MEMORANDUM

Date: August 10, 2015

To: The Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

Re: **Appointment of Pima County Public Defender and Legal Defender**

The Public Defender and Legal Defender positions have both recently become vacant; the first due to the promotion of former Public Defender Lori Lefferts to Director of the Public Defense Services Department, and the second as a result of the retirement of former Legal Defender Isabel Garcia. I directed that both positions be open to applications from the public and that a committee be formed to conduct interviews and make recommendations to me. The positions were subsequently publicized on the County jobs website, through the Arizona Attorneys for Criminal Justice, the Arizona Public Defenders Association, and the Arizona Minority Bar Association; and advertisements were published in the *Arizona Daily Star* and *Arizona Republic,* as well as on an online jobs website.

A total of 21 attorneys applied, of whom 18 applied to be Legal Defender and 12 to be Public Defender, with 9 of the total applying for both positions. The selection committee included Ms. Lefferts; Assistant Pima County Administrator Ellen Wheeler; criminal defense attorney Jim Stuehringer, a partner with the Tucson law firm of Waterfall, Economidis, Caldwell, Hanshaw & Villamana, PC; and Maricopa County Public Defender Jim Haas. The committee selected a diverse pool of nine candidates for interviews.

Public Defender. The committee has recommended the appointment of Mr. Steve Sonenberg to Pima County Public Defender. Mr. Sonenberg has been serving as Interim Public Defender since May, he has been an attorney with the Public Defender's Office for 20 years, and he has served as Chief Assistant Public Defender for three years. Prior to becoming Chief Assistant, he was a trial team leader, supervising 15 attorneys and 8 support staff. Mr. Sonenberg practiced criminal defense law in the Detroit area for approximately 16 years before joining the Pima County Public Defender. His resume is Attachment 1 to this memorandum.

I concur with the selection committee's recommendation to appoint Mr. Sonenberg to the position of Public Defender, and I will be placing this issue on the Board of Supervisors August 17, 2015 agenda for Board consideration and ratification.

Legal Defender. Based on my concurrence with the recommendation of the selection committee, I am appointing Assistant Public Defender Dean Brault to Legal Defender. Mr.

Brault has been an attorney with the Public Defender's Office since 1997, and he has been a trial team supervisor since March 2012. In that capacity, he has supervised 15 lawyers, four secretaries and four legal assistants. He was named Attorney of the Year by the Arizona Public Defender Association in 2003. Mr. Brault's resume is Attachment 2 to this memorandum.

Please contact me if you would like to meet with Mr. Sonenberg or Mr. Brault, and I will facilitate such a meeting.

CHH/mjk

Attachments

c: Ellen Wheeler, Assistant County Administrator
Lori Lefferts, Director, Public Defense Services

STEVEN R. SONENBERG

ATTACHMENT 1

Chief Assistant Public Defender

Pima County Public Defender Office
33 N. Stone Ave., 21st Floor
Tucson, AZ 85701

520/724-6930 (direct)
Steve.Sonenberg@pima.gov

EDUCATION:

- Wayne State University Law School – Detroit, Michigan
  Juris Doctorate 1979

- University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, Michigan
  Bachelor of Arts with high distinction, 1975

LEGAL EXPERIENCE:

- *Pima County Public Defender Office* 1995 to Present

  Over the past 20 years I have worked as a staff trial attorney, team leader, and most recently Chief Assistant Public Defender since 2012.

- *Fried, Saperstein, Devine and Kohn, P.C.,* 1988 through 1995
  Southfield, Michigan

  Legal representation of criminal defendants at trial and appellate court levels.

- *Legal Aid and Defender Association of Detroit* 1981 through 1988
  Felony Trial Division
  Detroit, Michigan

  Legal representation of indigent criminal defendants at the trial court level.

- *Charles Simpkins, P.C.* 1979 through 1981
  Northville, Michigan

  Associate for general practice law firm.

- *State Appellate Defender Office* 1978 through 1979
  Detroit, Michigan

  Assisted in the preparation of appellate briefs on behalf of indigent felony defendants.

LICENSURE AND ADMISSIONS:

- Licensed by State Bar of Arizona (1995), State Bar of Michigan (1979 – currently inactive)

- Admitted to practice in Arizona State Courts (1995), Arizona Federal Courts (2005), Michigan State and Federal Courts (1979)

GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:

I have raised three sons who are now between the ages of 26 – 31. They are all high school graduates, college graduates (University of Arizona), Eagle Scouts, gainfully employed and homeowners.

ATTACHMENT 2

DEAN J. BRAULT

PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE
33 N. STONE, SUITE 2100
TUCSON, AZ 85701
(520) 724-6809, DEAN.BRAULT@PIMA.GOV

Summary of Professional Experience

- Direct supervisor of a large team of trial attorneys for over 3 years
- 18 years dedicated to defending indigent clients as a public defender with over 100 trials
- Jointly supervises and manages all support staff on a trial team
- Evaluates caseloads and assigns cases to appropriate attorneys
- Directly responsible for approving or denying expense authorizations
- Involved with the development and implementation of office policies and procedures
- Actively counsels attorneys and staff about performance expectations
- Member of the panel that discusses and resolves ethical issues
- Continually resolves case issues with attorneys of all levels of experience
- Routinely hears, handles, and addresses complaints about assigned attorneys
- Creator of case assignment tools to facilitate equitable and sustainable caseloads
- Frequent member of hiring committees for attorney and staff positions
- Substantial experience with all types of criminal cases including homicides and sex offenses
- Consistent provider of second opinions that aid in the resolution of difficult cases
- Mentor to and supervisor of numerous law student interns
- Presenter of numerous CLEs on many topics in criminal defense and judicial bypass training

Work History:

Trial Team Supervisor, Pima County Public Defender's Office
March 2012 – present

Assistant Public Defender, Pima County Public Defender's Office
September 1997 – present

Law Clerk and Bailiff for the Honorable John Davis, Pima County Superior Court
January 1997 – September 1997

Education:

University of Arizona College of Law
Juris Doctor, 1996

University of Arizona Eller College of Business and Public Administration
Bachelor of Science in Public Administration, *Magna Cum Laude* and *With Honors*, 1993

Licenses:

State Bar of Arizona, 1996 to present
United States Supreme Court, 2002 to present

Awards:

Attorney of the Year, Pima County Public Defender's Office, 2003
Attorney of the Year, Arizona Public Defender Association, 2003
Sarah Weddington Warrior Award, Planned Parenthood of Southern Arizona, 2007

Organizations: NACDL member, AACJ member

Interests: Cycling, hiking, concrete fabrications