



Office of Nikki Alvarez-Sowles, Esq. Pasco County Clerk & Comptroller

April 30, 2021

The Honorable Ron Oakley and
Members of the Board of County Commissioners
Pasco County, Florida
37918 Meridian Avenue
Dade City, Florida 33525

Re: Proposed CFY 2021-2022 Budget

Dear Chairman Oakley and County Commissioners:

Pursuant to Section 129.03(2), Florida Statutes, the attached document includes the Board of County Commissioners' funding requirements for the Office of the Clerk of Circuit Court & County Comptroller (Clerk's Office) to fulfill statutory responsibilities for County Fiscal Year 2021-2022. The budget request is \$13,284,195, resulting in \$8,992,936 of additional funding.

The support for this increase is the result of a thorough re-examination of Florida law that prescribes how Clerks' Offices in non-charter counties are to be funded. The analysis identified the underlying reasons why the Office is facing a breaking point in its ability to accomplish critical, statutorily mandated operations for the community, the Board of County Commissioners, and our many stakeholders, including county operations, justice partner agencies, outside auditors, and numerous other local, state, and federal agencies. This analysis also revealed oversights with the historical methodology of funding requests in that the Clerk's Office did not ask the County to sufficiently fund it in accordance with long-established provisions in Florida laws. Pursuant to §218.35(2)(b) and §29.008(1), F.S., county funding of board and court-related technology costs included in this request total \$1,246,465. Following §28.35 and §29.008(2), F.S., county funding of court-related local requirements computes to \$7,380,737. Also included are the requisite increases for retirement costs and group health insurance, as well as a pay adjustment of 3%, all totaling \$365,734.

The Clerk's Office has demonstrated fiscal responsibility by cutting positions while implementing new technologies and efficiencies; however, funding is not sufficient to cover the cost of providing required, essential services. Since 2010, Pasco's population increased by 19% and the County increased staffing by 39% to provide additional services. In that same time frame, the Clerk's Office cut 11% of its positions due to funding shortages. However, local requirements, factors, and circumstances beyond the control of the Clerk's Office continue to impact its workload and resource needs. Inadequate funding affects our ability to attract and retain qualified applicants, maintain proper reserves needed to plan for technological improvements, and meet anticipated increasing service demands. Therefore, the Clerk's Office is now requesting the County to fund the functions for which it is responsible. Providing premier, or even appropriate levels of service will not be possible with current funding.

The Clerk's Office will continue to provide law library services through the Legal Resource Centers in our East and West Pasco County offices, per Ordinance 16-23. These services, at a direct cost of \$108,424, are funded through dedicated revenue sources at no additional expense to the taxpayers of Pasco County or the Board of County Commissioners.

As you may know, my team and I began exploring elements of this subject with County Administration in the Spring of 2020. Since then, additional meetings occurred between our teams to provide conceptual and detailed analyses. During these in-depth meetings, especially those held over the last month, concerns were expressed about the County's ability to fund its statutory obligations to the Clerk's Office. Because I am required to submit a budget to the Board by May 1, attached is the total budget request in accordance with applicable laws. Understanding the County has many commitments to the community, I remain open to discussing a phased approach prior to the CFY2021-2022 final budget adoption.

On behalf of your dedicated Clerk & Comptroller team, thank you for your continued support. I am humbly committed to helping the County achieve its vision of becoming Florida's Premier County. I look forward to having additional conversations with you, partnering together, and ensuring the Clerk's Office is adequately funded to provide required, essential services.

With appreciation,


Nikki Alvarez-Sowles, Esq.
Pasco County Clerk & Comptroller

Office of Nikki Alvarez-Sowles, Esq.
Clerk & Comptroller
Annual Budget – Fiscal Year 2021-2022
Clerk to the Board and 29.008, F.S. Funding Request

Personnel:			
511100	Clerk's Salary	\$	72,446
511200	Salaries		7,689,137
512100	FICA		572,103
512200	Retirement		927,908
512300	Group Insurance		1,828,035
512500	Unemployment		1,100
		Subtotal: \$	11,090,729
Operations:			
533100	Professional Services	\$	7,200
533400	Other Contracted Services		231,766
534000	Travel		22,398
534001	Travel Registration		13,617
534100	Communications		178,670
534400	Rental and Leases		126,744
534602	Maintenance - Auto		36,430
534603	Maintenance - Office		29,649
534609	Maintenance - Software		917
534700	Printing		8,477
534920	Advertising		11,394
534930	Commissions-Fees-Costs		393
534951	Education and Training		41,809
534952	Awards		3,276
546009	IT Maint. & Support		892,074
555100	Office Supplies		2,028
555101	Postage		21,577
555105	Data Processing Supplies		576
555106	Uncapitalized Equipment		50,480
555107	Data Processing Software		251,709
555109	Computer Office Supplies		3,367
555110	Multi-Purpose Copy Paper		1,590
555200	Operating Supplies		8,744
555201	Fuel and Oil		9,297
555207	Clothing & Wearing Apparel		1,231
555401	Memberships		11,404
555402	Books		30,371
		Subtotal: \$	1,997,188
Capital:			
566401	Automotive Equipment	\$	93,596
566403	Other Equipment		102,682
		Subtotal: \$	196,278
		Total BCC Budget: \$	13,284,195