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November 27, 2024

City Service Commissioners  
Sent via email to DER Commissioner Harper Donahue IV  
hdonahue@milwaukee.gov

Re: Request to Extend Probation

Dear City Service Commission,

Under CSC Rule VIII, Section 8, the City Attorney respectfully requests an extension of the probationary period of the following employees to June 1, 2025:

Maria Mesoloras (appointment date January 10, 2024)  
Cynthia Harris Ortega (appointment date January 29, 2024)  
Zachary Hatfield (appointment date January 8, 2024)  
Meghan McCabe (appointment date January 8, 2024)

This request is made due to the unique nature of the events of 2024, and the demands they placed on our office. A new City Attorney took office in April 2024, followed by the appointment of three Deputy City Attorneys (one in May and two in July), amounting to turnover of four out of the five management positions in our office, quickly followed by the Republican National Convention, the budget cycle, and the 2024 Presidential election, and we now enter the holiday season. When the newly elected City Attorney took office in April, the City Attorney's Office had nine vacancies to fill. Much of the time since April 2024 has been focused on filling vacancies and performing the legal work of the City related to two significant events on top of the office's typical responsibilities.

Under these circumstances, despite our best efforts, we have not had the time and resources to conduct a proper probationary review of these employees. The current management team has not been able to have fully observe these employees' performance. We would also like the opportunity to observe their performance in a fully-staffed office where these probationary attorneys can exhibit how they will perform while handling a



normal workload. An extension is necessary to allow additional observation of these employees' performance in order to determine whether their performance is at a level that justifies ending the probation period.

Pursuant to the instructions on the City's Probation Service Report, this letter is being provided to you as "other documentation" to support this request in lieu of a performance improvement plan. The reason for seeking this extension is not to prompt improved performance by any of these probationary employees, but because the new management team in the City Attorney's Office has not had the opportunity to fully observe their performance in order to determine if there are deficiencies. It would not be appropriate to put these employees on a performance improvement plan in support of this request if we cannot appropriately articulate or document any actual performance deficiencies. It would not be appropriate to document a performance improvement plan in their employment record simply because they happened to join the office during a unique time of turnover and re-staffing

We respectfully request that the City Service Commission approve this request to extend probation as stated above. If you have any questions, please reach out to Deputy City Attorney Robin Pederson at (414) 286-2633 or [rpederson@milwaukee.gov](mailto:rpederson@milwaukee.gov).

Very truly yours,



for

EVAN GOYKE  
City Attorney

cc: DER Commissioner Harper Donahue IV