

District Court of Nebraska

SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

428 N. Broad Street • Fremont, NE 68025

Lori A. Blume
Court Reporter

GEOFFREY C. HALL
DISTRICT JUDGE

Telephone 402-727-2780
Fax 402-727-2774

DODGE

April 17, 2019

Appendix Item # 22
Date 4-24-2019

Dodge County Board of Supervisors
ATTN: Chairman Bob Missel
435 North Park Street
Fremont, Nebraska 68025

2019 APR 18 AM 9:16
DODGE COUNTY NEBRASKA
FREMONT CIVIC CENTER

RECEIVED

RE: Court-appointed defense counsel hourly rate increase in Dodge County
Effective date: July 1, 2019

Dear Mr. Missel and Members of the Board,

As you may know, Judge Vampola and I have decided, after considerable contemplation and discussion, to raise the hourly rate of Court-appointed defense counsel in Dodge County effective July 1, 2019, as follows:

District Court - \$95.00 per hour
County Court - \$95.00 per hour
Juvenile Court - \$75.00 per hour

This increase is driven in part by the recent movement throughout the Sixth Judicial District to raise the Court-appointed defense counsel hourly rate to a uniform level. I am attaching a copy of Judge Samson's recent letter concerning the same subject in Washington, Burt and Thurston Counties. The nearby counties of Dixon, Dakota, and Cedar in the Sixth Judicial District, as well as Wayne, Madison, Stanton, Cuming, Platte, Colfax, Butler, and Saunders Counties, are all paying an hourly rate of \$95.00 per hour to Court-appointed defense counsel.

We realize this is a significant increase in the current hourly rate but we feel it is prudent to pay defense counsel an hourly rate that is consistent with other

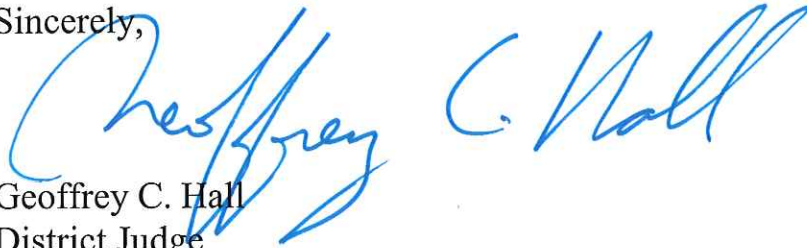
Burt • Cedar • Dakota • Dixon • Dodge • Thurston • Washington

counties in Northeast Nebraska. Further, the rising overhead costs of defense counsel also compels this decision.

In conclusion, the new hourly rates indicated above for Court-appointed defense counsel will go into effect in Dodge County on July 1, 2019. It is our hope that the delay in implementing this planned change will allow you additional time to budget for this increase.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Sincerely,



Geoffrey C. Hall
District Judge



Kenneth Vampola
County Judge

GCH:lab

Enclosure



1555 Colfax Street • Blair, Nebraska 68008-2094 • Phone (402) 426-6808 • Fax (402) 426-6821

JOHN E. SAMSON

DISTRICT JUDGE

SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Gladys Nelson, Court Reporter
Tammi Burbach, Bailiff

February 20, 2019

Washington County Board of Supervisors
c/o Chairman Steve Dethlefs
1555 Colfax Street
P.O. Box 466
Blair, NE 68008

Burt County Board of Supervisors
c/o Chairman David Schold
111 N 13th Street, Suite 8
P.O. Box 87
Tekamah, NE 68061

Re: Court-appointed attorney fees increase in Burt and Washington County
(effective date: July 1, 2019)

Dear Mr. Dethlefs and Mr. Schold:

The undersigned is the District Court Judge for Burt, Washington, and Thurston Counties. In that regard I wanted to give you advance notice of a change in the court-appointed attorney fee rate.

As you are aware, the County must provide legal representation for defendants who are indigent. Several months ago, I was asked to consider increasing the hourly attorney fee rate for lawyers who are court-appointed. It was mentioned that the current hourly rate of \$75.00 was not a reasonable hourly rate when considering overhead expenses incurred by the attorneys.

During my investigation over the past couple of months, I spoke with numerous attorneys and county attorneys and several judges. I found that the hourly court-appointed attorney rate for the majority of counties in Northeast Nebraska is set at \$95.00 per hour and has been for some time. The counties which are currently paying \$95.00 per hour are: Thurston County, Dakota County, Cedar County, Wayne County, Madison County, Stanton County, Cuming County, Platte County, Colfax County, Butler County and Saunders County.

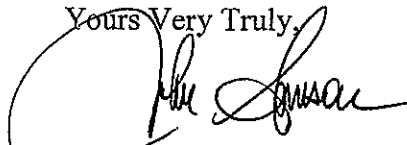
Burt County and Washington County hourly rates are currently set at \$75.00 per hour and Dodge County is set at \$70.00 per hour. I recently spoke with Judge Geoffrey Hall (Dodge County District Court Judge) and it is my understanding that he is in the process of notifying the Dodge County Board of Supervisors that the court-appointed attorney rate in Dodge County will be raised to \$95.00 per hour.

Based upon my investigation, I determined that a fair and reasonable hourly rate for Burt County and Washington County is \$95.00 per hour for all felonies and misdemeanors. (Juvenile Court matters in Burt and Washington Counties are under the jurisdiction of Judge Samuelson and are not affected by my decision.)

I realize this is a significant increase in the hourly rate but it is comparable to all of the other rural counties in Northeast Nebraska. With that said, the new hourly rate of \$95.00 for both Burt County and Washington County **will be implemented effective as of July 1, 2019**. I decided to delay the increase to July 1, 2019 to allow you time to adequately plan and budget for the increase to the attorney fee expense.

If you have any questions, or, if you would like to have me speak with you at one of your board meetings, please contact me. Thank you.

Yours Very Truly,



John E. Samson
District Judge

JES/tsb

Cc: Honorable Geoffrey Hall, Dodge County District Court Judge
Honorable Kenneth Vampola, Dodge County Court Judge
Honorable Matthew Samuelson, Washington/Burt County Court Judge
Oliver Glass, Dodge County Attorney
Francis Barron, Burt County Attorney
Scott Vander Schaaf, Washington County Attorney