

Child Welfare Project, Additional Facility Funds on Butte Supervisors Agenda

Chico ER
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Oroville >> The Butte County Board of Supervisors may consider exiting a child welfare state project Tuesday and approving nearly \$300,000 in “urgent” funds for some facilities in Chico and Oroville.

The Social Services Department would like to exit from the Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Project because of capped federal funds making the agreement more costly than the county agreed upon. Previously, the agreement was cost neutral, according to [the staff report](#), but in 2015-2016, the project cost the county an unexpected \$1.4 million more than allotted, “due to unanticipated increases in foster care assistance and administrative costs.”

While realignment reserves were enough to cover that amount, the county departments cannot afford to continue to fund the project with this trend, the staff report states.

The agreement with the state Department of Social Services and county Social Services and Probation departments was supposed to last from October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2019. There will be no impact to the county’s General Fund as a result and affected programs will go back to “pre-project sources of funding,” the staff report states. One senior administrative analyst position established for the project will be disbanded, and that employee will transition into a vacant social services position.

“The phase-down will be done strategically and thoughtfully to ensure that all families can complete their current participation before termination from a program, based on the specific intervention and needs of the family,” the staff report reads.

Social Services Director Shelby Boston said Butte County was an early adopter in safety organized practice, which this project is centered on. Opting in on this state project allowed for more staff to be trained in safety-focused social work methods which strengthened county social services’ foundation, she said. Although it is exiting this program, the county will continue to provide safety-centered welfare services, which involve social workers meeting with families and helping to resolve issues which got them in the welfare system in the first place, keeping children with their families and out of the foster care system whenever it is possible and safe. Now federal funds won’t be capped through this project.

“(Exiting) will allow us to fully maximize federal dollars,” Boston said.

The county’s probation department has and will continue to support these families with “wraparound services,” part of its award-winning Strengthening Families program.

Salary increases for Public Authority employees are before the board, including: the Public Authority secretary, Public Authority services specialist and Public Authority specialist aid by: 5 percent effective Feb. 11, 2017, 2 percent effective Dec. 2, 2017, and 3 percent effective Dec. 1, 2018. According to the staff report, these raises “mirror what similarly situated county employees” received through contract negotiations.

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The board may approve \$285,000 in additional funding to complete what [the staff report](#) describes as urgent capitalized and non-capitalized facilities related work, including: \$175,000 for 900 Esplanade in Chico which is leased by the Museum of Northern California Art, \$35,000 for the Oroville Veterans Memorial Park for all of Butte County and \$75,000 for the Southside Oroville Community Center.

The board may consider a memorandum of understanding forming the Wyandotte Creek Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Agency to be in accordance with The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. By June 30, 2017, subbasins subject to the act must have one or more Groundwater Sustainability Agency or Agencies established for all portions of the subbasins, according to [the staff report](#). Butte County, the city of Oroville and the South Feather Water and Power Agency have elected to be those agencies.

Also on the agenda:

- Resolution authorizing Chico Unified School District to sell bonds directly, after voters in the district approved the issuance of \$152 million in bonds.
- Resolution to vacate unnecessary public rights of way in the Rock Creek Drive area.
- General Plan and Rezone and Specific Plan Amendment to allow development of the Courtesy Automotive Center, with no fiscal impact to the county.
- Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency updates.
- Appointments to the Local Appeals Board, Rural County Representatives of California’s Environmental Services Joint Powers Authority.