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Sent: Monday, April 3, 2023 4:13 PM
To: COB_mail
Subject: Public Comment, April 4 BOS Meeting

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Dear Board of Supervisors,

My name is Justine Hernandez and I am proud to work as librarian in the Pima County Public Library. Also, I am a long-time union member—previously represented by SEIU and currently represented by AFSCME. I am submitting this letter of public comment to you, the Board of Supervisors, for your April 4th meeting where you will weigh-in and help move forward some items related to the Classification and Compensation work the County has undergone over the last couple years—namely the approval of the 2023/2024 Fiscal Year Budget Framework which include the Compensation Implementation Plan request of \$14,000,000 (item 14) as well as the Procurement request to award CBIZ an additional \$75,000 to complete their work of reducing the overall classification titles (item 37). I would like to preface my comments first by expressing my gratitude to County Administrator Leshner, her team, and the Board of Supervisors, for their wisdom to support this important, necessary, and timely work.

I appreciate that in her March 2, 2023 Memo to the Board, Supervisor Leshner acknowledges some of the glaring and troublesome revelations that the CBIZ study brought to light, such as classification redundancy, lack of transparency in how one advances (or as if often the case, does not advance) through their career path, and the outdated job and salary structures which has left many of the County's more economically vulnerable employees finding themselves in immovable classifications and salary ranges, just to name a few.

However, as a woman in a County Department staffed by a majority female-identifying workforce, I don't believe the scope of the work completed by CBIZ went far enough and deep enough in asking relevant questions related to gender pay equity, among others. Pima County has an opportunity to truly move the needle in the direction of a well-paid female-identifying labor force, but neglected to use the lens of gender equity as they conducted their work. I also find it disconcerting that the recent rekindling of a Pima County and AFSCME 449 relationship that a good faith effort was not made to include the important voice of labor advocacy to the conversation.

It's unclear from the March 2nd memo how the requested \$14,000,000 for FY2023/2024 will be distributed among County employees; such an exact amount suggests there is some plan already in the works. The lack of transparency is

troubling and leaves the people ultimately affected out of the conversation. Our library administrators are waiting on pins and needles to learn more, just as we are.

I am sure you, the Board of Supervisors, will come to your own questions when it's time. I would also urge you to consider some of the following considerations, if they are not already on your radar. Some are specific to the Library Department, others are not.

- Even though CBIZ's original contract with Pima County states the following objectives:
2.1.5 - *Establish an internally equitable compensation framework to guide future compensation decisions*, the CBIZ study looked at **external** market comparisons (i.e. comparing Library classifications to other regional library salaries). In our own, rigorous internal Salary Study, it was revealed that there are very obvious comparisons between library positions and comparable, higher-paid County positions in other departments. The library is just one example, but this process will affect other female-dominated positions, as well.
- In that same vein, I would urge you to consider the issue of **occupational segregation**, which keeps wages for female-dominated positions perpetually low when they are continually compared to those in other female-dominated systems. As Pima County endeavors to be an "*Employer of Choice*" in a world of male, female, AND non-binary workforce, that can only happen when you address the gender pay gap head on by making comparisons *across occupational boundaries* based on equivalent work duties, responsibilities, and minimum qualifications. Such a strategy aligns with the County's commitment to supporting diversity, equity and inclusion in its workforce.
- To the point that diversity, equity, and inclusion are part of Pima County's commitment to its workforce, what has been the role of Pima County's Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Program Manager in examining CBIZ's job evaluations?

I am encouraged by much of the work done so far and the promise it holds for helping Pima County recruit and retain a stellar work force, I just don't believe the work is complete. I hope that these thoughts and any other feedback you receive will help guide you toward an implementation plan that has diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices at its core.

Respectfully,

Justine Hernandez, Librarian, Sam Lena South Tucson Library