



AGENDA REPORT

Police Department

DATE:	May 27, 2025
TO:	Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Bisa French, Chief of Police
Subject:	Contract with Breakpoint Investigations for Preemployment Background Checks
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	The estimated expenditure of \$10,000 is included in the approved Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Police Department budget, and the remaining contract value will be appropriated in the following fiscal years, appropriately. Account string 01191021-400201
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	n/a
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	Richmond Police department staff is seeking approval to add a third-party background investigator to keep up with the demand and goal of hiring additional police officers.
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	APPROVE a three-year, \$180,000 contract, with two additional one-year extensions, with Breakpoint Investigations for Police background investigations for the period May 28, 2025, through May 27, 2028 – Police Department (Chief Bisa French 510-621-1802).

DISCUSSION:

The Richmond Police Department recognizes the importance of thorough and unbiased background investigations for all new police recruits. Background investigations are crucial in ensuring that candidates meet the high standards required for the position and are suitable for the role. These investigations help to screen out individuals who may pose a risk to the community, the agency, or themselves.

Currently, the Richmond Police Department uses two background investigation services and conducts its own background investigations when the vendors are unable to take on new investigations. However, this approach has several limitations. In-house investigations are costly due to union-required overtime pay and can divert already short-staffed sworn officers from their primary duties of patrolling and protecting the community. Additionally, the urgency to hire suitable candidates in a timely manner necessitates a more efficient and reliable process.

To address these challenges, the Richmond Police Department proposes the addition of Breakpoint Investigations as a third-party outside background investigator to validate and verify the backgrounds of new police recruits. This third-party investigator would bring several benefits:

1. **Expertise and Specialization:** Third-party investigators specialize in conducting comprehensive background checks. They have the expertise and resources to uncover past misconduct and other signs of unsuitability, ensuring that only the most qualified candidates are hired.
2. **Impartiality and Consistency:** Utilizing an outside investigator helps to maintain impartiality and consistency in the background investigation process. This ensures that all candidates are evaluated fairly and without bias, based on behaviors that have a direct relationship to the requirements and demands of the position.
3. **Efficiency and Timeliness:** Third-party investigators can conduct background checks more efficiently, reducing the time it takes to complete the investigations. This allows the Richmond Police Department to offer positions to suitable candidates more quickly, preventing them from accepting offers from other departments.
4. **Cost-Effectiveness:** While there is an initial expenditure associated with hiring a third-party investigator, this approach can ultimately be more cost-effective. It reduces the need for overtime pay and allows sworn officers to focus on their primary duties, enhancing overall productivity and effectiveness.

On May 9th, 2024, the Police Department issued an RFP on the City of Richmond's Planet Bids system for Background Investigations services with a deadline for submission date of June 7, 2024, in accordance with Purchasing guidelines. 843 vendors were notified, and two vendors submitted a proposal, Breakpoint Investigations (BPI) and MCR Investigations and Consulting. Both proposals were carefully considered, reviewed and evaluated based upon the following point assignment: Licensed as a Background Investigation with the State of California (10 Points), Local within the San Francisco Bay Area or Northern California – offshore and out of area will not be considered (10 Points), Experience with performing Background Investigation within the cities of Contra Costa County (Up to 80 Points), Additional consideration to those that had performed similar services (or had a law enforcement partnership) with the Richmond Police Department (Additional 20 Points). Out of a possible 120 points, MCR Investigations received 100 points and Breakpoint Investigations received 118 points. Breakpoint Investigations was awarded a higher score because they had more experience with performing similar services in the Greater Bay Area.

The estimated cost for BPI to perform background investigation services for a candidate applying for Police Officer is \$2000, and the estimated cost for BPI to perform background investigation for Professional Staff (non-sworn) is \$1800.

In conclusion, the addition of Breakpoint Investigations as a third-party outside background investigator is a strategic move that aligns with the Richmond Police Department staff's commitment to hiring the best candidates while maintaining efficiency, impartiality, and cost-effectiveness. This proposal is recommended for approval to ensure that the background investigation process remains robust and reliable, ultimately contributing to the safety and well-being of the community.

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

Attachment 1 – Original Contract

Attachment 2 – RFP Bid