

**COMMISSIONERS' MINUTES
KITITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
COMMISSIONERS AUDITORIUM
SPECIAL MEETING**

FRIDAY

12:30 P.M.

DECEMBER 22, 2017

Board members present: Chairman Paul Jewell & Vice-Chairman Osiadacz. Excused: Commissioner Obie O'Brien.

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board; Doug Mitchell, Deputy Prosecutor; Scott Sparks, Superior Court Judge; Candace Hooper, Superior Court Judge; Darryl Ellis, Upper District Court Judge; Diana MacKenzie, Upper District Court Administrator; Barb Demory, Lower District Court Administrator; Greg Zempel, Prosecutor; Sarah Keith, Superior Court Administrator; and 2 members of the public.

SPECIAL MEETING

PUBLIC DEFENSE COSTS

SUPERIOR COURT

The meeting was moved from the Commissioners Conference Room to the Auditorium due to the amount of seating needed for the meeting.

At approximately 12:30 p.m. Chairman Jewell opened a Special Meeting to receive an update from Superior Court on the costs for Public Defense.

Scott Sparks, Superior Court Judge, provided a handout and explained how the Superior Court is on the cusp of a crisis in providing indigent defense to adults charged with felony crimes. He provided a background of indigent defense since 1989 and the system that they've been using which has been using a list of willing Attorneys who've placed their names upon a list. The system has compensated them on a per-case basis, with additional funding being available for time spent in trial and for complex or abnormally time-consuming cases. He indicated that as of January 1, 2018 they will only have one attorney who has expressed their willingness to take on regular appointments for adult felonies. The caseload has been approximately 330-360 adult felonies filed each year and the compensation they receive is not competitive anymore. He reviewed various models which governmental entities provide indigent defense and said they would be in favor of offering contracts with attorneys. It was noted that although there may not be an impact to the 2018

General Fund, it is important that they begin talking about a long term solution as it will most likely begin impacting the budget in 2019 of approximately another \$50,000.00.

There was discussion on how Attorney's need to know how much money they will be getting, not how many cases and thus a guaranteed contract for a guaranteed amount of money would be most appealing to take on public defense felony cases.

Superior Court Judge Candice Hooper said if they cannot attract local attorneys, they need to at least be able to attract ones from Yakima and Grant Counties and make it worth their while or they will get into a real bind.


The Board indicated they have an obligation to assist but wish it was in smaller amounts rather than 1 large jump as it stands now. They appreciated the conversation and explained how they look forward to working together to prepare for the future.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

CLERK OF THE BOARD


Julie Kjorsvik

**KITTITAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
KITTITAS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**


Paul Jewell, Chairman