

## STAFF REPORT

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**Date:** September 27, 2023

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**Thru:** Doug Thornley, City Manager

**Subject:** Staff Report (For Possible Action): Resolution of the Reno City Council adopting the salary and benefits of the Reno Municipal Court Judges pursuant to Article IV, Section 4.020(3) of the Reno City Charter, providing a salary increase and rescinding Resolution No. 9050, and providing for other matters properly relating thereto.

**From:** Veronica Lopez, Court Administrator

**Department:** Municipal Court

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### **Summary:**

Reno City Charter provides that the salary and benefits of the Reno Municipal Court Judges hereinafter referred to “Bench” are established by resolution of the Reno City Council. On behalf of the Bench, the Court Administrator requests the annual salary for the Bench be fixed at ten percent (10%) above the top of the salary range for the Court Administrator retroactive to July 1, 2023.

### **Alignment with Strategic Plan:**

Fiscal Sustainability

### **Previous Council Action:**

Salaries for the Bench were last adjusted on July 20, 2022, via Resolution No. 9050, providing a 4.5 % cost-of-living increase. Prior to that, salaries for the Bench were adjusted on January 26, 2022, via Resolution 8997 with a 2.5% cost-of-living increase. Prior to that, salaries for the Bench were increased for the 2018/2019 fiscal year via Resolution 8519 with a 2.5% cost-of-living increase that corresponded to the adjustment to City Council Member salaries.

**Background:** Historically, salaries for the Bench have been established by the City Council and adjusted from time to time based on occasional ad hoc requests by the Court Administrator. This has resulted in infrequent and unpredictable adjustments without a specific guiding principle. The intent of this resolution is to fix the salaries of the Bench at 10% above the top of the salary range for the Court Administrator so that future salary adjustments will be contemporaneous and

commensurate with salary adjustments of other City employees as they are reviewed by the City Council.

**Discussion:**

The Bench consists of four employees: Chief Judge Christopher Hazlett-Stevens, Judge Gene Drakulich, Judge Justin Champagne, and Judge Shelly O'Neill. Raises for the Bench as contemplated by this Resolution would adjust each judge's annual salary to \$221,407.32.

The Court Administrator requests that Council fix the salaries of the Bench at ten percent (10%) above the top of the salary range established for the Court Administrator. Because the Court Administrator's salary range is established by Resolution and regularly adjusted by City Council, tying the Bench's salaries to the Administrator's will avoid inconsistent review of the Bench's salaries and maintain the gains toward parity with the annual salary review of other employees. This is the current practice with respect to the City Attorney's salary, which is fixed at five percent above the Chief Deputy City Attorney's salary pursuant to Resolution Nos. 4500 and 7181.

**Financial Implications:**

This resolution will increase the cost to the Municipal Court by \$165,407.32 in salaries for the Bench for the 23/24 Fiscal Year. The Municipal Court has projected savings from a vacant position and federal grants to cover additional expenses. For Fiscal Year 24/25, the estimated salary cost will be \$165,407.32.

**Legal Implications:**

Legal review completed for compliance with City procedures and Nevada law.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends Council adopt the Resolution.

**Proposed Motion:**

I move to approve staff recommendation.

**Attachments:**

Resolution – Judges' Salaries