



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service
www.washoecounty.gov

STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: April 14, 2026

DATE: February 26, 2026

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Patricia Hurley, Chief Human Resources Officer
775-328-2087, phurley@washoecounty.gov

THROUGH: Kate Thomas, County Manager

SUBJECT: Recommendation to approve providing the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender the same benefits afforded to confidential attorneys who follow the Washoe County Public Attorneys' Association (WCPAA) agreements, specifically including longevity pay, cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), health insurance, retiree health insurance, and perquisite pay. [Total estimated fiscal impact for Fiscal Years 2026, 2027, and 2028 is \$114,230] Human Resources. (All Commission Districts.) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

SUMMARY

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners approve providing the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender the same benefits afforded to confidential attorneys who follow the Washoe County Public Attorneys' Association (WCPAA) agreements. These benefits include longevity pay, cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), health insurance, and retiree health insurance.

This action would align the compensation and benefits of the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender with those of similarly situated unrepresented attorneys in the County, promoting internal consistency and supporting the County's ability to attract and retain qualified attorneys in these critical public service roles. The recommendation is consistent with the County's long-standing practice of extending negotiated terms to unrepresented employees in comparable positions, thereby promoting fairness, equity, and operational efficiency.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Fiscal Sustainability

PREVIOUS ACTION

On June 25, 2024, the Board of County Commissioners approved a four-year Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the Washoe County Public Attorneys' Association (WCPAA), effective July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2028. As part of that action, the Board extended the same benefit provisions—including pay, longevity, cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), health insurance, and retiree health insurance—to confidential

AGENDA ITEM # _____

attorneys, consistent with the terms negotiated for WCPAA-represented employees.

BACKGROUND

The WCPAA collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) establish the terms and conditions of employment for represented attorneys, including pay, longevity, cost-of-living adjustments, health insurance, and retiree health insurance. The Board of County Commissioners has historically extended negotiated salary and benefit provisions to unrepresented confidential attorneys in comparable roles to ensure alignment, internal equity, and administrative consistency.

The current proposal to extend these benefits of the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender is consistent with past practice. Aligning these positions with the confidential attorneys who follow the WCPAA agreements reinforces the County’s commitment to equitable employment practices, fiscal responsibility, and operational efficiency.

FISCAL IMPACT

The FY 2026 estimated fiscal impact associated with these recommendations is \$4,897 and was not included in the FY 2026 adopted budget. These cost increases may necessitate a budget adjustment during the fiscal year. The Budget Division will monitor the budget status related to these changes and propose budget adjustments as needed.

The FY 2026 impact is broken out as follows:

FY 2026 (Assumes May 1, 2026 Effective Date)

Description	Public Defender	Alternate Public Defender	Total
Career Incentive (+0.25% for 10+ yrs)	\$1,850	\$1,887	\$3,737
Perquisite	\$150	\$150	\$300
Professional Dues	\$430	\$430	\$860
COLA (no variance to approved)	\$-0-	\$-0-	\$-0-
Post Retirement Health Reimbursement Arrangement (PEHRA)	\$-0-	\$-0-	\$-0-
TOTAL FY 2026	\$2,430	\$2,467	\$4,897

The annual FY 2027 fiscal impact associated with these recommendations is estimated at \$27,885 and if approved prior to adoption of the FY 2027 budget, will be included in the FY 2027. The FY 2027 impact is broken out as follows:

FY 2027

Description	Public Defender	Alternate Public Defender	Total
Career Incentive (+0.25% for 10+ yrs)	\$9,451	\$14,874	\$24,325
Perquisite	\$1,350	\$1,350	\$2,700
Professional Dues	\$430	\$430	\$860
COLA (no variance to approved)	\$-0-	\$-0-	\$-0-
Post Retirement Health Reimbursement Arrangement (PEHRA)	\$-0-	\$-0-	\$-0-
TOTAL FY 2027	\$11,231	\$16,564	\$27,885

The annual FY 2028 fiscal impact associated with these recommendations is estimated at \$81,448 and if approved will be included in the FY 2028 budget and is broken out as follows:

FY 2028

Description	Public Defender	Alternate Public Defender	Total
Career Incentive (+0.25% for 10+ yrs)	\$23,184	\$35,985	\$59,169
Perquisite	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$2,600
Professional Dues	\$430	\$430	\$860
COLA (no variance to approved)	\$-0-	\$-0-	\$-0-
Post Retirement Health Reimbursement Arrangement (PEHRA)	\$-0-	\$18,819	\$18,819
TOTAL FY 2028	\$24,914	\$56,534	\$81,448

***Notes:**

Totals in tables may be off due to rounding.

Estimates do not include additional positions or estimated PERS changes for FY 28.

Estimates reflect the net impact of the current versus recommended salaries and benefits.

FY 2026 through FY 2028 Career Incentive estimates reflect cumulative impacts based on FY 2026 increases-not incremental impacts (i.e., FY 2026 plus FY 2027)

PEHRA estimates assume the eligible employee receives the contribution in the first year of eligibility. Actual contributions may be more, or less, in any fiscal year.

Estimates only reflect through the term of the approved Collective Bargaining Agreements; additional costs are expected in future years.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation to approve providing the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender the same benefits afforded to confidential attorneys who follow the Washoe County Public Attorneys' Association (WCPAA) agreements, specifically including longevity pay, cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), health insurance, retiree health insurance, and perquisite pay.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board of County Commissioners agree with the recommendation, a possible motion would be

“Move to authorize providing the Public Defender and Alternate Public Defender the same benefits afforded to confidential attorneys who follow the Washoe County Public Attorneys’ Association (WCPAA) agreements, specifically including longevity pay, cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), health insurance, retiree health insurance, and perquisite pay.