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# COUNTY OF ERIE

**MARK C. POLONCARZ**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

May 7, 2013

Erie County Legislature  
92 Franklin Street – Fourth Floor  
Buffalo, New York 14202

**RE: Department of Probation - Equipment Replacement  
Purchase of Computers and Vehicle**

Dear Honorable Members:

The attached resolution and accompanying memorandum from the Erie County Department of Probation requests authorization to appropriate available asset forfeiture funds for the purchase of replacement equipment. The Probation Department, using Federal seizure funds, needs to replace as soon as possible an existing 2001 Chevrolet Trail Blazer and many aging computers in order to maintain efficient operations.

Should your Honorable Body require further information, I encourage you to contact Commissioner Brian McLaughlin at the Erie County Probation Department. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark C. Poloncarz".

Mark C. Poloncarz, Esq.  
Erie County Executive

MCP/bb  
Enclosure

cc: Brian McLaughlin, Erie County Probation Department

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Honorable Members of the Erie County Legislature  
**From:** Erie County Probation Department  
**Re:** Department of Probation - Equipment replacement  
Purchase of Computers and Vehicle  
**Date:** April 25, 2013

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### **SUMMARY**

The attached resolution and accompanying memorandum requests the authorization to appropriate available asset forfeiture funds for the purchase of (27) twenty-seven desktop computers, (20) twenty laptop computers, and a replacement vehicle for the Probation Department. This will address immediate problems in the operations of the Probation Department.

### **FISCAL IMPLICATIONS**

None. The County has available asset forfeiture funds which will be utilized to pay for the vehicle and the computers.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The Probation Department is mandated to make home visits in order to supervise probationers (including sex offenders, DWI offenders, and domestic violence cases). The department currently uses a 2001 Chevrolet Trail Blazer for home visits. The vehicle is also used by the Warrant Squad to pick up probation violators. This 12 year old vehicle is incurring high maintenance costs and frequently breaks down, and needs to be replaced. The Department of Public Works' Division of Fleet Services has determined that this vehicle needs to be replaced.

The Probation Department has over 145 computers, the majority of which are insufficient for current demands due to a combination of age, insufficient systems capability, and lack of processing speed. This has both slowed and hindered departmental operations, and resulted in more than 300 calls to the DISS Help Desk in 2012. The situation is becoming progressively worse, and must be addressed. The Probation Department is requesting to replace the worst performing computers immediately. DISS has determined that these computers need to be replaced and approves this plan.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Asset forfeiture funds can only be used for law enforcement equipment, training, temporary staff, and other investigative or awareness programs as delineated as permissible uses in the Equitable Sharing guideline for State and Local Law Enforcement Agencies. Currently the Probation department has available resources in asset forfeiture funds. It will need to utilize \$23,271 to purchase 47 computers (27 desktops @ \$441 each and 20 laptops @ \$568.20 each). The department is using DISS specifications and the NYS contract bid prices. This purchase will address the most critical and immediate problems in computer operations within the department.

The Probation Department must also address the replacement of an aging vehicle used by officers for mandated home visits and by the Warrant Squad to pick up probation violators. The department currently uses a 2001 Chevrolet Trail Blazer with a cage for these functions. This 12 year old vehicle is incurring high maintenance costs and frequently breaks down; Fleet management says they will not maintain a large vehicle with such poor gas mileage, which is costing thousands of dollars annually in repairs. The Probation Department desires to replace this vehicle with a new lower maintenance and more efficient vehicle. The Division of Purchase has indicated that a vehicle can be purchased for \$18,182, with an additional \$1,670 for a cage with installation. This makes the total vehicle replacement cost \$19,852.

The cost of purchasing the vehicle and computers is \$43,123. The Probation Department has the funds available for these purchases in existing asset forfeiture funds.

### **CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION**

The Probation Department will continue to be hampered in the performance of its duties to supervise probationers by home visits and to apprehend probationers with warrants. The County will continue to pay high maintenance on an old vehicle, and likely will pay higher mileage costs when officers use their own vehicles to conduct home visits when the existing vehicle is out of service for repairs.

Computer operations are becoming increasingly problematic. The computers used by the Probation Department are old and failing to operate at a sufficient level. Computers are crashing consistently and running too slowly and are not up to demands imposed by the Caseload Explorer computer program mandated by the state. The Probation Department has been working with DISS to fix these problems, but an overall shift to cloud technology and virtual computer processing is not due for several years. It is imperative that the worst performing computers be replaced immediately.

### **STEPS FOLLOWING APPROVAL**

The Department of Probation will work with DISS, Purchase and Fleet Services to purchase and install the equipment.

**A RESOLUTION SUBMITTED BY:  
PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

RE: Department of Probation - Equipment Replacement  
Purchase of Computers and Vehicle

WHEREAS, the Probation Department is mandated to supervise Probationers through the use of home visits; and also uses its vehicle for the Warrant Squad to pick up probation violators; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Department of Probation is currently using a twelve year old Chevrolet Trail Blazer to conduct home visits, which has frequent break downs and has high maintenance costs; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Probation department desires to replace this vehicle with a new lower maintenance more efficient vehicle; and

WHEREAS, the Probation Department also has over 145 computers, the majority of which are insufficient for current demands due to a combination of age, insufficient systems capability, and lack of processing speed. This situation is becoming progressively worse, and must be addressed, because it has both slowed and hindered departmental operations, and resulted in more than 300 calls to the Help Desk in 2012; and

WHEREAS, the Erie County Probation Department has 27 desk top and 20 lap top computers which need to be replaced immediately, because they are antiquated and failing to operate properly; and

WHEREAS, the County has available asset forfeiture funds of which a portion can be used to pay for both the replacement of the 12 year old vehicle, and the replacement of the most antiquated desk top and laptop computers; and

WHEREAS, there is no impact on the existing 2013 Erie County Adopted Budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Erie County Legislature approves the appropriation of Asset Forfeiture Funds and authorizes the following budgetary transfers in the 2013 Budget of the Probation Department, cost center 1261010:

REVENUE

421550 Forfeiture Crime Proceeds	<u>\$43,123</u>
REVENUE TOTAL:	\$43,123

APPROPRIATION

561440 Automobile Equipment	Increase
	\$19,852

561410 Lab and Technical Equipment	<u>23,271</u>
APPROPRIATION TOTAL:	\$43,123

and be it further

RESOLVED, that these expenditures meet the criteria established by the US Department of Justice for use of equitable shared funds; and be it

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the County Executive's Office, the Division of Budget and Management, the County Comptroller, the County Attorney and the Probation Department.