



**MINUTES**

**City of Scottsdale  
JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS ADVISORY BOARD  
Regular Meeting**

**Wednesday, July 16, 2025**

**North Corporation Yard – Wrangler Conference  
Room 9191 E. San Salvador Drive  
Scottsdale, AZ 85258**

**PRESENT**

**Board Members:**

John Gilbert, Chair  
Judge Joseph Kiefer, Vice-Chair  
Judge Suzanne Marwil  
Tricia Schafer  
Carol Ann Petren  
Helene Weitzenkorn  
Jeanne Beasley

**Staff:**

Stephanie Heizer, Senior Assistant City Attorney  
Marianne Bayardi, Presiding City Judge  
Monica Boyd, Director of Human Resources  
Autumn Asmus, Management Analyst

**Call to Order**

Chair Gilbert called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Roll Call**

Members present as listed above.

**Possible Executive Session**

**1. APPROVAL OF MAY 12, 2025, JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Board Member Petren pointed out that the third paragraph on page 4 should reflect September 5, 2025 as the third meeting of the Judicial Appointments Advisory Board.

VICE-CHAIR KIEFER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 12, 2025, JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED. BOARD MEMBER MARWIL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR GILBERT, VICE-CHAIR KIEFER, BOARD MEMBERS BEASLEY, MARWIL, PETREN, SCHAFFER, AND WEITZENKORN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no requests to speak.

**3. PRESENTATION / INFORMATION**

Marianne Bayardi, Presiding City Judge, presented and discussed important qualifications to look for when reviewing applications for a new Judge. Judge Bayardi began by thanking the Board Members for their time, dedication, and commitment to finding great candidates to put before the City Council. The role of the Court is to serve justice, which is the purpose behind what is done.

Aside from the typical legal knowledge, knowledge of procedures, rules, evidence, statutes, codes, and the ability to use computers, Judge Bayardi suggested additional qualifications needed to serve justice:

- Humility
  - Be part of a team where everyone works together
  - Treat everyone in the courtroom and courthouse with respect and dignity
  - Judges do not need to know everything
  - Be introspective of how you operate the courtroom
  - Have the ability to rely on other judges and staff and be relied on by them
  - Apply the highest standards of ethics and integrity
- Experience
  - Have an understanding of limited jurisdiction courts and criminal matters
  - Experience working with unrepresented individuals
  - Understanding of procedures and the environment
    - It is important to understand the quality and nature of their experience
- Demeanor
  - A judgeship is not about ego or an iron fist but maintaining decorum and procedures to ensure justice is served for all
- Communication
  - Clear and respectful communication skills
  - Patience while ensuring the individual before them understands what is being said
  - Use of verbal tone and non-verbal communication to control the courtroom
  - Ensure individuals in the courtroom treat and are treated with respect and dignity
  - Use of proper demeanor and decorum when rendering a decision

- The ability to represent the City of Scottsdale, the Court, and the community with the dignity that is expected and deserved.
- Teamwork
  - Collegial teamwork and work ethics are important in small courts where everyone works hard every day
- Education
  - Attend continuing education opportunities
  - Participate in committees, teach courses, and do other things that give back to the community

The Avondale Municipal City Court is one of the most respected courts in the state due to judges giving back
- Additional Questions
  - When can they start?
  - Do they have any conflicts and, if so, what is the nature of the conflicts?

Board Members were given an opportunity to comment and ask questions not related to individual applicants outside of executive session.

Chair Gilbert inquired with Board Members whether there were any conflicts with any applicants.

- Board Member Marwil stated Joan Sinclair is a friend and colleague whom she has known for more than 20 years in various capacities. Therefore, she will not participate in discussions or vote for Joan Sinclair.
- Vice Chair Kiefer stated Joan Sinclair works in the same court, and they worked on a committee together, though he did not feel it is necessary to recuse himself from discussing Ms. Sinclair's application. Chair Gilbert concurred, noting they are seeking familial and close personal relationships.
- Board Member Marwil stated she will recuse herself from discussing and abstain from voting on Shalanda Looney based on professional experiences.

Board Member Marwil inquired about on-the-job training. Judge Bayardi discussed the State training that is available in January and April each year, as well as an overview of the in-house training provided by a group of judges, including herself. She noted the applicant pool contains many well-qualified candidates with diverse backgrounds, some with and without judicial experience.

Board Member Petren inquired whether this position requires more criminal or civil experience. Judge Bayardi explained this court is almost entirely criminal misdemeanors with some civil matters, such as domestic violence or those attached to criminal charges, but it does not handle civil lawsuits.

Board Member Petren inquired whether there was a particular number of years of experience that could excel a candidate above another. Judge Bayardi stated that it could not be quantified; however, legal and life experience contribute to being a good candidate.

Chair Gilbert reviewed the procedure for identifying a minimum of six applicants to interview on Friday, September 5, 2025.

Vice Chair Kiefer discussed a desire to enter executive session to discuss procedure, specifically questions about the paperwork and materials received. He suggested Judge

Bayardi not join the executive session at this time and invited Senior Assistant City Attorney Stephanie Heizer, Director of Human Resources Monica Boyd, and Management Analyst Autumn Asmus to join.

VICE CHAIR KEIFER MOVED TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION. BOARD MEMBER MARWIL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0), CHAIR GILBERT, VICE-CHAIR KEIFER, BOARD MEMBERS BEASLEY, MARWIL, PETREN, SCHAFFER, AND WEITZENKORN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION HELD FROM 6:31 P.M. TO 7:11 P.M.**

#### **4. DISCUSSION OF ASSOCIATE JUDGE CANDIDATE APPLICATION MATERIALS (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER) AND VOTE ON CANDIDATES TO ADVANCE TO INTERVIEW:**

Chair Gilbert called the meeting back to order and provided an overview of proceedings to this point, including the Board Members' role in conducting a thorough review of the 51 applications and contacting references. As decided in executive session, each Board Member will recommend at least one applicant for collective consideration from the board. All applicants were recognized for their interest and thoroughness in completing the application.

Board Members were given an opportunity to identify and discuss their recommendation(s) for consideration.

- Board Member Schaffer announced the six applicants she conducted due diligence on. Of those applicants, she recommended Douglas Jann based on his qualifications, experience, stellar references, and temperament which is suited for the diversity of clientele that appears before the Court. Mr. Jann is a top-tier candidate who could potentially step in and do the job. Mr. Kurt Altman was a close second as he had stellar recommendations.
- Board Member Marwil announced the eight applicants she conducted due diligence on. Of those applicants, she recommended Karen "Alex/Alexis" Yakubi, who has served as a pro tem judge in numerous city courts in the valley, including Scottsdale. References received from three Judges were indicative of her ability and willingness to do the job, how much staff loves her, and the welcoming nature of her courtroom. Judge Bayardi noted Ms. Yakubi would be one of the pro tem judges filling in when Judge Blake leaves. Ms. Yakubi's ability to do whatever the Court needs whenever it was needed and the fact that she would be doing the job in the interim make her a great candidate. A second recommendation is Stephen Little, who currently serves as a bar counsel. She cited references which spoke of his ability to learn various areas of the law to determine if ethical violations have occurred. She thought his temperament, demeanor, reputation, and ability to work with a challenging population warrant an interview.
- Vice Chair Kiefer announced the seven applicants he conducted due diligence on. Of those applicants, he recommended Wilbur Hudson, who currently presides over the Phoenix Municipal Court. Mr. Hudson has been practicing law since 1989 in private practice, the County Attorney's Office, and the Attorney General's Office. The skills and knowledge he has acquired are consistent with what a Scottsdale City Court Judge does. A second recommendation is Kristine Eisler who performs quasi-judicial functions as a Superior Court Commissioner in California. She has criminal experience working

as a Deputy County Attorney and Public Defender in California. A major concern is the lack of knowledge of the Arizona rules of procedure and evidence.

- Chair Gilbert announced the eight applicants he conducted due diligence on. Of those applicants, he recommended Patricia George, who currently presides as a Phoenix Municipal Court Judge. She has 19 years of experience as a City of Phoenix prosecutor, a City of Scottsdale judge, and a pro tem judge. Ms. George possesses the qualifications and references, is very active within the Court, and supplied over 20 reference letters.
- Board Member Petren announced the seven applicants she conducted due diligence on. Of those applicants, she recommended Joan Sinclair, who currently presides in the Maricopa County Superior Court. This recommendation is exclusively based on her credentials because previous employers were marked as “do not contact”. She previously worked as a commissioner, staff attorney, and Assistant Deputy County Attorney. Her experience is extensive in civil, criminal, and juvenile law. Board Member Petren expressed concern with the inability to contact past and present employers and sought input from fellow Board Members. A second recommendation is for Julie Rhodes, who is a well-respected lawyer with 30 years of experience in civil, child protection, and juvenile court proceedings. Her only hesitation was the lack of criminal experience necessary for this position. A brief discussion ensued.
- Board Member Beasley announced the seven applicants she conducted due diligence on. Of those applicants, she recommended Douglas Erickson, who has been practicing law since the late 1980s with an extensive background in criminal law. He has been a pro tem judge at the Tempe and Scottsdale Municipal Courts. References note his positive demeanor, reliability, team-player mentality, respectfulness, and kindness to all. Mr. Erickson’s background, characteristics, and qualifications make him someone who could step into the role of municipal court judge. The second recommendation is Andrea Keever, who was employed as a Prosecutor for the Maricopa County Attorney with experience in civil, juvenile, and criminal law. Ms. Keever is currently working in the Appeals Division. It is evident from Ms. Keever’s background, references, and other attributes that a transfer to judgeship in the Municipal Court would be a faster paced environment than she is used to. A discussion ensued, and Ms. Keever was not recommended.
- Board Member Weitzenkorn announced the seven applicants she conducted due diligence on. Of those applicants, she recommended Tina Solomon, who currently presides over the Phoenix Municipal Court. Ms. Solomon has worked with Judge Bayardi, and her references spoke of her demeanor, patience, domestic violence background, efficiency, and preparedness. The second recommendation is Jacqueline Kochis-Chapman, who has worked as a pro tem judge in Scottsdale for the past seven years. Key qualities are her demeanor, judgment, value for alternative solutions, and ability to serve justice.

Chair Gilbert inquired whether there was a desire to pare the list down more. Board Member Marwil suggested an attempt be made to do so using consistent standards.

VICE CHAIR KEIFER MOVED TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION. BOARD MEMBER SCHAFFER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0), CHAIR GILBERT, VICE-CHAIR KEIFER, BOARD MEMBERS BEASLEY, MARWIL, PETREN, SCHAFFER, AND WEITZENKORN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION HELD FROM 8:13 P.M. TO 9:03 P.M.**

Chair Gilbert reconvened the meeting, noting the Board discussed the number of candidates and are ready to proceed with entertaining nominations for the tentative list of candidates to interview.

VICE CHAIR KEIFER NOMINATED DOUGLAS ERIKSON, PATRICIA GEORGE, WILBUR HUDSON, DOUGLAS JANN, JACQUELINE KOCHIS-CHAPMAN, JULIE RHODES, JOAN SINCLAIR, TINA SOLOMON, AND KAREN YAKUBI TO BE INTERVIEWED ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2025. HE FURTHER ORDERED THAT THE TENTATIVE INTERVIEW LIST FOR SEPTEMBER 5, 2025, BE CLOSED AND MADE FINAL. CHAIR GILBERT SECONDED THE NOMINATIONS, ALL BUT ONE CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR GILBERT, VICE-CHAIR KEIFER, BOARD MEMBERS BEASLEY, MARWIL, PETREN, SCHAFFER, AND WEITZENKORN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

THE VOTE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION OF JOAN SINCLAIR CARRIED SIX (6) TO ZERO (0), WITH CHAIR GILBERT, VICE-CHAIR KEIFER, BOARD MEMBERS BEASLEY, PETREN, SCHAFFER, AND WEITZENKORN VOTING IN THE AFFIRMATIVE, AND BOARD MEMBER MARWIL ABSTAINING.

With the final list in place, Chair Gilbert advised that staff will be directed to schedule interviews and provide necessary materials to Board Members prior to September 5, 2025.

### **5. DISCUSSION OF ASSOCIATE CITY JUDGE APPOINTMENT AND INTERVIEW PROCESS**

Board Members discussed when interview questions will be provided for their review and the timing of the interview briefing, which will include the selection of lead questioners.

Ms. Boyd provided an overview of the process that will occur on September 5, 2025, including the interview briefing slated to occur the morning of the interviews. Sample questions and additional preparation materials will be provided electronically to Board Members.

After discussion, the consensus was to schedule 30-minute interview sessions with a 10-minute break between them.

BOARD MEMBER MARWIL MOVED TO VACATE THE NEED FOR THE MEETING ON JULY 17, 2025. VICE CHAIR KIEFER SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR GILBERT, VICE-CHAIR KEIFER, BOARD MEMBERS BEASLEY, MARWIL, PETREN, SCHAFFER, AND WEITZENKORN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

Ms. Boyd applauded the Board for paring the 51 candidates down to 9 great candidates. It was amazing how the list overlapped with Judge Bayardi's prior to any discussion.

### **6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

None presented.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

BOARD MEMBER MARWIL MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. CHAIR GILBERT SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR GILBERT, VICE-CHAIR KEIFER, BOARD MEMBERS BEASLEY, MARWIL, PETREN, SCHAFER, AND WEITZENKORN VOTED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. THERE WERE NO DISSENTING VOTES.

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

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