

**LIBRARIANS REPORT
OF THE SPECIAL PROCEEDINGS
SKAGIT COUNTY LAW LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Thursday, July 13, 2023, at 8:30 AM**

The Skagit County Law Library Board of Trustees held a Special Meeting on Thursday, July 13, 2023. The meeting was available both in person at the Library and remotely via Zoom. Present at the library were Ex-Officio Member Commissioner Peter Browning, Judge Elizabeth Neidzski, Ms. Jeri Chavez, Ex-Officio Member Ms. Michelle Cook and the Law Librarian, Ms. Cindy Adams. Board of Trustees Chair Melissa Simonsen and Mr. Andy Schuh were present via Zoom.

- I. **Call to Order:** A quorum being established, the Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 8:37 am. On a motion by Judge Neidzski, seconded by Ms. Chavez, the Special Agenda was unanimously approved.
- II. **Presentation of the 2024 Draft Law Library Budget and the 2023 County Salary Study.** The Library's draft budget for 2024 (the "Preliminary LL Budget") was presented by the Court Administrator.

The Preliminary Draft Budget was created by the Operations Manager of Juvenile Court as a starting point for budget evaluations going forward. The Preliminary LL Budget proposed a total library expense budget in 2024 of \$140,717.92. This included many built in increases over the 2023 Budget that were required by contract. From this initial figure, the Librarian and Court Administrator proposed various additions and deletions.

- III. **Librarians' Proposed Changes to Non-payroll Expenses:** In accordance with the Special Agenda after presentation of the of the OJC Budget, the Librarian presented proposed changes to the Preliminary LL Budget for non-payroll expenses.

A. Proposed Adjustments to 2024 Draft Budget.

The Law Librarian presented some necessary increases from the 2023 budget. First, the Librarian built in a 5% increase in internet costs. The current internet contract will be up for renewal this November and the Librarian and Court Administrator anticipate an increase in pricing. Next, the Librarian anticipates an increase in copy usage due to increased Library hours. This results in a proposed increase in the copier rental budget. As increases in the Westlaw contracts had already been added to the baseline, no adjustment to those amounts were needed.

Next the Law Librarian presented several cost cutting changes to the non-payroll expense budget. These include totally eliminating budget line items for updating/servicing the patron computers, as well as the budgets for Travel, Education/Training, and Volunteer Activities.

Finally, the Librarian presented an option to reallocate funds from Code Books/Maps to Library books. The Librarian and Court Administrator believe the Code Publishing obligation should be removed from the Library's budget and those funds be reallocated to purchase books for the Library's collection (See Section III.B., infra.)

RESOLVED: That the Board is satisfied with the Law Librarian's reported analysis of non-payroll adjustments, and she is directed and authorized to continue to work with the Office of Juvenile Court to propose all final non-payroll adjustments by the next Board Meeting.

B. Proposed Cancellation of Library's Code Publishing Commitment.

Late last year, attention was brought to the curious invoicing by Code Publishing relating to the codification and publication of changes to the Skagit County Code. The Law Librarian referred the Board's attention to Skagit County Code Sections 1.08.010 through 1.08.030, which state that revisions and updates to the Code are the responsibility of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office. The Law Librarian and Court Administrator concluded there was no rationale for the Library to carry the financial and administrative burden of codifying the Skagit County Code when its resources are so limited, and when it is not charged by law with doing so. However, the Court Administrator reported that per the existing contract with Code Publishing, the Law Library has been named as the source of funding for the Skagit Code codification and that the contract was recently amended to have an end date of December 31, 2024. Until then, the County remains contractually bound to use the Library budget to fulfill to the contract's current payment terms.

RESOLVED: That the Board is satisfied with the Law Librarian's reported analysis of the Law Library's obligation under the Code Publishing. The Law Librarian and Court Administrator are directed to work with the Prosecuting Attorney's office to shift the Law Library's burden under this contract to the Prosecuting Attorney's office as per Skagit County Code Sections 1.08.010 through 1.08.030 and to report back prior to the contract's expiration on December 31, 2024.

IV. Court Administrator's Report on Payroll Expenses: In accordance with the Special Agenda, after presentation proposed non-payroll adjustments, the Court Administrator presented proposed changes to payroll expenses.

To ensure the County's wages and salaries remain competitive relative to other counties in the state, the County commissioned a salary study which included a survey of all county positions using other counties as comparators (the "Compensation Study.") The result of this months' long study was an increase in wages in nearly all sections of County government. The Compensation Study created a need to increase the Library's Personnel Budget for 2024

By definition, there are few adjustments to the personnel budget that can be used to offset a payroll increase. However, one line item in the personnel budget could be eliminated to reduce costs. This is the budget provision for an on-call law librarian used to cover times at the Library when the Law Librarian is away. It is possible that by cutting this item in whole or in part the Library can make up at least some of the increase in the Law Library's budget necessitated by the Compensation Study. Any other cuts will have to be made in the non-payroll portions of the budget. (See Section III., infra.)

RESOLVED: That the Board is satisfied with the Court Administrator's reported analysis of payroll adjustments, and she is directed and authorized to continue to work with the Office of Juvenile Court to propose all final payroll adjustments by the next Board Meeting.

- V. **Library Revenue Going Forward:** Given the increased budget pressure due to the Compensation Study increases, the Court Administrator proposed the the Board look at ways in which the Library can generate revenue going forward. The two most obvious ways for the Library to create revenue is through charging for copies and notary services. These are currently free to the public. In addition, it was proposed that the Library publish and sell soft bound resources, such as the 2023-20234 Skagit Superior Court Local Court Rules, for a price to be set by the Law Librarian and Court Administrator. The Board recognized the tension between generating revenue and providing free services that are important for access to the courts by low income pro se patrons. However budgetary constraints have made generating income necessary.

RESOLVED: That the Law Librarian and Court Administrator develop different ways to increase Library revenues, to be presented and acted upon by the Board after the 2024 Library Budget is finalized.

- VI. **New Budget Business:** Commissioner Browning suggested that in order to preserve Law Library hours from any cuts, it may be possible to reallocate the Law Librarians duties to take on more administrative work for Court Administration. This would keep the Law Library open by shifting some of the cost of the Library payroll budget to the Superior Court Administration budget.

RESOLVED: That the Court Administrator explore the advantages and disadvantages of making an adjustment to the allocation of the Librarian's duties and report back at the next meeting on the efficacy of such a change.

- VII. **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Chavez, seconded by Mr. Schuh. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:38 am.