



**Contra  
Costa  
County**

To: Board of Supervisors  
From: INTERNAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE  
Date: March 23, 2021

Subject: LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION SERVICES AT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETINGS

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**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

1. RECEIVE report on language interpretation services.
2. APPROVE the agenda language addition on interpretation services and closed-captioning.
3. APPROVE the media announcement on Spanish interpretation services and closed-captioning at the Board of Supervisor meetings.
4. DIRECT Clerk of the Board staff to continue providing Spanish language interpretation at Board meetings and to promote the availability of closed captioning and Spanish language interpretation to community based service organizations and advocacy groups.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

No fiscal impact. This is an informational report only.

Should the Board of Supervisors decide to implement interpreter services in multiple languages and/or agenda translation services in Spanish, per-meeting

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

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Action of Board On: **03/23/2021** ☒ 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: March 23, 2021

Monica Nino, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: June McHuen, Deputy

Contact: Jami Morritt (925)  
655-2005



### FISCAL IMPACT: (CONT'D)

and annual costs would depend on the number of selected languages and number of service hours, remote or onsite. Potential costs would deviate significantly based upon the scope of service and cannot be accurately estimated until a scope of service is further defined. Costs would likely be borne by the County General Fund.

### BACKGROUND:

On March 26, 2019, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) requested that the Internal Operations Committee (IOC) develop a policy on language interpretation services at Board of Supervisors meetings. The IOC considered this matter on September 9, 2019 and decided that the services could not practically be rolled out until staff relocated to the new Administration Building at 1025 Escobar Street in Martinez.

On January 21, 2020 staff presented, at IOC direction, a report to the Board of Supervisors with options for implementing language translation services at BOS meetings upon 72 hours' prior notice once the Board began using its new meeting chambers, estimated to be in June 2020. The Board's direction in January was for the Clerk of the Board Division to secure its own contract for hiring interpreters, which would enable BOS meetings to feature additional requested services for the public. This roll-out would include adding a language interpretation policy to the County website and working with the Office of Communications and Media on how to communicate the new policy and procedures to the public.

The IOC, composed by Supervisors Andersen and Burgis, had also directed staff to explore the feasibility of providing Board of Supervisors agenda in Spanish as well as English. The translation of written materials from English to Spanish is charged per word. Staff estimated that an English to Spanish translation of a typical 100-item meeting agenda that has approximately 7,800 words would cost \$1,482, or about \$44,500 annualized. A shorter agenda of roughly 75 items could be closer to 6,000 words (approximately 20 pages) and would cost \$1,140.

Efforts to plan and implement language interpretation and translation were stymied by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic, the Board had still been meeting at 651 Pine Street. State and County health orders necessitated converting Board of Supervisors meetings to a virtual model, in which the five Supervisors participate in the meeting from remote locations, minimal staff are in the board room, and the public are allowed to participate remotely through a call-in number. Since relocating to the new County Administration building during the summer of 2020, the Board of Supervisors has continued to meet virtually.

Ensuring effective virtual meetings with public participation was the focus for both Clerk of the Board and DoIT (Department of Information Technology) for the second and third quarters of 2020. These divisions worked collaboratively to convert meetings to an entirely new format, while preserving the ability of the public to participate. As the logistics for managing the BOS meetings were refined, the use of interpretation services for public



comment was quickly added. The current process for interpretation services is to have an interpreter in the Board Chambers who provides consecutive interpretation for Spanish-speakers during public comment periods of the meetings. The County currently contracts with Continental Interpreting for interpretation services.

In response to public comment made at the February Internal Operations Committee, direction was given to the Clerk of the Board to report back at the March Internal Operations Committee. Clerk of the Board was asked to:

**1. Add language to the Board of Supervisors agenda regarding the availability of Spanish interpretation and closed-captioning**

Update: Clerk of the Board staff worked with County Counsel on appropriate language to include on the Board of Supervisor agendas. Per the request of the Internal Operations Committee & with guidance from County Counsel, the following language will be added to all the Board of Supervisor agendas.

*Meetings of the Board of Supervisors are closed-captioned in real time. Public comment generally will be limited to two minutes. Your patience is appreciated. A Spanish language interpreter is available to assist Spanish-speaking callers."*

**2. Announcement for the Supervisors to share with constituents on the availability of Spanish interpretation and closed-captioning**

Update: Clerk of the Board staff worked with the Office of Communications and Media on the following draft announcement.

Contra Costa County  
County Administrator's Office • 1025 Escobar Street • Martinez, CA 94553 • [www.contracosta.ca.gov](http://www.contracosta.ca.gov)

**NEWS RELEASE** Contact: Susan Shiu, PIO, 925-313-1183  
March xx, 2021 [Susan.Shiu@contracostatv.org](mailto:Susan.Shiu@contracostatv.org)

**Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors Further Increases Public Accessibility to its Meetings**

(Martinez, CA) – The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors further increases public accessibility to its meetings with a Spanish language interpreter present at all Board meetings and ongoing live closed-captioning available.

A Spanish language interpreter is available to assist Spanish-speaking callers for public comment at all Board of Supervisors meetings. The public service seeks to help inform and engage community members.

Closed-captioning or subtitles for live and recorded videos of Board of Supervisors meetings will continue to be available on the County website at [www.contracosta.ca.gov](http://www.contracosta.ca.gov).



Closed captions are also available during live and rebroadcasted TV coverage of the Board meetings on Contra Costa Television channels. Learn more at [www.contracostatv.org](http://www.contracostatv.org).

For more information about Board of Supervisors meetings, including meeting dates and agendas, visit the [County website](#). Click on the icon for “Board & District Agendas”. You can also find Board meetings in the Calendar or News section on the homepage.

If you have questions or need assistance, contact the Office of the Clerk of the Board by email at [ClerkofTheBoard@cob.cccounty.us](mailto:ClerkofTheBoard@cob.cccounty.us) or call (925) 655-2000.

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3. Interpretation of other languages

Update: Clerk of the Board staff worked with the current vendor who provides the Spanish interpretation, Continental Interpreting, on the cost to provide an interpreter for other languages and also on what advance notice would be needed to have the interpreter both on-site and available remotely. The languages that staff requested quotes on were:

- Mandarin
- Cantonese
- Tagalog
- Vietnamese
- Farsi

The above languages were selected as they are representative of the Census 2020 outreach effort. In contrast, County Elections translates written elections information in only Spanish and Chinese (Mandarin/Cantonese).

Per Continental Interpreting, the ideal lead time is one week to request either an on-site or remote interpreter. It is possible to fulfill a request in 2-3 business days, especially for remote interpreters, as there is a larger pool of options for the remote interpreters. The cost is the same for on-site and remote interpreters. Should the Internal Operations Committee direct staff to provide either on-site or remote interpretation in the other languages either routinely or only upon request, a full review of agenda submittal and publishing deadlines will need to occur as the current agenda is published 96 hours before the board meeting. If the County will other language interpretation only upon request, it would require more lead time but would likely be less costly than if the County were to provide such services routinely.

Interpreting Rates

Language Pair	Half Day (up to 2 hrs)	Full Day (up to 4 hrs)	Extended Full Day (up to 9 hours)
Spanish < > English	\$ 400.00	\$ 750.00	\$1350.00



Vietnamese, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese), Korean < > English	\$ 550.00	\$ 1050.00	\$ 1950.00
Japanese, Farsi, Tagalog < > English	\$ 750.00	\$1450.00	\$ 2350.00
ASL Interpreting	\$ 550.00	\$1050.00	\$ 1950.00
Other languages or regional variants	\$ 550 - 750	\$ 750 - 1450	Upon request

- *All interpreting assignments require a forty-eight (48) hour notice of cancelation or change (excluding weekends and holidays). Full rates apply for late cancelation or change (excluding weekends and holidays). Full rates apply for late cancelation.*
- *Minimum order value for interpreting is Half Day (up to 2 hours).*
- *Team of 2 interpreters required for simultaneous interpreting beyond 1 hour.*
- *All interpreting services are offered either onsite (subject to availability) or remotely (Zoom or Phone).*
- *If an interpreter can be booked below listed market rate, lower fees may apply but cannot be guaranteed.*
- *Onsite services to be provided in Contra Costa County.*
- *For remote interpreting, we can also offer the use of our remote interpreting platforms (additional fees apply).*

#### 4. Translation of other languages

Although Clerk of the Board was not directed to report on written translation rates in other languages, because translation costs have been discussed in past reports, staff is providing written translation rates for review.

#### Written Translation Rates

Language Pair	Per Word Rate	Minimum Order Value
Spanish < > English	\$ 0.16	\$ 100.00
Other European, Middle Eastern & Asian Languages < > English (incl. most European languages, Simplified & Traditional Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, etc.)	\$ 0.24	\$ 125.00
Cambodian (Khmer) < > English	\$ 0.30	\$ 125.00
Other languages or regional variants upon request	\$ 0.25 - 0.50	\$ 100.00 - 150.00

- *All translations will be delivered via email in PDF and Word, if requested.*
- *Upon request, we can provide a quote for each project to be approved prior to translation.*

The IOC recognizes and shares the Board's desire to engage all its constituency in local government concerns. Ideally, the County would be able to provide every public facing service in all the many languages spoken throughout the county and would also have the



resources and time allowances to make that feasible. However, the Board must balance the impacts on cost, productivity, and production deadlines, with the value of providing meeting materials meeting interpretation in additional languages. The Board currently offers closed captioning and Spanish language interpretation at all Board meetings. This service is bolstered by the many nonprofit advocacy groups that already provide assistance to non-English speakers and help them to navigate how to participate in civic activities.

The IOC recommends that the County continue its present practice of closed captioning and Spanish interpretation at Board meetings. The IOC directed the Clerk of the Board to conduct broader outreach to community based service organizations and advocacy groups to increase awareness of these accommodations. The Clerk of the Board is also producing, with CCTV, a Spanish language video to be broadcast prior to each Board meeting to better prepare individuals whose testimony will be interpreted consecutively.