

Constable Budget Request

Justice Precincts #3 & #4

Cochise County is in a unique position of opportunity, after the recent election cycle, in that two individuals have been elected to the Benson and Willcox Justice Court Precincts whom are experienced individuals in law enforcement. The value of quality personnel in the Sierra Vista Justice Precinct Constable position has been realized by Constable Melissa Wirthlin. Constable Wirthlin and her staff have saved countless hours that would otherwise require sheriff deputies to leave patrol duties and deal with civil actions that are time consuming. Currently, the Cochise County Sheriff Dept. has one deputy dedicated to working the civil division with an overwhelming case load from the superior court alone, not including the justice courts of Douglas, Bisbee and San Simon. In the past, patrol deputies have taken on the civil procedures such as writs, eviction notices, evictions, service of protection orders/restraining orders. This results in countless hours of fully certified peace officers removed from patrolling our neighborhoods and roadways.

The current climate in law enforcement is a difficult one, at best. Retention and hiring of deputies is a long process and simply finding qualified personnel to enter that process is becoming more and more difficult. Qualified constables provide an asset to the courts and the sheriff dept. that can free up deputies which will keep our neighborhoods safer.

Constables in Arizona are a unique form of peace officers, which were historically the first law enforcement to be utilized in the Arizona Territory as courts were created. Currently, Arizona constables with proper training are empowered as peace officers while conducting the business of the court, as follows:

- may act as bailiffs during court trials and hearings, allowing court security personnel to remain at their security posts;
- may arrest on local warrants issued by the justice courts, thus freeing up deputies to include transport

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- after arrest to the court for initial appearance or to the jail for booking;
- serve eviction notices and conduct evictions;
- serve restraining orders/orders of protection;
- provided assistance to deputies when requested/needed;
- assist the superior court's civil deputy;
- assist county probation officers in situations where a second officer is needed, thus freeing up other probation officers;
- serve criminal and civil subpoenas & summons;
- assist planning/zoning with service of notices;
- have jurisdiction in their precinct and adjoining precincts.

Willcox Constable Kevin Beyer retired from Los Angeles Police Department and is currently an AZ certified private investigator.

Benson Constable Jon Drummond retired from the Az Dept. of Public Safety in December after 34 years, and 3 years with Sierra Vista PD. He holds a current AZPOST peace officer certification and is an AZPOST certified general instructor, police driving instructor/P.I.T. instructor.

Both new constables are trained with and up-to-date on current firearm platforms, and have their own firearms for duty use. Both have attended and completed the week-long AZ Constable Association training course. Both have body armor to be used when needed. Both are well acquainted with local law enforcement and court personnel, and have many years of experience dealing with the public in many different settings. Both constables have purchased badges that are consistent/similar with Constable Wirthlin's for uniformity. Both have designed/purchased patches for use on jackets/outer vest carriers that are consistent, identifiable and provide uniformity.

The Willcox Justice Precinct has a current registered voter roll of over 2,100. The Benson Justice Precinct

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has just under 9,800. Both courts issue in excess of 100 processes to include local warrants, subpoenas, restraining/protection orders and writs on a yearly average. Per the current ARS 11-424.01, applicable salaries for the voter base and processes served, would place the salary levels at \$26,000.00 per year. There is currently legislation pending in the Arizona Senate, (SB1307), that would be consistent with this salary level when/if that bill passes. In regards to the equipment items in the budget request, some of these items may be offset by working in conjunction with Sheriff Dannels, depending on availability of surplus equipment he may have access to. Thankyou for your consideration.

SALARY: \$26,000.00 per constable yearly, to include benefits (medical, dental, etc.).

COMMUNICATIONS: \$7000.00 per constable, 2-way radios with CCSO frequencies.

OFFICE EQUIPMENT: \$1500.00 per constable, Panasonic Toughbook/laptops.

FLEET: \$5000.00 yearly allowance per constable, or county provided pick-up trucks due to transporting property.

PHONE: \$500 per constable for county cellphone.