

W 10a

Memorandum Date: February 4, 2009  
Order Date: February 11, 2009

---

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners  
**DEPARTMENT:** Management Services  
**PRESENTED BY:** Annette K. Newingham, Chief Deputy County Clerk  
**AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Order / In the Matter of Providing Direction to the County Clerk Division for Revenue and Expense Reductions due to Reduced Recording Revenues as the Result of the Nationwide Economic Downturn.

---

**I. MOTION**

Move approval of recommended staff reductions to minimize the fiscal impact of reduced Recording revenues due to the current economic recession.

**II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

At the January 28, 2009, Board meeting, staff was directed to return to the Board with recommended staff reductions to offset the current revenue shortfall within the Management Services Department, County Clerk Division, due to the current housing downturn.

The decrease in recording revenues is the result of a significant decrease in local home sales and refinancing, and is projected to continue through 2009.

**III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION**

**A. Board Action and Other History**

On January 28, 2009, the Board directed the County Clerk division to identify staff reductions to address the decline in the current fiscal year's recording revenues and come back to the Board with a recommendation.

**B. Policy Issues**

The Division/Department is required to balance its appropriated expenses with the appropriated revenues, end the fiscal year lapsing 2% of the appropriated General Fund, and meet all local, state, and federal laws and mandates. In their prioritization of General Fund services in 2008, the Board placed these services high on their list (numbers 7 and 12 out of 46).

**C. Board Goals**

The County Clerk Division of the Management Services Department includes Recording, Elections, Board of Property Tax Appeals (BoPTA), Marriage Licensing, Declaration of Domestic Partnership registrations, and County Archives. All programs within the Division, with the exception of the County Archives, are mandated services that provide broad public support to the citizens of Lane County. The mandated services are listed as Priority 3 in the Lane County Strategic Plan.

**D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations**

For the past 20 years, recording revenues have consistently met or exceeded all program expenses within the Division/Department. The current financial downturn reflects the national financial crisis affecting the housing industry, and is expected to continue through 2009.

**E. Analysis**

The projected division shortfall of \$338,750 for fiscal year 2008/2009 cannot be met entirely by staff reductions. Even if every single staff person was eliminated it would still not be enough to make up the shortfall with the division. Adequate staff needs to be maintained to continue to process work and collect revenues for recordings, marriage licenses, and domestic partnership registrations. Adequate staff also needs to be maintained to administer voter registration services and conduct scheduled elections.

That being said, two Office Assistant positions are recommended for elimination at a combined savings of \$30,290 (April – June). To achieve additional savings, a Records Office Assistant will be moved to the Elections program to minimize the use of Extra Help. The impact of these changes will be to reduce the hours the Records office is open to the public by two hours a day.

The department will attempt to make up the remaining shortfall within its larger budget, however the full magnitude of the shortfall is not yet known. County Clerk division revenues will continue to be closely monitored throughout the current fiscal year. The department will return to the Board at the end of the third quarter if it is unable to fully absorb the entire budget shortfall.

**F. Alternatives/Options**

**Option 1:**

- Eliminate 2 Office Assistant positions in the Records program.
- Move 1 Records Office Assistant position to the Elections program to continue minimizing the use of Elections extra help.
- Reduce the hours Records is open to the public to 9am-noon and 1pm-4pm.
- Continue monitoring Records revenue with the goal of offsetting the remaining shortfall with saving in other divisions of Management Services.

**Option 2:**

- Maintain current staffing and public hours. This would require the Board of Commissioners to approve the use of General Fund reserve dollars to make up the loss in revenue.

**Option 3:**

- Forgive a portion of the 2% General Fund lapse. This would not require the use of reserves but would reduce the amount of cash carry forward into next year's budget.

**IV. RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends **Option 1**:

**V. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION**

Requires action before the end of this fiscal year.

**VI. FOLLOW-UP**

Come back before the Board in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter should recording revenues decline further and the shortfall cannot be made up by savings in other divisions.

**VII. ATTACHMENTS**

Board Order

**IN THE BOARD OF COMMISSONERS OF LANE COUNTY  
STATE OF OREGON**

ORDER NO. 09- 2- 11-       ) IN THE MATTER OF PROVIDING DIRECTION TO  
                                  ) THE COUNTY CLERK DIVISION FOR REVENUE AND  
                                  ) EXPENSE REDUCTIONS DUE TO REDUCED  
                                  ) RECORDING REVENUES AS THE RESULT OF  
                                  ) THE NATIONWIDE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN.

**WHEREAS**, the County Clerk division is responsible for Elections and Voter Registration, Recording and Public Records Research, Marriage Licenses, and Domestic Partnership Registrations; and

**WHEREAS**, such programs are all state mandated services; and

**WHEREAS**, after due consideration, and in response to a decrease in recording revenues due to the current nationwide economic downturn; the Board of County Commissioners have determined that it is in the County's best financial interests to support a staff reduction in the Division of the County Clerk.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED**, the Board of County Commissioners directs the Department of Management Services, County Clerk division, to implement Option 1 which includes:

- The elimination of two Office Assistant positions in FY 08-09,
- The movement of one Records Office Assistant to the Elections program to minimize the use of Extra Help during the next election,
- Reduce the hours the Records office is open to the public to 9 am – noon and 1pm – 4pm, and
- Report back to the Board at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter if the revenue situation has gotten worse and the department is unable to absorb the shortfall.

**DATED** this 11<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2009.

---

Pete Sorenson, Chair  
Lane County Board of Commissioners