Board of County Commissioners
Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: April 7, 2020
Date Submitted: March 17, 2020
To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board
From: Wesley Hall, Interim County Administrator
Subject: Approval of a Letter Authorizing Tallahassee Big Bend Crime Stoppers, Inc. to Act as Gadsden County’s Agent for the Purpose of Applying for and Receiving Monies from the Crime Stopper’s Trust Fund

Statement of Issue:

This agenda item seeks approval from the Board for a letter authorizing Big Bend Crime Stoppers, Inc. to act as the County’s agent for the purpose of applying for and receiving monies from the Crime Stopper Trust Fund.

Background:

Big Bend Crime Stoppers, Inc. represents seven counties in the Big Bend area: Leon, Wakulla, Jefferson, Taylor, Liberty, Gadsden and Franklin. Established in 1984 as a non-profit organization, Crime Stoppers has been successful in assisting law enforcement with various services in each of these Counties. Primary funding for the organization comes from the Office of the Attorney General’s (OAG) Crime Stopper Trust Fund. Periodically, subsection 16.555(5)(b) Florida Statute mandates that the OAG require this Letter of Authorization be obtained from each County Commission.

Analysis:

None

Fiscal Impact:

None

Options:

1. Approve the attached letter of authorization and authorize the Chairperson to sign.
2. Do not approve.
3. Board direction.
Interim County Administrator’s Recommendation:

Option 1.

Attachment(s):

1. Letter from BBCS, Inc.
2. FS 16.555
3. Letter to Office of the Attorney General
Dear Anthony Viegbesie, Chairman, Gadsden County Commissioner

As you are aware, Big Bend Crime Stoppers represents 7 counties in the big bend area: Leon, Wakulla, Jefferson, Taylor, Liberty, Gadsden, and Franklin. Established in 1984, as a not-for-profit organization, Crime Stoppers has been successful in assisting law enforcement agencies in removing undesirable individuals from the community in each county. Primary funding of the organization comes from the Office of Attorney General's (OAG) Crime Stoppers Trust Fund grant-in-aid program. Every three years, per subsection 16.555(5)(b) of the Florida Statues (1998 Supplement) that a "Letter of Agreement" be obtained from each county commission authorizing Big Bend Crime Stopper, Inc. to act as your county's agent for the purpose of applying for and receiving monies from the Crime Stopper Trust Fund. Monies from the Trust Fund can only be utilized by Big Bend Crime Stoppers, Inc. as permitted by the OAG guidelines.

We respectfully request your continued support. We've included a copy of your previous letter of support for compliance with our request and statement requirements, (attachment B). The same letter may be resent with a current date. Please send the requested letter to:

The Honorable Ashley Moody
Office of Attorney General
State of Florida
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050

Attachment C is information relative to our performance for calendar 2019. Attachment (D) is information regarding the services that are offered by Crime Stoppers to each law enforcement agency in participating counties. As noted in the services provided and our performance for calendar year 2019, combining funds under crime stoppers yields a significant return for all partners.

Your letter of agreement must be received to the state no later than April 1, 2020. Please forward a copy of your signed letter to Crime Stoppers at crime_stoppers@bigbendcrimestoppers.com. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me at 850-222-0890.

Sincerely,

Sharon Ofuani, Executive Director
Big Bend Crime Stoppers
The 2019 Florida Statutes

Title IV
EXECUTIVE BRANCH
Chapter 16
ATTORNEY GENERAL

16.555 Crime Stoppers Trust Fund; rulemaking.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:
(a) “Department” shall mean the Department of Legal Affairs.
(b) “Units of local government” shall mean the various city and county governments of the state.
(c) “Crime Stoppers” shall mean members of the Florida Association of Crime Stoppers, Incorporated, a Florida Corporation.

(2) The department shall have all the powers necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes and provisions of this act.

(3) The department shall establish a trust fund for the purpose of grant administration to fund Crime Stoppers and their crime fighting programs within the units of a local government of the state.

(4)(a) The department shall make applications for all federal and state or private grants which meet the purposes of advancing Crime Stoppers in the State of Florida. Upon securing such grants, the funds shall be deposited in the “Crime Stoppers Trust Fund.”
(b) The proceeds of the court cost imposed by s. 938.06 shall be deposited in a separate account in the trust fund, and within that account the funds shall be designated according to the judicial circuit in which they were collected. The funds in this account shall be used as provided in paragraph (5)(b).
(c) After an initial distribution of funds to the judicial circuit in which they were collected, up to 50 percent of the unencumbered funds returned to the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund from that circuit from a previous grant year, may, in subsequent grant years, be reallocated to other judicial circuits for special crime stoppers initiatives or other programs of the Florida Association of Crime Stoppers, as prioritized and determined by the department and the Florida Association of Crime Stoppers.

(5)(a) The department shall be the disbursing authority for the distribution of funding to units of local government which apply to the department for funding assistance.
(b) Funds deposited in the trust fund pursuant to paragraph (4)(b) shall be disbursed as provided in this paragraph. A county may apply to the department under s. 938.06 for a grant from the funds collected in the judicial circuit in which the county is located. A grant may be awarded only to counties that are served by an official member of the Florida Association of Crime Stoppers and may be used only to support Crime Stoppers and its crime fighting programs. Only one such official member is eligible for support within any county. To aid the department in determining eligibility, the secretary of the Florida Association of Crime Stoppers shall furnish the department with a schedule of authorized crime stoppers programs and shall update the schedule as necessary. The department shall award grants to eligible counties from available funds and shall distribute funds as equitably as possible, based on amounts collected within each county, if more than one county is eligible within a judicial circuit.
(c) A county that is awarded a grant under this section may use such funds to purchase and distribute promotional items to increase public awareness of, and to educate the public about, Crime Stoppers.
(d) Grants may be awarded to fund student crime watch programs pursuant to s. 1006.07(3).
(e) A county that is awarded a grant under this section may use such funds to pay rewards for tips that result in any of the following:
1. An arrest.
2. The recovery of stolen property.
3. The recovery of illegal narcotics.
4. The recovery of the body of a homicide victim.
5. The recovery of a human trafficking victim or a missing person connected to criminal activity.
6. The recovery of an illegal firearm or an illegal weapon on a K-12 school campus.
7. The prevention of a terrorist act.
8. The solving and closing of a criminal case involving a homicide or other violent felony offense that remains unsolved for 1 year or more after being reported to a law enforcement agency and that has no viable and unexplored investigatory leads.

(6) The department shall adopt and enforce rules to implement the provisions of this act. Such rules shall include, but shall not be limited to:

(a) Criteria for local governments to apply for funding from the “Crime Stoppers Trust Fund” in order to aid in local law enforcement as provided in this section.

(b) The limits of funding to be distributed to local government units based on a pro rata share of grants made available through the “Crime Stoppers Trust Fund” pursuant to paragraph (4)(a), and criteria for the equitable distribution of funds available pursuant to paragraph (4)(b).

(c) Provisions for the return of unused funds to be redeposited in the “Crime Stoppers Trust Fund” if for any reason the unit of local government does not use the funds as intended within an agreed upon time.

(d) Provisions for the coordination with appropriate governmental agencies to support and enhance efforts to train the public in crime prevention methods and in personal safety principles, especially for citizens who live in, work at, or frequent locations having high crime rates.

History.—ss. 12, 13, ch. 91-205; s. 2, ch. 98-319; s. 8, ch. 2001-380; s. 22, ch. 2002-402; s. 33, ch. 2003-399; s. 25, ch. 2004-269; s. 1, ch. 2006-2; s. 1, ch. 2015-136; s. 3, ch. 2018-3; s. 1, ch. 2019-167.
September 19, 2017

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Office of the Attorney General
State of Florida
The Capitol Pl.-01
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050

Re: Letter of Agreement -- Crime Stoppers Trust Fund

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

By copy of this letter, the Gadsden County Board of Commissioners authorizes Big Bend Crime Stoppers, Inc. to act as our agent for the purpose of applying for and receiving monies from the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund.

If I can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Sherrie D. Taylor, Chairperson
Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners

SDT/ib

cc: Robert M. Presnell, County Administrator
    Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners
Performance Report - 2019

The Crime Stoppers program is a free service to law enforcement. It is based on the simple principle that for every crime committed someone other than the criminal has information that would solve it. Crime Stoppers relieves the fear of involvement or retaliation by offering anonymity and encourage tipsters by offering rewards. The following are our statistics.

Arrests

This impressive increase in arrest rate over the past 3 years demonstrate that this organization is an effective tool in the fight against crime. In 2017, the reward payout was increased from up to $3,000 to $500 - $5,000. Additionally, with new funding, program awareness and outreach were expanded. We believe both are impacting factors to the bottom line: the increase in arrest.

Rewards By Offense - 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>Rewards Paid 2017-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warrants</td>
<td>$29,825.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>$6,360.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>$4,310.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>$2,750.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firearms</td>
<td>$2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Stalking</td>
<td>$1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>$800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>47,045.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Funding for rewards are made possible from Office of the Attorney General, donations and fundraisers. While warrants consist of all types of criminal activities, overall, most offenses are drug related. Of the reward payouts, thirteen (13) were $1,000-$3,000.

Tips and Rewards by County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Tip Count 2019</th>
<th>Rewards Paid 2017-2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$1,100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gadsden</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>$1,990.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leon</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>$83,045.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakulla</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>$2,165.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>1034</strong></td>
<td><strong>$89,300.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: P3 System as provided by Law Enforcement Coordinator. The tip count represents tips forwarded to the respective county.

Tipsters are reporting crime via the tip line, mobile and website. Many tips remain open because there is insufficient information to develop probable cause that results in an actual arrest. The need to educate the public on what to describe when providing a tip is being addressed. Since 2017, all counties have active tipsters and most have reward payouts.

In Closing,

Year in Review January – December 2019

Total Tips – 1389 (this tip count represent total received)
Arrests – 60
Cases Cleared – 128
Rewards - $47,045.00

Crime Stoppers Does Work!
April 7, 2020

The Honorable Ashley Moody  
Office of the Attorney General  
State of Florida  
The Capitol PL-01  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1050

Re: Crime Stoppers Trust Fund

Dear Attorney General Moody:

By copy of this letter, the Gadsden County Board of Commissioners authorizes Big Bend Crime Stoppers, Inc. to act as our agent for the purpose of applying for and receiving monies from the Crime Stoppers Trust Fund.

If I can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff.

Sincerely,

Anthony O. Viegbesie, Ph. D, Chairperson  
Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners

AOV/lb

cc: Wesley Hall, Interim County Administrator  
Gadsden County Board of County Commissioners