

JUDICIAL ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

January 5, 2005

The Judicial Advisory Board of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on January 5, 2005 at 7:50 a.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Chairman Joan Ruffennach
Marlon E. Branham
Stella Hunsaker
Barbara Jarrett
Linda Rottman

COMMITTEE ABSENT

Joan C. Herzog
Murray G. Snow

STAFF PRESENT

Denise Bleyle
Kathleen Broman
Pat Granillo
Matt Tafoya

1. Update on the Mesa City Court by Presiding City Magistrate Matt Tafoya.

Presiding City Magistrate Matt Tafoya provided the Boardmembers with a brief status report on the City Court. He reported that the City Court has recently hired Paul Thomas as the new Court Administrator and Albert Lemke as the new Deputy Court Administrator. Magistrate Tafoya advised that the remodeling of the Jail Court is scheduled for this year and should be fully operational by this summer. He also noted that pending City Council approval, it is anticipated that the design of the new Court Building would begin, the process of which is expected to take approximately 18 months. Magistrate Tafoya stated that the design of the new facility would center on the Court's business operations, and that ultimately the current system would be converted to a paperless system (the City Court, the City Prosecutor's Office and the Mesa Police Department would be components of that system). He added that it is his desire that the new Court building be operated in an effective and functional manner to efficiently dispose of cases and promptly receive the payment of fines.

Magistrate Tafoya further reported that various court forms related to pleas and the Jail Court would be streamlined this year for the benefit of the magistrates, the court clerks and the defendants. He also discussed the Home Arrest Program, which is currently in the pilot stage, and his desire to begin the process to hire another City Magistrate, if approved by the City Council.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the proposed site for the new Court Building would be located at the corner of 1st Avenue and South Pomeroy; that the City Prosecutor's Office would also be housed in the new facility; that the Jail Court is being remodeled to address safety

issues for Court staff; and that the existing Court Building has been physically restructured to accommodate the hiring of a new City Magistrate.

Chairman Ruffennach expressed appreciation to Magistrate Tafoya for his presentation.

2. Approve minutes of the October 6, 2004 meeting.

It was moved by Boardmember Rottman, seconded by Boardmember Jarrett, that the minutes of the October 6, 2004 meeting be approved.

Chairman Ruffennach declared the motion carried unanimously by those present.

3. Review and consider items related to the reappointment of Magistrates Victor Ortiz and Karl Eppich, whose terms expire June 30, 2005:

a. Application for Reappointment

Management Assistant Denise Bleyle informed the Boardmembers that staff traditionally prepares a letter which is signed by the Board's Chairman to formally invite the magistrate whose term is expiring to apply for reappointment to the Mesa City Court. She explained that the letter, along with a disk and a hard copy of the newly revised Application for Reappointment, is mailed and the application must be completed and returned to the Human Resources Office by the end of January so the Board can review it at their February meeting.

b. Letter to Commission on Judicial Conduct

Ms. Bleyle explained that Chairman Ruffennach will sign the Board's letter that will be sent to the Arizona Commission on Judicial Conduct to solicit the number of complaints or reprimands, if any, which may have been filed against Magistrates Ortiz and Eppich.

c. Courtroom Schedule

Ms. Bleyle indicated that the Boardmembers were provided copies of courtroom schedules for Magistrates Ortiz and Eppich. She stated that if anyone is interested in observing the magistrates, she encouraged them to contact Court Administrator Paul Thomas prior to visiting the Court to confirm case schedules and the magistrate's availability.

d. Distribute previous interview questions for review at the next meeting

Ms. Bleyle reported that the Boardmembers were provided copies of the 2004 Interview Questions for the reappointment of Magistrates Standage and Allen; the 2001 Interview Questions for the reappointment of Magistrate Ortiz; and the 2003 Interview Questions for the reappointment of Magistrate Eppich. She commented that at the February meeting, the Boardmembers, per their discretion, would modify and finalize the questions in preparation for the public hearings and interviews in March.

Chairman Ruffennach suggested that between now and the February 9th meeting, that the Board review the previous interview questions in an effort to expedite the process at that time.

She also stated that because the Board has asked a hypothetical question of the candidate in the past, that perhaps the Boardmembers could formulate those types of questions as well.

Ms. Bleyle said that she would e-mail and mail hard copies of the previous interview questions to Boardmembers Snow and Herzog so that they also have the opportunity to review those items in a timely manner. She added that in addition to the Board finalizing the interview questions at the February meeting, she would also distribute the survey results at that time. Ms. Bleyle also briefly discussed the scheduling/posting of the magistrates' public hearings and interviews.

4. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

Chairman Ruffennach advised that the next meeting of the Judicial Advisory Board would be held on Wednesday, February 9, 2005, 7:45 a.m., in the Lower Level Council Chambers, 57 E. 1st Street.

5. Adjournment.

It was moved by Boardmember Rottman, seconded by Boardmember Branham, that the meeting of the Judicial Advisory Board be adjourned at 8:20 a.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Judicial Advisory Board meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 5th day of January 2005. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK