

# Department of Administration

Randy B. Scholz, County Administrator



October 19, 2021

TO: County Board Supervisors

FR: Randy Scholz

RE: Adjustments to Wages for Jailers and Jail Sergeants

Good Afternoon,

During my presentation of the budget to the Executive Committee on October 5, 2021, I talked briefly about a new issue that emerged since the budget was prepared. That issue is recruiting for Jailers. This is an issue that is going on in Chippewa County, across the State, and Nation. The situation changed a few weeks ago when we shifted from receiving very few applications to not receiving any applications for weeks at a time.

We received two resignation letters in the last two weeks. If we were fully staffed, we would have 23 Jailers and 4 Sergeants and we are currently at 20 Jailers and 3 Sergeants. Both the Human Resources Division and Jail Division have been contacted by other municipalities to do reference checks for two Jailers; therefore, we anticipate that we may have more resigning in the near future.

Over the last month, we performed background checks on three qualified applicants. One had poor references so an offer was not extended. One was made an offer, but denied, and accepted a position with another county due to higher wages. Another one just completed the pre-employment process and we are hopeful to secure a start date for them in November.

If we get too short on Jailers the State will require us to ship inmates out to other jails. We are currently working on a contract with Eau Claire County to house inmates for \$43/day. That amount does not take into consideration the travel time to transport inmates back and forth for court. With other Counties, including Eau Claire County having similar issues, it is unknown how far we would need to go to find a County that would take our inmates, if Eau Claire County does not have the resources to assist us.

The timing of this is unfortunate and awkward because of where we are in the budget process. If this would have occurred back in June, I would have included the pay grade change in the proposed budget I presented to the Executive Committee on October 5, 2021 and I would have covered it when I presented the 2022 preliminary budget to the County Board on September 14, 2021.

I've included language below from the Human Resources policy that allows the change to the pay grade.

## **15. Compensation System**

### **h. Pay Grade Adjustment**

*Pay Grade Adjustment is movement of an employee from one Pay Grade to another Pay Grade outside the promotional process. Pay Grade Adjustments can occur in two (2) ways:*

- 2. A position's Pay Grade is evaluated by a third party consultant. A Pay Grade Evaluation may occur for two (2) reasons:**

#### **a). Human Resources Director Initiation for a Pay Grade Evaluation**

*The Human Resources Director may determine a position needs to be evaluated as a result of county initiated position and/or program changes, organizational structure changes,*

*recurring minimal modification to a position that over time may result in substantive change in a position, or recruitment/retention challenges. The Human Resources Director shall be responsible for the coordination of the Pay Grade Evaluation with the Consultant.*

*The effective date of a Pay Grade change due to a Human Resources Director initiation shall be determined based on the following:*

- 1. If the change in position is current, the effective date shall be the first day of the next pay period following the written determination by the Consultant and shall be prospective only.*
- 2. If the change in position is at a future date, the effective date shall be determined by the Human Resources Director and Department Head for a prospective date.*

*The Pay Grade determination of the third party consultant is final.*

The Sheriff has also made changes to the education requirements in the Jailer job description in an attempt to increase the pool of candidates. The Sheriff is also working with Jail leadership to improve retention by increasing employee engagement and job satisfaction. I know the pay grade change will not solve the problem completely, but my hope is with the job description changes and the continued work on employee engagement and job satisfaction, it will allow Chippewa County to fill our vacant positions much faster.


The total estimated fiscal impact for the pay grade change is \$82,650. We are able to fund these costs within the existing budget by utilizing some other line items within the entire 2022 Sheriff's Department budget. There are three areas of the Sheriff's Department budget which have been transferred to the Jail wages and benefits in order to accommodate this increase:

- One area of savings to utilize is the Health Insurance benefit within the divisions of the Sheriff's Department. As explained in Resolution 31-21 we included an estimated 3% increase in the Personnel Cost Report. Since then with the latest Resolution 45-21 the 2022 Health Insurance premiums will actually have a 0% increase.
- Another savings relates to the meals which were served to our Huber inmates that are now on home detention. The Sheriff is planning to keep this home detention model moving forward.
- The last area of savings to utilize is the benefit cost for Wisconsin Retirement. In the Personnel Cost Report provided to the Departments in early June, the Wisconsin Retirement benefit was estimated. Since then, the percentage from Employee Trust Funds came in lower than budgeted in late June.

At this time these are sustainable funding streams. However, all of these adjustments will need to be reviewed for the 2023 budget.

All of the line items that needed to be changed to accommodate this pay grade change for the Jailer and Jail Sergeant positions are reflected in this budget presentation and included in the budget reports, which will be presented to the County Board at the Budget Hearing on November 4, 2021.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me before the Budget Hearing.

  
Randy Scholz  
County Administrator