

BLUE RIDGE JUVENILE DETENTION COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<u>AGENDA TITLE:</u> Hazard Pay - 1 st Quarter FY21	<u>AGENDA DATE:</u> September 10, 2020
<u>SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST:</u>	<u>FORMAL AGENDA:</u> <u>INFORMATION:</u> Yes <u>ACTION:</u>
<u>STAFF CONTACTS:</u> Roessler, Brill	<u>ATTACHMENTS:</u> No
	<u>REVIEWED BY:</u>

BACKGROUND

On June 11, 2020 the Commission approved hazardous pay for BRJD personnel for the months of April, May, and June, at a rate of \$3 per hour for all hours worked on site, and which totaled approximately \$56,828. The cost of the hazard pay was an unbudgeted expense and was offset by BRJD's ample FY20 vacancy savings.

Due to the continued negative forecast for COVID-19, I am requesting that hazard pay be approved for all BRJD personnel, with the exception of the Director, for the months of July, August, and September, at a rate of \$1 per hour for all hours worked on site. The requested rate of \$1 per hour currently aligns with the Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail and, taking into account current vacancies, is estimated to total less than \$20,000.

The justification for continued hazard pay is due to the continued risk BRJD personnel face as essential public safety employees. Although BRJD has been fortunate thus far to avoid a positive diagnosis amongst staff and residents, there have been several occurrences in which staff have had to quarantine at home due to having close contact with a person who tested positive, or due to experiencing symptoms of their own that prompted them to pursue a COVID test. These occurrences require our remaining staff to provide coverage for those who are absent and understandably increase everyone's stress/anxiety. In addition, there is no routine testing available to BRJD personnel or residents, therefore staff must contend with the unknown when working with each other and when conducting the intake/quarantine process with new residents.

Like many other employers, BRJD has instituted multiple protocols and procedures to mitigate our level of risk. However, many other governmental entities possess an even greater ability to mitigate risk by allowing their employees to work from home, which thereby eliminates or greatly reduces staff exposure to the public and each other. BRJD employees do not have this option. Detention staff are required to continue to work closely with residents, members of the public, and each other, all of whom could possibly expose them to COVID-19. Unlike the inherent risks associated with working in a correctional environment that are typically limited to impacting only the essential personnel, the COVID-19 virus extends those health risks to their families which is above and beyond normal expectations.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Director recommends that the Commission approve the request for continued hazard pay for BRJD personnel, at the rate of \$1.00 per hour, for the months of July, August, and September. As mentioned above, the total cost is estimated to be less than \$20,000 and it is anticipated that FY21 vacancy savings will absorb this cost.