RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2020-710

MEETING: December 8, 2020

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Dallin Kimble, County Administrative Officer

RE: NRCS Memorandum of Collaboration

RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:
Approve a Memorandum of Collaboration with the National Resource Conservation Service to Sublet Office Space at the Mariposa County Fairgrounds; and Authorize the Board of Supervisors Chair to Sign the Memorandum.

In order to preserve a physical presence for the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in the county, the County has found space for their operation in the Campbell Building at the Mariposa County Fairgrounds. This Memorandum of Collaboration formally approves this arrangement and allows for the continued operation of NRCS in this location. Staff recommends approval of the memorandum.

This memorandum provides space, utilities and routine trash pickup at no cost to NRCS through June 30, 2023. At the end of this period, it is anticipated that NRCS will have federal approval to begin paying for rent and related costs at this or any other location.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:
In the mid-1990s, the U.S. Department of Agriculture decided to consolidate local offices of the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Mariposa County’s office was identified for closure.

The office was eventually allowed to remain open as a "local partnership office", not an official NRCS office, with the condition that the local NRCS would not be permitted to pay for rent or other expenses associated with operating a local office. Mariposa County Resource Conservation District (RCD) was able to provide space at their location on the fairgrounds and NRCS served the county under that arrangement until November 2019. For the last year, the County paid the rent on their office building at the fairgrounds (Resolutions 2019-633, 2019-688).

The Mariposa NRCS office is the most productive in the state with more than 350 active contracts valued at over $19 million. They have been a crucial partner in
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battling drought and tree mortality on private land throughout our community and are awarded grants on a regular basis that improve our fire safety and resource management.

Regulations have also changed since the mid-1990s. The local office is in the process of requesting authorization from their superiors in the federal government to pay for rent and other expenses. Officials at NRCS are cautiously optimistic their request will be granted within the next two years.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:
Do not approve this agreement. NRCS will continue working to find solutions, but may or may not continue to have a presence in Mariposa County.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:
There is no direct financial impact for this agreement.

ATTACHMENTS:
MOC with Mariposa CBOS Nov 2020 (PDF)

RESULT: ADOPTED AS AMENDED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER: Merlin Jones, District II Supervisor
SECONDER: Marshall Long, District III Supervisor
AYES: Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Menetrey