AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY
City Council

City of Fort Collins

STAFF

Carrie Daggett, City Attorney
Jill Hueser, Chief Municipal Court Judge
Dawn Downs, Managing Attorney, Public Safety and Prosecution Section

SUBJECT

First Reading of Ordinance No. 083, 2024, Appropriating Prior Year Reserves in the Redlight Camera Fund Within the General Fund for Additional Staffing for Municipal Court and City Attorney's Office to Support the Increased Police Enforcement Cases.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to appropriate $179,122 from the Redlight Camera Fund to add additional staffing for Municipal Court (1 full time equivalent [FTE]) and the City Attorney's Office Prosecution Team (2 FTE's) to support the Traffic Safety initiative and the increased number of enforcement cases that are already occurring. This new staffing will handle increases in police enforcement cases and is in addition to the request for the Automated Vehicle Identification Systems (AVIS) and speed corridors item also being presented to Council on July 2, 2024.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinances on the First Reading.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The Municipal Court and City Attorney's Office Prosecution teams are committed to maintaining public safety, and fair and equitable treatment of all people who receive citations. The Court and Prosecution handle a weekly court docket that includes scheduling, court appearances, arraignments, pretrial conferences, trials, and hearings involving several different enforcement agencies.

In 2024, the Court's general enforcement caseload has increased by over 1200 cases, an average of 33% in the first 4 months of the year. This is driven primarily by emphasis placed on traffic enforcement and traffic safety initiatives towards meeting the vision zero goal, and Fort Collins Police Service's (FCPS's) new e-citation technology which allows an officer to issue violations quickly and return to patrolling faster than using handwritten violations thus increasing their efficiency. In addition, a new shift of patrol officers was added in May, increasing the number of officers and citations that can be issued on those days. Additionally, the misdemeanor caseload is trending higher as well.

The number of enforcement cases cited in Municipal Court have been steadily increasing over the last year and an even more drastic increase in the first four months of 2024. This increase has led to critical staffing shortage to handle the influx of cases. The notable rise in enforcement programs is expected to continue and has significantly impacted Court and Prosecution staffing. Accordingly, we are asking for FTE staffing increases so that we can continue to strive to provide excellent customer service to our community members in court.

The estimated costs associated with FTE staffing requests are:

- One new full-time Assistant City Attorney II and one new full-time Legal Assistant with related support including equipment and benefits, is $142,774

- One new full-time Municipal Court Clerk, with related support including equipment and benefits is $36,348.

The total cost for the remainder of 2024 for these positions (assuming positions are filled for the last 5 months of the year) is projected to total $179,122. The ongoing annual cost of these positions is projected to total $324,777.

The current fund balance in the reserves in the Redlight Camera Fund within the General Fund will be used to fund the additional FTE's requested for Municipal Court and the City Attorney's Office Prosecution Team to support the Traffic Safety initiative and the increased number of enforcement cases.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

This Ordinance will appropriate $179,122 in reserves from the Redlight Camera Fund within the General Fund to add additional FTE's for Municipal Court and the City Attorney's Office Prosecution Team to support the Traffic Safety initiative and the increased number of enforcement cases.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

None.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ordinance for Consideration