

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
January 16, 2026 – City Commission Special Work Session
Civic Center, Commission Chambers 206, Mayor Reeves Presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 12:00 PM

ROLL CALL/STAFF INTRODUCTIONS:

City Commission members present: Cory Reeves, Joe McKenney, Rick Tryon, Shannon Wilson, and Casey Schreiner.

Also present was City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Plascak, currently residing in Chicago, commented that he lived in Great Falls for six years and worked at the Public Defender’s Office, during which time he worked with all of the applicants. He expressed, while all candidates are qualified, he believes Ms. Blomgren is the most qualified, citing her fairness, honesty, levelheadedness, and compassion, including her role in starting the first Mental Health Treatment Court in Great Falls. He concluded that she would make an excellent judge.

Claire Lettow, Managing Attorney for the Great Falls Office of the State Public Defender, noted a severe shortage of defense attorneys in Cascade County and explained that allowing Zoom appearances would help attract attorneys from outside the county. She stated that the Municipal Court currently does not allow Zoom appearances and encouraged the Commission to ask the applicants about their willingness to use courtroom technology. She also echoed prior comments in support of Ms. Blomgren and personally endorsed Cassidy Blomgren.

Donny Gerhart, retired Great Falls Police Officer, expressed his endorsement of Cassidy Blomgren, stating he has worked with all three candidates during his career. He cited Ms. Blomgren’s professionalism, dedication to the City of Great Falls, and compassion. He concluded that his experience working with her during the Mental Health Treatment Court and describing her passion and commitment as inspiring.

After a brief discussion, it was Commission consensus to add question 15 - Would you support advocating for technology/Zoom in the Municipal Court – to the candidate interview questions.

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WORK SESSION ITEMS

**1. MUNICIPAL COURT DEPARTMENT A JUDGE CANDIDATE
INTERVIEWS**

The City Commission interviewed Cassidy Blomgren, Cayle Mark Halberg, and Theresa L. Diekhans individually. Commission members took turns asking each applicant the same set of 15 questions, with opportunities for follow-up discussion as needed for clarification.

At the conclusion of the interviews, the Commission discussed and weighed the applicants' responses.

A formal appointment to fill the remaining portion of Judge Bolstad's unexpired term, through December 31, 2027, will be made at the regular Commission meeting on January 20, 2026.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves adjourned the informal special work session of January 16, 2026, at 3:23 p.m.