

## Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE August 11, 2017

TO Honorable Members of the Ad Hoc Judicial Nominations Committee

SUBJECT **Recommendations for Administrative Law Judge Positions**

On July 24<sup>th</sup>, the Judicial Nominating Commission, as required by City Ordinance and pursuant to proper notice, convened into session and interviewed candidates for the Administrative Law Judges of the City of Dallas.

For reference, The Judicial Nominating Commission (Commission) serves as an advisory body to the City Council in matters related to: the filling of municipal judge vacancies the reappointment of current municipal judges, salary recommendations for municipal judges, the implementation of a merit evaluation system for the appointment and reappointment of municipal judges, the filling of administrative law judges, salary recommendations for administrative law judges, recommendations for improvements in Court and Detention Services.

Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) hear demotion or discharge appeals for eligible City employees pursuant to Section 34-40 of the Dallas Personnel Rules.

- Under contract for two years;
- Compensated \$400 per hearing day;
- Must be a licensed attorney who has practiced law in the State of Texas for at least three years or a person who has at least five years of experience adjudicating hearings of personnel decisions;
- Not have been an employee or an elected or appointed officer of the City, other than a full-time or associate municipal judge, within the five years immediately preceding application;

The Commission received a total of 36 applications and interviewed 9 applicants.

1. Valerie Carillo
2. LaKisha Thigpen (incumbent ALJ)
3. Peter Graham
4. James E. Urmin, Sr. (Incumbent ALJ)
5. J.C. Petty
6. Karen Washington
7. Deborah Wakefield
8. Hobert Douglas
9. Steven Metzger

Based on the Commission's interviews, evaluations and deliberations, the Judicial Nominating Commission unanimously recommends to the Ad Hoc Judicial Nominating Committee that four (4) of the nine (9) candidates named above be recommended as

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Administrative Law Judge to hear employee disciplinary appeals. The recommended individuals are:

1. Karen Washington  
Current adjunct professor at Texas A&M University School of Law teaching ADR Survey – Arbitration, Mediation, Negotiation; founding member of Thorpe Hatcher & Washington, PLLC
2. LaKisha Thigpen (incumbent ALJ)  
Currently serves as Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts; Appointed to ALJ in 2014
3. James E. Urmin, Sr. (incumbent ALJ)  
Currently serves a General Counsel to The Clearly Food & Beverage Co.; Appointed to ALJ in 2014
4. Hobert Douglas  
Currently a Certified Independent Hearing Examiner at the Texas Education Agency

Additionally, the Commission finds that based on the current caseload and the administration of justice in employee disciplinary appeals hearings, at least three (3) Administrative Law Judges should be appointed with the fourth recommended individual to serve as back-up to the three (3).

Daniel Perez, Chair  
Judicial Nominating Commission

c: Larry Casto, City Attorney  
 Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor  
 Rosa A. Rios, City Secretary  
 Daniel F. Solis, Administrative Judge  
 Kimberly Bizzor Tolbert, Chief of Staff to the City Manager  
 Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager  
 Jo M. (Jody) Puckett, Assistant City Manager (Interim)

Jon Fortune, Assistant City Manager  
 Joey Zapata, Assistant City Manager  
 M. Elizabeth Reich, Chief Financial Officer  
 Nadia Chandler Hardy, Chief of Community Services  
 Raquel Favala, Chief of Economic Development & Neighborhood Services  
 Theresa O'Donnell, Chief of Resilience  
 Directors and Assistant Directors