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# Supervisors Will Consider Judge's Budget Request

Supervisors Tuesday will consider Municipal Court Judge Richard Kessel's request that the court's 1982-83 budget be cut by \$120,000 by eliminating the pre-trial release program.

Kessel, presiding judge of the Municipal Court, requested the cut Friday when county supervisors were considering the Municipal Court budget.

The request came after Acting County Administrative Officer George Newell had recommended the Municipal Court budget be cut by 3½ full-time positions.

Although supervisors Friday approved the recommended \$2 million Municipal Court budget, they decided to wait until Tuesday's budget hearings to take up Kessel's request.

Budget hearings will be held this week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Room 525 of the County Center, except for a break Tuesday morning during which supervisors will conduct their normal business.

Ironically, Kessel helped start the pre-trial release program several years ago. Under the program, suspects can be released on their own recognizance before a trial if certain findings are made.

Kessel said the program cost \$60,000 annually when he helped implement it in 1974. The cost of it now has doubled, he estimated.

He said the passage on June 8 of Propositions 4 and 8 throws the whole matter of pre-trial release into a state of confusion.

The \$120,000, Kessel said, could better be used by the probation department, the district attorney's office and by mental health programs that are "sorely needed by many of our clients."

The money also is needed to repair county roads, Kessel added, stressing he was speaking as an individual and not for the court.

Kessel did claim that, including himself, three of the four municipal court judges backed the elimination of the program. Judges William Kelsay and John Marlo reportedly are in agreement with Kessel, and Judge Richard McAdams openly disagreed with Kessel Friday.

"It is a false economy, a false issue," McAdams told the board Friday afternoon.

The program, McAdams insisted, will have to exist even if it exists in some other budget.

"It is not just a humanitarian issue," he said, "but an economic issue." If people aren't released on their own recognizance, it will cost the county money to keep them in jail until their trials and Propositions 4 and 8 will have a "dramatic effect" on jail population, he said.

Superior Court Judges Chris Cottle and Rollie Hall and Court Administrator Bob Wandruff reportedly also disagreed with Kessel's call for elimination of the program.