



### **Agenda Action Form Overview**

The Board is requested to authorize the County Manager to enter into a service contract with Buddi US, LLC in the amount of \$186,439 to provide Electronic Monitoring Services for individuals assigned to Durham County Pretrial Services in Fiscal Year 2026-27. The funding for this contract has been included in the Justice Services Department’s FY 2026-27 approved budget.

### **Background/Justification**

Durham County Government established a Pretrial Services Program in 2006. The overall goal of Durham County’s Pretrial Services is to create a systematic approach for recommending release and community supervision for defendants who do not pose a risk to the community as they await trial. The program strives to provide complete and accurate information to judges, improve the release and detention decision, actively supervise defendants released pre-trial, ensure that agency-mandated conditions and court-ordered requirements are satisfied, and to maintain the integrity of the judicial process while promoting public safety.

One essential component of the program is an electronic monitoring module for court identified criminal defendants who are on release from the Durham County Detention Facility as an alternative to detention. Offenders are assigned to electronic monitoring by a judge or by delegated authority of a magistrate or clerk of court and may also be required to attend programs in the community. The utilization of electronic monitoring devices has steadily increased over the past two years. In FY24, the lowest number of units in use was 75 units and the highest was 96 units, with an eleven-month average use of 87 devices. The proposed contract would be for up to 85 units.

Durham County Purchasing Division issued a Request for Proposals for Electronic Monitoring Services (RFP 25-035) in February 2025. After a comprehensive review process, the Selection Committee recommended Buddi US, LLC as the preferred vendor. The monitoring device is less obtrusive, waterproof, has a durable and temper resistant strap, can be charged remotely, and has a long battery life. This agreement will reduce the daily unit cost from \$6.00 to \$5.80 per day. More information about Buddi US, LLC can be found at [www.buddi.us](http://www.buddi.us).

The Justice Services Department received four proposals during the bidding process, each offering comprehensive and innovative solutions that met the core requirements outlined in the RFP. The vendors presented devices with varying features, prompting the evaluation committee to invite all four for in-person presentations. Each vendor accepted and was allotted one hour to demonstrate their equipment and supportive applications.

While the financial aspect of each proposal was considered, it was not the sole factor in our decision. The committee evaluated overall value, service offerings, and suitability for our program, which serves both defendants and alleged victims. Our goal was to identify a solution that enhances community safety, ensures compliance with court orders, and maintains a humane approach to supervision for individuals awaiting court disposition. Here are the vendor comparisons of the top three proposals.

Vendor Comparisons:



1. Sentinel Services  
Sentinel submitted the lowest cost at \$4.88/unit/day for their OM500 device, beacon, web and mobile application, and magnetic charger. The transmitting device ranked second in size. While the OM500 boasts a strong battery life, it does not support wireless charging. The standard strap is included, but a metal-reinforced tamper-detecting strap is optional at an added cost of \$39.99 per unit, or approximately \$2,999.25 for 75 units, not currently included in the proposal. Victim services are provided via a cellular application requiring the alleged victims to maintain their own mobile service. Use of this service would incur additional costs for the County or the client.
2. Alcohol Monitoring Services (SCRAM Systems)  
SCRAM proposed a rate of \$5.45/unit/day for their GPS Gen 9 Plus device. Their offer includes transmitting devices, the corresponding beacon, a comprehensive web interface and mobile application as well as a cut resistant strap. However, the device is slightly heavier and larger than those offered by Buddi US and Sentinel weighing in at 8.3 ounces with dimensions of 8.3 cubic inches. The proposal includes a magnetic charger and standard cut-resistant strap; wireless chargers are available for an additional \$39.99 per unit. Victim services through the SCRAM Ally app similarly require cellular service, resulting in potential additional costs for the client or the County and would remain the client to maintain cellular service.
3. Buddi US  
Buddi US, ranked third in cost at \$5.80/unit/day, proposed the Smart Tag and Buddi Eagle Interface. The package includes a transmitting device with a cut-resistant strap, wireless charger, web/mobile application, 24/7/365 support, and robust victim services—all at no additional cost. Notably, the Victim Buddi device allows victims to receive proximity alerts without requiring them to download an application or maintain cellular service. The Smart Tag was ranked first in size weighing almost half the weight of the OM500.

#### Additional Evaluation Points:

We reviewed several critical areas:

- Device Size & Weight:
  - *Sentinel OM500*: 5 oz, 3.9” x 2.6” x 1.5”
  - *Buddi Smart Tag*: 2.8 oz, 2” x 2” x 0.9”
- Water Tolerance:
  - *Sentinel OM500*: Waterproof and submersible
  - *Buddi Smart Tag*: Submersible
- Ankle Strap Design:
  - *Sentinel*: Standard tamper proof strap with an optional metal-reinforced tamper strap, removable with a special tool identical in fashion to a flathead screwdriver.
  - *Buddi*: Standard cut-resistant strap, removable only with a specialized tool
- Charging Capabilities:
  - *Sentinel*: Magnetic swivel corded charger (30–45 min charge), requires access to electrical outlets, limiting user mobility



- *Buddi*: Portable wireless charger (2-hour daily charge), supports on-the-go charging without disrupting daily activities

After a thorough evaluation, the Justice Services Department has selected Buddi US as the vendor that best meets the needs of our program, although all four vendors are capable of fulfilling the basic RFP requirements. Considering our client population—individuals presumed innocent and often monitored for 200+ days—we prioritize comfort, functionality, and victim support. Buddi US provides a compact, easy-to-use device with included wireless charging, tamper-resistant design, and a comprehensive victim support solution, all within the quoted price.

### **Policy Impact**

The agenda item is consistent with the Board of County Commissioners support for the Justice Services Department’s Pretrial Services program and Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan. The electronic monitoring component provides an increased emphasis on community safety and contributes to a reduction in detention costs to the County for defendants who may be awaiting case disposition for an extended period of time.

### **Procurement Background**

#### **Type of purchase**

- Goods
- Services
- Architect, Engineer or Surveyor Services
- Construction and Repair

**Did this request for purchase go through a bid process? Yes  No**

*Goods: Bids required if  $\geq$  \$30,000, BOCC approval if  $\geq$  \$90,000*

*Services: Bids required if  $\geq$  \$30,000, BOCC approval if  $>$  \$40,000*

*Construction/Repair work: Bids required if  $\geq$  \$30,000, BOCC approval if  $\geq$  \$500,000*

If yes, attach a copy of bid tab and the minority and women business enterprise (MWBE) compliance review form provided by the Purchasing Division.

If no, why?

- Sole source exemption
- Cooperative purchasing program exemption
- State and federal contract exemption
- Contract is an amendment to an existing contract
- Other (please explain)



**If exempted from bidding, has this request been reviewed and approved by the Purchasing Division in the agenda Legistar system? Yes  No**

If no, why?

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**Fiscal Impact**

Similar contracts for electronic monitoring services have been included in the Justice Services Department’s budget for Pretrial Services since 2006. For the past few years the demand for electronic monitoring units has remained strong due to court ordered releases as electronic monitoring has proven to be a key element of supervision.

**Recommendation**

The County Manager recommends that the Board of County Commissioners authorize the County Manager to enter into a service contract with Buddi US, LLC in the amount of \$186,439 to provide Electronic Monitoring Services for individuals assigned to Durham County Pretrial Services in Fiscal Year 2026-27. The funding for this contract has been included in the Justice Services Department’s FY 2026-27 approved budget.