



Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

To: City Councilors
From: Mayor Miro Weinberger
Date: December 17, 2015
Re: Appointment of Assistant City Attorney

I respectfully submit for your consideration and approval Justin St. James as the City's newest Assistant City Attorney, effective January 4, 2016. Mr. St. James comes to the City of Burlington after almost four years working as a union attorney and negotiator in Oregon and Vermont. I am requesting City Council approval of this appointment at your December 21, 2015 meeting.

Establishment of the new Assistant City Attorney position

In the FY16 budget, the Council approved the hiring of a new Assistant City Attorney. As you may recall, when I took office, the City Attorney's Office had a City Attorney, a Senior Assistant City Attorney (Gene Bergman), three in-house Assistant City Attorneys (Nikki Fuller, Richard Haesler, and Gregg Meyer), and one outside counsel Assistant City Attorney (Kim Sturtevant). One of those Assistants, Nikki Fuller, left in September 2012. Instead of directly replacing Ms. Fuller, City Attorney Blackwood determined that the City would be better served by bringing Attorney Sturtevant in-house, along with all of the City's planning and zoning work, which in conjunction with other departmental changes saved the City more than \$100,000 in FY14 alone. Since then, workloads have continued to increase for each individual attorney, resulting in a need for more legal assistance.

Extensive search for the new Assistant City Attorney

As part of the City's commitment to engage as diverse a recruitment pool as possible, the City's diversity & equity consultant, Curtiss Reed, was consulted, and in addition to the usual posting, City Attorney Blackwood contacted the following minority bar groups and asked them to post the opening with their memberships:

- Minority Bar Association of Western New York
- MA Black Lawyers Assoc.
- MA Black Women Attorneys
- MA Assoc. of Hispanic Attorneys
- Asian American Lawyers Assoc. of MA
- MA LGBTQ Bar Assoc.
- Assoc. of Black Women Attorneys (NYC)
- Metropolitan Black Bar Assoc. (NYC)
- CT Hispanic Bar Assoc.
- National Native American Bar Assoc.
- CT Asian Pacific American Bar Assoc.
- Asian American Bar Assoc. of NY
- George W. Crawford Black Bar Assoc. (CT)
- Westchester Black Bar Assoc. (NY)

Amistad Long Island Black Bar Assoc. (NY)
Joseph Drayton, Region II director for National Bar Assoc.

Rolling applications were accepted through October. Resumes were received from 25 applicants, at least three of whom self-identified as EEO candidates. The City Attorney's Office interviewed nine candidates, including one of the EEO candidates. Eventually, three finalists met with the Mayor, but one of them later withdrew. Mr. St. James was then offered and accepted the position.

Background

Mr. St. James, a New Hampshire native, has a Bachelor of Arts in Politics from Wake Forest University and a JD from the University of Oregon. He serves on the board of the Restorative Justice Panel in Montpelier, and served as the campaign manager for two candidates for statewide office in Oregon after graduating from law school. Mr. St. James also worked as the chief negotiator for an AFSCME council in Salem, Oregon. In addition, he has experience working in a New Hampshire County Attorney's Office and served as a law clerk in the Oregon Department of Justice's Criminal Justice Division. He most recently served as Associate General Counsel with the Vermont State Employees' Association, having been promoted from Staff Attorney a little over a year and a half after joining the organization.

I am confident that Mr. St. James's experiences in representation of state employees will be invaluable to our City Attorney's Office, and he is a strong candidate for this position.

Moving forward

Further details of Mr. St. James's career and experiences can be found in his attached application and resume. Following your confirmation of Mr. St. James's appointment, I intend to place him at Step 2 of NU Grade 24 of the Willis pay scale for an annual compensation of \$71,294 in FY16. Mr. St. James is expected to begin his service to the City of Burlington on January 4, 2016.

Thank you for your consideration.