

WHATCOM COUNTY
WCEMS Office
800 E Chestnut, Suite 3C
Bellingham, WA 98225



Mike Hilley
WCEMS Manager

MEMORANDUM

To: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
From: Tawni Helms, Administrative Coordinator
Re: Medical Examiner amendment
Date: October 27, 2022

Enclosed for your review and approval is a contract amendment between Whatcom County and Hunt Forensics, LLC for the provision of Medical Examiner Services.

- **Background and Purpose**

This contract amendment is a result of increased costs and expenditures for the Medical Examiner Office. Due to significant increases the number of deaths and autopsies under the Medical Examiner's jurisdiction.

In 2022 Whatcom County contracted with new Medical Examiner/Forensic Pathologist for the first time in 30 years. In negotiating the contract, a budget was developed in accordance with the number of cases and autopsies document in the previous year. That included 168 death investigations that involved forensic autopsies, toxicological examinations, viewing and summary reporting.

The first 6 months of 2022 the number of cases increased significantly with 372 deaths reported to the Medical Examiner's Office and 200 of those cases were fully investigated with 122 requiring a form of postmortem examination. With the significant increase in autopsies the Medical Examiner requested additional funds to continue the level of services required under the jurisdiction of the Medical Examiner Office.

- **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding in the amount of \$89,028 was approved through Ordinance 2022-068. The funding source is the General Fund.

Please contact Tawni Helms at X5208 if you have any questions or concerns regarding the terms of this agreement.