



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: April 8, 2014

Prepared By/Phone Number: Denise Bell ext 43997

Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head: Dana DeBeauvoir x43996

Commissioners Court Sponsor:

AGENDA LANGUAGE:

Request use of Special Elections Fund to cover travel costs for voting systems experts.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

April 1, 2014

TO: Travis County Commissioners Court
FROM: Dana DeBeauvoir
RE: Reimbursement Request for Election Expert Travel Costs

This is to request the use of the special Election Fund to cover travel costs for a group of voting system experts scheduled to meet at our office on May 2-4, 2014. The goal of this meeting will be to provide additional technical expertise on the specifications for Travis County's new voting system and the feasibility of adding a version of this design that does not include a printed ballot and/or receipt.

Background:

To gain information for the preparation of our RFP for a new voting system, we requested the assistance of individuals from the private sector and universities throughout the country who are considered among the nation's most accomplished in the field of election system security and design. Last year, we received approval from you to pay the travel cost for a meeting of these individuals.

Much progress has occurred since that time including the notice of this project by the Council of Urban Counties (CUC). As a result, the CUC set up a meeting with nine counties who expressed an interest in collaborating on this project. The question arose from these counties as to whether the proposed system could also have an option that did not require the use of a paper receipt and/or ballot. The current design includes a receipt and paper ballot since the Travis County Clerk's Election Study Group requested that both of these attributes be included to provide maximum security and meet voter demands.

While it is unlikely that Travis County would be interested in a paperless version, we want to fully explore the possibility of adding this option to the specifications we are preparing. If while meeting our needs, we can also meet those of other counties, then we will increase the possibility of having a project that can share advantages and costs with other counties. Travis County could significantly benefit from this type of joint effort.

To ascertain the technological feasibility of a paperless option and the security trade offs this will create, we would like to pay the travel costs for this team to meet on May 3, 2014 for 2 days in Austin.

Specific Request:

These experts will be meeting at our office on May 3rd and 4th 2014. They are not charging for their time, but we want to provide their airfare, hotel, and receipt-based per diem.

These individuals are non-County employees. We are requesting that we pay Four Seasons Travel directly for flights not previously paid for our visitors. We would then

like to reimburse the costs for the hotel, per diem, and any remaining airfare costs after their visit. One of the flights will be international as one expert lives in Belgium.

The total estimated cost is \$8750. The funds are to come out of is 1200050128 / 512090.

Airfare for travelers (including one international flight) $\$1200 \times 5 = \6000

Estimated mileage reimbursement for group driving into Austin \$200

Hotel per person for 2 nights $\$325 \times 6 = \1950

Meals per person for 2 days $\$100 \times 6 = \600

Total estimate = \$ 8750

We cannot emphasize enough how extremely fortunate we are that these individuals share Travis County's commitment and passion for this project and, in so doing, have been willing to donate their expertise to us.

If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.