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| **Agenda Item No.:** | 3, 4, 5 | **Date:** | April 25, 2016 |
| **Proposed No.:** | 2016-0218  2016-0219  2016-0220 | **Prepared by:** | Nick Wagner |

# SUBJECT

Review of District Court candidates and selection of final candidates to be interviewed by the Committee of the Whole on May 4, 2016.

# SUMMARY

There currently are three judicial vacancies in King County District Court: one in the Southwest Division (Burien) and two in the West Division (Seattle). In accordance with the process prescribed in the King County Code, Chapter 2.70 (Att. 2), the King County Bar Association (KCBA) and other bar associations with established judicial evaluation procedures have referred to the Council three candidates for the Southwest Division vacancy and 10 candidates for the two West Division vacancies. Proposed Motions 2016-0218, 2016-0219, and 2016-0220 (Attachments 1-3) would fill the vacancies. In their current form, the motions have a blank for the name of the person being appointed.

At a special meeting on Monday, April 25, the Council’s Committee of the Whole will meet to review the candidates and select final candidates to be interviewed by the committee at its regular meeting on Wednesday, May 4. At its May 4 meeting the committee will interview the final candidates and make a recommendation to the full Council.

# BACKGROUND

Under state law, RCW 3.34.100, the county legislative authority (for King County, the Council) is directed to fill district court vacancies by appointment. The King County Code, Chapter 2.70 (Att. 2, p. 11), prescribes a merit selection process for filling such vacancies, including:

* Advertising of existing or anticipated vacancies by the clerk of the Council;
* Rating of interested applicants by the KCBA and any other bar association with an established judicial candidate evaluation procedure;
* Referral by KCBA to the Council of the names of candidates receiving the highest rating;
* Review of all the candidates and interviews of the “final” candidates by the Council’s Committee of the Whole, which then must make a recommendation to the full Council (KCC 2.70.020(E)); and
* Final appointment by the Council.

The appointee will serve until a successor is elected this November and will be eligible to run for election.

# THE CANDIDATES

The three candidates to fill the judicial vacancy in the Southwest Division (Burien) of King County District Court are:

* Laurel Gibson
* Kris Jensen
* Brian Todd

The 10 candidates to fill the two judicial vacancies in the West Division (Seattle) of King County District Court are:

* Anne Daly
* Gregg Hirakawa
* Steven Kim
* Rhonda Laumann
* Mary Lynch
* Lisa Paglisotti
* Andrew Simons
* Sumeer Singla
* Renee Walls
* Brian Zuanich

Written materials submitted by each candidate have been compiled into a binder, a copy of which has been made available to each committee member. The materials consist in large part of the candidates’ responses to an extensive Uniform Judicial Evaluation Questionnaire prepared by the Washington State Governor’s Office. Some of the candidates have also submitted additional materials to the Council, including, for example, resumes and letters of recommendation.

A table prepared by council staff, comparing the candidates according to a limited set of objective criteria, is Attachment 7 to this staff report. The table is not intended as a substitute for review of the candidates’ materials.

# The BAR ASSOCIATION RATINGS

Pursuant to the county code, the candidates have been rated by KCBA and other bar associations that have established judicial selection procedures. A table summarizing the ratings is Attachment 5 to this staff report. KCBA’s description of how its judicial screening process works is Attachment 6.

# COUNCIL REVIEW PROCESS

**Special April 25 COW Meeting**

There will be a special meeting of the Committee of the Whole on Monday, April 25, following the Council meeting. In executive session, the committee will discuss the qualifications of the candidates. Then, in open session, the committee will choose the final candidates to interview at the committee’s regular meeting on Wednesday, May 4.

**May 4 COW Meeting**

At its May 4 meeting, the Committee of the Whole will interview the final candidates and make a recommendation to the full Council.

**May 9 Council Meeting**

It is expected that the full Council will take final action on the District Court appointments at the May 9 Council meeting.

# Invited

None.

# ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Motion 2016-0218
2. Proposed Motion 2016-0219
3. Proposed Motion 2016-0220
4. King County Code, Chapter 2.70
5. Consolidated Bar Association Ratings of the Candidates
6. How the Judicial Screening Process of the King County Bar Association Works
7. Comparison of Judicial Candidates – Selected Criteria