



Legislation Text

File #: 0875-2020, Version: 1

BACKGROUND

This ordinance authorizes the Administrative and Presiding Judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court to accept a grant in the amount of \$124,069.29 from the Supreme Court of Ohio, to appropriate from the unappropriated balance of the general government grant fund to the Franklin County Municipal Court, the total amount of the grant, and authorizes the Administrative and Presiding Judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court to enter into contract with Business Information Systems, Inc. (BIS Digital) in the amount of \$106,769.49 from the grant funds.

The Supreme Court of Ohio announced a special one-time funding opportunity focused on the purchase of equipment necessary to quickly facilitate remote access for local courts in direct response to the emergency need caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the Stay at Home order issued by the Governor of the State of Ohio and the State of Emergency issued by the City of Columbus Mayor, there is a need to limit the number of jailed defendants transported to the courthouse for arraignment limiting exposure to the novel Coronavirus for defendants, courthouse staff, and Franklin County Sheriff Office staff. This grant will fund the equipment and software required to implement video arraignments and remote hearings, improving the operational efficiency and safety of the arraignment process.

BIS Digital holds the current contract with the Franklin County Municipal Court for the installation and maintenance of Audio/Visual recording equipment in the courtrooms. BIS Digital will provide a video conferencing system in the arraignment courtroom as well as 4 mobile video conferencing units that can be used in multiple other courtrooms that will be compatible to the current audio/visual equipment. \$106,769.49 of the grant funds will be used to contract with BIS Digital. The balance of the grant funds will be used to purchase video conferencing units for installation at each jail facility. These units will be shared with the Franklin County Common Pleas Court. The equipment purchased with this grant will successfully reduce risk to defendants and court staff, while at the same time reducing risk to Franklin County Sheriff staff and costs in transporting defendants from the jails.

Due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, the emergency grant awarded by the Supreme Court of Ohio, and the need to protect the health of defendants and staff of the court and the Franklin County Sheriff, the Franklin County Municipal Court Judges requested an emergency waiver of the provisions of Columbus City Code Chapter 329 from the Director of Finance and Management following the procedures set forth under the Mayor's Executive Order 2020-01 "Declaration of State of Emergency". That waiver was approved and PO221988 was established with BIS Digital, Inc., with the provision that this ordinance would be drafted for the next council meeting.

Emergency Legislation is requested so the grant funds can be used as closed to the start date as possible.

FISCAL IMPACT Grant funding in the amount of \$124,069.29 will be appropriated and expended from the General Governmental Grant Fund.

To authorize and direct the Administrative and Presiding Judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court to accept a grant award from the Supreme Court of Ohio in the amount of \$124,069.29 funding the equipment and software required to implement video arraignments and remote hearings especially for use during the COVID-19 pandemic; to appropriate \$124,069.29 from the unappropriated balance of the general government grant fund to the Franklin County Municipal Court; to authorize the expenditure of \$106,769.49 from the general government grant fund; to authorize the Administrative and Presiding Judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court to enter into contract with Business

Information Systems, Inc. (BIS Digital) in the amount of \$106,769.49 from the grant funds; and to declare an emergency. (\$124,069.29)

WHEREAS, a grant from the Supreme Court of Ohio in the amount of \$124,69.29 has been awarded to provide the equipment and software required to implement video arraignments and remote hearings in the Franklin County Municipal Court; and

WHEREAS, BIS Digital holds the current contract with the Franklin County Municipal Court for the installation and maintenance of Audio/Visual recording equipment in the courtrooms. BIS Digital will provide a video conferencing system in the arraignment courtroom as well as 4 mobile video conferencing units that can be used in multiple other courtrooms that will be compatible to the current audio/visual equipment; and

WHEREAS, funds up to an amount not to exceed \$106,769.49 is provided within this grant for a contractual agreement with BIS Digital, Inc.

WHEREAS, the Franklin County Municipal Court Judges sought and received approval to waive the provisions of Columbus City Code Chapter 329 following the procedures set forth under the Mayor's Executive Order 2020-01 "Declaration of State of Emergency"; and

WHEREAS, PO221988 has been established for this purpose with the provision that this ordinance would be drafted to formally authorize this contract; and

WHEREAS, it is in the city's best interest that the Franklin County Municipal Court receive support to implement video arraignments and remote hearings; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operation of the Municipal Court in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Administrative and Presiding Judge to accept the aforementioned grant and contract with BIS Digital in order to implement video arraignments and remote hearings in the Franklin County Municipal Court, thereby preserving the public health, peace, property, safety and welfare; Now, Therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Administrative and Presiding Judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court be and is hereby authorized to accept a grant in the amount of \$124,069.29 from the Supreme Court of Ohio.

SECTION 2. That from the unappropriated balance in the general government grant fund, fund 2220, and from all monies estimated to come into said fund from any and all sources and appropriated for any other purpose during the months ending December 31, 2020, the sum of \$124,069.29 is appropriated to the Franklin County Municipal Court according to the account codes in the attachment.

SECTION 3. That the Administrating and Presiding Judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court be and is hereby authorized to enter into contract with BIS Digital, Inc. for \$106,769.49 for implementation of a video arraignment system through December 31, 2020.

SECTION 4. That the expenditure of \$106,769.49 or so much thereof as may be needed, is hereby authorized from PO221988.

SECTION 5. That the monies appropriated in the foregoing Section 2 shall be paid upon the order of the Administrative

and Presiding Judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court and that no order shall be drawn or money paid except by voucher, the form of which shall be approved by the City Auditor.

SECTION 6. That, at the end of the grant period, any repayment of unencumbered balances required by the grant is hereby authorized and any unused City match monies may be transferred back to the City fund from which they originated in accordance with all applicable grant agreements.

SECTION 7. That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.