



# BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF SNOQUALMIE

**AB24-111**  
**November 12, 2024**  
**Appointment**

## AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

|                            |  |   |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>TITLE:</b>              | <b>AB24-111:</b> Appointment of the City Hearing Examiner  | <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only  |
| <b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b> | Confirm the Mayor’s appointment of Peregrin Sorter as City Hearing Examiner and authorize the execution of a professional services agreement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Needed:<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Motion<br><input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance<br><input type="checkbox"/> Resolution |

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|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| <b>DEPARTMENT:</b>      | Community Development  |                         |
| <b>STAFF:</b>           | Emily Arteche  |                         |
| <b>COMMITTEE:</b>       | Finance & Administration   | Meeting Date: 11/5/2024 |
| <b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b> | n/a  |                         |
| <b>EXHIBITS:</b>        | AB24-111x1 Contract<br>AB24-111x2 Statement of Qualifications and Fee Proposal |                         |

## SUMMARY

Appointment of Peregrin Sorter of Laminar Law PLLC to serve as Hearing Examiner pursuant to SMC 2.14.030, and approval of a professional services contract.

### BACKGROUND

The City’s current Hearing Examiner, Sharon Rice, recently gave notice that she would be terminating her contract with the City because some of the larger jurisdictions that she serves have been demanding an increasing proportion of her time. Ms. Rice believes that she will no longer be able to provide the same level of timely and responsive service to Snoqualmie; therefore she is electing to terminate her contract with Snoqualmie and another smaller city that she has served for several years. Accordingly, the City now needs to appoint a new hearing examiner to fulfill the duties required under Chapter 2.14 of the Snoqualmie Municipal Code.

Peregrin Sorter is the founder and managing attorney of Laminar Law, PLLC, and serves as hearing examiner to a select number of cities and towns in Western Washington, including the cities of Arlington, Des Moines, Port Angeles, Sedro-Woolley, and Woodinville. Prior to founding Laminar Law in 2023, Mr. Sorter served for three years as managing attorney and pro tem hearing examiner with Sound Law Center, where he conducted hearings and prepared written decisions for many jurisdictions in the Puget Sound region. Prior to becoming a hearing examiner, Mr. Sorter served for over 10 years as a staff attorney for the Washington State Court of Appeals, Division II, where he assisted judges in drafting appellate opinions. Mr. Sorter’s professional resume and his proposal for providing services to the City is attached, along with a Professional Services Agreement that will be executed if the Council confirms his appointment.

Mr. Sorter advises that, if confirmed, he will be readily available to schedule requested hearings. He is very comfortable conducting remote hearings by Zoom, which is efficient and convenient for land use applicants, members of the public, and other parties. He is also able to conduct in-person hearings when appropriate. Because of his extensive prior experience, Mr. Sorter is knowledgeable of planning policies and regulations governing land-use decisions in Washington State, and will be able to efficiently produce decisions that are clear, thorough, and timely issued. Mr. Sorter would serve as Snoqualmie's Hearing Examiner with support provided by additional Laminar Law members as needed.

### **APPOINTMENT PROCESS**

A hearing examiner is appointed by the Mayor and subject to confirmation by the City Council as outlined in Chapter 2.14 of the Snoqualmie Municipal Code.

The Community Development Director reached out to several local providers of hearing examiner services to solicit their qualifications and interest in serving as the City's hearing examiner. Three responses were received, and interviews were conducted with two candidates. Mayor Ross selected Mr. Sorter of Laminar Law to be the City's Hearing Examiner after determining that he presented the best combination of expertise, experience, availability, and approach to conducting hearings, with costs that are reasonable and competitive with other providers. His proposal included flat fees for various routine land use application matters (preliminary plats, conditional use permits, etc.), along with a competitive hourly rate for appeals, code enforcement hearings, and other non-routine matters delegated to him for decision or recommendation under the SMC.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Motion to confirm the Mayor's appointment of Peregrin Sorter as City Hearing Examiner and authorize the execution of a professional services agreement.