

MONTANA PUBLIC DEFENDER COMMISSION  
**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**  
Helena Regional Office and Conference Call  
139 North Last Chance Gulch, Helena, MT 59601

**April 17, 2014**

**MINUTES**

*(Approved at the November 16, 2015 meeting)*

**Committee Members Present**

Fritz Gillespie, (Chair), Helena; Ken Olson, Great Falls; Roy Brown, Billings; Chris Daem, Billings

**Committee Members Absent**

Margaret Novak, Chester

**Agency Team Members Present**

Bill Hooks, Chief Public Defender; Harry Freebourn, Administrative Director; Wade Zolynski, Chief Appellate Defender; Wendy Johnson, Contract Manager; Carleen Green, Accountant

**Interested Parties**

None

**1. Call to Order**

Committee Chair Fritz Gillespie called the meeting of the Budget Committee to order at 8:35 a.m.

**2. Approval of Minutes of March 27, 2014 Meeting (\*Action Item)**

Commissioner Brown moved to approve the minutes as drafted. Commissioner Daem seconded and the motion carried.

**3. Prioritize 2017 Biennium Budget Items (\*Action Item)**

Chairman Gillespie invited discussion of Mr. Freebourn's memo regarding prioritizing the decision packages (DPs). The first four priorities, including the base budget and DPs 1-4, are essential to continuing the current operation. The remaining items are needed to cover case load overages and address other critical issues. The Commission members were generally supportive of Mr. Freebourn's proposal. There was particular interest in additional support staff, including resource advocates, to increase attorney productivity. The proposed new FTE positions by type and location are detailed in two tables attached to the memo.

Commissioner Olson wondered how such a large budget request would be received by legislators. He suggested emphasizing the message that the agency started out "in the hole" and has been playing catch up all this time, so it is an uphill battle every two years to get appropriate funding. Commissioner Daem agreed, saying that these decision packages are not a "wish" list but a "needs" list to address the historical lack of resources and increasing

caseloads. Chairman Gillespie concurred, and said that it is important to ask for the resources that are needed even if, based on past experience, there is little hope of getting them all. Once the Commission approves the prioritized DPs, they will go to the Governor's budget office. Chairman Gillespie intends to approach the Governor's office in a positive way to achieve as many priorities as possible. Commissioner Olson said he was very proud of the accomplishments at the last session and is optimistic that it might go well next time.

Commissioner Olson moved to forward the priority list as drafted to the full Commission as the Budget Committee's recommendation. Commissioner Daem seconded and the motion carried.

**4. Public Comment**

There were no members of the public in attendance.

**5. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.