



# 2025 BOS Workshop: County Counsel

County Counsel

Date: January 15, 2025

Charlotte E. Scott, County Counsel



# Agenda

1. County Counsel Overview
2. Key Goals for County Counsel
3. Role of County Counsel relative to the County's Strategic Initiatives



# County Counsel Overview

- **Mission & Vision**

The office of the Mendocino County Counsel is committed to providing the highest quality legal advice and representation to the Board of Supervisors, elected and appointed department heads, County agencies, departments and staff, in a timely, responsive and cost-effective manner; County Counsel is committed to providing legal assistance to the County, its governing Board of Supervisors and departments as needed to promote the public service objectives of Mendocino County, while at the same time protecting the County from risk and loss.

- **Key Focus Areas**

a) County Counsel is a County Officer authorized by the California Government Code and appointed by the Board of Supervisors to be the chief legal advisor on all civil matters to the Board of Supervisors and County departments.

b) There are numerous state laws that address the powers, duties and functions of County Counsel, including, but not limited to: legal advisor to the civil Grand Jury; review contracts, leases, memorandums, legal documents; preparing ballot title and summary for and impartial analysis of county ballot measures; counsel in probate matters involving Public Administrator, in conservatorship matters for Public Guardian/Public Conservator; counsel for county's child welfare agency in juvenile dependency proceedings; respond to petitions regarding conditions of confinement in County jail; advise certain Boards and Commissions (e.g., AAB, BHAB, Planning Commission and other advisory boards as assigned by the Board of Supervisors) and much more. . .

c) Office of 9 attorneys when fully staffed (currently 8); 3 Deputies devoted to Juvenile Dependency Team, 1 Deputy to Behavioral Health and Probate litigation



# County Counsel Overview (cont'd)

- The 5 attorneys outside the juvenile dependency team, (including County Counsel and Assistant County Counsel) each share responsibility for several assigned departments and/or tasks.
- These tasks include everything from legal advice and opinions, litigation, records requests (PRAs and third-party subpoenas), contracts, etc., including, but not limited to the following departments or tasks:
  - AAB; Agriculture/ Farm Advisor; ALUC; Animal Care Services; Appeals/Writs; Assessor/ Clerk/ Record/ Elections; Auditor-Controller/ Treasurer-Tax Collector; Bail Bonds; Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (Mental Health/ BHAB/ Substance Use Disorder Treatment); Board of Supervisors; Cannabis; Child Support Services; Clerk of the Board; Code Enforcement (Cannabis/DOT/EH/PBS); Executive Office (IT/OES/Risk Management/PRRM); Emergency Medical Services; Environmental Health; General Services (Central Services/Facilities & Fleet/Parks); Grand Jury; Human Resources; Library; Litigation; Museum; Planning & Building Services; Planning Commission/ MHRB; Probation (Adult/Juvenile/ Juvenile Hall); Public Administrator; Public Conservator (LPS); Public Defender; Public Guardian (probate); Public Health/Health Officer; Sheriff's Office; Social Services (Adult & Aging Services/ Family & Children's Services/ Employment & Family Assistance); Transportation; Water Agency.



# Key Goals

- We will continue to take our direction from the collective Board of Supervisors, and work to understand and further the priorities of the Board;
- We will provide the best possible legal services for the County in litigation initiated by and against the County;
- We will provide well researched, accurate, and clearly communicated legal advice that is timely in response to our clients' questions;
- We are dedicated individual legal professionals who will work as a team to support each other in completing our tasks and use available resources to successfully reach our shared goals;
- We will foster and promote an environment that allows Board members and the County's management staff to fully and timely seek guidance whenever needed and to inform County Counsel of all relevant information.



# Strategic Plan Initiatives

- As an internal service department with certain statutory responsibilities, we see our role as helping the Board of Supervisors fulfill its objectives and priorities by assisting county departments to implement the same.
- This involves assessing these objectives and priorities within the applicable legal and statutory framework.
  - *An Effective County Government Organization*
  - *A Safe & Healthy County*
  - *A Thriving Economy*
  - *A Prepared & Resilient County*



# Q&A/Discussion

- Any questions?
- Thank you!