

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

Jill A. Hueser, Chief Judge

SUBJECT

Items Relating to the Appointment and Reappointment of Assistant Municipal Court Judges.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A. Resolution 2024-082 Reappointing Brandi Nieto as an Assistant Municipal Judge of the Fort Collins Municipal Court and Authorizing the Execution of an Employment Agreement.
- B. Resolution 2024-083 Reappointing Kristin Brown as an Assistant Municipal Judge of the Fort Collins Municipal Court and Authorizing the Execution of an Employment Agreement.
- C. Resolution 2024-084 Reappointing Sarah Simchowitz as an Assistant Municipal Judge of the Fort Collins Municipal Court and Authorizing the Execution of an Employment Agreement.
- D. Resolution 2024-085 Appointing John William Sierra as an Assistant Municipal Judge of the Fort Collins Municipal Court and Authorizing the Execution of an Employment Agreement.
- E. Resolution 2024-086 Appointing Laura Hinojos as an Assistant Municipal Judge of the Fort Collins Municipal Court and Authorizing the Execution of an Employment Agreement.
- F. Resolution 2024-087 Appointing Whitney Stark as an Assistant Municipal Judge of the Fort Collins Municipal Court and Authorizing the Execution of an Employment Agreement.
- G. Resolution 2024-088 Appointing Linda Cooke as an Assistant Municipal Judge of the Fort Collins Municipal Court and Authorizing the Execution of an Employment Agreement.
- H. Resolution 2024-089 Appointing Jana Kaspar as an Assistant Municipal Judge of the Fort Collins Municipal Court and Authorizing the Execution of an Employment Agreement.

The purpose of this item is to reappoint three Assistant Municipal Judges and to appoint five new Assistant Municipal Judges for the Fort Collins Municipal Court. The City Charter provides for the appointment of judges of the Municipal Court for two-year terms. Chief Judge Jill A. Hueser recommends that John William Sierra, Laura Hinojos, Whitney Stark, Linda Cooke, and Jana Kaspar be appointed as Assistant Municipal Judges, and that Brandi Nieto, Kristin Brown and Sarah Simchowitz be reappointed as Assistant Municipal Judges to serve in the absence of the Chief Judge.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Resolutions.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

These Resolutions appoint five new Assistant Municipal Judges and reappoint three existing Assistant Municipal Judges, all for two-year terms, and authorize the Mayor to execute employment agreements with each of them. Although the terms of the current Assistant Municipal Judges do not expire until December 31, Chief Judge Hueser requests that they be reappointed now so that all appointments can be on the same schedule. Chief Judge Hueser recommends these appointments to provide adequate relief judge resources to cover vacation and sick leave, to preside when two judges are necessary based on the size of the Municipal Court docket, and in cases where there may be a conflict for one or more judges. Assistant Judges may also serve as the Liquor Authority or Marijuana Authority when the Chief Judge is unavailable.

The new appointees and their backgrounds are:

- Mr. Sierra currently works as a hearing officer for the City of Greeley and has prior experience of over twenty years as a trial attorney. He is bilingual, speaking Spanish fluently and has a diverse background of legal experience.
- Ms. Hinojos recently left the District Attorney's Office for the 8th Judicial District, where she was a Chief Deputy District Attorney. Although this is her first judicial appointment, she brings over fifteen years of legal experience to the bench.
- Ms. Stark currently works in Denver as a part-time Magistrate Judge while also maintaining her own private practice. She previously worked as a Public Defender.
- Ms. Cooke recently retired from the City of Boulder, where she was the presiding judge for over twenty years.
- Ms. Kaspar is currently in private practice in Denver and also serves as a Pro Tem Municipal Judge for the City of Westminster.

Chief Judge Hueser believes each of these individuals will serve the City of Fort Collins faithfully and will add great value to the bench. Additionally, Chief Judge Hueser requests reappointment of the current judges as they have all provided valuable service to the bench and continue to be well-qualified judges.

The Assistant Municipal Judges may also be appointed by the Chief Judge to serve as referees to hear civil infractions, camera radar, red light, and parking infractions when requested.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The proposed rate of pay of \$100 per hour is in line with the rate being paid by other Municipal Courts in the front range. Each Assistant Municipal Judge will serve on an as-needed basis and the expense will be covered by the current Municipal Court budget.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

None.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution A for Consideration
2. Exhibit A to Resolution A
3. Resolution B for Consideration

4. Exhibit A to Resolution B
5. Resolution C for Consideration
6. Exhibit A to Resolution C
7. Resolution D for Consideration
8. Exhibit A to Resolution D
9. Resolution E for Consideration
10. Exhibit A to Resolution E
11. Resolution F for Consideration
12. Exhibit A to Resolution F
13. Resolution G for Consideration
14. Exhibit A to Resolution G
15. Resolution H for Consideration
16. Exhibit A to Resolution H