



**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**  
220 NORTH MAIN STREET, P.O. BOX 8645  
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48107-8645  
(734)996-3055  
FAX (734)994-2592

**TO:** Al Robinson, Chair  
Ways & Means Committee

**THROUGH:** Robert E. Guenzel  
County Administrator

**FROM:** Peter A. Ballios  
Finance Director

**DATE:** March 24, 1999

**SUBJECT:** Management of LAWNET Financial Account

**BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:**

LAWNET has requested that Washtenaw County maintain a separate bank account on its behalf, receiving and disbursing funds generated from forfeiture actions. It is requested that the Board delegate the County Administrator the authority to authorize LAWNET expenditures.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 1970, the Washtenaw County Sheriff, Ann Arbor Police Department, Ypsilanti Police Department and the Michigan State Police formed the Washtenaw Area Narcotics Team, a multijurisdictional task force

designed to combat drug related offenses. In 1981, the Livingston County Sheriff's Department joined the task force and it was renamed the Livingston and Washtenaw Narcotics Enforcement Team ("LAWNET"). In 1989, the Jackson County Sheriff and Jackson Police Department joined the task force. Originally staffed with five (5) officers in 1970, the task force has grown to thirty-five (35) sworn and support personnel and now investigates narcotics offenses, auto theft and gang crimes. Under state law, law enforcement entities may keep any funds received as a result of forfeiture actions. State law also provides, however, that any funds that are forfeited shall be deposited with the Treasurer of one of the entities within the task force. LAWNET has requested that Washtenaw County establish a separate account within the County system whereby forfeiture funds would be deposited in the account and disbursed by the County upon request by LAWNET.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Pursuant to State law, cash, vehicles and other tangible items may be forfeited if used in the commission of certain crimes. The proceeds of such forfeitures may be used to further fund law enforcement. Under Michigan law, however, multijurisdictional task forces such as LAWNET are not permitted to expend such forfeiture monies on their own authority. Rather, the forfeiture monies must be deposited with one of the governmental entities within the multijurisdictional task force. Expenditures of the task force must then be approved by the governmental entity holding the forfeiture monies. The LAWNET Board of Directors has asked that Washtenaw County maintain a separate bank account for any forfeiture monies generated and provide oversight on LAWNET's request for expenditures from that account. Because LAWNET's requests for expenditures would most likely occur on a frequent basis, it is recommended that the Board of Commissioners delegate the responsibility for approving such requests to the County Administrator's Office.

### **IMPACT ON HUMAN RESOURCES:**

County finance personnel would need to devote some time to maintaining the LAWNET account.

### **IMPACT ON BUDGET:**

The requested action would have no impact on the County's budget.

### **IMPACT ON INDIRECT COSTS:**

There are no indirect costs associated with this request.

**IMPACT ON OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS OR OUTSIDE AGENCIES:**

County personnel would approve and process payments to LAWNET from the LAWNET account.

**CONFORMITY TO COUNTY POLICIES:**

This matter has been reviewed by the County's Administration Office, Finance Department, Human Resources, Corporation Counsel and Ways and Means Committee. The requested action conforms to County policy.

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING WASHTENAW COUNTY TO MAINTAIN A SEPARATE BANK ACCOUNT FOR LAWNET'S FORFEITURE MONIES, AND DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO APPROVE LAWNET EXPENDITURES FROM SUCH ACCOUNT

WASHTENAW COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 24, 1999

WHEREAS, in 1970 the Washtenaw County Sheriff, Ann Arbor Police Department, Ypsilanti Police Department and Michigan State Police formed a multijurisdictional task force to combat drug offenses; and

WHEREAS, in 1981 the Livingston County Sheriff's Department joined the task force and it was renamed the Livingston and Washtenaw Narcotics Enforcement Team ("LAWNET"); and

WHEREAS, in 1989 the Jackson County Sheriff and the Jackson Police Department joined LAWNET; and

WHEREAS, LAWNET has now grown to over thirty-five (35) sworn and support personnel to investigate narcotics offenses, auto theft and gang crimes; and

WHEREAS, under Michigan law, cash, vehicles and other tangible items may be forfeited if involved in the commission of certain crimes with the monies being used to fund further law enforcement activities such as LAWNET; and

WHEREAS, Michigan law requires one of the governmental entities that participates in LAWNET to maintain a separate bank account to handle the receipt of forfeiture proceeds and approve expenditures to LAWNET; and

WHEREAS, LAWNET has requested that Washtenaw County maintain a separate bank account for forfeiture proceeds and to provide oversight on such expenditures; and

WHEREAS, due to the expected number of expenditure requests from LAWNET for payments from the account it would be more efficient for the County Administrator to approve or deny such requests.

WHEREAS, this matter has been reviewed by Corporation Counsel, Human Resources, the Finance Department, the County Administrator's Office and the Ways & Means Committee

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners hereby approves the creation of a separate banking account to house forfeiture monies generated by LAWNET activities,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners designates the County Administrator as the individual responsible for approving or denying such expenditure requests from LAWNET.

LAWNET DRUG FORFEITURE FUND

FUND 7970

REVENUE:

65550 Forfiture Drug \$114,000

EXPENDITURES

74300 Operating Supplies \$114,000

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