



MONROE CITY COUNCIL

Agenda Bill No. 20-003

SUBJECT:	Confirmation of Appointment for Municipal Court Judge Jessica Ness
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DATE:	DEPT:	CONTACT:	PRESENTER:	ITEM:
1/21/2020	Human Resources	Ben Warthan	Ben Warthan	Special Orders of the Day #1

Discussion 1/21/20
Attachments: 1. Jessica Ness bio

REQUESTED ACTION: Move to confirm Mayor’s appointment of Jessica Ness as Monroe Municipal Court Judge

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The Council is responsible for confirming the Mayor’s appointments

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND

Pursuant to Monroe Municipal Code 2.80.090: Any vacancy in the municipal court due to death, disability or resignation of the municipal court judge shall be filled by the mayor for the remainder of the expired term. The appointment shall be subject to confirmation by the city council.

On October 2, 2019, Judge Mara Rozzano provided noticed to the City she was ending her contract effective December 1, 2019. In the same month the City put out a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) for Municipal Court Judge with a deadline for responses by November 15, 2019. The City received 3 qualified submittals for the RFQ. Ms. Jessica Ness was selected by the Mayor to fulfil the remaining unexpired term, ending December 31, 2021.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The proposed fiscal impacts of the agreement is unchanged from the budgeted amount for Municipal Court Judge for 2020. The rate for 2020 is \$6,388 per month. The rate for 2021 is \$6,867 per month.

TIME CONSTRAINTS

January 21, 2020, due to scheduled Judicial College for the last week of January 2020.

ALTERNATIVES

Do not approve the appointment and ask the Mayor to direct staff to find other alternatives.



Jessica Connelly Ness

candidate for

Monroe Municipal Court Judge

Jessica Ness is a highly experienced Judge Pro Tem whose primary occupation is serving in the District and Municipal Courts. Since 2012, she has been handling all judicial responsibilities in these courts and has developed a strong reputation for effective, fair, and efficient handling of the work of the trial courts. Her services as a judicial officer are much in demand due to the calm, considerate, professional manner in which she interacts with the elected judges, court staff, administration, attorneys, and public court users.

Jessica was appointed by the Mountlake Terrace City Manager and confirmed by the city council as a Hearing Examiner in 2015. In this capacity, she renders quasi-judicial decisions in civil matters. She also serves as a Police Chief's Designated Appointee for the City of Mukilteo presiding over forfeiture matters.

As a former Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for the Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office, Jessica managed all aspects of case preparation and trial. She recruited, trained, and supervised new attorneys and interns in her role as the Infractions Supervisor. Part of her responsibilities also entailed the management of a legal team of expert witnesses, lay witnesses, and paralegals in the Involuntary Commitment program. This position provided her with valuable insight into the relationship between mental health treatment, the justice system, and community safety.

Jessica has gained valuable experience on the other side of the courtroom by serving as a criminal defense attorney for nearly five years, counseling clients on their legal rights and representing them in all phases of their criminal cases.

Dedicated to investing in youth, Jessica has volunteered as a coach for Archbishop Murphy's Mock Trial team, advocated as a VGAL for abused and neglected children, and engaged 5th graders at the ABA Law Day celebration.