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Date: September 9, 2015

To: Dane County Board of Supervisors

From: Carlo Esqueda, Clerk of Circuit Court/Register in Probate

Re: Public Hearing on the 2016 Budget Request

I apologize for not being able to present to you personally this evening. Please accept this written testimony in lieu of a personal appearance tonight. If you have any questions or concerns, you can certainly feel free to contact me via e-mail or by telephone at my office.

My office's 2016 budget request is largely status quo from that presented in the last two years. As in the past, we have requested that the County Executive consider a few revenue lines to bring them into synch with past performance and future predictions based on a proper trend analysis. These are as follows:

- that the revenue line for County Share of State Fines and Forfeitures be modified downward by \$69,000 to a base of \$500,000;
- that the line for Clerks Fees be modified downward by \$124,300 to \$425,000; and
- that the County Fees line be reduced by \$32,500 to a base of \$414,500.

It is important to bear in mind that the revenue targets for these particular lines have for many years been set at levels that have not been met. I have appreciated the County's efforts to gradually establish such targets at levels that are predictively attainable, rather than based upon an outlier amount that may have been last achieved up to a decade ago.

We have also asked for the addition of a .5 Social Worker in our Alternatives to Incarceration Program. Currently, staffing in that work unit is 3.5 FTE. The cost of adding the .5 position will be \$36,376, and this cost may actually be made up in two ways. First, we will be able to increase our caseload capacity, meaning that we will be asking the Court less often to suspend Bail Monitoring Program (BMP) referrals. Each FTE carries a maximum caseload of 30 participants. Adding 15 more participants to our caseload capacity will lead to inevitable jail bed savings. It is difficult to project the actual amount of savings, but we certainly do know that these savings could max out at over \$400,000 under the best-case assumption that these 15 people would be in jail until their case disposition if not for BMP. In practice, we do not see that every defendant eligible for BMP who cannot be served by the program stays in jail for the entirety of the pre-trial period, but it is clear that jail bed days are indeed saved by ensuring that we have maximized our caseload. A related point worth considering is that as we have come to focus more and more on enhancing options for alternatives to incarceration as a result of increased community awareness of and involvement in justice

system issues, particularly those that involve racial disparities and inequities, it behooves us to ensure that no one be turned away from participation in BMP as we continue to work toward more comprehensive solutions. Another factor to consider is a very recent change to current BMP policy whereby not all participants will be subject to baseline and ongoing random drug tests and alcohol monitoring; rather, just those who have specific bail conditions in those regards due to the nature of their offenses. In 2014, we spent \$21,000 on drug testing kits and \$58,000 for alcohol monitoring units. We expect usage of these materials will decrease by about 50%, for a savings of about \$39,000. This alone would pay for the increased position authority. We also see this position as reflective of a partnership between my office and the District Attorney's Deferred Prosecution Unit. The position would assist that office in observing the drug testing process that they perform for participants in their opiates program.

The exciting initiative in our office for next year, which will have a budgetary impact in 2016 and beyond, is the implementation of a paper-on-demand records management approach. On January 1, we will begin managing all new filings using electronic case files, eliminating the need for the maintenance of paper files moving forward. Using document routing and storage technology provided by the Consolidated Court Automation Program, we will start the process of gradually eliminating paper file storage in the Clerk of Courts' Office. It is inevitable that this initiative will create new efficiencies in both staffing and expenses which should become ever more substantive as we move through the coming years.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to present this written testimony and I welcome any questions or concerns you may have.