



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: County Executive Office and Office of County Counsel
Department No.: 013
For Agenda Of: May 16, 2023
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 45 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Director(s) Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Rachel Van Mullem, County Counsel

Contact Info: Jeff Frapwell, Assistant CEO

DocuSigned by:
Mona Miyasato
DocuSigned by:
F5C725B460...
Rachel Van Mullem
EBE96ED16FBD4EE...

SUBJECT: **KPMG Operational Performance Review – Santa Barbara County Counsel Department**

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Other Concurrence:

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Receive and file a report on KPMG’s Operational and Performance Review of the Santa Barbara County Office of County Counsel;
- b) Provide direction as appropriate; and
- c) Find that the proposed actions do not constitute a “Project” within the meaning of California Environmental Quality Act, pursuant to 14 CCR 15378(b)(2), as it consists of general policy and procedure making

Summary Text:

The Santa Barbara County Office of County Counsel is the fourteenth County agency review completed by KPMG LLP (KPMG). The purpose of this review is to provide a high-level assessment of the Office, identify strengths and opportunities, and benchmark financial and operational areas with similar jurisdictions. The focus is to improve the overall operational efficiency, effectiveness, and service delivery provided by the Department. KPMG’s report, “Improving Performance to Better Serve Our County” is attached. The County Counsel’s response and implementation timeframe is also attached.

Overview of the Department:

By statute, County Counsel is the legal adviser to the Board of Supervisors. The Office of County Counsel advances and defends the County’s civil policies and actions by: looking ahead; advising and providing options; and litigating. It works closely with the Board of Supervisors and other County officers to maintain the civil legal integrity of the County of Santa Barbara.

County Counsel defends or prosecutes all civil litigation in which the County, or its officers or employees in their official capacities, are parties. It provides civil legal advice and services to: the Board of Supervisors, other County Officers, Departments, Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Special Districts. All of this advances the County’s public service objectives, while helping to protect the County from loss and risk.

The County Counsel has 43 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions. The Department’s Adopted Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2023 operating budget is \$12,163,800.

Overview of KPMG Recommendations:

Staffing Analysis

1.1: Enhance regular caseload and activity tracking to improve data-driven decision-making related to staffing mix, resource allocation, and task assignment.

1.2: Enhance reporting and tracking of outside counsel utilization by case type to consistently evaluate internal staffing needs and enhance budget planning.

Financial Management

2.1: Enhance data tracking and reporting related to case outcomes, staff productivity, and performance to allow for increased operational oversight.

2.2: Conduct an assessment of internal training needs for LOPs and develop formal internal debrief processes to allow for more proactive education.

2.3: Enhance frequency and approach to County department training and formalize debrief approaches to allow for more proactive education and communication across County departments.

Assessment Appeals

3.1: For complex cases received from Assessor, County Counsel should work with Assessor to develop additional internal criteria to assess workload to allow for enhanced decision-making on caseload assignment, staffing, and resource mix.

3.2: Engage with the Assessor’s Office to obtain access to the assessment appeals documents to streamline information sharing processes between both departments.

3.3: Establish a data reporting framework across County Counsel, Clerk of the Board, and the Assessor’s Office to enable a process wide view of performance across the assessment appeals process.

Background:

Background

The County of Santa Barbara (the County) contracted with KPMG in May 2019 to conduct an operational and performance review of all County departments. KPMG conducted a review of the County Counsel Department commencing in August 2022. The purpose of this review was to provide a high-level assessment of the Department to identify strengths and opportunities across key focus areas with the goal of enhancing overall operational efficiency, effectiveness, and service delivery provided by the Department.

Performance Measure:

Performance measures will be developed in conjunction with the report recommendations and included in future budgets to track progress and cost/benefit of the operational performance reviews.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts: Many of the recommendations provided by KPMG will not require additional resources or budget and, if implemented, will likely result in efficiencies of cost, time savings or improved outcomes. Other areas of improvement, may require additional resources, those recommendations must be evaluated through the annual budget process.

Attachments:

- A) KPMG report: Improving Performance to Better Serve Our County
- B) County Counsel Response to KPMG Review and Implementation Timeframe

Authored by:

Jeff Frapwell, Assistant CEO