

## AGENDA ITEM BRIEFING

Commissioners Court – September 21, 2021

**AI Number:** 82412

**Information:** Requesting authority to pay voting equipment retrofit expenditures made in response to SB 598 and as a result in reduction in resources due to the COVID-19 public health emergency as necessary and eligible under the American Rescue Plan Act Fund for the period in which the COVID-19 economic crisis is in effect.

**Description of AI:** Approval of expenditures

**Funding Source:** American Rescue Plan Fund

**Account No.:** 1-1290-441-62-115-101-1-XXX

**Requested by:** Sergio Cruz, Budget Officer

**Department:** Budget & Management

**Prepared by:** Angélica M. Tapia, Budget Analyst

**Department:** Budget & Management

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**Background:**

In accordance with the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislature’s passing of Senate Bill (SB) 598, wherein, Section 129.003 of the Texas Election Code now requires that voting systems must “use, create or display a paper record that may be read by the voter,” the County voting equipment must be retrofitted.

On May 10, 2021 the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced the launch of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, established by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, to provide \$350 billion in emergency funding for state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments. It allows recipients to use funds for revenue replacement due to reduction in revenue as a result of COVID-19.

**Compliance:**

The purchase referenced herein is being procured in an effort to comply with SB 578. The Purchasing Department followed compliance in accordance to the Texas Local Government Code 262.024(a)(7)(A), Competitive Bidding and Sole Source Bidder.

**Administration:**

Approval of the item is consistent with Hidalgo County’s intended purpose of SB 528 compliance while using ARPA funds in order not to further reduce County own resources that may affect the public services.

**Agenda Item Caption**

ARPA - American Rescue Plan Act Funds (1290):

A. Discussion, consideration, and action to approve the payment of voting equipment retrofit expenditures for a period in which the COVID-19 Public Health and Economic crisis is in effect, as necessary, use American Rescue Plan Act Funds loss revenues to cover costs not accounted for in the current budget and cannot be lawfully funded by line item, allotment or allocation in connection with the ongoing COVID-19 public health and economic crisis; the Court having reviewed the Agenda Item Briefing, herein finds that such expenditures are reasonable and necessary for the intended use.

B. Approval of 2021 interdepartmental transfer in the amount of \$1,670,668.

**Recommendations:**

The Department of Budget and Management recommends approval of the use of ARPA funds for the voter equipment retrofit expenditure as it is needed in order to comply with SB 598. Such expenditures not previously budgeted for and due to reduction of revenues resulting from the COVID-19 public health crisis. Expenditures will be charged to the American Rescue Plan Act Fund.