



Department Source: Municipal Court  
To: City Council  
From: City Manager & Staff  
Council Meeting Date: May 6, 2019  
Re: Adding positions to Municipal Court

## Executive Summary

The Columbia Municipal Division requests to add three additional full time positions to our current staff in order to meet the new requirements of the Supreme Court. We are requesting two Administrative Support Assistants; and an Administrative Technician; and additional funds to comply with mandated requirements. These changes would allow our department to better serve our community.

## Discussion

Parking tickets are ordinance violations under the City of Columbia Code of Ordinances and currently do not have court dates. Parking tickets are typically paid outside of court through the Violations Bureau, which is allowed under Supreme Court Rule 37.49(c). The Violations Bureau consists of charges that can be paid outside of court without a personal appearance. Effective May 1, 2019, changes to Supreme Court Rule 37 may have a preemptive effect on fine amounts assessed by the City of Columbia. The rules will also require that parking tickets have a date and time for the initial court appearance.

The Supreme Court established a committee that will provide a new uniform Violation Bureau for the state of Missouri. The Violations Bureau will take effect May 1, 2019. In order for a City to have a Violations Bureau, this new list must be adopted. Currently we have not been made aware of the charges that will be on the new uniform Violation Bureau list. This could have significant budget impacts on the City of Columbia. The City will not be able to remove or amend the list of violations provided by the committee; however, it appears under the rules that a municipal judge can add to the required list by adopting an order. This order is limited to three types of cases: any animal control, housing or traffic violation cases (subject to the supervision of the Circuit Court). If parking tickets are not on the adopted Violation Bureau list they could be added to the list if they are considered a traffic violation. This would allow the citizens of Columbia to continue paying tickets at their convenience, without requiring a personal appearance in court. Starting May 1, 2019, if they elect not to pay prior to their court date they will be required to personally appear in court as stated on their ticket. This will pose significant challenges in the operations of the Municipal Division.

In 2018 the number of parking ticket issued totaled 63,489 (January through December). To prepare for this, the Municipal Division will need to adjust dramatically court dockets and staffing levels. We will implement six parking arraignment dockets every Thursday. An average docket is estimated at 229 tickets per hour with peak dockets exceeding 300 tickets per hour. This may seem like an impossible undertaking; however, we believe most citizens will continue to pay out of court. If 10% to 20% of cases are not resolved, these will result in



# City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

actual dockets consisting of 22 to 44 cases per hour. Limiting factors could potentially be court room capacity to seat citizens as well as, sequentially scheduling dockets. If capacity or volume exceeds these estimates additional dockets will be required.

To accommodate these Parking dockets, Trials and Interpreter dockets will be moved. Another consideration for the council is whether or not to continue weddings. If the Council wants the Municipal Division to continue offering weddings to the citizens of Columbia free of charge, alternate facilities may need to be utilized.

Additional staff will be needed. All parking cases must be filed and reconciled using the appropriate court rules, accounting principles and auditing procedures. Using 2018 annual numbers the Municipal Division had a total of 6,397 cases with 1,742 ordinance violations and 4,655 traffic violations. If 10% percent of parking tickets are not resolved by the court dates that will be an additional 6,348 case. If the percentage is 20% it will triple the current case load. The court will follow standard processes for all citizens who fail to appear for their court date. Including issuing summonses, and when necessary warrants just like any other ordinance violation.

## Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: \$242,704.00  
Long-Term Impact: \$174,334.00 annually

## Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

### Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Public Safety, Secondary Impact: Economy, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

### Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Not Applicable, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

## Legislative History

Date	Action
None	None

## Suggested Council Action

Should the Council agree with staff recommendations, three FTE should be added to the Municipal Court budget and \$11,641.00 for supplies.