



Cassia County Board of Commissioners

*Cassia County Courthouse
Commission Chambers
1459 Overland Ave. – Room 206
Burley, ID 83318
www.CassiaCounty.org*

Board Members:

*Chairman Dennis Crane (District #3) ~ dcrane@cassiacounty.org
Paul Christensen (District #1) ~ pchristensen@cassiacounty.org
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Thursday, January 29, 2015

12:00 PM

The Board of Cassia County Commissioners met this day in a special session in the Commission Chambers of the Cassia County Courthouse.

THOSE PRESENT:

County Commissioners:

Dennis Crane, Chairman

Prosecuting Attorney:

Doug Abenroth

Paul Christensen

Administrator:

Kerry D. McMurray

Bob Kunau

Clerk of the Board:

Joseph W. Larsen

Others:

Bob Moore, Minidoka Commissioner
Patty Temple, Minidoka Clerk
McCord Larsen, Prosecutor office
Paul Jeffries, Prosecutor office
Heather Evans, Deputy Auditor
Hyrum Hibbert, Public Defender

Tim Schneider, Public Defender
Dennis Byington, Public Defender
Mick Hodges, Magistrate Judge
Rob Hemsley, Minidoka Prosecutor
Rick Bollar, Magistrate Judge

Scott Lindstrom, Burley Prosecutor
Darwin Johnson, Mini-Cassia Jail
Dwight Davis, Assessor
Jay Heward, Sheriff
George Warrell, Undersheriff
Amber Prewitt, Adult Probation

- 1) 12:00 PM LUNCH MEETING WITH MAGISTRATE JUDGES AND PROSECUTORS REGARDING CASSIA COUNTY JAIL USE AND SCRAM UNITS
 - a) Doug Abenroth conducted this portion of the special meeting. Judge Canon was unable to attend and provided written concerns to Abenroth.
 - b) Minidoka uses SCRAM units more than Cassia units.
 - c) Pre-trial detention issues. Been trying to lower bonds to be more reasonable. Also wanted to use more SCRAM units. Cost to purchase SCRAM units is outweighed by the unit fees collected.
 - d) Judge Hodges asked about GPS units. Prewitt said those units are not purchased but rather provided by the vendor. Rental fees pay for their use.
 - e) Current procedures were discussed. The Jail population of booked inmates was compared to contracted inmates who the jail receives payment for with placement from other entities or facilities.
 - f) Abenroth discussed shortening the time of pre-trial holds for a small amount of time to reduce pressure on the jail.
 - g) Judge Hodges talked about Mental Health Court that helps to reduce incarcerated individuals.
 - h) Hemsley and Abenroth discussed with those present pro se mental holds which there is little they can do about except to try and involve Health and Welfare in those situations. Abenroth talked of the importance of helping with budgets and costs and recommended taking pro se holds directly to the courts.

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- i) Johnson and the magistrate judges discussed those who are held for 120 days being released early. It was stressed that it needs to have the blessing of the Sheriff and Prosecutor.
 - j) Bollar and Prewitt discussed probation number differentials between Minidoka and Cassia Counties.
 - k) Byington talked about pre-trial conditions being used and whether it creates a potential problem in the consideration of due process and bond requirements.
 - l) Byington expressed concern about someone who is charged with one crime and conditions are put on them for drug or alcohol use and they may get incarcerated on a potential unrelated charge. Judge Bollar talked of the need to protect the community.
 - m) Commissioner Christensen expressed appreciation to everybody and referred to the Justice Fund of the County that is continually stressed by County costs. Commissioner Moore expressed the same concern about the stress on the Justice Fund.
 - n) Schneider mentioned that parole violations are up significantly in Cassia County and that contributes to the additional costs. Those individuals generally remain in jail two to three weeks as they cannot meet bond.
- 2) 1:05 PM DELIBERATE ON MISDEMEANOR PROBATION DEPARTMENT (AMP) WAGE INCREASES
- a) AMP Supervisor Amber Prewitt reported they had lost two probation officers which they are trying to replace.
 - b) The current rate of pay for an entry level probation officer is \$13.00 per hour. Prewitt has interviewed 10 individuals. At least four turned down the offer, and the others did not qualify due to issues with previous employment or they did not pass the background check. The rate of pay was clearly an issue and some said if it were higher, they would work. They have gone through four cycles of interviews since November and in that three months, she has not been able to hire anybody.
 - c) Prewitt studied the costs to her department in overtime and what they have remaining in their budget.
 - d) Commissioner Kunau talked about the benefits being stressed to those offered jobs. Prewitt said that was talked about with every potential employee.
 - e) Prewitt said she would like to offer \$14.00 per hour as what she thought would be a reasonable wage. \$14.12 was recommended by the Joint Justice Board last Tuesday according to Commissioner Christensen. He supports that as a Board member now.
 - f) Chairman Crane expressed hesitation to approve that rate of pay and would like to take it under advisement. He said it is a critical issue when wages are increased with the current financial situation in the County.
 - g) Prewitt reiterated that \$13.00 per hour is a hard sell to potential probation officer employees.
 - h) Commissioner Christensen said he would encourage action to be taken today. Prewitt said the joint Justice Board was on board with it.
 - i) Commissioner Kunau desired more information on the issue before a decision is made.
 - j) In discussing SCRAM units, Commissioner Christensen said they generate revenues that should outweigh any extra costs. Prewitt stated that of 20 units they have 17 that are out currently and they lack a sufficient number of them to meet their needs.
 - k) Prewitt pointed out that they perform roughly the same duties as Felony Probation, yet they are paid much less for those services in AMP. She said she only wanted to bring that up because she felt that is directly responsible for her inability to hire someone over the past three months.
 - l) When asked by Commissioner Kunau about the current revenue situation, Larsen said, though he didn't have the numbers in front of him, that both Cassia and Minidoka Counties had to infuse money into AMP since revenues were significantly down. He felt that was due to the nature of probationers being the ones least capable of paying their obligations, increasing numbers of probationers, and that has

diminished revenues continuing on even during this fiscal year. Revenues have dropped in nearly every area in the County, as is the case statewide. The issues are firstly, where do you go to get additional revenues and secondly, what are the Board's funding priorities with decreased revenues. Budgeted revenues are all being spent as we go and the only other area available is reserve funds and savings that are invested in the Treasurer's office. There is no real good solution and Larsen felt he is in a bad position to advise the Board. He further reiterated, they are dealing with the type of client who would rather go to jail than to work and pay probation fees. Consequently, revenues diminish.

- m) Larsen also pointed out that accrued overtime during this time of there not being sufficient number s of probation officers will create a liability for payouts in the future of hourly wages at time and a half that will further impact the budget. That doesn't show in the reports, but will come along later down the trail as a negative effect on the budget.
- n) Commissioner Kunau pointed out that others in the County have only seen cost of living increases along the way with all the other increases in we see law enforcement and at the jail.
- o) Commissioner Christensen asked if Prewitt could live with \$14.00 per hour as a starting wage instead of \$14.12. She felt she didn't desire to have a starting wage the same as someone who is currently working and who has experience.
- p) Larsen reminded the Board that Sheriff Heward had suggested \$14.12 per hour as a starting wage as it puts AMP officers at a starting wage that is parallel to those in the jail.

1:34 PM

MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHRISTENSEN MOVED TO INCREASE THE AMP OFFICER'S STARTING WAGE AT \$14.12 PER HOUR AND TO RAISE ANY AMP OFFICERS UNDER THAT AMOUNT TO THE STARTING WAGE OF \$14.12. COMMISSIONER KUNAU SECONDED THE MOTION. COMMISSIONER CHRISTENSEN VOTED AYE, COMMISSIONER KUNAU VOTED AYE, AND CHAIRMAN CRANE ABSTAINED.

3) 1:35 PM DELIBERATE ON COUNTY BUILDING REPAIR MATTERS

- a) McMurray said that the Juvenile Probation office requested for safety reasons that windows be placed in their office doors. He said the costs associated with that being done was at their request for their reasons. The issue is whether that cost should be taken care of by that department or paid for by the County building budget. The total amount of costs is \$450.00 according to McMurray.
- b) The Board recommended that the billing be referred back to the Joint Juvenile Probation Board for that joint committee's approval.

1:38 AM

MOTION: COMMISSIONER CHRISTENSEN MOVED TO REFER THE BILLING FOR INSTALLATION OF WINDOWS IN THE JUVENILE PROBATION OFFICE DOORS TO THE JOINT JUVENILE PROBATION BOARD FOR PAYMENT. COMMISSIONER KUNAU SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4) 1:38 PM DISCUSS CASSIA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE DATA

- a) Sheriff Heward said that financial amounts provided by Deputy Auditor Heather Evans very closely matched his numbers. The Law Enforcement Committee is enamored by Ada County Sheriff Raney's model and they desire him to emulate that. Heward didn't desire to get right down to the small purchase amounts as he felt they were incidental. He came to an amount of \$300,666.94 for "B" Budget expenditures attributed to the City of Burley including officer liability and car insurance.
- b) Evans said the amounts calculated by the Auditor's office was based on percentages and were actually a lower amount. Larsen indicated that the Auditor's office needs to be explicit that they are unable to make an accurate division between "B" Budget expenditures attributed to the City of Burley and to the

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rest of the County as they are not privy to the day to day operations. Only the Sheriff's office can determine the level of expenditures that are made on behalf of City of Burley law enforcement appropriately. Larsen said his office can only give the overall total expenditures.

- c) Heward said he would defend those totals all day long.
 - d) Commissioner Christensen said that the numbers presented were the hard numbers spent. He said in negotiations, it must include what it is worth to the County and to the City of Burley in a compromise.
 - e) Evans and Warrell presented to the Board salaries and benefits for those included in the contract.
 - f) Evans stated that with the revised version, as requested by the Sheriff and the Board, the total of costs identified was \$1,642,888.37.
 - g) Dispatch was not included in this, even though it is part of the contract with the City of Burley at 60% of those costs. McMurray went over the contract provision regarding dispatch coverage in the event the contract is terminated. Warrell reported on his talks with the City of Blackfoot, the City of Rupert, and the City of Jerome about their payment towards dispatch. Larsen said he sent out an email to other County Clerks regarding city participation in the costs of dispatch. Though participation is not consistent throughout the State of Idaho, most municipalities do pay differing amounts to the County for dispatch services. Most cities pay something, some pay nothing, and others pay most of dispatch.
 - h) Chairman Crane asked why we were not including that in actual costs reported. Heward and Larsen determined to include the overall costs of County dispatch just in case any questions come up regarding that. It was pointed out that 911 calls have to be taken care of by the County. It was reported that \$280,000 is 60% of the Dispatch budget. It was also felt by many of those present that with tracking calls to dispatch, actually more than 60% of calls to dispatch are attributed to the City of Burley.
 - i) Chairman Crane made a point to those present that this discussion did not constitute negotiations in any form for the Law Enforcement contract with the City of Burley. It was merely a means to discuss accuracy of numbers to be presented to the Law Enforcement Committee.
 - j) The Board emphasized putting together an alternative plan if that becomes necessary for the future. Heward and Warrell said they are working on an alternative plan.
 - k) Larsen pointed out that the contract payment from the City of Burley of \$1.45 million would immediately be gone in the event of a termination of the contract and that would just be a place to start for what available funds there would be for law enforcement. It expands beyond that just with the costs that have been identified today that is attributed to City law enforcement. He also pointed out that if the actual costs exceeded that \$1.45 million, the Board would have to identify funding sources to do that. There are no additional funding sources the Auditor's office is aware of that we are not already spending in their entirety each year. Savings is the only other source that comes to mind.
 - l) Evans and Larsen discussed overtime inclusions in the officer's W-2 calculations. The Auditor's office can only provide the actual amount of overtime based on base pay of each officer times the number of hours for full time employment. The excess would then need to be gone over by the Sheriff's office and portray the percentage of that overtime attributed to service to the City of Burley as opposed to the rest of the County for each individual officer.
- 5) **2:28 PM** ADJOURNMENT

APPROVED:

/s/ _____

Dennis Crane, Chairman of the Board

ATTEST:

/s/ _____

Joseph W. Larsen, Clerk of the Board