



Contra
Costa
County

To: Board of Supervisors
From: Candace Andersen, District II Supervisor
Date: January 21, 2020

Subject: Policy Regarding Language Interpretation Services at Board of Supervisors Meetings

RECOMMENDATION(S):

CONSIDER accepting a report and recommendations on Language Interpretation Services at Board of Supervisor Meetings.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Unknown fiscal impact.

BACKGROUND:

Currently, there is no formal process for providing language interpretation services at the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors meetings. If a member of the public speaks at public comment and they are more comfortable speaking a language other than English, they historically have brought a language interpreter with them for assistance. Upon approaching the podium to address the Board of Supervisors, the Clerk doubles the speaker's time in order to allow both the speaker, in their preferred language, and the English interpreter to address the Board of Supervisors. This method of interpretation is referred to as "consecutive interpretation".

In 2019 Staff presented to the Internal Operations Committee (IOC) at two of their monthly

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **01/21/2020** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

AYE: John Gioia, District I Supervisor
Candace Andersen, District II Supervisor
Diane Burgis, District III Supervisor
Karen Mitchoff, District IV Supervisor
Federal D. Glover, District V Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: January 21, 2020

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: June McHuen, Deputy

Contact: Jami Napier,
335-1908

cc:

meetings (both IOC reports attached). Staff researched how Bay Area counties and the Cities of Concord, San Ramon and Richmond encourage public

BACKGROUND: (CONT'D)

participation in Board meetings. Most counties and cities surveyed have limited experiences with translation services. Among jurisdictions that accept requests for interpretation services, there is consensus that at least a 72-hour advance request for interpretation services is needed.

Staff researched types of available technology for providing interpretation services. Next, staff examined whether it would be feasible to incorporate new technology into the board chambers at 651 Pine Street or whether implementing the technology in new County Administration building to open at 1025 Escobar would be more time and cost effective.

After meeting with the Department of Information Technology and examining the types of technology needed for interpretation equipment, it was determined that some new technology would be built into the new building at 1025 Escobar. Staff examined the various technology options for interpretation services and determined that it would not be possible to research, purchase, test, and implement new technology into the current building before June 2020; the anticipated time for the opening of the new administration building.

It is anticipated that improved interpretation equipment will be implemented in the new Board Chambers during 2020. The Clerk of the Board Division will also secure its own contract with Language Line, the service provider the Contra Costa Employment and Human Services (EHSD) department uses for hiring interpreters. By obtaining both the equipment and a contract for on-call interpreters this will enable the Board of Supervisor meetings to provide additional requested services to the public of Contra Costa County. This roll-out would include adding the policy to the County website and working with the Office of Communication and Media on how to communicate the new policy and procedures to the public.

The Internal Operations Committee comprised of Supervisors Burgis and Andersen also directed staff to explore the feasibility of providing Board of Supervisors in Spanish as well as English. Written materials translation from English to Spanish is charged per word. Language Line, the vendor EHSD contracts with charges \$.19 per word for English to Spanish translation. A 26-page meeting agenda that has approximately 7,800 words and would cost \$1,482. Twenty-six-page agendas are common with many Board of Supervisor meetings having over 100 items on the agenda. A shorter agenda of roughly 75 items could be closer to 6,000 words (approximately 20 pages). This English to Spanish translation would cost \$1,140.

The County Administrators' Office's Divisions of Clerk of the Board and DoIT will continue to work on developing the plan of implementation and associated costs and return to the Board as part of the 2020/21 Budget Progress.

CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

There will not be a policy for residents to request interpretation services at Board of Supervisors meetings.

CLERK'S ADDENDUM

Speakers: Daniel Safran, CCIRA; Linda Olvera, CCC United Latino Voices; Tony; Ali Saidi, Contra Costa Defenders Association, Contra Costa Immigrant Rights Alliance; Dick Offerman, CCIRA.

ATTACHMENTS

9-9-19 IOC report on Interpretation Services

12-9-19 IOC report on Interpretation Services