



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:

Agenda Item Number: 17

Agenda Date: March 21, 2024

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Municipal Courts

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Carla Obledo

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Ordinance amending Chapter 20, Section 20-7 of the City Code of San Antonio to allow the use of electronic recording device for municipal court records. [Carla Obledo, Presiding Judge]

SUMMARY:

Ordinance amending Chapter 20, Sec. 20-7 of the City Code of San Antonio to allow usage of a good quality electronic recording device for municipal court records.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In Chapter 20, Sec. 20-7 of the City Code of San Antonio, the City of San Antonio provides a court reporter when requested by the defendant, prosecutor, or judge, for the purpose of preserving a record in cases tried before the municipal courts. State law permits the use of a good-quality electronic recording device to report court proceedings, without the need for a court reporter to be present at the proceeding. Recent legislative changes, through H.B. 4714, the 88th Texas Legislature has amended the Texas Government Code, Ch. 30.00226(c) to allow the City of San Antonio to do this. The Municipal Court is seeking to amend Chapter 20 Section 20-7 of the City Code of San Antonio to align with the state code as follows:

In lieu of a court reporter, a good-quality electronic recording device may be used to report court proceedings. A court reporter is not required to be present to certify the reporter's record.

The procurement of this device's hardware, software, and licensing costs up to \$45,003.00. Funding in the amount of \$45,003.00 is available from FY 2024 General Fund Adopted Budget. Funding for yearly licensing renewal in the amount of \$6,015.00 for future years of the contract is subject to City Council approval of the annual budget.

ISSUE:

This ordinance amends Chapter 20, Section 20-7 of the City Code of San Antonio to allow usage of a good-quality electronic recording device for municipal court records.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council could choose not to approve this item, which would limit the City's ability to hold trials and hearings on the first date they are scheduled to be held. This will diminish public trust and confidence in the Court and is not in alignment with judicial economy and best practices.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This ordinance authorizes the expenditure of up to \$45,003.00 for the procurement of hardware, software, and licensing for electronic recording devices. Funding in the amount of \$45,003.00 is available from FY 2024 General Fund Adopted Budget. Funding for yearly licensing renewal in the amount of \$6,015.00 for future years of the contract is subject to City Council approval of the annual budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of this ordinance to amend Chapter 20 Section 20-7 of the City Code of San Antonio to allow usage of a good quality electronic recording device for municipal court records, and the expenditure of up to \$45,003.00 for the procurement of hardware, software, and licensing of the device.