



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 4/14/2026

File #: 26-289

To: Board of Supervisors

From: Sheriff

Agenda Section: Consent

Vote Requirement: Majority

SUBJECT:

Approval of Memoranda of Understanding Between the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office and the City of Rio Dell for SWAT, Crisis Negotiations and Tactical Dispatch Services

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Board of Supervisors:

1. Approve and authorize the Chair of the Board, Mike Wilson, and Sheriff William Honsal to execute the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between the County of Humboldt, through the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, and the City of Rio Dell establishing cooperative Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT), Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT) and Tactical Dispatch operational relationships (Attachments 1); and
2. Direct the Clerk of the Board to return fully executed copies to the Sheriff's Office for distribution to participating partner agencies.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This action supports the following areas of your Board's Strategic Plan.

Area of Focus: Safe & Healthy Communities

Strategic Plan Category: 1001 -Support and sustain partnerships between public safety and partner agencies to enhance public safety in our communities

DISCUSSION:

The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office maintains a countywide Crisis Response Unit composed of the SWAT), the CNT and Tactical Dispatch personnel. These components respond to critical incidents involving imminent threats to life, including hostage events, armed and barricaded suspects, active shooter situations, sniper threats and other life-threatening emergencies.

Local law enforcement agencies in Humboldt County rely on shared resources and mutual aid to provide an effective tactical response capability. In December 2025, your board approved MOUs with the cities of Arcata, Eureka and Fortuna, and Cal Poly Humboldt. Before your Board today is the MOU for the City of Rio Dell. All the partner agencies employ qualified personnel who can be trained, selected and assigned to serve as members of the Sheriff's Crisis Response Unit. Participation enhances regional capabilities, reduces duplication of specialized services and increases operational preparedness across jurisdictions.

The proposed MOU formalizes the operational framework, expectations, training requirements, call-out procedures, chain of command, liability provisions and termination processes governing the cooperative relationship between the Sheriff's Office and each law enforcement agency. The MOU, attached for reference, outlines the standards to which all five partner agreements conform. Each MOU ensures:

- Clear criteria for SWAT, CNT and Tactical Dispatch membership
- Oversight and command authority remains with the Sheriff's Office during missions and training
- Cities retain responsibility for salary, benefits, training costs and equipment for their personnel
- Policies, procedures and POST standards are uniformly applied to all team members
- Incident command responsibilities are defined under ICS for jurisdictional responses
- Indemnification and hold harmless provisions protect each participating agency based on where the incident occurs
- Either party may terminate the agreement with written notice

The MOU continues a longstanding interagency partnership that enhances public safety and ensures a coordinated, effective tactical response capability throughout Humboldt County.

Approval of this agreement will allow for ongoing collaboration, maintain POST-compliant training standards and ensure consistent, countywide availability of highly trained sworn and non-sworn personnel to respond to major critical incidents.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

City of Arcata, City of Eureka, City of Fortuna, CalPoly Humboldt and City of Rio Dell

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Participating agencies are responsible for their own personnel costs and associated training and equipment, pursuant to the terms outlined in the MOUs.

STAFFING IMPACT:

There is no impact to staffing for approval of this MOU.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Arcata Police Department
Eureka Police Department
Fortuna Police Department
Rio Dell Police Department
CalPoly Humboldt University Police Department

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Your Board may choose not to approve the MOU; however, this is not recommended. Local law enforcement agencies in Humboldt County rely on shared resources and mutual aid to provide an effective tactical response capability. The MOU is critical to clearly outline responsibilities for this collaboration.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. MOU - City of Rio Dell SWAT/CNT/Tactical Dispatch

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Meeting of: 2/6/18, 5/1/18, 5/28/19, 6/12/18, 12/9/25
File No.: 17-2921, 18-343, 19-711, 18-520, 25-1371