



**OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF**  
COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS

JIM SKINNER, SHERIFF

January 5, 2021

Hon. Chris Hill, County Judge  
Hon. Susan Fletcher, Commissioner  
Hon. Cheryl Williams, Commissioner  
Hon. Duncan Webb, Commissioner  
Hon. Darrell Hale, Commissioner  
Jack Hatchell Administration Building  
2300 Bloomdale Road, Suite 4192  
McKinney, TX 75071  
972.424.1460

Re: Budget Amendment to Study and Replace the Analogue Camera System in the CCDF

Dear County Judge and Commissioners:

I ask you for an amendment to the FY21 budget to replace the CCDF's analogue Bosch camera system with a digital system. The CCTV system is critical for the safety of inmates and officers. Between November 14 and January 4, Facilities has been unable to close work orders for seven cameras, which are losing their ability to pan, tilt, and zoom (PTZ). The system is at end of life, and Facilities is unable to get new parts. According to the County's Director of Engineering, the County must engage an engineer for the project (an estimated 10–15% of the project's cost). And Facilities obtained a \$1.3 million quote (May 14, 2020) from CML Security—an existing vendor—for the project. This is an estimate only and doesn't consider an engineer's work. And  $\$1.3 \text{ million} \times 1.1 \text{ to } 1.15 = \$1.43 \text{ to } \$1.495 \text{ million total}$ . If a camera vendor is not on a cooperative purchasing contract, then you may also want to consider granting an exemption for public health or safety under Section 262.024(a)(2), LGC, to bypass competitive bidding. CCDF will also likely need approval from TCJS at various stages under regulations such as 37 TAC § 257.4.

### **CCDF's CCTV System**

The housing portions of a county jail must be built to facilitate the observation of inmates, and a county jail may use a CCTV system to supplement control and security functions. *See* Local Gov't Code, §§ 351.001–351.002; 37 Tex. Admin. Code, § 260.110, § 260.162. A standard housing pod in the CCDF holds 72 inmates, and only one detention officer supervises a standard pod. Detention officers in Building Control and Cluster Control observe the pod officers and inmates, and the CCTV system is critical to the officers' and inmates' safety.

The CCDF uses an analogue Bosch camera system to monitor inmates and activity in virtually all areas of the jail, including the housing pods, Admissions and Release, programs areas, hallways,

and Medical. The system's main components are: (1) about 140 cameras, (2) a matrix (a junction box that connects the cameras to the screens in Building Control), (3) Bilinx Boards, (4) DVR storage, and (5) power supplies.

### **The Problem**

The Bosch analogue camera system is at end of life, and Facilities states that it can no longer get replacement parts. Facilities states that the components that fail most frequently are cameras—about 12 so far in 2020—and Bilinx ports—about 5–6 in the past year.

As of November 19, 2020, Facilities had work orders to repair at least seven cameras, and, as of January 4, 2021, Facilities confirms that the same seven work orders are still open. In November, the cameras in pods 1B, 3D, 5B, and in recreation yards 3C, 5C, and 5B didn't have PTZ. Without PTZ, jail staff cannot direct a camera to view a specific area. On October 21, for example, a detention officer in pod 3D was electrocuted by a worn power strip and lost consciousness, and officers in Building Control could not direct the camera to view the incident because of a PTZ problem. As of January 4, the cameras, which don't work properly, still show a picture, but they do not PTZ.

### **Engineering**

According to Clarence Daugherty, Director of Engineering, the County must engage an engineer for the project. Currently, the County has a contract with MD Engineering for the camera project in Juvenile Detention. The Juvenile project cost approximately \$500,000 total, with approximately \$62,000 in engineering costs.

Although the Juvenile camera project was not at the same level of urgency, the engineering work took six months, and the project is currently out for bid—which means that camera vendors are considering the scope of work as described by the engineers.

Purchasing states that the County can use MD Engineering for the engineering part of the CCDF camera project. MD Engineering can start as soon as the County supplies funding.

### **CML Security, LLC and a Milestone Surveillance System**

The County currently uses a Milestone digital camera system in Minimum Security. The Juvenile Detention Center has a Bosch analogue system.

CML Security, LLC installs and maintains Milestone systems, and the County most recently signed a contract with CML Security in May 2020 for CML to perform integration and maintenance on CCDF security systems. *See* Commissioners Court Order No. 2020-388-05-11 (May 11, 2020) (RFP No. 2019-160).

Purchasing notes that the County may be able to purchase the camera project through a cooperative contract. At least one camera vendor (not CML Security) is on a cooperative list. But the practicality of buying from a cooperative list will turn on the scope of work as the engineers determine it.

**TCJS:** Chief Terry McCraw has alerted TCJS to the project. The Commission had no advice at this stage.

### Summary

Because a CCTV system is critical to inmate and officer safety and the CCDF's analogue Bosch system is at its end of life and because Facilities is unable to obtain parts, I ask you for an amendment to the FY21 budget to (1) engage the County's contract engineers, MD Engineering, to study the project and prepare specifications and (2) pay for a new digital system from a vendor on a cooperative purchasing contract or a vendor like CML Security (or the vendor who is successful on the Juvenile project), under a competitive-bidding exemption such as Section 262.024(a)(2), LGC (safety).

Sincerely Yours,



Jim Skinner  
Collin County Sheriff