



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 19-1007, **Version:** 2

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**TO:** Mayor Richard C. Irvin

**FROM:** William Hull, Lieutenant

**DATE:** 11/07/2019

**SUBJECT:**

Resolution to re-hire certified fingerprint analysts Julie Smith and Gina Minetti as contractual consultants for the purpose of fingerprint analysis and identification at the Aurora Police Department.

**PURPOSE:**

To request authorization from the Aurora City Council to re-hire certified fingerprint analysts Julie Smith and Gina Minetti for the purpose of conducting fingerprint analysis and identification as part of the Department's continuing program to maintain a complete in-house fingerprint capability for the Aurora Police Department.

**BACKGROUND:**

Formerly, for all crimes occurring in Aurora (DuPage County excluded), the Aurora Police Department had submitted fingerprint evidence to the Illinois State Police's Joliet Crime Lab (JCL) for analysis and identification. Due to overstretched resources and heavy caseloads at the JCL, it was taking approximately 12 months for them to process and return fingerprint evidence from crime scenes submitted for Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) comparison.

As we waited for our AFIS submissions to come back, the citizens of Aurora suffered needless victimization at the hands of criminals, often times felons, who remained unidentified and free to continue their criminal pursuits while fingerprint evidence that could link them to previous crimes was waiting processing by the JCL. This continued victimization has monetary costs as well as psychological costs that negatively impact the quality of Aurora citizenry.

Fingerprint evidence is still amongst the strongest of all types of evidence, it is possible to get charges authorized against an offender on the basis of fingerprint evidence alone. In order to better serve the public by combatting crime and removing criminals from the streets of Aurora at the earliest possible opportunity, the Department developed its own complete in-house fingerprint capability to include lifting fingerprints, submitting them through AFIS, making identifications, and being able to testify in court to those identifications. Being able to make these quick identifications has resulted in career criminals being identified and removed from our streets before they have the opportunity to victimize our citizens over and over again.

Research into what was needed in order to establish an in-house AFIS capability showed that two analysts were needed, as in order to establish absolute reliability in identifications, one certified analyst must verify the identification of another. Misidentifications would serve to undermine the

credibility of our programs before the courts, and could also incur liability for the City. After analyzing various options to obtain the services of two analysts, the Police Department determined that hiring already trained and certified people to perform fingerprint analysis and identification on a contractual basis was the quickest and most cost-effective way to establish an in-house AFIS capability. Other options that were ruled out were hiring full or part-time analysts, or committing Police Department personnel to the lengthy training and certification process that would be needed to perform this task.

On 12/22/2009, the City Council approved the purchase of AFIS equipment from the NEC Corporation of America for this purpose and updated the equipment in February 2018. On 03/23/2010, the City Council adopted Resolution R10-109 authorizing the hiring of two certified fingerprint analysts as contractual consultants to conduct fingerprint analysis and identification. Fingerprint analysts, Julie Smith and Gina Minetti, were contracted and cleared to perform this work for the department beginning 11/30/2010.

Smith and Minetti began performed fingerprint analysis for the Department in December of 2010, and have continued their analysis since that time. They have been assigned approximately 1575 cases, examined approximately 5576 fingerprint lifts and were able to make over 1600 identifications of people. They have proved themselves to be highly competent and dependable workers. They have met all of the requirements of their job descriptions and expectations of the Department. In some cases, they had an identification within hours, instead of the 12 months it may have taken the crime lab to make an identification.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Based on the proven work performance and success rates already established by Julie Smith and Gina Minetti, the Department would like to have their contracts renewed for the calendar year 2020 and 2021. Those contracts have been structured based on the volume of work we have for them and the rate at which they were able to process it during the time they worked. That analysis showed that they will need to work at least 6 hours a piece each week, up to 10 hours a piece a week. Their rate of pay will be \$100.00 per hour, subject to an annual maximum of \$60,000.00 each. They are only contacted when there is work for them to do, so the City will not incur any costs if there is none.

The anticipated 2020 budget shall provide for this project in account 101-3536-421.32-20.

#### **IMPACT STATEMENT:**

If this is not approved, the Aurora Police Department will have a significant time lag in the potential identification of offenders. Our fingerprint lifts would have to be sent to the State Police Crime lab and sit stagnate for up to 12 months while they await processing with many other requests from other law enforcement agencies.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

I am recommending that the City Council authorize the re-hiring of Julie Smith and Gina Minetti as contractual consultants for the purpose of fingerprint analysis and identification in order to continue the Department's established success in completely processing all fingerprint evidence in-house.

cc: Public Health, Safety, and Transportation Committee



CITY OF AURORA, ILLINOIS

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF PASSAGE \_\_\_\_\_

A Resolution authorizing the continued services of civilian fingerprint analysts Julie Smith and Gina Minetti as contractual consultants for the purpose of fingerprint analysis and identification for the Aurora Police Department.

WHEREAS, the City of Aurora has a population of more than 25,000 persons and is, therefore, a home rule unit under subsection (a) of Section 6 of Article VII of the Illinois Constitution of 1970; and

WHEREAS, subject to said Section, a home rule unit may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs for the protection of the public health, safety, morals, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, Authorizing the continued services of civilian fingerprint analysts Julie Smith and Gina Minetti as contractual consultants for the purpose of fingerprint analysis and identification for the Aurora Police Department.

WHEREAS, Due to overstretched resources and heavy caseloads, it was taking approximately 12 months for the Joliet Crime Lab to process and return fingerprint evidence from crime scenes submitted for AFIS comparison; and

WHEREAS, The citizens of Aurora suffered needless victimization at the hands of criminals, often times felons, who remained unidentified and free to continue their criminal pursuits while fingerprint evidence that could link them to previous crimes was awaiting processing by the Joliet Crime Lab; and

WHEREAS, Continued victimization has monetary costs as well as psychological costs that negatively impact the quality of life of Aurora's citizenry; and

WHEREAS, In order to better serve the public by combating crime and removing criminals from the streets of Aurora at the earliest possible opportunity, the Department developed its own complete fingerprint capability to include lifting fingerprints, submitting them through AFIS, making identifications, and being able to testify in court to those identifications; and

WHEREAS, In order to establish this complete fingerprint capability, on December 22, 2009 the City Council authorized the purchase of equipment from the NEC Corporation of America that will interface with the AFIS system used by the State's Bureau of Identification (B of I); and

WHEREAS, In order to be able to make use of the above-mentioned NEC equipment, the services of fingerprint analysts are needed; and

WHEREAS, After research into the current best practices in the field, the Department learned that two fingerprint analysts are needed-one to make an identification, and another to confirm the identification; and

WHEREAS, After an extensive staff study, the Department determined that the quickest and most cost effective way of acquiring the services of fingerprint analysts is to hire two already trained and certified analysts as contractual consultants; and

WHEREAS, Julie Smith and Gina Minetti are trained and certified fingerprint analysts who formerly worked at the Joliet Crime Lab and each have years of experience in this field, and who presented themselves to the Department as being willing to serve as contractual consultants for the purposes of fingerprint analysis and identification; and

WHEREAS, Julie Smith and Gina Minetti have previously signed contracts to perform this work for the Police Department from December of 2010 to the present day. During this time Julie Smith and Gina Minetti proved themselves to be highly competent and knowledgeable in this field, and have been able to meet all of their job requirements and expectations. They have been assigned approximately 1575 cases, examined approximately 5576 fingerprint lifts and were able to make over 1600 identifications of people; and

WHEREAS, Julie Smith's and Gina Minetti's pay shall be \$100.00 per hour respectively, subject to an annual maximum of \$60,000.00 each; and

WHEREAS, the anticipated 2020 budget shall provide for this project in account 101-3536-421.32-20 in the amount of \$120,000.00; and

WHEREAS, Julie Smith and Gina Minetti have already passed the requisite background check for such employment at the Department, and that Julie Smith and Gina Minetti have secured the professional liability insurance required by the City for such contract work)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Aurora, Illinois, as follows: subject to the approval of this item in the 2020 budget, It is the desire of the Department to renew the contracts of Julie Smith and Gina Minetti for 2020 and 2021, and that those contracts have already been reviewed by the Human Resources Department.