

Superior Court of the State of Washington
For the County of Yakima

Yakima County Courthouse
128 North Second St.
Yakima, Washington 98901

SUPERIOR COURT
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Judge Susan L. Hahn
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Judge Blaine G. Gibson
Judge David A. Elofson
Judge Ruth E. Reukauf
Judge Gayle M. Harthcock
Judge Richard H. Bartheld

April 20, 2015

Ms. Janelle Riddle
Clerk of the Court
128 North 2nd Street
Yakima, WA 98901

Dear Ms. Riddle,

I provide this letter to you as background for the new local rule LAR 3.

There have been three recent significant communications with you March 20, March 30 and April 14, of 2015. On March 20, 2015 you sent an email to Yakima County Superior Court stating you would make fundamental changes to the court procedures performed by the in-court clerks effective May 4, 2015. These are longstanding and carefully designed procedures which have been followed for several years with outstanding success. I have attached your email to this letter.

In response to your letter, the Court Administrator asked to meet with you via e-mail and voice mail. Receiving no response, a meeting before the Yakima County Superior Court Judges was scheduled for March 30, 2015. The purpose of the meeting was for you to explain the reasoning behind your decision to so fundamentally alter the system. During that meeting you admitted you had not consulted with the court as to the potential impact your changes would have on the judicial system. You admitted you did not conduct any research into the potential financial impact your decision would have on Yakima County. You offered as a basis for the change your concerns regarding the implementation of the new Odyssey computer system.

During the course of the meeting we learned from Yakima County Technology Services that there would be very little impact on your office until September or October for a two week period. During that two week period we have agreed to schedule very light dockets to accommodate this new and beneficial technology. We learned that your proposal would have substantial and catastrophic financial impact on Yakima County estimated at approximately \$475,000.00 per year. Your decision would also substantially impair the administration of justice. Of particular concern is your stated refusal to create and maintain

the digital recording of court hearings. You also refused to make those recordings available to the general public, the attorneys appearing in court, and the court itself.

During the course of the meeting you admitted your plan was not well thought out and was insufficiently researched as to its impact. You also stated you would consult with the courts before making such decisions in the future. You agreed to withdraw the proposed changes to the system described in your email of March 20th.

Following that meeting you and I had a meeting in my office. In that meeting you looked me in the eye and said "Trust me". I said I would.

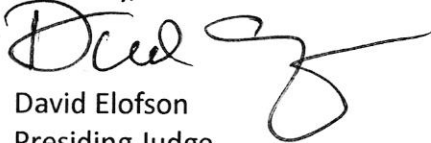
On April 14, 2015 you forwarded a new email threatening again to fundamentally alter the courtroom procedures in the same fashion as threatened in your email of March 20, 2015. You offered no basis or reason for your position. Your edict of April 14 was precisely the same as your edict of March 20th, both of which are contradicted by your statements to the Yakima County Judges at the March 30th meeting. At no time have you consulted with the courts regarding the basis for this plan or the impact this plan would have. I have also checked your statement, in your April 14 email, in which you claim you and Harold Delia entered into some alternative agreement and I find that statement to be untrue.

I emphasize your proposed changes to the procedures in the courtroom will have a catastrophic financial impact on Yakima County; your proposed changes make the judicial system less effective and less efficient and retard the ability of the judicial system to respond to the needs of the public.

Our Court Administrator and I have repeatedly invited you to meetings to share information so that we can devise policies and procedures which will enhance the judicial system. We have attempted to schedule these types of meetings every week since January 1, 2015. With the exception of three occasions you have been unwilling to meet with us. Not once have you stated your vision, plan or goals. Your refusal to cooperate for the benefit of the judicial system we have all pledged to support is simply negligent.

Consequently, Yakima County Superior Court has adopted by unanimous vote LAR 3. LAR 3 will allow necessary services to continue to be made available to the public. It appears to me your statements made on March 30th to Yakima County Superior Court were made to deceive the court. Your statements made at that meeting and to me privately were not truthful. I am deeply concerned that you have made untruthful statements to me, another government official. You have given the Superior Court very little time to respond to your maneuver. As an aside, you should also know, even if we were inclined to hire staff necessary to fill the void you have created, we would need several months to hire the those employees. Your untruthful statements and refusal to cooperate are harmful to our judicial system. Your conduct is misfeasant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Elofson", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Elofson
Presiding Judge