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DUNN COUNTY, WISCONSIN

RESOLUTION NO. 23

Supporting the District Attorney's Request for Additional Prosecutorial Staff and the Current Proposal for Pay Progression for Assistant District Attorneys

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dunn County Board of Supervisors supports both the request by the District Attorney for additional prosecutorial staff and pay progression for Assistant District Attorneys and further directs that the Clerk send copies of this Resolution to the Governor, state and federal legislative representatives having constituencies in Dunn County, and such other public officials that the District Attorney may deem appropriate.


Offered this 15th day of March, 2017, at Menomonie, Wisconsin.

OFFERED BY THE JUDICIARY AND LAW COMMITTEE:

Adopted on: March 15, 2017


David Bartlett, Chair

ATTEST:


Julie A. Wathke, County Clerk

Approved as to Form and Execution:


Nicholas P. Lange, Corporation Counsel

Budget Impact: Adoption of this Resolution will not impact the 2017 budget.

Background Information: Dunn County is currently allotted 3.0 prosecutor FTEs, including the elected District Attorney position, that cover all criminal, traffic, juvenile, and DNR cases in Dunn County. In 2016 the District Attorney's Office charged 3,020 cases (not including cases handled through the Pre-Charge Program), requiring each attorney to prosecute over 1,000 cases each year. The District Attorney's Office has fewer prosecutors now than it did in 2002, when it charged a total of 2,714 cases. The cases handled by the Office of the District Attorney continue to become more complex primarily through scientific advances including the use of DNA.

Local law enforcement in Dunn County employs approximately 125 officers, from nine different departments/agencies, to the three prosecutors employed by the District Attorney's Office. With a population of approximately 44,000, persons, Dunn County is a complex county with large areas of rural coverage combined with a population center that includes a state university.

The national standard for prosecutor staffing, although subject to some variable from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, indicates that any jurisdiction having only one prosecutor per 10,000 in population is in serious danger of case mismanagement, inadvertent malpractice, and/or the inability to provide each case with the required attention, all of which can result in justice not being done. Dunn County currently has one prosecutor per approximately 15,000 citizens.

The current pay scale for Assistant District Attorneys is not competitive with attorney wages in the private sector, which creates substantial challenges for recruiting top Assistant District Attorney candidates and retaining the dedicated Assistant District Attorneys that faithfully serve the State of Wisconsin. In order to begin addressing the economic disparity between the private and public sector, pay progression for Assistant District Attorneys has been included in the 2017-2019 State of Wisconsin Budget proposed by the Governor.

The District Attorney has also requested funding for an additional 2.0 FTE prosecutors in Dunn County. This request is supported by the Wisconsin Department of Administration in its request for the Governor to include these positions in the 2017-2019 State of Wisconsin Budget. However, the requested funding for an additional 2.0 FTE prosecutors by both the District Attorney and the Wisconsin Department of Administration was not included in the 2017-2019 State of Wisconsin Budget proposed by the Governor.