



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
Inter-Departmental Correspondence  
Sheriff's Office



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**Date:** May 9, 2012  
**Board Meeting Date:** May 22, 2012  
**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Greg Munks, Sheriff  
**Subject:** Purchase of an airplane to be utilized as an aerial resource for law enforcement

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a Resolution waiving the Request for Proposals (RFP) process and authorizing the County Purchasing Agent to purchase an equip an airplane from Cessna Aircraft Company and Wipaire, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$713,744

**BACKGROUND:**

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Air Squadron has been in existence for almost 30 years. The Sheriff's Air Squadron is made up solely of volunteers, who are both pilots and mechanics. Currently, the Air Squadron utilizes a 1980 Cessna 206 for counter drug surveillance missions, search and rescue and other investigative missions. The aircraft is over 32 years old, electronically out-dated and too noisy for suburban, semi-rural surveillance.

Aerial surveillance platforms have consistently proven to be an invaluable asset for law enforcement. Fixed wing aircraft are used in surveillance operations against narcotics traffickers and, unlike ground surveillance, planes are virtually undetectable. The sophistication of the new era drug trafficking organizations (DTOS) is causing law enforcement to constantly develop new techniques to monitor their illegal activities. Aerial platforms such as surveillance aircraft enhance law enforcement's perspective of ground targets. Drug traffickers, and other sophisticated criminal enterprises, often take extraordinary measures to avoid detection thereby making the covert nature of aircraft invaluable.

In addition to aerial surveillance, airplanes are a priceless resource when utilized in search and rescue operations. Through the use of special equipment attached to the aircraft, locating a person lost in hazardous environmental conditions or inclement weather is accomplished much quicker.

**DISCUSSION:**

The San Mateo County Narcotics Task Force (SMCNTF) will utilize accumulated Federal Asset Forfeiture funds to purchase a 2012 Cessna 206 aircraft. This investigative tool will not only be accessible to SMCNTF, but will be made available to any regional law enforcement agency in need of an aerial resource. Federal, state, and local agencies in the County will be able to use the aircraft to help successfully investigate criminal cases, conduct surveillance and to help locate missing persons. This aircraft will be a critical component in SMCNTF efforts to successfully investigate narcotics cases and other high profile criminal investigations.

The custom built aircraft will be purchased from Cessna Aircraft Company. Wipaire, Inc., a Cessna Authorized Service Station, will install a right side (co-pilot side) door on the aircraft. This secondary door is used for ingress and egress during emergency situations. Wipaire will also install a special "wing tip" that assists in offsetting the weight distribution of the aircraft once it is loaded with law enforcement equipment.

On advice of the Sheriff's Air Squadron leadership, the Cessna 206 is the most capable aircraft for the missions they fly. It is also the best suited platform for other equipment capabilities such as radios, cameras etc. Further, it is one of the most common aircraft making service and parts less expensive. For these reasons, it is in the County's best interest to waive the Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the Resolution as to form.

Approval of this item contributes to the Shared Vision 2025 outcome of a Healthy Community by providing an invaluable aerial resource for law enforcement to ensure the safety of our community.

**PERFORMANCE MEASURES:**

Measures	FY 2010-11 Actual	FY 2011-12 Projected
Number of missions flown by the Sheriff's Air Squadron	158	160
Volunteer hours provided by the Sheriff's Air Squadron	1092	1100

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The cost of the aircraft, including tax, is \$682,731 and the modifications will cost \$31,013 for a total purchase price of \$713,744, which is 100% funded by Asset Forfeiture funds. The U.S. Department of Justice Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section (AFMLS) has authorized the expenditure of such funds in a letter stating "AFMLS has determined that the use of equitably shared funds to purchase the 2012 Cessna 206 aircraft is a permissible expenditure of equitably shared funds."

The operating costs for the new aircraft will remain the same and have been included in the SMCNTF FY 2011-12 budget as well as the projected FY 2012-13 budget. The primary funds utilized for the ongoing operating costs come from Asset Forfeiture. There will be no Net County Cost associated with this purchase.