

DISCUSSION:

On September 8, 2007 to improve the level of forensic pathology services and to reduce contracted service costs, the Sheriff's Department received approval from the Board of Supervisors to add a Forensic Pathologist position. Since hiring a full-time Forensic Pathologist last year, the Department has been unable to provide vacation and/or sick time relief. In December 2007, in order to provide coverage to the current Forensic Pathologist, the Sheriff's Department began recruiting for an extra-help Forensic Pathologist. During the last nine months, the Department has received only one (1) qualified candidate meeting the minimum requirements. There are approximately 400 Board Certified Forensic Pathologists in the United States. The Forensic Pathologist classification is considered to be a hard to recruit classification. The current salary band for the Forensic Pathologist classification is \$113.46 to \$170.18 per hour.

After an extensive search for a qualified candidate, the Sheriff's Department has recently hired Dr. Eugene Carpenter as an extra-help Forensic Pathologist at the mid-point of the band at an hourly rate of \$141.82. He has been employed with the County since August 7, 2008. Dr. Carpenter resides in Los Angeles and is willing to travel to Stanislaus County to perform this work. The rate of \$162.00 per hour was determined by using the current hourly rate paid to the full-time Forensic Pathologist (\$141.82) plus an estimate for overnight accommodations and travel expenses per the County's Travel Policy. To help cover these additional expenses incurred by Dr. Carpenter, the Department would like to increase his salary to \$162.00 per hour. Dr. Carpenter is currently employed by the Los Angeles County Coroner's Office and has specialized training, expertise and experience that will benefit the Sheriff's Department and Stanislaus County. Dr. Carpenter has 33 years of experience in Forensic Pathology.

The Department currently has one (1) full-time Forensic Pathologist; however there is currently no relief for the Forensic Pathologist for vacation and/or sick time. If the Department had to outsource Forensic Pathologist services, a flat fee per autopsy can range from \$500.00 to \$2,000.00. The current Forensic Pathologist is performing in excess of 500 autopsies per year. The National Association of Medical Examiners recommends and has a set standard of 250 autopsies per calendar year. It is imperative that the Department provides some relief for the full-time Forensic Pathologist to ensure the Department can continue to provide quality service. Compensating Dr. Carpenter at the hourly rate of \$162.00 will help off-set the cost for traveling from Los Angeles to Stanislaus County, and will provide the County with a capable and well-qualified pathologist to assist with vacation and/or sick coverage as well assisting with the high volume of autopsies. An hourly rate of \$162.00 is recommended.

POLICY ISSUES:

Board of Supervisor approval is required to appoint employees above the mid-point of a salary range. Approval of this action supports the Board's priorities of A Safe Community and Efficient Delivery of Public Services.

Approval of the Appointment of an Extra-Help Forensic Pathologist Above the Mid-Point of Salary Band J at an hourly rate of \$162.00 - Sheriff
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STAFFING IMPACT:

This action will provide an urgently needed staffing resource for the Sheriff-Coroner.