

JEROME COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

PRESENT: Ben Crouch, Chairman
John Crozier, Vice Chairman
Jane White, Deputy Clerk

Meeting convened at 10 A.M.

TAX DEED AUCTION

Commissioner Crouch conducted an auction of tax deed property taken by the County on May 17, 2021. Only one 40-acre parcel of bare ground had not been redeemed, formerly owned by Robert Campbell Trust.

Commissioner Crouch began the auction by opening two sealed bids, both of which were more than the minimum bid of \$562.58. Bidding exceeded both sealed bids and ended at \$110,000.

11 A.M. – Commissioner Howell was present.

MIGLIURI & RODRIGUEZ—PUBLIC DEFENDER CONTRACT

Patricia Migliuri, Lisa Rodriguez, and Carlos Rodriguez were present as public defenders under contract with Jerome County.

Patricia Migliuri referred to her firm's letter of July 16 requesting \$2500 more per month for defending felony cases as well as conflict cases for misdemeanors, child protection, and other public attorney appointments. The letter had also stated the law firm additionally handles drug court arraignments and is becoming involved in domestic violence court.

Migliuri stated Jerome County cases assigned to Migliuri & Rodriguez have increased by 20 percent.

Clerk/Auditor/Recorder Michelle Emerson was present.

Migliuri continued to speak of increased workloads and increased County population. She said employee retention is also difficult.

Chief Deputy Clerk Tracee McKim was present.

Migliuri stated that her firm needed to hire another legal assistant. She said Carlos Rodriguez works seven days a week to ensure that clients are well represented. She told the Commissioners that the current contract amount could not sustain providing high quality representation.

Carlos Rodriguez stated his focus has been representing Jerome County clients and that he had not accepted conflict cases from other counties. He said his firm appreciated the office space provided in the Jerome Courthouse.

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Carlos Rodriguez said Attorney Anja Rodriguez also works behind the scenes providing service for clients. He expressed that his firm prides itself in having a good working relationship with prosecutors and judges.

The law firm representatives were excused.

The Commissioners discussed the proposal from Migliuri & Rodriguez with Michelle Emerson and Tracee McKim. They determined that the amount requested by the firm would be a 16 percent increase.

Emerson and McKim suggested that the County hire the staff for the attorneys.

Those present also considered the possibility of hiring in-house public defenders in the future.

- Further discussion was continued until the afternoon.

TEVIAN-EKREN KOBER—TAX CANCELLATION

Treasurer Tevian-Ekren Kober was present.

Tevian Ekren-Kober explained that a mobile home with overdue taxes could not be located. She said the listed owner does not own any other property in Jerome County and that she could not find him on Peoplefinders.

❖ A Motion was made by Commissioner Crouch to cancel the tax amount of \$498.30 (including penalty/interest and sheriff's fees) in the name of J D McDannald, Parcel No. MH0816E286001B, formerly located at 180-A South 400 West, Jerome, because of the removal of the mobile home and the inability to collect taxes. It was seconded and carried with unanimous ayes.

Meeting recessed at 12 NOON

Meeting reconvened at 1:16 P.M.

ROCKNE LAMMERS—PUBLIC DEFENDER CONTRACT

Present were Clerk/Auditor/Recorder Michelle Emerson and Chief Deputy Clerk Tracee McKim. Also present was Rockne Lammers, under contract with Jerome County for public defense.

Rockne Lammers stated he would like to continue representing public defender cases in Jerome County, with a modest cost of living increase, noting that he did not receive an increase for the cost of living in his current contract. He said the additional \$30,000 the County had provided in his last contract had enabled hiring another secretary.

Lammers said he represents juvenile cases as well as child protection, mental commitments, and felony fugitive cases in addition to conflict felony public defender cases.

Lammers stated that he handles 106 cases, plus felony conflict cases, which is at the level recommended by the Public Defense Commission (PDC). He said that the other two attorneys in his office handle more cases than recommended by the PDC.

Lammers said Mark Coppin, as another attorney in his office, was concerned about the financial parity between the public defender and the prosecutor offices. He said the two secretaries in his office are overworked and underpaid and that Coppin thinks the office needs another full-time secretary as well as additional compensation for the three attorneys in his office.

Commissioner Howell asked Lammers what he considered a modest cost-of-living increase; he answered two or three percent for the attorneys as well as their staff.

Michelle Emerson inquired about the salaries for office staff and said compensation for the staff would not make them County employees.

Lammers was excused.

The Commissioners again discussed hiring defense attorneys in-house. Commissioner Howell expressed he would not be in favor of going in-house unless there was a reason because hiring by contract was working well.

➤ Further discussion resulted in the Board offering Rockne Lammers, Mark Coppin, and Hilverda McCrae attorneys an additional \$33,000 in each of their contracts beginning October 1, 2021, to help pay their staff.

MIGLIURI & RODRIGUEZ—PUBLIC DEFENDER CONTRACT, continued

The Board determined to offer Migliuri & Rodriguez an additional 15 percent in a renewed contract.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15 P.M.

Respectively submitted:

Jane White, Deputy Clerk

A. Ben Crouch, Chairman

John Crozier, Commissioner

Charles M. Howell, Commissioner