

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Commission
FROM: Douglas R. Gonzales, City Attorney
DATE: October 29, 2018
RE: Overview of City Attorney Accomplishments - 2018

The purpose of this Memorandum is to *briefly* summarize the various actions taken by the City Attorney since November 14, 2017, as well as address a few of the accomplishments of the Office this past fiscal year. As each of you know, the City Attorney's function is reactionary rather than proactive. Therefore, the vast majority of what we do is to assist in the enactment of your policy requests, handle agenda matters, defend against civil lawsuits and claims, attend meetings, and of course, provide competent, prompt and accurate legal advice to both the Commission and staff.

This Memorandum addresses three primary areas: office improvements, reliance on outside counsel, and significant matters:

1. A brief synopsis of office improvements include:
 - a. Addressed critical office moral issues with both staff and attorneys, resulting in a more relaxed, cooperative and happy environment;
 - b. Reformed the litigation department to establish the position of Chief Litigation Counsel, who is responsible for supervising almost all outside counsel work, handling all incoming litigation, and supervising other office litigation attorneys (including assignment and supervision of various types of litigation to other in house litigators);
 - c. Re-assigned various departments among existing transactional attorneys;
 - d. Reduced the office budget for 2019, doing more with existing resources; and
 - e. Revamped and expanded the role of the Collections Attorney with the goal of collecting as much delinquent monies owed to the City as possible, and working with various departments in that endeavor.

2. Reduced reliance on outside counsel:

As of November 2017, the City was utilizing outside counsel at various firms for approximately 120 cases. As of today, there are approximately 20 cases remaining with various outside counsel. The City has approximately 50 cases that are being handled in house.

3. Significant matters involving the City Attorney (many working closely in consultation with City staff and administration):

- a. PERC issues pertaining to declaration of financial urgency, with results favorable to the City;
- b. Various labor issues, including 13th check litigation and various grievances;
- c. Agreement with Broward County re extension of Downtown CRA;
- d. Margaritaville issues concerning transfer to new ownership interest, including demand for payment of sums due the City as a result of that transaction;
- e. Pembroke Pines litigation and additional suits relating to that action;
- f. Fire pension loan issues;
- g. The City Attorney has kept virtually every new lawsuit in house, and will only transfer cases to outside counsel when our office does not have the particular expertise that a given case may require;
- h. When cases are settled, all resolutions have been on terms favorable to the City;
- i. The City has prevailed in all trials since November 2017;
- j. The Collections Attorney has worked closely with utilities and other City staff in obtaining favorable judgments and resolutions in nearly 100 matters;
- k. Approximately 90% success rate with municipal prosecutions;
- l. Resolution of over 70 pending litigation matters;
- m. Resolution of ICON litigation;
- n. Final resolution of Rocket Outdoor Advertising;
- o. Working with counsel for JCI re possible resolution of contract and breach issues, including related ongoing issues with defective meters provided by Aclara;
- p. Worked closely with the Charter Review Committee, resulting in numerous proposed Charter Questions;
- q. Redefined the City Attorney's role with staff;
- r. Handled all agenda items, including all ordinances and resolutions considered by the City Commission;
- s. Revised the City Commission's Policies and Procedures;
- t. Worked closely with CRA staff to bring forward CRA matters, including the 2019 Enhanced Services Agreement (with related code inspections services issues);
- u. Provide legal advice to the CRA when requested;

- v. Worked closely with City staff to refine the public records review process;
- w. Promote all city attorney staff, including attorneys, both interoffice and Citywide.

These are only a few of the highlights from the 2018 fiscal year. I am very proud of the accomplishments of the City Attorney's Office and expect that our office will achieve similar, if not greater success in the year to come.

As I have indicated on many occasions, thank you so much for providing me with the opportunity to serve Hollywood's amazing staff and administration, residents and businesses, and each of you this past year. I look forward to continuing these efforts in 2019.