

Richland County Finance and Personnel Committee

Agenda Item Cover

Agenda Item Name: Transfer of Deputy Clerk position from Clerk of Courts to Probate Office

Department	Register of Probate	Presented By:	Jenifer Laue and Stacy Kleist
Date of Meeting:	August 4, 2020	Action Needed:	Approval for Deputy Clerk transfer
Disclosure:	Open	Authority:	Finance and Personnel Committee
Date submitted:	July 31, 2020	Referred by:	LEJC Committee

Recommendation and/or action language:

1. Recommending a motion to move a deputy clerk position from the Clerk of Court's office to the Register in Probate's office.
2. Recommending a motion to move the salary and benefits of a deputy clerk from the Clerk of Court's budget to the Register in Probate's budget with the authority to advertise for the position if approved by the county board.
3. Recommending a motion to present a resolution to the county board.

Background:

Presently, the Probate/Juvenile Clerk/Judicial Assistant has no staff. It has operated this way since 2018, receiving assistance from the Clerk of Court office when the Register in Probate/Juvenile Clerk/Judicial Assistant is out of the office. In April of 2020, the Clerk of Court dismissed a deputy and has since made the decision not to fill that deputy's position at this time. Instead, the Clerk of Court is recommending that the position remain within the Circuit Court but be transferred to the Register in Probate/Juvenile Clerk/Judicial Assistant's office.

Heads of the two departments have discussed this matter in detail and feel that this move will provide staffing resources that are desperately needed at the Probate/Juvenile Clerk/Judicial Assistant office. Further, the transfer of a deputy clerk will allow a person to specifically master the Juvenile case types handled by the Probate office and learn the various other duties performed by the Register in Probate.

By doing this restructuring when the Clerk of Court has an open position, the two offices have an opportunity to better serve the customers of the Register in Probate/Juvenile Clerk/Judicial Assistant's office without pulling resources away from the Clerk of Court's office.

Carlson and Dettman have reviewed and recommended the pay grade remain the same at Grade G of the wage structure.

Due to the position being a deputy to the Register in Probate and the Judicial Assistant, Judge Sharp is requesting to be a part of the interview and hiring process.

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Budget:

This item will have no financial impact on Richland County. The salary and fringes for this full-time position are presently part of the Clerk of Court's budget and have been for the past nine years.

Attachments and References:

Job Description of Deputy Clerk/Register in Probate Assistant	Letter from Carlson Dettman regarding the pay grade
Letter in Support from Judge Sharp	

Financial Review:

(please check one)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In adopted budget	Fund Number	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Apportionment needed	Requested Fund Number	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other funding Source		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No financial impact		

(summary of current and future impacts)

Presently, the Clerk of Court office has four positions in its budget; the Register in Probate office has one. Between the two departments, there were five positions that serve the Richland County Circuit Court.

With this proposal, the total number of positions remains the same and the total number of deputy clerks remains the same. But, rather than having three deputy clerks at the Clerk of Court office and none at the Register in Probate office, there will be two at the COC office and one at the RIP office.

If allowed to transfer to the Register in Probate office, this position will go from 40 hours per week to 35. The Clerk of Court office operates as a 40-hour-per-week department; the Register in Probate office operates as a 35-hour-per-week office.

Thus, the financial impact to the county will be less than it is now.

Approval:

Review:

Department Head

Administrator, or Elected Office (if applicable)

DEPUTY CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT / REGISTER IN PROBATE ASSISTANT

Department: Register in Probate Office

Reports to: Register in Probate and Judge

Purpose of Position

The purpose of this position is to assist the Register in Probate/Juvenile Clerk/Judicial Assistant in the discharge of the duties of that office which utilizes a working knowledge of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

The following duties are customary for this position. These are not to be construed as exclusive or all-inclusive. Other duties may be required and assigned.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

- Performs a lead role on the absence of the Register in Probate
- Performs as clerk in the courtroom.
- Schedules the Judge's calendar as well court commissioner's calendars
- Acts as the Judge's receptionist
- Initiates and disposes cases including confidential Juvenile cases, guardianship cases and Mental cases.
- Files reports to the Department of Justice/WI Election Commission
- Receipts and files wills
- Obtains a GAL for juveniles under the age of 12 in newly filed juvenile cases.
- Provides customer support to Health and Human Services, Corporation Counsel as well as attorneys and members of the public.
- Prepares receipts
- Processes department mail
- Completes data entry functions
- Completes and files correspondence, legal documents, notices and orders
- Reviews bills from attorneys acting as GAL and adversary counsel
- Oversees the examination of guardianship cases and accounting
- Receipts and files wills
- Performs records searches
- Performs other duties that may be assigned
- Sets up ZOOM meetings for court hearings

Minimum Training and Experience Required to Perform Job Functions

- Possession of an associate degree in a professional, legal secretary, information systems, accounting or related field.
- Two years job experience in court-related or legal office setting
- Professional experience using personal computers and contemporary business office software.

Preferred Qualifications

Job experience based in public administration setting

Note: Equivalent combination of education and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills, and ability to proficiently perform the duties of this position may be accepted.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Required to Perform Job Functions

- Language, mathematical, judgmental/reasoning, oral and written communication skills.
- Requires regular attendance
- Ability to communicate professionally and work effectively with peers, subordinate's, supervisor and members of the public.
- Establish proficiency and work effectively with peers, subordinates, supervisor and members of the public
- Establish proficiency in office management skills, which includes required bookkeeping procedures to maintain database, and perform word processing tasks in a Windows environment.
- Must possess a multi-task orientation and be a self-tarter with ability to accurately complete all job tasks with minimum supervision.
- Successful completion of Office Skills including typing, MS Word and MS Excel

Working Environment

- Typical working environment is within a temperature-controlled non-smoking office and courtroom.

Physical Requirements

- Ability to operate office equipment such as multi-line telephones, copiers, facsimile, machines, personal computers, calculators, etc.
- Ability to exert very moderate physical effort in sedentary to light work activity, typically involving some combination of stooping, kneeling, crouching, lifting, carrying, pushing and pulling, and stair climbing.

This position description has been prepared to assist in defining job responsibilities, physical demands working conditions and skills needed for compliance with the American with Disabilities act. It is not intended as a complete list of job duties, responsibilities, or essential functions, is not exhaustive and may be supplemented as necessary. This description is not intended to limit or modify the right of any supervisor to assign, direct and control the work of employees under supervision. The county regains and reserves any or all rights to change, modify, amend, add to or delete, from any section of this document as it deems, in its judgment, to be proper.



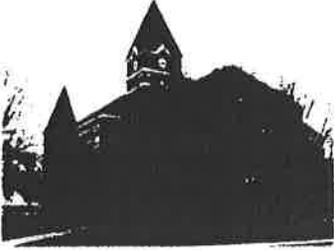
July 16, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Clinton Langreck, County Administrator
FR: Patrick Glynn, Senior Consultant
RE: Job Classification Review

The County requested we evaluate job documentation provided for the classification of Deputy Clerk of Circuit Court / Register in Probate Assistant. The duties associated with assisting with the probate and juvenile court functions, as well as the other duties required to support the court system, align fairly closely with those of the Deputy Clerk of Circuit Court. Our recommended placement is Grade G of the wage structure.

Please let me know if you any questions.



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CIRCUIT COURT CHAMBERS

Andrew Sharp
Circuit Judge

Susan M. Kaderavek
Court Reporter

Jenifer Laue
Register in Probate/Judicial Assistant/
Juvenile Clerk

July 30, 2020

To the Richland County Finance and Personnel Committee:

Thank you for your time in considering this letter. I am writing in support of transferring the Deputy Clerk of Court position from the Clerk of Courts office to the Probate office.

The Register of Probate office is currently a one-person office. This makes it difficult to always be available and to efficiently serve the public, attorneys, corporation counsel, the Department of Health and Human Services as well as the District Attorneys office.

At present, the clerk of courts serves as Ms. Laue's back when Ms. Laue is out of the office. In a smaller county such as ours, the Register in Probate also serves as the Juvenile Clerk and the Judicial Assistant. It is difficult for the Clerk of Courts office to fill all of these roles when Ms. Laue is unavailable.

When Ms. Laue is helping someone in person at her counter or the window, she is frequently interrupted with phone calls. If she is in court clerking a juvenile case, and someone stops in with a Probate question, they must wait for her to return to her office. When she is on vacation or away from the office, the vast majority of the work waits until she returns and then she must scurry to catch up. Due to the time-sensitive nature of the cases in the Probate office, Ms. Laue has felt compelled to work remotely while on vacation in order to complete things in a timely manner.

We have tried to run the office without an assistant or deputy clerk for over two years. As Judicial Assistant, Ms. Laue works closely with the Clerk of Courts office on several matters. Transferring the deputy clerk of court position to the Register in Probate office will allow the Circuit Court of Richland County to operate more efficiently.

This transfer would allow a Deputy Clerk to learn the complex details of Probate, Juvenile Delinquent, CHIPS (Children in Need of Protection and Services), Emergency Detention, Guardianship, Adoption, and Juvenile Injunction cases and be better prepared to help the public and the court in Ms. Laue's absence. Each office specializes in their own case types. Although there are similarities with court cases, in order to adequately serve the public and accurately answer questions, a deputy must know the process involved for each case type.

In view of the fact that there will be no financial impact to Richland County if you transfer this position, I am strongly recommending this change within the Circuit Court.

Judge Andrew Sharp

