



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

AGENDA ITEM

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

NORA VARGAS
First District

JOEL ANDERSON
Second District

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Third District

MONICA MONTGOMERY STEPPE
Fourth District

JIM DESMOND
Fifth District

DATE: April 30, 2024 and May 21, 2024

22

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

**NOTICED PUBLIC HEARING: AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ARTICLE XX
SECTION 364.6 OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE,
RELATING TO MEDICAL EXAMINER FEES AND CHARGES (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

Today's action requests that the Board of Supervisors (Board) approve amendments to Article XX of the San Diego County Administrative Code. The Board last approved revisions to the Department of the Medical Examiner fees on April 24, 2018 (01).

The Department of the Medical Examiner recently conducted a review of fees and rates to ensure compliance with Board Policy B-29 (Fees, Grants, and Revenue Contracts – Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery), which requires County departments to recover the costs to provide services to agencies or individuals. All six (6) Medical Examiner fees were reviewed, resulting in a proposed increase in five (5) fees and a proposed decrease in one (1) fee. The Auditor and Controller reviewed and approved the supporting documentation and methodology used to determine the proposed fees to be adjusted in this proposal.

Today's request includes two steps. The ordinance will be introduced on April 30, 2024, and, if approved, it will be scheduled for adoption on May 21, 2024. If the proposed ordinance is altered on May 21, 2024, then on that date, a subsequent meeting date will be selected for the ordinance's adoption.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

On April 30, 2024:

1. Approve the introduction of the Ordinance (first reading):

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ARTICLE XX SECTION 364.6 OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE RELATING TO MEDICAL EXAMINER FEES AND CHARGES.

SUBJECT: NOTICED PUBLIC HEARING: AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND SECTION ARTICLE XX 364.6 OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, RELATING TO MEDICAL EXAMINER FEES AND CHARGES (DISTRICTS: ALL)

If, on April 30, 2024, the Board takes the actions recommended in Item 1 above, then on May 21, 2024:

1. Consider and adopt (unless ordinance is modified on second reading):

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ARTICLE XX SECTION 364.6 OF THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE RELATING TO MEDICAL EXAMINER FEES AND CHARGES.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The County of San Diego Department of the Medical Examiner's mission is to contribute to safe communities and to justice and equity for the residents of San Diego County by certifying the cause and manner of death for all homicides, suicides, accidents, and sudden and/or unexpected deaths in the county. The Medical Examiner has and continues to identify ways to reduce departmental costs to provide its services to the public. Full cost recovery for fees paid by customers, ensures that Medical Examiner services, which benefit a single agency or individual, does not reduce resources available to the entire region.

The proposed actions would amend fees and charges for services that are provided to the public to cover the full cost of those services in alignment with current San Diego County Board of Supervisors' policy. The Medical Examiner utilized approved County methodology to ensure all direct and indirect costs are fully recovered.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed adjustments to the Medical Examiner's fee structure are a result of the cumulative increase of the cost drivers such as salaries and benefits, services and supplies, and associated departmental and countywide costs. The adjustments to the Medical Examiner fees are based on available expenditure and revenue data and time studies. The proposed actions are appropriate as they support the County of San Diego's Strategic Initiative of Sustainability to align the County's available resources with services to maintain fiscal stability and ensure long-term solvency.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact in the current fiscal year. If approved, the revised Medical Examiner fees will be effective July 1, 2024. Additional revenue generated by the five increased fees, estimated at \$58,215 for the first year, are included in anticipated fees revenue budgeted in the Fiscal Year 2024-25 CAO Recommended Operational Plan for the Medical Examiner. The funding source is fees paid by customers. There is no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

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BACKGROUND

The San Diego County Department of the Medical Examiner (Medical Examiner) is responsible for investigating and determining the cause and manner of death for all homicides, suicides, accidents, and sudden and/or unexpected deaths according to California Government Code Section 27491 and Health and Safety Code Section 102850.

The Medical Examiner recently conducted a review of all six (6) departmental fees to ensure cost recovery for services provided as required under the San Diego County Board of Supervisors (Board) Policy B-29 (Fees, Grants, and Revenue Contracts—Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery). The review identified five (5) customer fees to be increased and one (1) fee to be decreased. Fees are charged as allowed by statute and approved by the Board for both required and optional services, such as a family requested autopsy. The Medical Examiner's customers are families of individuals whose deaths fall under Medical Examiner jurisdiction, law enforcement agencies, Deputy District Attorneys, Deputy Public Defenders and other defense attorneys, health agencies and mortuaries. The current fee schedule was approved by the Board on April 24, 2018 (1).

The Auditor and Controller has reviewed and approved the supporting documentation and methodology used to determine the proposed fees to be adjusted in this proposal. The tables below show the County's current fee and the proposed fee.

Fees in the Administrative Code to be Increased (5):

The proposed increases to the Medical Examiner's fees are based on negotiated salary and benefit increases and adjusted to achieve full cost recovery.

Fee	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Certification of Documents	\$1.80	\$4.40
Printing and photocopying of Documents	\$1.20	\$1.90
CD of Digital Photographs	\$12.10	\$35.30
Family Requested Autopsy	\$3,931.00	\$5,821.40
Histology (30-minute Use of Photo Microscope)	\$18.00	\$43.20

Fee in the Administrative Code to be Decreased (1):

The proposed decrease to the Medical Examiner's Observer Safety Clothing fee is based on a decrease in direct cost for supplies.

Fee	Current Fee	Proposed Fee
Observer Safety Clothing	\$9.00	\$7.40

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action supports the Sustainability Initiative of the County of San Diego's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan by aligning services to available resources to maintain fiscal stability and ensure long-term solvency.

Respectfully submitted,



FOR

SARAH E. AGHASSI
Interim Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Attachment A: An Ordinance Amending Article XX Section 364.6 of the San Diego County Administrative Code Relating to Medical Examiner Fees and Charges (Clean Copy)

Attachment B: An Ordinance Amending Article XX Section 364.6 of the San Diego County Administrative Code Relating to Medical Examiner Fees and Charges (Informational Copy)

Attachment C: Summary of Proposed Ordinance