

Finance & Administration Committee Meeting
April 20, 2021
4:00 p.m.

1. LED Lighting Discussion – PATH
2. Request – Payoff Lease of 2 Police Vehicles – Director Dunn
3. Discussion on the Special Events Application Fee – Director Mack
4. Park & Recreations Improvements – Director Mack
5. Municipal Code (Title 2,4, & 5) – Attorney Witherington and Director Fisher
6. Administrative Ordinance
7. Budget Discussion – Mayor Hanson
 - Request from Judge Witherington

April 15, 2021

To: Finance & Administration Committee

During the July, 21, 2020 Finance & Administration Committee Meeting, Alderman Phelps requested the leasing of police vehicles due to the risk of a decrease in sales tax collections. During the fiscal year, the sales tax collections have increased. I am requesting to pay these leases off which will be a savings of approximately \$10,000.00. The complete purchase price of these vehicles is budgeted in the line item from the state grant funding.

Thanks

Tina Dunn
Recorder-Treasurer

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March 23, 2021

Hon. Justin Hanson, Mayor
City of Covington
200 W. Washington Ave.
Covington, TN 38019

RE: Report on Increased Court Activity

Dear Mayor Hanson:

This letter constitutes my report on the increase in activity in Covington City Court, along with my request for a salary increase. In terms of in-person hourly time, I can attest from my anecdotal observation that the time required for conducting court has more than doubled on average since the first months after I assumed office in 2019. This vast increase in court time corresponds to the ticketing statistics and appears to be attributable to shifts in policing policy and the availability of electronic ticketing.

I had our court clerk, Carolyn Scott, provide an accounting of total citations issued for the years 2018-2020. They are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u># Citations</u>
2018	1,087
2019	1,166
2020	2,580

While tickets more than doubled in 2020 over previous years, electronic ticketing did not become available until somewhere near the middle of 2020. This means that we can expect the increase in total citations to be in excess of three times what they have been in previous years. For example, December of 2019 totaled 26 tickets, compared to ticket receipts for December 2020, which totaled 129 tickets. This represents a 5-fold increase in ticket receipts processed through the Court over the previous year when electronic ticketing was not yet available.

We have managed to translate a 500% increase in ticket receipts into only a 200-300% increase in courtroom time by offering greatly expanded settlement incentives in advance of scheduled court dates. For example, we have offered dismissals upon payment of only court costs for speeding up to a hefty 15 mph over the speed limit. This more expansive approach to

settlement, however, functions solely as an endeavor to lessen the Covid-related backlog and comply with Tennessee Supreme Court recommendations regarding docket reduction.

Looking toward the future, I think it is safe to presume that number of tickets issued will continue to be a 300% increase over what we have handled in the past. (Electronic ticketing seems and current policing policy is here to stay.) Covid-era docket reduction settlements will eventually dissipate in pace with the virus. All factors considered, we can reasonably anticipate that our Court will operate with a minimum increase of 300% caseload and maximum increase of approximately 500%.

I understand that you are formulating your budget for the Court in the near future. These 300-500% increases can accurately be translated as 300-500% additional work for Court personnel. While I am not requesting a corresponding 300% increase in pay, I do think a raise of one-half of that amount (150% increase from \$1000 to \$2500 per month) is fully warranted under the circumstances.

I am not aware of the history of the salaries paid to the Court Clerk or any other personnel associated with the Court. Those supporting the Court have performed wonderfully under the ever-expanding work load, and I would ask that you take the factors stated in this letter into consideration on their behalves as well.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely,


J. Barney Witherington IV
Judge for Covington Municipal Court

JBW/dg