



Monday, May 8, 2023

OFFICE OF THE COCONINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

SPECIAL SESSION MINUTES (BUDGET)

10:00 a.m.

In Person at Highlands Fire Station

3350 Old Munds Highway, Flagstaff (Mountainaire), AZ 86005

Present: Chair Patrice Horstman, Vice Chair Jeronimo Vasquez, Supervisor Judy Begay and Supervisor Lena Fowler were present in-person.

Absent/Excused: Supervisor Matt Ryan

Also Present: County Manager Steve Peru, Deputy County Manager Sue Brown, Deputy County Manager Andy Bertelsen, Finance Director Siri Mullaney, Human Resources Director Erika Philpot, Assistant County Manager Eslir Musta, Budget Analyst Erin Beckett, Budget Analyst Chris Bringard, Special Assistant to the County Manager Corey Ringenberg, and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors Lindsay Daley were present in-person.

Call to Order:

Chair Horstman called the Special Session to order at 10:15 a.m.

1. Adult Probation FY24 Budget presentation and discussion – 10:00 -11:00 a.m.

Chief Probation Officer Sarah Douthit explained that prior to Covid the Chief Justice announced a state-wide crisis to prevent being over the statutory cap. She explained her department's main focus has been employee engagement and retention and that 87% of their probation officers have been in the position less than 2 years. She provided information on the program they provide and how there is never enough to do what is needed. She spoke about the frustration employees are faced with when they can't do the right thing because of the lack of resources and the cuts to services impacting employees.

Upon questions from Supervisor Fowler regarding case load, Officer Douthit explained that it is a multi-step process to address the case load and that they work less in the community because they don't have the capacity to do so. She explained that they also communicate with stakeholders about their issues and ask for unsupervised probation when appropriate, because they are over by about 20 cases. She spoke about the tension between the county and state when it comes to funding their services and how the state does not provide everything needed to provide the service so leaves the community struggling locally. Officer Douthit spoke about moral injuries being difficult for employees and how they have become excellent at hiring. She spoke about the needs of the program.

Chair Horstman asked how many positions are vacant, and Administrative Senior Manager, Shannon Lucrecia stated that it is a moving target, and they are requesting that 1.5 positions not be authorized because they have not been able to fill them. She spoke about the various positions that are currently vacant in the department.

Officer Douthit spoke about the pre-trial services and how the program is known to be a cost savings. She explained that they still have a vision that every person taken into custody will have a risk assessment done. She spoke about the performance measures of pre-trial services. She also spoke about the program of Supervision. She went over the program goals and performance measures of supervision. She explained that 2008 was a pivot year modeling statistics against the old way of probation. Upon a question from Vice Chair Vasquez, Officer Douthit explained that the changes throughout the years which is 15-20 years in the making, everything was bean counting- how many times you did certain things and there was little recognition that each is different, and needs are different. She explained that a statewide evidence-based risk assessment was implemented to create individualized case plans. She explained that the way probation officers talk with people is different in that they provide more guiding/coaching versus authoritarian. She explained that it is a big responsibility and then to add too much work and not enough pay for employees who also can't afford a house- it is a lot. Vice Chair Vasquez stated that he appreciated the information and that he experienced moral injury in the education field as well. He commented that he wants to support staff with affordable housing and workforce housing to maintain quality staff.

Officer Douthit stated that with assistance from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, which provided staff, the pre-sentence program/unit is doing well. She went over the increment and carryover requests for the Adult Probation department. Upon a question, she stated that they have 5 ARPA funded positions. Upon a question from Supervisor Judy Begay, Officer Douthit explained the carryover requests for their department and that the increment for \$544,000 would be to make pre-trial services whole at least pre-pandemic whole. She stated that she understands that is not possible today but is still bringing it forward. Vice Chair Vasquez asked if there are any funding models in other parts of the country that don't depend on the probationer to pay and Officer Douthit answered that there is a push to see from several states and that California may have moved away from that. Chair Horstman thanked Officer Douthit for the work she and her team do, and that it is an important part in the criminal justice system, and that they try to have people return to be productive members of the community. She stated she also understands the difficulties that those working in the criminal justice system are dealing with in getting good, qualified employees, and the need for affordable housing. Supervisor Fowler stated that this is something that should be funded by the state and that the job they do is challenging emotionally and with families. Supervisor Fowler asked if there is a program within the judicial system to help employees and Officer Douthit stated that the efforts the county puts forward in terms of Employee Assistance services, COVIDI and Emergency Evacuation leave have given signals to employees that there is a concern/care for employees. Officer Douthit explained that they also encourage counseling, vacation time, friendships, and time off, and do rely heavily on Human Resource's programs. Officer Douthit also stated that she would like to see a sabbatical program where employees can use a lump of time off to really disconnect. She stated that many of her senior staff are seeking retirement.

Supervisor Fowler stated that the Board may not be able to fund budget requests as they are restricted, and that she is wondering what else can be done to help retain staff because this is happening across the departments. She spoke about the trickle-down effect on those served and the community. Officer Douthit spoke about the Pathways program being a step in the right direction, as well as the prevention

being done at juvenile court, and that anytime we can offer flexibility, compassion, and humanity it is good but also, at the end of the day don't know what the outcome will be if employees can't get more pay and afford to live in the community. Supervisor Judy Begay stated she is not sure what needs to happen as they all share the same concern and there are limited dollars, that maybe they can look at streamlining processes or services, and also working with other counties for the state to provide money for mandates.

County Manager Steve Peru went over the recommendations from the Manager's Office for the Adult Probation department and spoke about a one-time amount of \$250,000 and what came through from Arizona Office of the Court. He explained that fees for the criminal justice system have dwindled at the state level and there is a need for continued advocacy. He said there are conversations about the state taking over the court system, which may be a solution, however; you may lose the ability to tailor to the community needs. He spoke about the various programs provided locally for criminal justice.

Chair Horstman stated that the state needs to fund their mandates and that our county has set a higher standard for service than if the state were running it completely, but there is a cost to that. She stated that the pathways program is going in the right direction and how it looks like there will be funding for that and that she hopes there will be more innovative monies available and how they are trying the best they can, but it will never be enough. Supervisor Fowler stated that through the years they made this commitment but now they are at a point of figuring out how to keep what they committed to. Supervisor Fowler stated that she appreciates Officer Douthit's work and to let staff know that they are appreciated.

The discussion on item 1 ended at 11:16 a.m.

2. Juvenile Court FY24 Budget presentation and discussion – 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Juvenile Court Director Casie Lightfoot introduced staff with her and therapy dogs that were present. She provided information on how they changed the mission statement of their office this year to reflect the dependent and delinquency side. She spoke about the programs in juvenile court, which included administration, juvenile detention, juvenile services, probation services, and juvenile court. Director Lightfoot spoke about the trends, challenges and needs of the juvenile court. She also spoke about seeing the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, with kids in classrooms. explained the challenges of having fees go away, but how they do fund services. She also spoke about how they currently have a 53% vacancy of positions, which has created overtime and sick time expenses. She explained that staff were sleeping in the detention center to make shifts in order to follow mandates during snow events. Upon a question from Chair Horstman, Director Lightfoot explained that there needs to be 3 staff at all times. Director Lightfoot explained that for needs, they need to figure out their detention staffing issue, and how they are thankful to Human Resources and the Manager's Office for assisting them with that. She explained that their increment request is for their Page Office.

Juvenile Court Deputy Director Israel Garcia presenting information on the program for administration of juvenile court services. He spoke about the outcomes of services, goals, and objectives, as well as the accomplishments and performance measures of the program.

Juvenile Detention Manager Jeremy Russell spoke about the juvenile detention program and how they try to keep as many kids out of detention as possible. He spoke about youth being better served in their communities and how it is unfortunate that some youth need to be detained to keep the community safe. He spoke about the detention screening instrument for juveniles and how it takes into account

factors. He explained that the detention operates twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, 365 days a year and he went over service delivery and populations served. He explained that they are down 53% in staffing and how the hours a difficult and snowstorms made it difficult to staff the building. He also spoke about how overtime leads to burn out, bad decisions, and turnover and how they are working with Human Resources and looking at a more equitable salary change that is in line with adult probation salary system. Manager Russell explained that they provide school, yoga, recreation and skills development to the youth in detention and how they are remodeling the building for therapeutic reasons. Lastly, he spoke about the goals, objectives and accomplishments of the program.

Treatment Division Manager Cydney Boyer presented on the juvenile resource services program. She provided information on the services of the program and the outcomes of services, goals, objective and accomplishments of the juvenile resource services program. She also spoke about their collaboration with Flagstaff Unified School District. She provided statistics to show performance measures of the program.

Probation Manager Walter Stokes presented information on the probation services program in juvenile court. He spoke about the service delivery of the program and how they serve the whole community, and every probation officer works in detention 4 hours a week. He explained that they have less field officers and more intake and diversion because there is a need to start at the beginning. He spoke about the outcomes of service, goals and objectives and accomplishments of the program. He also spoke about the performance measures for probation services for juveniles. He answered questions from the Supervisors.

Dependency Manager Jillian Schuldt presented information on the court services program for juvenile court. She explained that Coconino County Juvenile Court hears all juvenile matters, and she provided information on their service delivery, outcomes of service, goals and objectives and the accomplishments of their service. She also provided information on the performance measures of the program, including reunification statistics.

Director Casie Lightfoot spoke about the service improvement requests that they have for juvenile court/detention services. She explained that \$24,000 is needed for the rental fee for the Page office and that they requested a .64 Full-time employee increase from the state.

Honorable Juvenile Court Judge Angela Kircher stated it is easier to build strong children than repair broken men. She spoke about the Page office and shared her observations that the facility is incredible and how it has a garden and hands on activities including making quilts. She stated that from a court perspective, the number of warrants issued has significantly decreased. She also stated that the kids are reliant on parents who are working and can't take kids to court and as a result the child suffers the consequences. She explained that in Page the kids can get to court during the day and that they are working on getting people to court virtually via zoom.

Honorable Presiding Juvenile Court Judge Ted Reed thanked the Board for listening and stated it is an honor to work with the staff in juvenile because they are dedicated, and they bring creativity and drive to do the best they can. He also thanked the Board for their support.

County Manager Peru spoke about the Manager's Office recommendations regarding the juvenile court funding requests. He explained that they have asked the court to look at using ARPA funds for the Page office rent to offset the expense for FY2024. Upon a question from Chair Horstman, Director

Lightfoot stated that they do have ARPA funds available but that they would like a more permanent commitment to be able to budget that cost more appropriately and for the long-term. County Manager Peru stated he understands the need for assurance but for purposes for today that they are budgeting for FY2024. Supervisor Fowler stated that the Board can only budget for the current Board but that the Page office is amazing and believes in it, and that those services provided are part of the county's services and that can be put on record. Chair Horstman agreed that the current Board cannot bind the future Board, but that they can state their stance.

County Manager Peru also spoke about pending legislation that may have an impact on fee accounts. Director Lightfoot explained that she thinks the legislation will be passed this year and that they are in support of it passing; however, then built-in fee accounts would be disconnected. She stated that is why they are recommending resolving the issue now. County Manager Peru stated that the county has been good at leveraging state dollars without rippling the general fund and that he would support the request if it does not impact the general fund.

Vice Chair Jeronimo Vasquez thanked staff and stated that he appreciates the fact there have been no detentions in three years and it is good to see success of the diversion programs and how they move forward with juvenile justice. Supervisor Fowler stated that juvenile courts have completely changed and now it is an innovative approach in treating people and giving them help. She thanked the judges also and stated that lifting people up creates balance and peace for the individual and the family. She also stated that they will continue to advocate to the state and support the services reaching out to the community, and that she appreciates their work, passion, and emotional strength. Chair Horstman thanked the staff and stated she appreciates their efforts. Supervisor Begay thanked staff for helping those in need of help.

Chair Horstman called for a break at 12:09 for lunch and then resumed the meeting at 12:35 p.m.

3. FY24 Budget Presentation and Discussion/Working Lunch – 12:00 – 12:30 p.m.

Item #3 was not discussed by the Board.

4. Human Resources FY24 Budget presentation and discussion - 12:30 – 1:00 p.m.

Present: Chair Patrice Horstman, Supervisor Judy Begay, and Supervisor Lena Fowler were present in-person. *Vice Chair Jeronimo Vasquez did not return from the break.*

Absent/Excused: Supervisor Matt Ryan and Vice Chair Jeronimo Vasquez.

Also Present: County Manager Steve Peru, Deputy County Manager Sue Brown, Deputy County Manager Andy Bertelsen, Finance Director Siri Mullaney, Human Resources Director Erika Philpot, Assistant County Manager Eslir Musta, Budget Analyst Erin Beckett, Special Assistant to the County Manager Corey Ringenberg, and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors Lindsay Daley were present in-person.

Human Resources Director Erika Philpot had staff introduce themselves. Director Philpot presented information on the Personnel program in Human Resources, and she spoke about the different staff and what they do to provide services to county employees. She also spoke about the accomplishments of the program, provided statistical information, and spoke about the results of the employee engagement survey. Director Philpot provided information on the recruitment and retention program within Human

Resources and spoke about the accomplishments of the program. She explained that there has been a high level of employees on leave due to surgeries needed after COVID and that they are tracking the number of employees using their employee assistance program. Director Philpot provided information on the positions in the Human Resources Department and the current vacancies of positions, which is 5 positions. She went over the organizational chart.

Chair Horstman asked what Tami Suchowiejko's position does for Human Resources and Director Philpot answered that she reconciles all the medical, dental, life insurance bills between census and billing, which needs to be done for active employees and those who have retired. She explained that it needs to be the right amount of money and that she is managing all the retiree payments.

Director Philpot spoke about the employee relations program and the performance measures for the program. She explained that employee evaluations were brought back, that they have resilience month, walks, Supervisors Development Academy and Executive Leadership Academy that are all back in person for employees to attend and have many reclassifications that they work on. Director Philpot also spoke about the diversity program and provided information on the accomplishments of the program. She read some of the positive responses from the employee engagement survey which they received pertaining to the diversity events provided by the County.

Supervisor Lena Fowler left the room at 12:59 p.m. A quorum was lost. Supervisor Lena Fowler returned to the room at 1:00 p.m.

Director Philpot answered questions from the Supervisors regarding how employees in the Human Resources department telecommuting. Supervisor Fowler stated that Human Resources has been very creative over the years and especially during COVID and how they have been working on ways to retain employees and yet, department are still mentioning during their budget presentation that they need more help. Supervisor Fowler spoke about needing to compete with other employers and how we have a housing issue in the community and that there is burnout from overtime. Director Philpot explained that the Human Resources department has worked with directors to be creative which has resulted in a slight uptick in applications, especially after the wxyz compensation plan was implemented. Director Philpot also stated that the county has set itself apart with the benefits to show care for employees and trying to be flexible. She also stated that the county is growing its own in providing employees opportunities to be trained and move up within the organization. She stated that it has been difficult for employees because of the housing costs.

Chair Horstman stated she believes that the county has the best benefits in the state of Arizona and that people can get more from working for the county versus the private sector. She stated that she keeps hearing employees talking about burnout and she is not sure if that is just a few or more and that they want people to stay with the county organization and that they look to Director Philpot for suggestions.

Chair Horstman asked if it really comes down to salary rather than benefits for people. Director Philpot stated that they can still do better and be creative and think of new ideas, but in the end, it doesn't matter if employees cannot afford housing. She stated that there are some employers who are only providing insurance for employees and not for dependents because of cost. Director Philpot stated it is hard to have jobs to grow employees because there are small departments where employees wear a lot of hats and there aren't enough people to train, and they need to look at each individual opening and analyze how to fill it.

Supervisor Begay stated that it is important to look at whether staff are in the right position for the work they do and that she likes the flexibility with telecommuting provided. Supervisor Begay asked what the percentage of staff that moved up due to turnover and Director Philpot answered that 63% were internal promotions during COVID and they usually average 35%. Director Philpot gave an example of employees moving up in the Human Resources department. Chair Horstman stated that she appreciated the work that Director Philpot and her staff do and that she hears wonderful things about the Human Resources department and the care that is shown to employees.

5. Flagstaff Constable FY24 Budget presentation and discussion

Flagstaff Constable Danny Thomas provided information regarding their budget and services. He spoke about the increase in their budget that they are requesting and why they need it. He explained that Deputy Constable Linda Kuczynski had recent calls where they had to take action, which could have resulted in a fatality, as someone she was evicting physically assaulted her. Constable Thomas stated that he had to get an order of protection because someone pulled a knife on him. Chair Horstman asked if they carry weapons, and he answered yes. Constable Thomas provided an overview of his office and the service they provide. He spoke about getting an arrest warrant list and how they send out letters by the month and try to locate offenders and send them letters. He explained that the grant they have is an alternative funding grant that saves time and manpower. He further spoke about the grants they receive and how they work. Constable Thomas explained that they are requesting the budget increase to be able to run the office effectively, limit liability to the county, and maximize officer safety.

Supervisor Fowler asked if the county provided an increase in their budget last year and Special Assistant to the County Manager Corey Ringenberg answered that they did provide an increase last year and that last year's increment request was to adjust the Williams Constable's salary. Supervisor Fowler asked if the increment request is just for the Flagstaff Constable's office and Assistant Ringenberg answered yes. Constable Thomas explained that Deputy Kuczynski does all the administrative work in the office and that they need 2 people, at least, in the office to take care of work, but that Deputy Kuczynski is part-time. Supervisor Fowler asked if the \$2,000 increase is for salary or security and Constable Thomas answered that it would be to increase the salary.

6. Williams Constable FY24 Budget presentation and discussion

Williams Constable Greg King thanked the Board for the increase in salary last year and he spoke about the geographic location served, outcomes of service, goals and objectives of their service and accomplishments. He also provided information on serves/attempts to serve. Lastly, he noted that he does not have any increment or carryover requests for his budget.

The Supervisors thanked him for the information and for his work.

Chair Horstman called for a break at 2:01 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 2:09 p.m.

7. Public Defender FY24 Budget presentation and discussion

Public Defender Sandy Diehl provided information on their department budget. She went over the organizational chart for their office and stated that they currently have no vacant positions for their office. Public Defender Diehl provided information on the trends that her office is seeing including

increased employee retention, improvement of employee morale, decreased dependence on paper and increased reliance on technology. She also spoke about the challenges her office faces including an increase in complexity of cases, office configuration constraints, and state bar licensing delays. She spoke about the needs of their office, which included enhancing capacity and accessibility for electronic disclosure, consideration of economic challenges within Flagstaff, and continued support from the Board. Public Defender Diehl spoke about the adult felony program and spoke about the performance measures for that program. She provided information on the adult misdemeanor program and went over the performance measures for that program. She explained that delinquency cases are going up. Upon a question from Supervisor Fowler, Public Defender Diehl explained that if they represent a child there is a lot they can do. Public Defender Diehl provided information on their increment requests for their budget. County Manager Peru stated that his office sees no obstacles for providing the requested legal assistant.

Chair Horstman expressed appreciation to Public Defender Diehl. Supervisor Fowler thanked Public Defender Diehl and stated it is the first year there is calm, to which Public Defender Diehl stated things are going well in their office.

8. Legal Defender FY24 Budget presentation and discussion

Legal Defender Erika Arlington introduced staff with her. She spoke about the two programs that they have including the in-house indigent legal services and the contractual indigent legal services. She spoke about the trends, challenges, goals and accomplishments of the programs. She stated that they have gone down in criminal cases that they have and that this is the first year that her office is fully staffed. Supervisor Fowler asked how they handle clients that have mental health issues and Legal Defender Arlington answered that when people are danger to themselves or to staff due to mental illness then they can go to the Guidance Center and if they are in danger and won't take medication then the Court can order a Title 36 evaluation. She provided data related to staff's workload between Fiscal Year 2020 and Fiscal Year 2023, highlighted service delivery and locations and target populations served. Lastly, she explained there are no carryover requests from the Legal Defender's Office for Fiscal Year 2024.

9. FY24 Budget Presentation and Discussion

County Manager Peru and the Board reviewed the budget presentation for tomorrow through the end of the week. They briefly discussed the arrangement of tomorrow's discussion items, noting they may need to complete the Public Works presentation on Thursday.

Chair Horstman adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:10 p.m.

COCONINO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

(SEAL)


Patrice Horstman, Chair

ATTEST:


Lindsay Daley, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

