County of Sonoma
Agenda Item
Summary Report

Clerk of the Board
575 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Agenda Item Number: 21
(This Section for use by Clerk of the Board Only.)

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Board Agenda Date: October 9, 2018
Vote Requirement: Majority

Department or Agency Name(s): District Attorney’s Office, Probation Department, Sheriff’s Office, Health Services, Human Resources – Commission on the Status of Women, Human Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Renate Amantite (707) 565-3150

Supervisory District(s): All

Title: Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Recommended Actions:

Adopt a Gold Resolution proclaiming October 2018 to be Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Sonoma County.

Executive Summary:

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The District Attorney’s Office has come together with community partners to elevate the level of awareness surrounding this important issue.

Discussion:

Background: On behalf of the many public and private agencies working together to improve services, and to prevent and respond to domestic violence, six departments – the District Attorney’s Office, the Sheriff’s Office, Health Services, Human Services, Human Resources - Commission on the Status of Women, and the Probation Department – have come together, with the support of our community-based partners, to seek a resolution proclaiming October 2018 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Sonoma County.

Communities around the nation come together during October to mourn those who have died as a result of domestic violence, to celebrate those who have survived domestic violence, and to honor and connect with those who work tirelessly to put an end to domestic violence. For over two decades, purple ribbons have served as visual gestures of support for victims of domestic violence. No one is able to pinpoint the history of the purple ribbon, but it symbolizes survival, courage, honor and dedication to ending domestic violence. It is also used to raise awareness in communities about the crime of domestic violence, and has been recognized by state legislatures.

SONOMA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S OFFICE
The District Attorney has made domestic violence a top priority of her office. Senior attorneys are assigned to the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Unit and prosecute all felony domestic violence cases in the county, while specially assigned attorneys in the unit handle all misdemeanor domestic violence cases. The cases are handled according to the vertical prosecution concept, which means the same prosecutor, specially trained in the subject matter, handles each case from filing determination through trial or plea and sentencing. These prosecutors work closely on their cases with the assigned D.A. investigator, victim advocate, and law enforcement agency detectives. Victim advocates, claims specialists and victim restitution specialists all provide victims a variety of services related to victims’ participation in the criminal justice system and to assist in recovering from crimes’ devastating impacts. Such services include court accompaniment, explaining the criminal justice process and crime victim rights, and providing assistance obtaining compensation and restitution to receive reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses related to the victimization. Victim advocates attend Domestic Violence Court daily to assist victims through the often complicated process. Advocates prepare Victim Status Forms so their voice can be heard and Criminal Protective Orders to increase their safety. We have numerous bilingual Spanish speaking advocates to ensure understanding. The District Attorney’s Office is committed to working with our law enforcement, county and community partners to hold family violence offenders accountable and to help victims heal.

Through a collaborative community response, we are celebrating the seventh anniversary, this month, of the grand opening of the Family Justice Center Sonoma County (FJCSC), where family violence victims receive comprehensive services in one location. The Sheriff’s Office, Health Services and Human Services are working with the District Attorney’s Office, and many other community partners and law enforcement agencies, including the YWCA Sonoma County, Verity, Council on Aging, Catholic Charities, Legal Aid of Sonoma County, Inter-Tribal Council of California, as well as the Santa Rosa Police Department, to provide those services. The partners seek to empower victims of family violence to live free from violence and abuse by providing wrap-around services through a single point of access. We follow best practices in the field, track our outcomes, and build on strong interagency collaboration to protect the vulnerable, stop the violence, and restore hope. Since the relocation of Redwood Children’s Center in the FJCSC, we have seen an increase in agency integration to better serve all victims of family violence. Over 7,000 clients have been served since opening the FJCSC. This year also marks the fourth year of FJCSC sending children of Domestic Violence Victims to “Camp Hope”, a therapeutic summer camp, for a week.

**SONOMA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

The Sonoma County Probation Department has operated a specialized Domestic Violence unit since 1995. The goals of the Domestic Violence unit are to help break the cycle of family violence, assist those already affected by family violence with the healing process and to safeguard victims and children. On average, the Domestic Violence unit supervises approximately 420 offenders. These offenders are convicted of both misdemeanor and felony offenses. The law mandates completion of a 52-week batterers’ intervention program as a condition of any grant of probation related to an act of Domestic Violence. Offenders are referred to one of six Domestic Violence intervention programs in Sonoma County, which are certified annually by the Probation Department. Offenders are required to work in group therapy on identifying triggers to violence, alternatives to violence, and communication skills. Most offenders tell their Probation Officers that they have learned a great deal from participation in these programs. Many offenders and victims have relayed that attendance has literally, “changed our lives for the better.”
Using validated risk and need assessment tools, the eight Probation Officers of the Domestic Violence unit develop individualized case plans that attempt to address the core factors that brought an offender into the criminal justice system. This past fiscal year Probation staff were trained to apply the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment (SARA); a specialized assessment tool used to identify DV offenders requiring more intensive supervision and interventions, with a goal of increasing victim safety. These Officers also act to hold offenders accountable for non-compliance with the imposed conditions of probation and established case plans. Accountability and advancement of case plan goals are achieved through meetings with offenders in an office setting, compliance checks in their homes and other community settings and referral to appropriate service providers.

Probation Officers work closely with the victims of Domestic Violence. Victims are contacted upon an offender’s initial placement on a grant of probation so that the probation supervision and future court processes can be explained to them. Ongoing contact with victims is maintained so their concerns, need for restitution and emerging issues can be addressed as part of the supervision case plan. The Domestic violence cases supervised by the Probation Department are all heard by a specialized Court. The progress of each offender is periodically reviewed by this Court. Assigned Probation Officers prepare reports for these Court reviews that outline an offender’s compliance with the imposed terms and conditions of probation, progress in related forms of treatment and any concerns of the victim.

**SONOMA COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE**

In the calendar year for 2017, the Sheriff’s Office, including Windsor Police Department and Sonoma Police Department, investigated 785 cases of domestic violence involving physical violence (intimate partner abuse and domestic battery). Additionally, the Sheriff’s Office investigated domestic violence cases that also were comprised of terrorist threats, stalking, false imprisonment, violation of domestic violence restraining orders, and assault with a deadly weapon. The total number of DV calls patrol responded to in 2017 was 2468, compared to 2538 in 2016. Thus far in 2018 we have investigated 506 DV cases and responded to 1556 calls for service.

Through a partnership with the Family Justice Center Sonoma County, victims of domestic violence are referred for centrally located advocacy services helping to achieve our goal of ending family violence in the county. The Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office takes the issue of domestic violence very seriously; it is therefore given our utmost priority.

**SONOMA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES**

The Department of Health Services (DHS) recognizes that domestic violence is a public health issue. The physical and emotional effects of domestic violence directly impact the health and well-being of victims and their families, with the negative effects being felt long past the original injuries. Health Services remains a committed partner in working for the safety, support, and restoration of victims of domestic and family violence.

During home visits, our public health nurses and social workers actively screen for domestic violence and educate individuals on how to access community resources for support. Our Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health staff provide education to community health care providers to ensure that all women are screened for intimate partner violence. Staff members also participate in the Teen Health Advocacy Coalition, which works with community partners to prevent teen dating violence and sexual assault. Our Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) provides 24-hour, seven days a week on-call forensic examination services for adult and child victims of sexual assault or abuse and works collaboratively with the Human Services Department, the District Attorney’s Office, local law enforcement, and community partners,
such as Sutter Hospital, YWCA Sonoma County, and Verity. The Department of Health Services also partners with YWCA Sonoma County and Verity to implement Coaching Boys Into Men, an evidence based violence prevention program that works closely with coaches from high school and middle school athletic programs to teach their young male athletes about the importance of respect for themselves, others, and particularly women and girls. Responding to the pervasive issue of domestic violence, DHS continues to support the expansion of the YWCA Safe House, which provides shelter, prevention, and treatment services to women. DHS also helps support outreach efforts for the Family Justice Center Sonoma County, so that all victims of family violence are aware of the comprehensive services available to them.

In collaboration with Public Health, Behavioral Health, and community partners, the Health Policy, Planning and Evaluation Division of DHS is leading an effort to develop a Violence Prevention Initiative, which will be introduced to the public with the release of a report that profiles violence in Sonoma County and frames violence as a public health issue. Within the violence profile, there will be a close examination of domestic violence in Sonoma County.

**SONOMA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

**Commission on the Status of Women**

The Commission on the Status of Women continues to be a strong advocate of community-wide activities and agencies that work to eradicate Domestic Violence, and provide services to victims in need. The effects of Domestic Violence can lead far beyond physical harm to psychological and financial trauma, homelessness and perpetuation of abuse. The Commission worked to bring community awareness to this issue with One Billion Rising events held in 2015 and 2016, in conjunction with the global movement aimed at ending domestic and sexual violence. In 2017 and 2018 our Intimate Partner Violence ad hoc chose to focus on what causes perpetrators to become violent towards women. We partnered with Verity in April of 2018, providing a free public screening of the film *The Mask You Live In*, followed by a panel discussion including representatives of the Santa Rosa Violence Prevention Partnership and Verity's Rape Crisis Center. The film focuses on societal pressures on boys and explores how America’s narrow definition of masculinity is harming boys, men, and our society. Several of the audience members went on to request their children's schools receive training on safe, healthy relationships from Verity's education department.

This year the Commission will continue to partner with other organizations to promote healthy, non-violent relationships and bring awareness to gender biases. In addition, our Junior Commission has formed an ad hoc to work on a community service project to help educate youth on Domestic Violence, dating violence and what healthy relationships look like.

**SONOMA COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

The Human Services Department (HSD) is committed to protecting vulnerable children and adults from all forms of abuse and violence, and to promoting maximum independence and well-being for individuals and families. Child welfare social workers, Adult Protective Services social workers, employment counselors, and eligibility workers all assess clients for experiences of domestic violence and refer to services as appropriate. If needed, social workers assist adult clients in obtaining protective orders. Children and youth reporting domestic violence at home may be removed for their own safety by child welfare social workers. HSD is also the lead agency for the Redwood Children’s Center where a
specialized and multi-disciplinary team interviews child and adult victims of sexual abuse or assault, preventing the need for separate and multiple interviews.

**FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION COUNSEL (FVPC) AND SUBCOMMITTEES**

The Family Violence Prevention Council (FVPC) consists of over thirty members representing an array of agencies, departments and organizations in Sonoma County. The FVPC’s mission is to develop, promote, and enhance creative prevention and effective intervention initiatives to reduce the amount of family violence in Sonoma County. The FVPC provides an ongoing forum for collaboration among victim service providers, batterers’ treatment providers, the courts, criminal justice partners, and civil legal services. The Council is co-chaired by the Sonoma County Superior Court and the District Attorney. The Council supports training, educational and outreach opportunities to raise awareness in the field and in the public on the importance of breaking the cycle of violence. The Council, and its subcommittees, reviews, discusses and updates law enforcement protocols and policies and court and legal practices, as necessary, to ensure consistency in response to incidents of family violence throughout our County.

**YWCA SONOMA COUNTY**

“Ending domestic violence in Sonoma County through education, awareness and empowerment.”

**Thursday, October 25th** (National "Wear Purple Day") – Join us for “Dinner and a Movie” – Dine and Donate at Mary’s Pizza Shack and the 7 p.m. film screening of “Power and Control - The History of Domestic Violence in America” at the Summerfield Cinemas in Santa Rosa, a benefit for YWCA Sonoma County sponsored by Kaiser Permanente. Directed by Peter Conn, this film is the story of one woman’s desperate journey; and a revolution at a crossroads. (running time 50 minutes) The film will be followed by a panel discussion as well as Q & A with YWCA Senior Program Managers representing our comprehensive DV Services, including our confidential Safe House (the only one in Sonoma County), YWCA’s "A Special Place Therapeutic Preschool" (the only one in Sonoma County) and our robust Therapy Program offering individual counseling for children and adults as well as DV Support Groups in both English & Spanish. See you there!

**Prior Board Actions:**

Since 1982, the Board of Supervisors has proclaimed October to be Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The District Attorney’s Office has joined with the Probation Department, the Sheriff’s Office, Health Services, Human Services and Human Resources’ Commission on the Status of Women, with support from our community-based partners in requesting this proclamation. All partners join in the request for recognition of Sonoma County’s efforts to prevent and respond to domestic violence.

**Strategic Plan Alignment**

Goal 1: Safe, Healthy, and Caring Community
### Fiscal Summary

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#### Funding Sources

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#### Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

- Staffing Impacts
  - **Position Title** (Payroll Classification)
  - **Monthly Salary Range** (A – I Step)
  - **Additions** (Number)
  - **Deletions** (Number)

#### Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

#### Attachments:

#### Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:
Resolution Of The Board Of Supervisors Of The County Of Sonoma, State Of California, Proclaiming the Month of October 2018 to be Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Sonoma County

Whereas, domestic violence is a crime and does not discriminate, crossing all ethnic, social, political, class and gender lines; and

Whereas, domestic violence involves the systematic use of force, threats and intimidation to establish and maintain control of the victim; and

Whereas, stopping the cycle of violence in the home requires the support and involvement of all those in the criminal justice system and community-based agencies who provide support services to victims, along with the courage and resolve of the survivors; and

Whereas, communities around the nation come together during October to mourn those who have died as a result of domestic violence, to celebrate those who have survived domestic violence, and to honor those who work tirelessly to put an end to domestic violence;

Whereas, enhanced prevention and intervention efforts increase awareness of the severity and extent of domestic violence, conveying the message to perpetrators that domestic violence will not be tolerated in Sonoma County; and

Whereas, The Board of Supervisors recognizes the ongoing efforts of the District Attorney’s Office, the Sonoma County Sheriff’s Office, the Department of Health Services, Commission on the Status of Women, the Family Justice Center Sonoma County, Sonoma County Courts, the YWCA, the Probation Department, and other law enforcement agencies, County departments and community groups for working together to end the cycle of domestic violence and improve victims’ services.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Board of Supervisors, in recognition of the community effort to address domestic violence, hereby proclaims October 2018 to be Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Sonoma County

Supervisors:
Gorin:  Rabbitt:  Zane:  Hopkins:  Gore:
Ayes:  Noes:  Absent:  Abstain:

So Ordered.