

FORSYTH COUNTY

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**BRIEFING
DRAFT**

MEETING DATE: April 16, 2020

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 10

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION AWARDING A CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE OF A LAW ENFORCEMENT DETENTION CENTER SPECIALIZED MAIL SCREENING SYSTEM (FORSYTH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE)

COUNTY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION OR COMMENTS:

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION:

This item is being submitted to the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners to authorize the purchase of a specialized mail screener for the detection of illicit substances at the Detention Center. The funding for this mail screener is provided by SCAAP program funds. No General Fund dollars are being requested.

After due advertisement, on March 17, 2020, one bid was received from ChemImage Corporation in the amount of \$134,800.00.

One of the many inmate services provided by the Detention Center is the handling, screening and delivery of inmate mail. The Detention Center handles approximately 75,000 to 100,000 pieces of mail each year. Written letters can be an important and inexpensive way to maintain a close relationship with someone who is incarcerated. All mail entering and leaving a jail facility is searched for contraband and the writing is scanned for security issues. In the case of "legal mail" between an inmate and the inmate's attorney, the Facility Commander, or other public official, checks the correspondence for contraband, but does not read or scan with the human eye.

Inmate mail is a primary means that drugs and other illicit/illegal controlled substances are smuggled into secure detention facilities. Addiction in our community is an epidemic and the interception of controlled substances through mail screening is critically important to maintaining the safety and security of the Detention Center. Drugs entering correctional facilities are a known problem within the correctional community. Visual inspection of the mail can reveal a suspicious looking powder or a letter adhesive that looks like water has been applied to it. These findings are obvious red flags to most inspectors, but visual cues are not fail-proof and traditional testing of the mail is time-consuming.

Based on the Request for Bids response, the equipment by ChemImage appears to be the only technology on the market designed to instantly test mail. In the case of ChemImage, the vendor's equipment uses light (spectral imaging) to detect illicit/illegal drugs. Using the VeroVision Mail Screener, staff will be able to detect the not-so-obvious presence of an illegal/illicit controlled substance such as methamphetamine, heroin, PCP or cocaine. The mail screener will detect both visible and nonvisible drugs that may have been folded or concealed within the paper.

The VeroVision Mail Screener features a simple, one-click detection interface that will allow staff to quickly screen mail and clearly confirm the existence of an illicit/illegal controlled substance. The mail screener uses near-infrared light to reveal what cannot be seen with the human eye. This light penetrates stamps, paper, crayons and other substances used to hide contraband in the mail and identifies the compounds present. The screener detects illegal drugs and common cutting agents by using high-resolution spectral data and makes a presumptive identification of the substance detected. Once detected and the substance identified, that mail can be restricted and possibly result in the arrest of the sender. The use of this technology will significantly improve the health and safety inside of the Detention Center by eliminating drugs and other smuggled contraband from the inmate mail system.

This Resolution awards a contract for the purchase of a Law Enforcement and Detention Center specialized mail screening system.

ATTACHMENTS: yes no

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____
COUNTY MANAGER

**RESOLUTION AWARDING A CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE OF
A LAW ENFORCEMENT DETENTION CENTER
SPECIALIZED MAIL SCREENING SYSTEM
(FORSYTH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE)**

WHEREAS on February 19, 2020, bid invitations for the purchase of a specialized mail screening system at the Forsyth County Law Enforcement and Detention Center were issued directly to a total of six (6) qualified businesses, advertised on the City of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County websites, as well as the State's Purchasing website;

WHEREAS bids were received and publicly opened by the City/County Purchasing Department at 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, March 17, 2020;

WHEREAS one bid was received from ChemImage Corporation in the amount of \$134,800;

WHEREAS it is the recommendation of the County Manager, the Sheriff, and the Purchasing Director that a contract be awarded to ChemImage Corporation in an amount not to exceed \$134,800;

WHEREAS the cost of this equipment will be funded by State Criminal Alien Assistant Program (SCAAP) funds;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners that a contract for the purchase of a specialized mail screening system at the Forsyth County Law Enforcement and Detention Center, is hereby awarded to ChemImage Corporation in an amount not to exceed \$134,800; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners that the County Manager and Clerk to the Board are hereby authorized to execute, on behalf of Forsyth County, a contract with ChemImage Corporation and any other necessary documents for the purchase of a specialized mail screening system at the Forsyth County Law Enforcement and Detention Center pursuant to the terms of the bid, at a cost not to exceed \$134,800, subject to a pre-audit certificate thereon by the County Chief Financial Officer, where applicable, and approval as to form and legality by the County Attorney.

Adopted this 16th day of April 2020.