

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2023**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, April 20, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Executive Conference Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

Present: Ann English, Chairman; Peggy Judd, Vice-Chairman; Tom Crosby, Supervisor, telephonic

Staff Present: Richard G. Karwaczka, County Administrator
Christine Roberts, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney
Tim Mattix, Clerk of the Board

Attendees: Timothy Dickerson, Presiding Judge, Division IV
Bruce Staggs, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 3
Amy Hunley, Clerk of the Court
John Schow, Court Administrator and Chief Probation Officer
Niltza Flores, Deputy Court Administrator
Rita Shipley, Division Director of Superior Court Budget and Finance
Tracey Romero, Judicial Human Resources Director
Monica Miranda, Finance Director
Juan Frisby, Budget Manager

Chairman English called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Budget Work Session - Discussion of County Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 specifically: Court Administration, JP, Superior Court, Adult Probation, Juvenile Detention, and the Clerk of the Superior Court's Office.

Ms. Hunley began the presentation of this item. She gave a detailed outline of an employee reclassification that was developed, based on a model from Pinal County, to promote retention and recruitment in the Clerk of the Court's Office (Clerk's Office), which would provide more competitive pay rates and opportunities for advancement. Ms. Shipley explained in detail how the employee reclassification would apply to other areas of the court. Ms. Shipley stated that the salary and Employee Related Expenses (ERE) increase to the general fund for reclassification would be an estimated \$214,000 or a 3.7% increase and this, along with the cost of career progression, would be a total of \$435,000 or a 5.8% increase to the general fund. In response to the Board, Judge Dickerson and Ms. Hunley clarified that the Clerk's Office would be an additional \$60,000 for reclassification and approximately \$39,000 for career progression.

Mr. Schow discussed losing many high-performing, experienced court staff and probation officers due to pay. He referred to an administrative order issued by the Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court, in relation to the ability to attract and retain officers due to pay, which resulted in a request to the legislature for \$17 million to raise salaries. The Governor's Office budgeted \$14 million to improve salaries. Mr. Schow discussed in detail the number of employees lost this fiscal year, which is causing non-compliant case load levels in standard probation. Waivers of the education requirements have been requested in order to hire people near completing their bachelor's degree and staff is looking to promote from other areas to fill vacancies. Mr. Schow discussed the increase in probation cases and stated that they are not requesting an increase in officers, just the ability to retain the officers they have. In response to the Board, he stated the budget request would not raise the base salary of a probation officer. However, the proposal from the state legislature would raise it from \$41,000 to a little over \$50,000.

There was detailed discussion regarding probation, compression and pay differential.

Judge Dickerson stated the Board approved local fees that are imposed by the Justice and Superior Court to go into an enhancement fund which is then used to pay for items like security, personnel, lease of computer equipment and general supplies. Douglas Justice Court is requesting to use enhancement funds to pay for a part-time position to assist the Judge with backlog, case management and newly adjudicated cases. Judge Dickerson explained that sealing criminal records and expungements have become more prevalent, which increases backlog. Willcox is requesting to use general funds to purchase new office furniture and a new Audio Visual system to replace worn and inoperable equipment. Judge Dickerson explained in detail the importance of operable recording equipment in relation to the Willcox request. In response to the Board, Judge Dickerson stated that the equipment staff is requesting be replaced is not part of the state equipment in Willcox and the cost would be \$82,000.

Judge Dickerson stated that Sierra Vista Justice Court is requesting to convert a full-time position (\$44,248) from enhancement fund to general funds. He stated that this is due to enhancement funds not coming in as in the past due to lower fine collections. Judge Dickerson discussed the required cost of computers and software purchased from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC).

Judge Dickerson discussed high turnover in the Clerk's Office and the important role they play and a case flow study that was completed. Judge Dickerson stated that people in higher-paid positions should be acknowledged as well.

In response to the Board, Ms. Romero stated that there is not an issue with performing exit interviews. Judge Dickerson stated that in order for an exit interview to be useful it would need to be confidential.

Chairman English discussed the importance of individuals in the lower-paid positions and their crucial role.

2. Budget Work Session - Discussion of County Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 specifically: Constables for Justice of the Peace Precincts 3 and 4.

There was no discussion on this item.

Chairman English adjourned the meeting at 9:54 a.m.

APPROVED:

Ann English, Chairman

ATTEST:

Tim Mattix, Clerk of the Board