

MEMO RE: DISTRICT COURT

Personnel Committee – March 5, 2024

ISSUE 1: Probation Officer Marquardt has resigned effective March 29, 2024. Officer Marquardt serves as both a District Court Probation Officer and as a Case Manager for our Drug Court.

Proposed Solution to Issue 1: We are in the process of interviewing individuals to fill the position of Probation Officer, which will not have Drug Court responsibilities (see Issue 2 for more explanation). The hiring of a new Probation Officer will yield a savings to the County for a period of time as the new officer will start at \$23.56 per hour, and the outgoing officer was at \$24.55 per hour.

ISSUE 2: Chief Probation Officer Latuszek has resigned; she was also the Drug Court Administrator and a Case Manager. Her initial last day was to occur on March 15, 2024, but on February 26, 2024 she decided to make that her last day. As such, I did not have an opportunity to review the status of any of her probation files or drug court duties. Ms. Latuszek's departure has created an immense problem for Drug Court. With her and Officer Marquardt's resigning, we have no case managers or anyone to administer the program.

Proposed Solution to Issue 2: My intent is for Drug Court to stand alone financially and personnel wise, and not have an overlap between any District Court responsibilities and Drug Court. As such, I do not intend to fill Ms. Latuszek's position as Chief Probation Officer in which she was paid \$28.93 per hour. The new Probation Officer will cover all probation responsibilities.

In order to address the needs of District Court (too high of a volume of work, which has led to turnover), I want to hire an additional Deputy Clerk in District Court at the rate of \$20.27. The additional Deputy Clerk can be paid without an additional cost to the County because of not filling the Chief Probation Officer position; this will result in a savings to the County.

Drug Court will need to have someone to take over the case management duties of both prior Probation Officers and the administrative responsibilities that Ms. Latuszek handled. The most pressing duties in the interim will be the case management. My proposed solution is to enlist Nicole Hatch. Ms. Hatch is a member of our Drug Court team, and through her role with Community Corrections already works with the majority of our participants. Ms. Hatch can work with Officer Marquardt during his remaining weeks to learn the process and software in relation to the case management for Drug Court. I propose paying Ms. Hatch a stipend of \$250.00 per week. I anticipate the hourly requirement to be around 10-15 hours. The stipend could be paid through the cost savings from not hiring a new Chief Probation Officer, or it could be paid from the Opioid Settlement Fund. Ultimately, there will need to be a discussion about the future of Drug Court and how to pay for an administrator and case manager. However, at this time, I need to ensure that the program continues to move forward until a decision is reached on how to pay for the administration of the Drug Court.