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DATE: July 9, 2014

TO: Chair and Member of the Personnel and Finance Committee

FROM: Sheriff David J. Mahoney

RE: Approval to fill a 1.0 FTE Records Clerk IV Position in the Dane County Sheriff's Office

County Ordinance 29.52(15) requires the Personnel and Finance Committee, along with the County Executive to approve filling positions that have been vacant longer than six months. I am requesting to fill a 1.0 Clerk IV position in the Records Unit of the Dane County Sheriff's Office.

The position was originally a Clerk Typist I-II position in records which was vacated on December 14, 2013 when the incumbent accepted a promotion to a different county department. The Department of Administration had approved the freeze appeal to fill this position on February 10, 2014. The Sheriff's Office requested that this position be evaluated for reclassification on March 3, 2014 in order to create a lead worker position in this work group. The position was evaluated by Employee Relations and finally approved for reclassification to a Clerk IV on June 30, 2014.

What is the nature of the work or what is the essential function of the position?

This position is responsible for processing public records requests within the records unit of the Sheriff's Office. It involves extensive public contact in person, over the phone and/or via email. The person filling this position must respond to a high volume of records requests. This position requires extensive knowledge of State Statutes and the use of the computerized records management system to locate reports, enter data, redact information, prepare correspondence, prepare digital line-ups, download video and photos, complete criminal background checks, scan documents, process bill payments, and perform other clerical duties as assigned. This position has access to highly sensitive and confidential written and photographic information.

This position functions as a "lead worker" for the other records unit staff. This position is responsible for problem-solving within the records unit, for evaluating workflow and developing increased efficiencies. This position handles records requests of a complex nature. This position also acts as the primary point of contact for records-related complaints from the public. The person in this position also assists in training, monitoring and assigning of work to other members of the records staff and to limited term employees.

How has the position been fulfilled during the vacancy?

The duties of this position have been shared by two Clerk I-IIs who work in the Records Unit, the Administrative Manager who supervises the Records unit and a Limited Term Employee during this vacancy. None of these four individuals has the time available to devote to covering these duties to the level necessary on a full time basis.

What will the impact be on the department's function and mission if the position remains vacant?

Due to the high volume of records requests received on a daily basis, this vacancy has presented a significant hardship to the Records unit. By law, public records must be provided "as soon as practicable and without delay." Wis. Stat. §19.35(4)(a). A reasonable time for response to any specific request depends on the nature of the request, the staff and other resources available to the authority to process the request, the extent of the request, and related considerations.

Although the public records law does not require response within any specific time, the Department of Justice suggests that records be made available within ten working days. Continuing to have a vacant position within the records unit will have a significant impact on our ability to provide records to requesters within this time frame. Not filling this position would jeopardize the Sheriff's Office's ability to process records requests in a timely manner and make the Sheriff's Office susceptible to litigation. Therefore, it is vital that this position be filled as soon as possible.

This position is one of three assigned to the records unit. The position is also needed for coverage on days when the other staff may be off. Not being fully staffed has significantly affected staff ability to take time off and resulted in the Administrative Manager filling the daily job duties when regular staff has been off due to illness, or preapproved time off.