



## King County

# Metropolitan King County Council Committee of the Whole

### STAFF REPORT

|                      |           |              |                  |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------|------------------|
| <b>Agenda Item:</b>  | 5         | <b>Name:</b> | Hiedi Popochock  |
| <b>Proposed No.:</b> | 2016-0085 | <b>Date:</b> | February 3, 2016 |

### SUBJECT

Proposed Motion 2016-0085 would confirm the appointment of Shannon Cortez as the Deputy Director of the Department of Elections.

### SUMMARY

In September 2014, King County's Director of Elections proposed a reorganization plan for King County Elections that would eliminate the Superintendent of Elections<sup>1</sup> position and add a new Deputy Director position.

In March 2015, the Council established the position of Deputy Director of the Department of Elections as a key subordinate unit that required Council confirmation, and required that the Deputy Director must be an Elections Administrator certified by the Washington Secretary of State's Office.<sup>2</sup>

In November 2015, Julie Wise, the Deputy Director of the Department of Elections was elected by the voters of King County to serve as the Director of Elections starting in January 2016.

In February 2016, Director Wise appointed Shannon Cortez as the Deputy Director of the Department of Elections.

Proposed Motion 2016-0085 would confirm the appointment of Shannon Cortez as the Deputy Director of the Department of Elections.

### BACKGROUND

In February 2003, the Council voted to require Council confirmation of the Manager of the Records, Elections and Licensing Division, as well as the Superintendent of

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<sup>1</sup> Ordinance 14570 - the Superintendent of Elections position is second in command at King County Elections and was required to be confirmed by the County Council.

<sup>2</sup> Ordinance 17994

Elections, the two key positions then responsible for administering elections in King County.<sup>3</sup>

In November 2007, the Council established the Elections Division and designated the Manager of the Elections Division as a key subordinate unit subject to Council confirmation. The Superintendent, as the second in command in the Elections Division, remained subject to Council confirmation.<sup>4</sup>

In November 2008, King County voters approved Initiative 25, which established an elected County Director of Elections and established King County Elections as an executive department. Following the election, the Council established qualifications for the office of County Director of Elections.<sup>5</sup>

In June 2009, the Council affirmed the continued importance of the Superintendent of Elections position, even after the creation of the elected Director of Elections position.<sup>6</sup>

In September 2014, the Director of Elections proposed a reorganization of the department. As part of that reorganization, she proposed to eliminate the position of Superintendent of Elections and create a new position of Deputy Director.

In March 2015, the Council established the position of Deputy Director of the Department of Elections as a key subordinate unit that requires Council confirmation, removed the Superintendent of Elections position from that Code provision, and required that the Deputy Director must be an Elections Administrator certified by the Washington Secretary of State's office.<sup>7</sup>

In November 2015, Julie Wise, the Deputy Director of the Department of Elections was elected by the voters of King County to serve as the Director of Elections starting in January 2016.

In February 2016, Director Wise appointed Shannon Cortez as the Deputy Director of the Department of Elections.

## **ANALYSIS**

Proposed Motion 2016-0085 would confirm the appointment of Shannon Cortez as the Deputy Director of the Department of Elections. Ms. Cortez has over 16 years of elections administration experience in various capacities at Pierce County Elections. She has conducted over 75 elections and 4 presidential elections.

She graduated from the University of Washington-Tacoma with a bachelor's degree in politics, values and social change. She has been a Nationally Certified Election Registration Administrator since 2011 and a Washington State Certified Election Administrator since 2003.

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<sup>3</sup> Ordinance 14570

<sup>4</sup> Ordinance 15971

<sup>5</sup> Ordinance 16302 required that the Director of Elections must within 30 months become an Elections Administrator certified by the Washington Secretary of State's office and must meet all ongoing requirements imposed by the Secretary of State.

<sup>6</sup> Ordinance 16557

<sup>7</sup> Ordinance 17994

Ms. Cortez currently serves on three Washington state election committees - the Voter Registration Modernization RFP Committee, the Voter Intent Committee and the Clearinghouse Committee. She is also the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Coordinator for the Pierce County Auditor's Office. In 2008, she authored the first official COOP document for the Auditor's Office.

The confirmation packet transmitted by Elections (**Attachment A to Attachment 2**) includes letters of support from the Washington Secretary of State and the Pierce County Auditor's Office that attests to Ms. Cortez's reputation for integrity and professionalism, commitment to and knowledge of the responsibilities of the Department of Elections and a history of demonstrated leadership, experience and administrative ability. Ms. Cortez's resumé and other documents that affirm her qualifications for the Deputy Director position in Elections are also included.

### **AMENDMENT**

Amendment 1 would attach the confirmation packet for Shannon Cortez, Deputy Director Appointee to the motion.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed Motion 2016-0085
2. Amendment 1

### **INVITED**

1. Julie Wise, Director, Department of Elections
2. Shannon Cortez, Deputy Director Appointee, Department of Elections