

JUDICIAL ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

March 7, 2000

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 March 7, 2000 at 6:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Chairman John Kerr
James R. Hart, II
James Keppel
Judith O'Neill
Cecil Patterson
Joe Shipley
Marilyn Wilson

STAFF PRESENT

Robin Allen
Kathy Barrett
Denise Bleyle
Kathleen Broman
Linda Crocker
Ellen Pence
Walter Switzer
Others

OTHERS PRESENT

Others

COMMITTEE ABSENT

None

Chairman Kerr welcomed the members of the audience to the public hearing and briefly outlined the process that will be followed by the members of the Board relative to the judicial reappointments.

1. Conduct a public hearing to receive comments on Presiding City Magistrate Walter Switzer.

Chairman Kerr announced that this is the time and place for a public hearing to receive comments on Presiding City Magistrate Walter Switzer and encouraged those present in the audience to complete speakers' slips and present their comments to the members of the Board.

There being no speakers present wishing to address the Board at this time, Chairman Kerr declared this portion of the public hearing closed.

2. Interview Presiding City Magistrate Walter Switzer.

Presiding City Magistrate Walter Switzer addressed the members of the Board.

Judge Switzer responded to a series of questions posed by the Boardmembers and discussed the fact that as the Chief Presiding Magistrate, he currently handles approximately 60% of the cases, compared to the other judges, and utilizes the remainder of his time to carry out administrative responsibilities, the fact that as a rule, Presiding City Magistrates do not participate in jury trials since the time involved in those cases is often extensive, the fact that Judge Switzer is involved in a variety of community-related activities and Judge Switzer's "hands-on" management style and efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Court.

Judge Switzer informed the members of the Board that he cares very deeply about the quality of the Mesa Municipal Court, from the manner in which telephones are answered to the quality of judges who sit on the bench. Judge Switzer added that if his reappointment is approved by the Board, he will continue to carry out his responsibilities to the best of his ability.

Boardmember Shipley commented on the favorable remarks he has heard regarding the management and operations of the Mesa City Court and commended Judge Switzer and court staff on their performance.

Chairman Kerr commented that he should have asked Judge Switzer prior to the interview whether he had any advance knowledge of the interview questions. Chairman Kerr asked Judge Switzer to respond to the question at this time and added that the meeting is being video taped for future review by the members of the Council.

Judge Switzer stated that he had no prior knowledge of the interview questions.

Chairman Kerr thanked Judge Switzer for his input.

(Chairman Kerr declared a brief recess at 6:44 p.m. and the meeting reconvened at 6:50 p.m.)

3. Conduct a public hearing to receive comments on City Magistrate Rebecca Standage.

Chairman Kerr announced that this is the time and place for a public hearing to receive comments on Magistrate Rebecca Standage and encouraged those present in the audience to complete speaker slips and present their comments to the members of the Board.

There being no citizens present wishing to address the Board at this time, Chairman Kerr declared the public hearing closed.

4. Interview City Magistrate Rebecca Standage.

Judge Standage responded to a series of questions posed by the Boardmembers relative to her judicial performance and discussed the fact that after serving in jail court for a period of six years, Judge Standage had requested a transfer to the City Court, the fact that the position of magistrate has been both an adjustment and a challenge which she has enjoyed meeting, Judge Standage's opinion that her position is a continuing educational process, and Judge Standage's on-going efforts to carry out her responsibilities as a magistrate with the Mesa City Court in a fair, professional and competent manner that will bring credit to the entire Court.

Boardmember Hart commented on the lack of negative comments contained in the surveys relative to Judge Standage's overall demeanor and performance and commended her on this accomplishment.

Chairman Kerr expressed appreciation to Judge Standage for her input.

(Chairman Kerr declared a brief recess at 7:20 p.m. and the meeting reconvened at 7:35 p.m.)

5. Conduct a public hearing to receive comments on City Magistrate Robin Allen.

Chairman Kerr announced that this is the time and place to conduct a public hearing to receive comments on City Magistrate Robin Allen and encourage the members of the audience to complete speaker slips and present their comments to the Board.

There being no citizens present wishing to provide input at this time, Chairman Kerr declared the public hearing closed.

6. Interview City Magistrate Robin Allen.

Magistrate Robin Allen addressed the members of the Board.

In response to questions posed by Chairman Kerr, Judge Allen indicated that he had no prior knowledge of the interview questions which will be posed at this meeting. Chairman Kerr noted that the public hearing is being taped and will be viewed by the members of the City Council.

Judge Allen responded to questions posed by the Board relative to his performance as a magistrate and discussed his intention to consider authoring an increased number of written rulings based on input in support of written rulings from the attorneys who participated in the survey process, Judge Allen's efforts to determine on a case-by-case basis whether continuances are justified, Judge Allen's policy of requiring both counsel and defendants to appear at all hearings and the negative reaction this process has generated among attorneys, Judge Allen's opinion that he has grown and learned from his past experiences, Judge Allen's on-going efforts to speak slower and enunciate clearer in response to comments that he speaks rapidly and is sometimes difficult to understand, and Judge Allen's opinion that Judges in the City Court should be given added authority to deal more effectively with juveniles.

Judge Allen informed the members of the Board that becoming a judge was a life-time goal and emphasized his respect for the position and on-going commitment to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Mesa City Court.

Chairman Kerr thanked Judge Allen for his remarks and stated that the Board will now convene into an Executive Session for the purpose of deliberations. Chairman Kerr explained that following the Executive Session, the meeting of the Judicial Advisory Board will reconvene and the Board will announce their recommendations.

7. Convene into an Executive Session for the purpose of considering personnel matters.

It was moved by Boardmember Keppel, seconded by Boardmember Shipley, that the meeting of the Judicial Advisory Board adjourn into an Executive Session for the purpose of considering personnel matters at 8:25 p.m.

Carried unanimously.

8. Reconvene into a public hearing to make a recommendation on the reappointment of Presiding Magistrate Walter Switzer and Magistrates Rebecca Standage and Robin Allen.

It was moved by Boardmember Shipley, seconded by Vice Chairman O'Neill, that the Judicial Advisory Board Meeting reconvene at 9:11 p.m.

It was moved by Vice Chairman O'Neill, seconded by Boardmember Keppel, to recommend to the Council that the reappointment of Walter Switzer to the position of Presiding City Magistrate for the City of Mesa for an additional four year period of time be approved.

Carried unanimously.

It was moved by Boardmember Wilson, seconded by Vice Chairman O'Neill, to recommend to the Council that the reappointment of Rebecca Standage to the position of Magistrate for the City of Mesa for an additional four year period of time be approved.

Carried unanimously.

It was moved by Boardmember Keppel, seconded by Vice Chairman O'Neill, to recommend to the Council that the reappointment of Robin Allen to the position of Magistrate for the City of Mesa for an additional four year period of time be approved.

Carried unanimously.

9. Adjournment.

It was moved by Boardmember Wilson, seconded by Boardmember Patterson, that the meeting of the Judicial Advisory Board adjourn at 9:16 p.m.

Carried unanimously.

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 7th day of March 2000. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2000

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK