact to the County. The \$10,000 donation from Paul Larkin will be used for rewards, incentives, and scholarships for the 403<sup>rd</sup> District Court Youthful Offender Program.

**REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:**

Paul Larkin  
5914 Lakehurst Avenue  
Dallas, TX 75230  
October 19, 2012

Travis County Judge Biscoe  
Travis County Commissioners  
Eckhardt, Davis, Gomez, Huber  
P.O. Box 1748  
Austin, TX 78767


Dear Judge Biscoe & County Commissioners:

It is indeed my pleasure to provide financial support, in the amount of \$10,000, to Travis County for the benefit of the 403<sup>rd</sup> Youthful Offender Support Court. The Court, along with its support team, is targeting its efforts towards assisting a population that, if successful, would result to benefit the community as a whole. I would like these funds to be used to provide incentives and tangible rewards to its participants, as recommended by evidenced based practices, through the staffing and decision-making processes utilized for its participants. I do understand that this Court needs assistance and funds to support its efforts in acknowledging milestones and achievements of the participants and would like to provide tangible incentives to them to encourage and provide positive reinforcement for them to keep moving forward towards goals that will assist them to make positive life choices now, which will assist them in making positive life choices in their future endeavors. Evidence based practices indicates that immediate tangible and meaningful rewards and incentives provide positive goal reinforcement for this targeted population. Some of these incentives include: educational, vocational, and/or technical scholarships to assist with enrollment at learning institutions; bus passes to provide basic transportation; medical/dental rewards to enable the purchase of eyeglasses; vaccinations for entrance into institutions of higher learning; retail gift cards for food, gas, movies, and necessary personal items.

I do trust that the Youthful Support Court Program and the Support Court Team will utilize the funds in the most effective way to achieve the desired goals for its participants. I hereby give full discretion to the 403<sup>rd</sup> Youthful Support Court Program to apply these funds for the benefit of its participants, inclusive of tangible rewards and incentives, in the manner that is deemed most appropriate and beneficial for the program participants in accordance with program guidelines and team member staffing recommendations.

If any further information is needed, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Paul Larkin