

## City Attorney Evaluation Form

<b>Attorney Name:</b>	Jennifer Merino	<b>For Year:</b>	2019- 2020
<b>Initial Appropriate Designation:</b>	X	Self-Evaluation Submitted to Commission	
		Subsequent Optional Evaluation by Commissioner:	Print Name
<b>Performance Factors:</b> Below are performance factors recommended for assessment of the City Attorney's Performance. The City Attorney will provide a self-assessment below each factor for commission consideration. Commissioner may submit feedback by use of this form or in-person discussions, whichever is preferred.			
<b>Each Category should be rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "Ineffective" and 5 indicating "Surpasses Expectations"</b>			
<b>Job Knowledge-</b> Measures effectiveness in keeping knowledgeable of relevant law, techniques and skills required in to advise the City; remaining current on new developments affecting the City and its work activities			
5	Employee Comments: The law in local government is constantly changing. However, despite an extraordinarily hectic work schedule, a City Attorney is expected to maintain abreast of developments in the law and annual changes in statute. I rate myself a 5 for this period because I also managed, at my own expense, to obtain my Board Certification from the Florida Bar in July 2019 for City, County and Local Government. I am the first City Attorney for Hallandale Beach to have the Florida Bar's highest certification in this field.		
	Commissioner Comment (optional):		
<b>Decision Making/Problem Solving-</b> Measures effectiveness in understanding problems and making timely, practical decisions.			
4	Employee Comments: Having worked with 3 City managers in a span of two years I have demonstrated that I am very capable of understanding both legal and administrative issues effectively and provide practical options to resolve the issues. Within the administration of the Legal Office, I have built a staff that is flexible and can quickly adjust to shifting dynamics. I have also adjusted practices to solve larger issues facing the city. For example, given the volatility on the Commission and the turn-over in City Manager, a number of legal issues and litigation arose that was destined to cost the city more money than allocated for legal issues. Recognizing that tide, I adjusted our functions to handle all personal injury litigation in house. We also have taken on all public records litigation and I took over negotiations for AFSCME and most of Police bargaining. This has saved the City significant funds that could then be utilized to address litigation and other specialized legal issues like pension transitions. Further, I have proposed multiple administrative solutions to address deficiencies. As one example, since mid-2019 I have proposed the addition of a Records Management Coordinator to generate additional revenues from our ever-increasing demand for public records. Currently staff is overwhelmed with the provision of records in a timely manner (to avoid legal liability) and is not able to collect the revenues available pursuant to Florida Statute.		
	Commissioner Comment (optional):		

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<b>Communication-</b> Measures effectiveness in listening to others, expressing ideas, both orally and in writing and providing relevant and timely information to the commission, city management, co-workers, subordinates and residents.	
4	Employee Comments: Although it may not be a popular opinion amongst attorneys, I place the greatest value on the ability to communicate complex legal issues in the simplest form possible so that all members of the public can understand the issue at hand. Furthermore, I am able to break down relevant information in a manner that does not leave out important considerations. I also know I have diligently built a strong framework of communication with each of the appointed City managers with whom I have worked and with senior administrative staff. I have accomplished as much by listening to others and being plainly honest with my opinions and positions. Finally, a very important aspect of maintaining communication in this position is discretion and confidentiality. From my first day at the City I have respected the right of each member of the Commission to have discreet conversations with me that do not get repeated to other commissioners. As you can each attest, I do not share with any member of the Commission any conversations that I have with other members of the Commission. I have always felt that this was the only way to build trust and I have counselled the same to the City Managers.
	Commissioner Comment (optional):
<b>Employee's Responsiveness-</b> Measures responsiveness in completing job tasks in a timely manner.	
3	Employee Comments: While I hold myself to a high standard in this area, I do know that my responsiveness is the number one issue with which I have struggled in the past two years. This factor is complicated by the breadth of activity from 14 departments, 5 commissioners and constantly shifting circumstances at the City. However, even given those setbacks, I genuinely expect to show significant improvement in this area in the future. I believe I have addressed staffing vacancies and have built more robust systems within the office to improve responsiveness. I have gone so far as to build a database system to streamline my office's activities this summer so that we may improve responsiveness.
	Commissioner Comment (optional):
<b>Dependability-</b> Measures how well CA complies with instructions and performs under unusual circumstances.	
5	Employee Comments: In a recurring theme throughout this review, the Commission is aware that I am currently working with my 4 <sup>th</sup> individual in the position of City Manager in the span of 3 and a half years. I have also dealt with a uniquely wide array of "unusual circumstances" in the three years that I have served as City Attorney. While each situation presented unique considerations, I approached each with a sense of purpose, an unyielding work ethic, and honest communication. The most recent test of dependability has come in the form of a global pandemic. Despite having to homeschool two young children, I have been active and productive in my efforts to get the City through a barrage of "first-impression" legal questions (legal issues not previously considered by the City), even if many nights I am working well past midnight or on weekends.
	Commissioner Comment (optional):

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<b>Leadership and Independent Action-</b> Measures effectiveness in initiative and independent action; proactiveness; effectiveness of accomplishing work assignments through subordinates, establishing challenging goals; coordinating effectively; promoting innovation and team effort.	
5	<p>Employee Comments: I believe unusual circumstances give rise to opportunities to demonstrate one's leadership abilities. In this area I believe that the current pandemic and the ever-shifting leadership of the City have both demonstrated my proactiveness and leadership ability. With respect to the shifts in City Manager, each time the position has shifted I have gone into overdrive to provide stability and leadership for staff beyond my own office. I have devoted countless hours to bringing new City Manager's up to speed on a barrage of issues and history to help inform their decisions. For example, I spent well over 80 hours initially brining the former CM up to speed on budget, pension and bargaining issues when he first was appointed. I spend another 40 bringing him up to speed on litigation and procurement issues. It was not easy to find these large masses of time over and above my typical responsibilities, but I have always been willing to work harder and longer when the need arose for the sake of the organization. During the pandemic, I have provided steady, calm and practical guidance in the face of great legal uncertainty. Upon realizing that the City had no code for dealing with Emergencies, I immediately acted to find a short-term and long-term solution that did not impede the practical need for immediate action. Further, I did this while keeping the Legal Office 100% functional even though we were all remote and most of my staff was home with school-aged children. In truth, my staff is my greatest achievement. During these hard times, they have demonstrated a dedication that exceeded all of my expectations and, I believe, speaks well of my ability to build a team.</p>
	Commissioner Comment (optional):
<b>Expense Management-</b> Measures effectiveness in establishing appropriate cost control mechanisms and processes to operate effectively as cost efficiently as possible.	
4	<p>Employee Comments: Legal cost control is difficult to measure because legal liabilities are not created by the City Attorney. I cannot change the actions of boards before I arrived; nor can I control if the commission acts contrary to my advice; and I cannot oversee every act taken by City employees. However, as I discussed as an example of "Decision Making," when a number of legal issues and litigation arose that was destined to cost the city more money than allocated for legal issues, I adjusted our functions to handle all personal injury litigation in house. We have also taken on all public records litigation and I took over negotiations for AFSCME and Police bargaining. This has saved the City significant funds that could then be utilized to address litigation and specialized legal issues like pension transitions.</p>
	Commissioner Comment (optional):
<b>Managing Change and Improvement-</b> Measures effectiveness in initiating changes, adapting to necessary changes from old methods when they are no longer practical, identifying new methods and generating improvement in City legal operations.	
4	<p>Employee Comments: I believe I have a lot room for improvement in this area when it comes to improving day-to-day processes. However, given the large scope of changes with which I</p>

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	have had to cope in three and half years and my responsiveness to those changes, I do believe I have earned a 4 in this category. In addition to the examples stated above, for the past year we have been working on improving a number of processes between the Legal Office and the other departments that will help increase efficiency and responsiveness. As mentioned above, I even created a database program to move the ISR (Internal service request) system from a paper system to a virtual system. I have also simplified and streamlined a number of legal functions that I believe previously hindered the efficiency of the office, and the City as whole. This has allowed us to be more agile when we needed to respond to extraordinary demands.
	Commissioner Comment (optional):
<b>Any additional Comments:</b> As you are aware, a lot of the work I conduct is sensitive or confidential in nature. Therefore, I ask that you excuse the more abstract nature of these comments, as I should not comment on specific legal matters or cases in a fashion that may later bring the City's actions into question. I am always available to more specifically discuss any questions or concerns you may have.	
	Employee Comments (optional):
	Commissioner Comment (optional):