



Pinellas County

Staff Report

File #: 21-1387A, Version: 1

Subject:

Agreement with the District Six Medical Examiner for professional services related to the Medical Examiner's Office and Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory.

Recommended Action:

Approval of the Agreement with the District Six Medical Examiner for professional services related to the Medical Examiner's Office and Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory.

- This Agreement provides operational support to the Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory and Medical Examiner's Office in accordance with Chapter 406, Florida Statutes.
- Services performed by the Medical Examiner's Office include but are not limited to autopsies, laboratory testing for analysis of evidence, and cremation services.
- This Agreement provides funding in the amount of \$6,778,360.00 for professional services.

Strategic Plan:

Ensure Public Health, Safety, and Welfare

2.1 Provide planning, coordination, prevention, and protective services to ensure a safe and secure community

2.2 Be a facilitator, convener, and purchaser of services for those in need

Summary:

This Agreement provides funding for Medical Examiner operations and Pinellas County Forensic Laboratory services in accordance with Chapter 406, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 11G, Florida Administrative Code. The Medical Examiner will furnish all services and personnel necessary for Medical Examiner operations within Pinellas County.

Background Information:

The Medical Examiner's Office provides both forensic medicine services (investigation of sudden, unexpected, or suspicious death) and forensic laboratory services (chemical and drug analyses) to Pinellas County. Medical Examiner operations comprises roughly 60% of the agreement budget and Forensic Laboratory operations including Chemistry/Fire/Debris Section, the DUI Section, and the DNA Section at roughly 40% of the budget. Under Section 406.06(3) and 406.08(1), Florida Statutes, the Board of County Commissioners is responsible for the payment of the Medical Examiner fees, salaries, and expenses.

The annual workload summary for the Medical Examiner's Office reports 13,038 deaths in Pinellas County in 2020. Of those, 2,938 became Medical Examiner cases (88% increase from 2019 to 2020), with 1,063 autopsies (up 11% from 2019 to 2020) and 1,875 external examinations performed. Trends relating to substance abuse, illicit drugs and sexual assault kit requirements continue to drive forensic lab demand with caseload up 18% from 2019 to 2020 (up 30% from 2018 to 2020). In 2020 there were 547 drug-related accidental deaths, 76% were opioid related.

Fiscal Impact:

Funding of \$6,778,360.00 is consistent with the FY22 Tentative Budget. This contract reflects an increase of \$522,010.00, or 8.3%, vs FY21 contract. The increase is attributed to a rise in healthcare costs and the addition of two full time positions because of increased workloads.

The total FY22 budget of \$7,460,710.00 for the Medical Examiner includes two (2) full-time equivalent positions for DNA section of Forensic Laboratory and operating expenses such as utilities. Total offsetting revenue including grants, cremation fees, and charges for services to Pasco County and Pinellas County law enforcement is \$1,732,110.00, which represents approximately 25.6% of the agreement.

Staff Member Responsible:

Karen Yatchum, Director, Human Services

Partners:

District Six Medical Examiner

Attachments:

Agreement
Schedule A