



Rex Scott, District 1

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**STATEMENT OF SUPERVISOR REX SCOTT ON THE RENEWAL OF THE COUNTY
ADMINISTRATOR'S EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT**

The decision I have made to vote to renew Mr. Huckelberry's contract is not one that I made quickly, or lightly. Dozens of people throughout our community contacted me during the last two weeks to share their opinions on this matter. I read every email and engaged in any conversation to which I was invited, hearing from people who strongly opposed, or very much supported Mr. Huckelberry's retention as county administrator. Along with public input, I also weighed many other factors.

A significant reason for this decision is Mr. Huckelberry's record of service and achievement throughout all the years he has worked for Pima County, not just as the administrator. His extensive knowledge of all aspects of county government and its operations is vast, almost encyclopedic. He also manifests many of the traits of a true servant leader. One of the other attributes of a strong leader is the quality of the team he has built. The deputy administrators and department heads Mr. Huckelberry has cultivated and trained are an exceptionally skilled and dedicated crew. This has been a point made to me by many people in our community, most especially those in the business, environmental and human services sectors.

The overall financial health of Pima County was another major factor in my decision. Our budgets have garnered praise from the Government Finance Officers Association. All general obligation debt will be paid off before the end of this decade and overall investment debt has been reduced 40% in the last eight years. The county's credit ratings are at the highest levels and the reports from the rating agencies point to our strong liquidity, reductions in debt and very conservative budgeting practices. This may be the strongest testament for the decision I am making to support the renewal of Mr. Huckelberry's contract, especially given the ongoing fiscal uncertainties for local governments brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The work Mr. Huckelberry has done to promote conservation and environmental protection is noteworthy, as is the effort he began in recent years to implement necessary reforms in our criminal justice system. He secured unanimous support from the previous Board for a program

that will address the 70% of our roads that are in poor or failed condition by 2030 and ensured that program would continue unhindered during the pandemic. Mr. Huckelberry and his team have also worked with care and skill to meet all the public health challenges brought about by the pandemic, especially the daunting logistical task of advancing the immunization plan.

I am not without concerns. As a new supervisor, it is very troubling to me that so many of our employees do not see Pima County as a caring, supportive, and positive place to work. Many of these employees place much of the blame for their feelings and experiences at the feet of Mr. Huckelberry and his team. Their concerns must and will be addressed. No organization can move forward if its employees do not feel acknowledged, respected, and supported. I share the view held by many of them about the inappropriate nature of a raise being considered for the highest-paid county employee during this time of challenge and crisis, which is why this renewed contract contains no raise for Mr. Huckelberry, but instead reduces his salary from its current base.

For our employees and others in the community who do not support this decision, I invite them to hold the Board accountable for the actions of county government, not the county administrator. Mr. Huckelberry answers to the Board and his charge is to implement our policies and decisions. I said many times during the recent campaign that the Board needs to be the face and voice of county government. My four colleagues have made similar statements.

During the next four years, I hope every person in Pima County will demand that this Board defend every decision it makes. We have the solemn obligation to ensure that every service you depend on is provided with the highest levels of equity, constituent service and respect for the public revenues entrusted to us. We will demand that Mr. Huckelberry and every other county employee meet our expectations for public service, but the Board and each individual supervisor will answer to you if we do not meet your expectations. It is with those understandings that I make this decision to support the renewal of Mr. Huckelberry's contract.

Today, the Board voted 4-1 to take the following actions with regard to Mr. Huckelberry's contract:

- Reduced the level of annual compensation from this year's base by \$10,000.
- Conditioned any future salary increases during the term of the contract on the results of evaluations by the Board of his performance.
- Added language that permit the administrator to return to work as a contractor if he retires at any time during its term.
- If the administrator is terminated without cause, his current severance package allows for six months of compensation. That was reduced to three months.