

**MUNICIPAL COURT MEMORANDUM
#1-2022**

DATE: April 25, 2022
TO: Honorable Mayor Meredith Leighty and City Council Members
THROUGH: Heather Geyer, City Manager *hmg*
FROM: Amanda Bailhache, Presiding Municipal Judge
SUBJECT: Municipal Court Quarterly Update

PURPOSE

To provide City Council with an update on the Municipal Court.

BACKGROUND

Court Operations

- Jason Johnson joined the City as a Court Supervisor in January.
- Municipal Court is still holding dockets virtually for traffic and code violations. The Municipal Court switched to the Zoom platform because it offers the breakout rooms that can be easily used to facilitate court smoothly. Municipal Court plans on continuing virtual court for traffic and code violations so that it is more accessible for participants.
- The Northglenn Juvenile Community Service Program continues to be held on Sundays. The program is still run by Community Service Coordinators Sarah Skarie and Eddie Blackwell.
- Community Resource Navigator Jayme Schledewitz and Crisis Response Unit Program Manager Jessica Hulse continue to be successful resources for defendants. Judge Amanda Bailhache continues to sentence some defendants to meet with Hulse as a condition of their sentence; it is a tremendously valuable alternative sentence.

Changes

- The North Metro Youth Diversion Program has recently changed how juveniles will participate. Established in 1997, historically the program board would hire a single treatment provider. If a juvenile completed a class with the approved treatment provider, the juvenile would have completed the diversion program. In the fall of 2021, the program board voted to change how a juvenile would enter diversion. Now all juveniles must complete an intake with The Link to participate in the diversion program. The agency that referred the juvenile to The Link will then decide what requirements the juvenile needs to complete to have successfully completed the diversion program.
- Johnson has started updating the Municipal Court's web pages. The goal is to make them more user-friendly and the Municipal Court more accessible. For example, several standardized forms are now available on the website.
- Bailhache has provided an advisement that is now available on the website as a video or written out. Defendants are encouraged to watch the video or read the advisement prior to attending.

Upcoming Changes

- Johnson is working on finding a new company to process credit card payments. The goal is to reduce credit card fees for defendants who pay online and to streamline the process for taking phone payments.
- Johnson is working on developing a text notification system for upcoming court dates.
- Municipal Court would like to launch a customer service survey that will be available for all participants to complete.
- Johnson is in the process of changing the format and including more substantive information in the Municipal Court's monthly reports. Bailhache and Johnson believe that switching from quarterly to bi-annual court updates to Council will be more informative.

Future Projects and Goals

Full-Time Probation Officer

- Municipal Court staff would like to transition the .25 FTE Probation Officer position to 1 FTE, and plans on making that request for the 2023 Budget. In order to implement a successful probation program, more funding is needed to carry out the duties of a full-time Probation Officer while using evidence-based practices and increasing safety in Northglenn.

Paperless Court Files

- Municipal Court would like to go paperless. This will be a tiered transition most likely starting with traffic cases.

Homeless Problem-Solving Court

- Hulse has approached the Court about her general vision for a problem-solving court that would address the needs of the homeless population in Northglenn. Johnson and Bailhache are excited about this idea.

Problem-solving courts differ from traditional courts in that they focus on one type of offense or type of person committing the crime. In problem-solving courts, an interdisciplinary team, led by a judge, works collaboratively to achieve therapeutic jurisprudence to reduce criminal offending through therapeutic and interdisciplinary approaches that address substance use disorders and other underlying issues without jeopardizing public safety and due process.

Designated Clerk/Administrative Assistant for the City Prosecutor

- Municipal Court is exploring having a designated clerk for the City Prosecutor. This will allow for a more efficient workflow for the Court Clerks. A designated City Prosecutor Clerk is important to avoid an appearance of impropriety or the appearance that the Municipal Court and the City Prosecutor work as a team.

BUDGET/TIME IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial or time impacts to the City.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

This item is for informational purposes only.

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STAFF REFERENCE

If Council members have any questions, please contact Amanda Bailhache, Presiding Municipal Judge, at abailhache@northglenn.org or 303.881.1303.