

**RESOLUTION
ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Supervisor Podzilni and
Supervisor Mawhinney
INITIATED BY



Josh Smith
DRAFTED BY

County Board Staff Committee
SUBMITTED BY

December 31, 2018
DATE DRAFTED

PROVIDING ONE-TIME FUNDING TO THE YWCA CARE HOUSE FOR FORENSIC INTERVIEWING SOFTWARE AND EQUIPMENT AND AMENDING THE 2019 BUDGET

1 **WHEREAS**, the YWCA CARE House is a child advocacy center that supports victims of child abuse
2 and their families; and,

3
4 **WHEREAS**, the primary method by which the CARE House is able to limit further trauma to victims is
5 by recording testimony that can be used in court so that victims only have to provide testimony one time;
6 and,

7
8 **WHEREAS**, the current forensic software used by the CARE House is no longer being supported
9 updated by the vendor, creating risk that testimony will not be accurately recorded and maintained; and,

10
11 **WHEREAS**, without functional software there is an increased risk that victims will be re-traumatized by
12 having to relive their experiences multiple times; and,

13
14 **WHEREAS**, many Rock County departments, such as the Human Services Department, the District
15 Attorney's Office, and the Sheriff's Office, partner with the CARE House and participate in these forensic
16 interviews; and,

17
18 **WHEREAS**, in the 2019 budget Rock County will provide \$10,000 to support operational costs of the
19 CARE House; and,

20
21 **WHEREAS**, it is in the best interest of Rock County, its partner law enforcement agencies, the Circuit
22 Court system, and the victims of child abuse that the forensic interviewing software and equipment be
23 updated to ensure it will work when needed to limit re-traumatization of children and hold offenders
24 accountable for their actions.

25
26 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Rock County Board of Supervisors duly assembled
27 this 10th day of January, 2019, approve a one-time payment of \$20,000 to the YWCA for
28 CARE House forensic interviewing software and equipment and amends the 2019 budget as follows:

<u>A/C DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>BUDGET AT 01/01/2019</u>	<u>INCREASE (DECREASE)</u>	<u>AMENDED BUDGET</u>
<u>Source of Funds:</u>			
19-1922-0000-64904 Contingency Fund	\$80,000	(\$20,000)	\$60,000
<u>Use of Funds:</u>			
19-1960-0000-69516 YWCA CARE House	\$10,000	\$20,000	\$30,000

19-1A-161

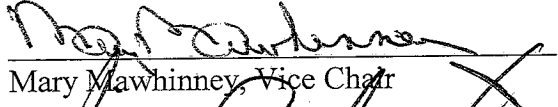
PROVIDING ONE-TIME FUNDING TO THE YWCA CARE HOUSE FOR FORENSIC INTERVIEWING SOFTWARE AND EQUIPMENT AND AMENDING THE 2019 BUDGET

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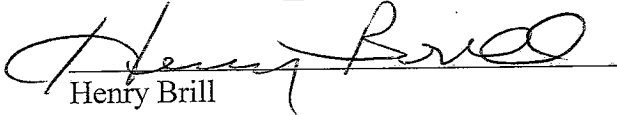
Respectfully submitted:

COUNTY BOARD STAFF COMMITTEE

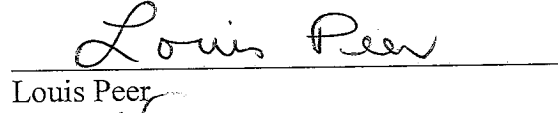

J. Russell Podzilni, Chair

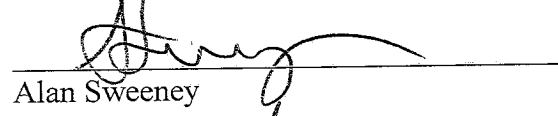

Mary Mawhinney, Vice Chair

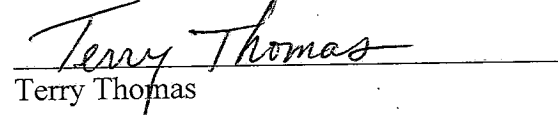

Richard Bostwick

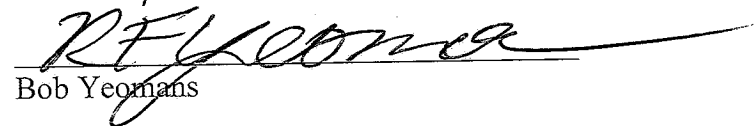

Henry Brill

Absent
Betty Jo Bussie


Louis Peer


Alan Sweeney



Terry Thomas


Bob Yeomans

FINANCE COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT

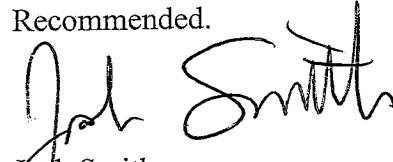
Reviewed and approved on a vote of

5-0

 1-4-19
Mary Mawhinney, Chair Date

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

Recommended.


Josh Smith
County Administrator

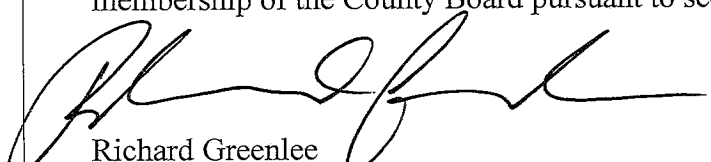
FISCAL NOTE:

This resolution authorizes a \$20,000 transfer from the Contingency Fund for the one time funding for forensic interviewing software for the YWCA CARE House.


Sherry Oja
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:

As an amendment to the adopted 2019 County Budget, this Resolution requires a 2/3 vote of the entire membership of the County Board pursuant to sec. 65.90(5)(a), Wis. Stats.


Richard Greenlee
Corporation Counsel

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The YWCA CARE House is a child advocacy center that works with victims of child abuse and their families to record children's testimony in a safe, child-friendly environment. This recorded testimony can then be used in court without having to re-traumatize the child victim. Rock County has been a partner with the CARE House since its inception in 1993 and currently provides \$10,000 annually to help support operational costs. The success of the CARE House is important in that it increases the likelihood that offenders will be held accountable while limiting trauma for children.

The vendor that supplies the forensic software used to record these interviews has informed the YWCA that it will no longer support and provide upgrades to the current version. The YWCA is requesting one-time funding from the County to update this software and related equipment so as to ensure it continues to operate in a safe and secure manner without interruptions that could result in the re-traumatization of children.

The cost to replace this software and equipment is \$18,995, plus installation costs that bring the total request to \$20,000.

A more specific description of the request and partnering agencies is attached.



December 7, 2018

Dear Josh Smith,

Thank you for your support in funding for the YWCA CARE House, Wisconsin's first and Rock County's only child advocacy center, in the 2019 Rock County Budget. Today, we are asking for a one time request for funding to update the CARE House forensic interviewing software and equipment.

A. Amount Requested

The YWCA Rock County is requesting one time funding in the amount of \$20,000 to cover the critical upgrade of the CARE House forensic interviewing software and equipment. The CARE House is proud to be recognized with national accreditation from the National Children's Alliance and has distinction of being the first child advocacy center opened in the State of Wisconsin. In 1993, Rock County leaders, community members, and service providers had the foresight to realize the importance of creating the CARE House, and our success in this County has blazed the trail for thirteen similar centers to open across the State.

B. Proposed Use of Funds

At the CARE House, we support victims of child abuse and their families with a safe, child-friendly, trauma informed, multi-disciplinary team approach to all child abuse investigations and witnesses to a crime throughout Rock County. Children are welcomed to a comforting and safe place to give their recorded testimony one time to a trained forensic interviewer while an investigative team made up of a detective, a Child Protective Services (CPS) caseworker, an Assistant District Attorney, a Family Advocate, an advocate from Victim Witness, and often a specially trained Sexual Assault Nurse watch. This prevents the child from being re-traumatized by having to tell their painful stories more than once, and this recording can usually serve in place of a child having to testify in court in front of an abuser. These interviews are crucial to help law enforcement officers and the District Attorney seek justice in the courts by convicting the abusers. This multidisciplinary team depends on the CARE House to document and record the forensic interviews for their use in court.

Currently, the software in use for the forensic interviewing is no longer being supported or updated by the software management provider. A critical software upgrade is imperative to the safety and trust of our young victims. Without safe and secure forensic interviewing software and equipment, we cannot guarantee that future interviews will be admissible in court, causing re-traumatization of the child. This hardship is something we have strived to protect Rock County children from since the opening of CARE House in 1993.

CARE House staff have had the opportunity to research software needed to provide verifiable digitally recorded video/audio interviews that will hold up as forensic evidence for law enforcement agencies and be court admissible for the District Attorney's Office. We even invited Assistant DA's to be a part of demos of said software so that we had input from a legal perspective as well as members of the Multidisciplinary Team. The chosen company is CaseCracker with a price tag of \$18,995.00, plus the cost of our tech support team to install the equipment, which totals \$20,000.

C. Number and Type of Clients Served:

In 2017, the CARE House conducted **163 forensic interviews of children ages 3 to 17 years old.**

- 108 children (66%) were victims of alleged sexual abuse
- 83 children were ages 3 to 12 years.
- 114 girls were interviewed and 49 boys were interviewed.

In 2017, the CARE House teamed with law enforcement agencies for interviews numbering: Janesville 58, Beloit 61, Town of Beloit 2, Milton 10, Edgerton 8, and Rock County Sheriff's Office 6. The CARE House also provided courtesy interviews for investigations involving crimes committed against Rock County children outside of our jurisdiction, some involving the Wisconsin Department of Justice and the FBI.

As of November 30th 2018, the CARE House has conducted 169 forensic interviews of children ages 3 to 17 years old.

* 94 children (56%) were victims of alleged sexual abuse

* 79 children were 12 years old or younger

* 119 girls and 50 boys have been interviewed

With emerging needs such as interviewing children who are sex trafficked or from drug endangered homes, we only see the numbers of forensic interviews increasing in Rock County.

Attached, please find letters from Sheriff Spoden and the Janesville Police Chief, supporting the funding for the CARE House. A list of the members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team is also attached.

Thank you for considering this crucial one time request toward funding the forensic interviewing software and equipment. We appreciate all that you do to keep the safety of children in Rock County a priority.

Sincerely,

Angela Moore
Executive Director

The YWCA Rock County CARE House Multi-Disciplinary Team:

Rock County District Attorney

Rock County Victim Witness

Rock County Human Services

Rock County Sheriff

Beloit Police Department

Clinton Police Department

Edgerton Police Department

Evansville Police Department

Janesville Police Department

Milton Police Department

Orfordville Police Department

Town of Beloit Police Department

Janesville Mercy Health Hospital

Beloit Memorial Hospital

Department of Corrections, Probation and Parole