

Response to Questions on the FY 2015 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Herrity

Question: The Budget Consideration Item reduction “*Reduce deputies in civil proceedings*” has been requested. Provide a summary of the reduction including the impact it would have.

Response: As requested by the Board of Supervisors on March 25, 2014, savings of \$850,000 could be achieved by reducing the number of Deputy Sheriffs available to staff civil courtroom proceedings from 24 to 14, an almost 42 percent reduction.

Taking this reduction would reduce the level of security and orderliness for Judges, Courthouse employees, and the public. Judges are given the difficult task of confronting the opposing litigants and resolving hotly contested issues; the Deputies are provided for their support and protection. Eliminating 10/10.0 Deputies would reduce the ability to control the environment of the Courthouse before the outbursts occur and again in getting the quick backup needed to respond to a violent situation. If this proposal is adopted, the Courtroom will continue to be video monitored from a central location and Judges will be able to confidentially contact security immediately should any issues arise that may require security presence; however, the response will take a period of time and as has been expressed previously by the Judges, they have considerable concerns with any reductions in this area and would oppose this proposal.

As the Board will recall, as part of the FY 2014 Advertised Budget Plan, two separate reductions in this area were proposed. First, a reduction of 3/3.0 FTE positions and \$255,000 was included to eliminate deputy presence from various classes of Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court (JDRC) and some Circuit Court less emotionally capricious civil hearings. Second, a reduction of \$85,000 and 1/1.0 FTE position was included eliminating the Deputy presence in JDRC status hearings, thought to be the least combative type of case. There are currently 24 Deputies that provide security at all civil hearings; the proposed FY 2014 reduction would have removed a total of four Deputies, for a total of 20.

As part of their deliberations on the FY 2014 Advertised Budget Plan, the Board decided to restore three of the four positions noted above and as a result, the FY 2014 Adopted Budget Plan only included a reduction of 1/1.0 FTE eliminating the Deputy presence in JDRC status hearings. At the time of the reduction, staff were under the impression that this reduction would have very limited impact as these hearings mostly involved the judge with lawyers. Subsequent to the adoption of the budget, staff heard from the judges and other court personnel that in fact, many status hearings in Juvenile court included litigants. As a result of this new information, as part of the *FY 2013 Carryover Review*, the Board approved the restoration of this position.