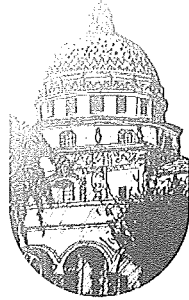


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MEMORANDUM

TO: Adelita Grijalva, Chair Pima County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Laura Conover, Pima County Attorney
DATE: May 15, 2024
RE: FY 24/25 Proposed Budget

In solidarity with the rest of Pima County Departments and Elected Officials, the Pima County Attorney’s Office (PCAO) is cooperating fully with the budget process as proposed by the County Administrator. PCAO is extremely grateful for the Board of Supervisor’s return of \$660,435 this year and next year to our general fund budget so that we may make payroll given the Phase 1 and 2 class and compensation pay increases. Likewise, PCAO is grateful that Special Revenue funding will be returned this coming year for PCAO’s use after its use was not allowed in FY 23/24.

It is incumbent upon PCAO to bring to the Board’s attention that in finalizing its proposed budget for PCAO, the Finance Department did not support any of our supplemental requests, including requests for funding for case management software for the criminal division (a core software for prosecutors and staff), for case management software for the civil division (with a similar function for the County’s plaintiff and defense lawyers), for outside council when there are conflicts of interest, and for a Microsoft 365 software upgrade (which would have upgraded PCAO’s system to be comparable with the rest of the county for its Pima1 Enterprise Resource Planning upgrade and our security to the same standard enjoyed by the County), etc.

The effect of the proposed budget by the Finance Department on PCAO is to pay for salary increases with a significant reduction to its general fund allocation for supplies and services (including utility costs, witness travel costs, expert witness costs, etc.). Whereas the supplies and services amount remaining from the target proposed by Finance Department is \$1,899,147, this number is not reflective of actual annual cost incurred by PCAO over the last few years (FY 21/22 \$2,848,493; FY 22/23 \$3,417,107; FY 23/24 up to and including April \$2,711,678). This leaves PCAO in the position to prioritize funding either critical FTEs that protect public safety or the continuity of operations of the office. This would mean eliminating critical FTEs and their funding and repurposing for the operating costs for the year. All of this would be exacerbated by an additional 2% general fund reduction.

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The gap between actuals and the proposed budget for PCAO's historical general fund actuals approaches or exceeds \$1,000,000. This proposed shortfall of funding for FY 24/25 is of grave concern. While PCAO will attempt to cut costs (difficult where most of our budget is personnel costs), and PCAO will endeavor to find outside grant funding. Because our statutory mission remains to fully provide public safety for Pima County residents and visitors and quality legal representation to the Board of Supervisors and the County. We are not lawfully allowed to come up short on our mission, nor will we. Thus, we are duty bound to point out the financial disadvantage this proposed budget puts the County's law firm in.

Given these facts, PCAO must warn now that we will no doubt need to approach the Board in the coming fiscal year for contingency funding to continue operations.

I remain ever available to answer any questions or to address concerns you may have regarding this regrettable proposal, or regarding any other matter.

C: Baird Greene, Chief Deputy County Attorney
Nicole Heath, PCAO Legal Administrator