GILA COUNTY ATTORNEY
Bradley D. Beauchamp

Re: County Attorney's Office "approval as to form" of contract or agreement.

To whom it may concern:

The County Attorney's Office has reviewed the contract or agreement attached to this agenda item and has determined that it is in its proper form and is within the powers and authority granted under the laws of this state to the public agency requesting the County Attorney's Office review.

Explanation of the Gila County Attorney's Office "Approval as to Form" Review

The Gila County Attorney's Office is often called upon to review contracts and other agreements between public entities represented by the County Attorney and private vendors, contractors, and individuals.

In performing this review, the County Attorney's Office reviews these contracts to see that they are in "proper form" prior to their execution. "Proper form" means that the contract conforms to fundamental contract law, conforms to specific legislative requirements, and is within the powers and authority granted to the public agency. It does not mean that the County Attorney's Office approves of or supports the policy objectives contained in the contract. That approval is solely the province of the public agency through its elected body.

The public agency or department submitting the contract for review has the responsibility to read and understand the contract in order to completely understand its obligations under the contract if it is ultimately approved by the public entity's board. This is because while the County Attorney's Office can approve the contract as to form, the office may not have any idea whether the public agency has the capacity to actually comply with its contractual obligations. Also, the County Attorney's Office does not monitor contract compliance. Hence the public entity or

submitting department will need to be prepared to monitor their own compliance. A thorough knowledge of the provisions of the contract will be necessary to monitor compliance.

Before signing a contract "approved as to form," the County Attorney's Office will answer any questions or concerns the public agency has about the contract. It is the responsibility of the public agency or department submitting the contract for review to ask any specific questions or address any concerns it has about the contract to the County Attorney's Office at the same time they submit the contract for review. Making such an inquiry also helps improve the County Attorney's Office review of the contract because it will help focus the review on specific issues that are of greatest concern to the public agency. Failing to make such an inquiry when the agency does have issues or concerns will decrease the ability of the County Attorney's Office to meaningfully review the agreement.