

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
Wednesday, May 4, 2016**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, May 4, 2016 at 2:00 p.m. in the First Floor Conference Room, Old Bisbee High School, 100 Clawson Avenue, Bisbee, Arizona.

Present: Patrick G. Call, Vice-Chairman; Ann English, Member
Absent: Richard R. Searle, Chairman
Staff Present: James E. Vlahovich, County Administrator
Edward T. Gilligan, Deputy County Administrator
Arlethe G. Rios, Clerk of the Board
Joel Larson, Public Legal Services Administrator/Legal Defender
Mark Suagee, Public Defender
Amy Hunley, Indigent Defense Coordinator
Mike McGinnis, Budget Manager, Finance Department

Vice-Chairman Call called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

THE ORDER OR DELETION OF ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION AT THE MEETING

INTRODUCTIONS

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Budget Work Session - Discussion of County budget for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 specifically: the Public Legal Services group.

Vice-Chairman Call asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Mr. Joel Larson, Legal Defender, said that case numbers have increased and that there has been a reduction in attorneys that can handle certain types of cases. He explained that between the lack of applicant pool, qualifications, salary competitiveness, or interest, it is becoming difficult to find attorneys that will stay with the County for a long period of time. He added that an increase in cases in early resolution court has stressed the defense system as well as other departments.

Supervisor English asked if this increase was also affecting contract attorneys.

Mr. Larson said that the new policy decided upon by the County Attorney and County Sheriff to prosecute all drug cases was also impacting the amount of contract attorneys that have to be hired due to conflicts. He noted that the increase had also impacted the server used by the Legal Defender and Public Defender, but that issue had been resolved quickly with the funding approved by County Administration and help from Mr. David Raber, Information Technology Director.

Mr. Mark Suagee, Public Defender, said that he was pleased with the new organizational structure as it had provided better communication among the public services group. He also noted that he was very concerned with the increase in cases.

Supervisor English stated that this increase in cases and the impact on staff and resources would have to be resolved by all parties involved. She added that it would take a team approach to address all concerns.

Mr. Larson said that his group had been thinking of new ways to recruit more attorneys. He stated that he was currently looking into creating an ongoing recruitment for attorneys and keeping an applicant pool available for when vacancies occur and added that quickly filling vacancies would mean less costs at the jail.

Mr. Gilligan said that both departments were trying to hire more tenured attorneys to decrease training time and increase productivity.

Mr. Vlahovich noted that attorney salaries were a priority in the new compensation program.

Ms. Amy Hunley, Indigent Defense Coordinator, added that the contract attorney system would be \$100,000 over budget due to case increases this fiscal year. She said it could be covered out of vacancy savings, but would have to be addressed next fiscal year.

Supervisor English asked if contract attorneys were paid by a fee schedule or dependent on contracts.

Ms. Hunley said that it was a mix of the two, but her office would be researching what a new fee schedule should look like.

Supervisor English noted that an ongoing recruitment was a good idea.

The Board thanked the Public Legal Services group for the information.

Vice-Chairman Call adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

APPROVED:

Patrick G. Call, Vice-Chairman

ATTEST:

Arlethe G. Rios, Clerk of the Board