



24-5378

**DATE:** May 7, 2024 (Item No. {{item.number}})

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** James R. Williams, County Executive

**SUBJECT:** Ratification of the Side Letter Agreement between the County of Santa Clara and the Service Employees International Union, Local 521 relating to compensation for canine handlers in the District Attorney's Office

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Consider recommendations relating to the Local 521 Canine Handler differential.

Possible action:

- a. Approve Request for Appropriation Modification No. 203 - \$2,263 transferring funds within the Office of the District Attorney budget relating to the Local 521 Canine Handler differential.
- b. Ratify Side Letter Agreement with Service Employees International Union Local 521 (Local 521) relating to providing compensation to canine handlers in the Office of the District Attorney Therapy Dog Program for the off-duty care and handling of the assigned canine in an amount not to exceed \$565.70 per pay period for period May 27, 2024 through June 21, 2026, that has been reviewed and approved by County Counsel as to form and legality.
- c. Introduce and preliminarily adopt Salary Ordinance No. NS-5.24.75, an Ordinance amending Santa Clara County Salary Ordinance No. NS-5.24 relating to compensation of employees adding Footnote No. 274 authorizing a differential for represented employees of Local 521 when assigned as canine handlers.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

The recommended action increases Salaries and Benefits appropriations by \$2,263 in the Office of the District Attorney's Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-2024 Adopted Budget and decreases Services and Supplies by the same amount. For FY 2024-2025 and FY 2025-2026 the estimated cost is \$29,416 annually.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION AND BACKGROUND**

The Office of the District Attorney has implemented a Therapy Dog Program, wherein Local 521 represented employees are assigned as handlers for a County-owned canine(s) trained to provide comfort and support for witnesses involved in the County's criminal justice system.

Dependent upon their specific duties, these canine handlers may be assigned to provide off-duty care and handling of the County-owned canine(s).

Accordingly, the County and Local 521 have met and negotiated a Side Letter Agreement to provide compensation in an amount not to exceed \$565.70 per pay period per canine for the off-duty care and handling when such duties are assigned to the specific handler by the Appointing Authority or their designee.

The Office of the District Attorney has acquired two therapy dogs since the inception of the Therapy Dog Program in February 2020, and currently fields one therapy canine. It is necessary to adopt the Side Letter Agreement to provide the handlers with the required compensation when assigned to perform off-duty care and handling of the County-owned canine(s).

### **CHILD IMPACT**

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on children and youth.

### **SENIOR IMPACT**

The recommended action will have no/neutral impact on seniors.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

The recommended action will have no/neutral sustainability implications.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

The report will not be received.

### **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

The Clerk of the Board of Supervisors is requested to send OneMeeting notifications of completed processing to Mitchell Buellesbach, Staci Bjerk, Jennifer Paredes-Fricano, and Zullay Rodriguez, Employee Services Agency, Human Resources Department.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- NS 5 24 75 ESA Footnote for SEIU Canine Handler Differential
- 2024 Side Letter Agreement County and SEIU Canine Handler Compensation for DAs Office
- F85-203 Transfer Funds for Local 521 Canine Handler Differential