



**DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
CITIZEN'S BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
2011/2012**

**Process:**

The committee has met with the District Attorney and his budget staff on two occasions during this budget process starting in December of 2010. The CBAC discussed general fund revenue outlook, constraint target and preparations for submitting the 2011/2012 budget documents. In addition, the CBAC discussed the potential countywide impact of the general fund revenue shortfall, the possibility of significant state reductions to the county and generally how the District Attorney's Office will approach submitting their program offers.

In February 2011 the CBAC and District Attorney Michael Schrunk reviewed the constraint numbers, the operational approach to balancing the budget and how many positions would be eliminated to meet the constraint. The CBAC also discussed issues they thought should be highlighted in their report.

**Major Changes:**

The District Attorney's Office has always been aggressive when seeking grant opportunities or other non-general fund revenue sources. In recent years this has helped the office preserve much needed prosecution capacity in the face of significant reductions to the number of Deputy District Attorney's. In the coming year many of those grants will expire and it is unknown whether any new grant opportunities will be available to take their place. The potential loss of personnel from expiring grants and contracts alone is eight positions, six of which are Deputy DA positions.

With that potential loss on top of a \$384K constraint cut looming, the office decided to look for ways to mitigate the loss by restructuring and creating efficiencies. We support this approach and believe some valuable prosecution resources have been maintained as a result. The changes have taken advantage of some retirement scenarios to reduce the overall number of senior Deputies by three and to physically move a trial unit from the 6<sup>th</sup> floor courthouse to the eighth floor courthouse in order to take advantage of shared clerical support staff.

Unfortunately the funding for the Elder Abuse prosecution deputy was exhausted in December of 2010 and with congress not processing earmarks it is unknown if any additional grant funding will eventually be available to continue the position.

Overall the District Attorney's budget for FY2012 is reduced by eight positions when compared to the adopted budget for FY2011. These eight positions represent a loss of 3.5 Deputy DA positions and 4.5 other support positions.

### **Recommendations/Concerns:**

The District Attorney's Office is a lean organization that continues to keep citizens safe by holding those who commit crimes in Multnomah County responsible for their actions. The CBAC is concerned that, when taken with the cuts from the past three years, the overall reduction in the number of Deputy District Attorney's will and has significantly impacted the offices capacity to prosecute quality of life crimes and low level non-person felonies.

The CBAC understands that quality of life crimes are considered to be lower on the continuum of crime in term of seriousness. These crimes however impact the livability and business atmosphere in our communities. We have all heard about the concerns of the business community in the downtown core area. They struggle everyday with transients, drug dealing, shoplifting and other crime that directly impacts their businesses and the people they employ.

The CBAC believes that the public safety system needs to develop a cohesive plan of action with a coordinated effort that includes the County, City of Portland and the State. And this effort must eradicate this type of crime rather than just pushing it from the core area to the urban neighborhoods, suburbs or Fairview, Troutdale, Wood Village or Gresham. In these tough economic times it is crucial for us to foster the businesses that are here and try to attract new business too. Even though the crime rate is down elected leaders and the public safety system must continue to be vigilant in addressing the lower level quality of life crimes.

The CBAC is also concerned about the loss of funding for the Financial Elder Abuse position. With the population of citizens over 60 years growing each year we feel it is necessary to focus attention on this type of crime. Our honored citizens deserve their time to relax and enjoy their lives without fear of being scammed or their precious resources being taken by unscrupulous caregivers and others. The CBAC urges Chair Cogen and the Commissioners to consider backfilling the funding for this important prosecution effort.

### **Emerging Issues:**

The overriding issue continues to be the sagging economy and its impact on resources that would otherwise be available to Public Safety, Health and Human Services and other valuable programs and services the County provides.

As the County enters its 11<sup>th</sup> year of general fund shortfalls the CBAC applauds efforts to find administrative efficiencies as highlighted in Coraggio report. An area of potential administrative savings not covered by the Coraggio group but supported by the District Attorney's office, Sheriff's office and Local Public Safety Coordinating Council is the regional network for public safety known as RJNET. This system would not replace existing data systems but instead would allow those systems to exchange real time data for daily operations and provide more timely and relevant data for policy and decision makers. Systems such as RJNET, implemented throughout the country, have provided the partner agencies opportunities to explore efficiencies, change business processes and re-task valuable human resources. With the cost of new technologies making this effort more affordable, the CBAC believes that County should make development of this system a priority.

The CBAC believes that the County should be looking for additional or alternative general fund revenue streams in order to stabilize county funding not only for the District Attorney but all county departments and the services they provide. Relying heavily on tax revenues that are profoundly impacted by economic fluctuations, and are capped in such a manner as to prevent revenues from keeping pace with costs, will only continue to cause this county to face general fund deficits year after year. Eleven years of funding cuts is enough!

District Attorney CBAC members:

Bob Pung- Chair

Mike Greenlick

Dave Simpson

Michael Delman

Dick Wegner

Irwin Mandel

Cliff Wamack