

City Attorney Performance Evaluation

Under the City Charter, the City Attorney serves as the chief legal advisor to the City Council and the City organization, is appointed by the Council, and is responsible for representing the City in all legal matters. This evaluation assesses performance in fulfilling those obligations.

For each performance factor, please rate the City Attorney on a scale from one (1) to five (5), according to how well she met your expectations for that factor:

-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----
Needs Meets Exceeds
Improvement Expectations Expectations

There are three reference points on the scale, defined as follows:

Exceeds Expectations (5): The City Attorney's performance surpasses expectations in this area, even those of someone fully qualified for the role. The City Attorney's performance and contributions positively impact the performance of others and the operation of the City.

Meets Expectations (3): The City Attorney's performance aligns with your expectations for someone fully qualified to do the job. However, this does not imply that she executed everything perfectly. Overall, she performed the job as required, and her performance would not need to change to remain entirely acceptable.

Needs Improvement (1): Performance is below the expected standard for a fully qualified City Attorney and requires significant improvement to reach an acceptable level.

PERFORMANCE FACTORS

- I. **MANAGEMENT SKILLS:** Effectively runs the office of the City Attorney. Creates a collaborative work environment for a strong team of professionals and support staff. Selects, hires and retains competent professional and support staff members. Leads and develops the professional and support staff within the office of the City Attorney.

Score: 4.31

○ **General Comments:**

The City Attorney effectively manages the City Attorney's Office and promotes a collaborative, professional work environment. The City Attorney has maintained a well-managed and professional office that consistently provides timely legal support to Mayor and Council. The office demonstrates strong leadership and has continued to attract, develop and retain a knowledgeable team, with noted effort in succession planning, creating advancement opportunities and the launch of the Summer Internship Program. The department is responsive, organized, and committed to serving the needs of the City while maintaining professionalism and integrity. The implementation of 47 standardized contract templates supported improvements in the department's efficiency. The City Attorney supports teamwork among attorneys and support staff and maintains a strong commitment to professionalism and quality legal service.

- II. LITIGATION AND RISK OVERSIGHT:** Manages the City's litigation portfolio with strategic oversight, ensuring that cases are handled efficiently and align with the City's legal and operational interests. Provides effective supervision of outside counsel, maintains rigorous evaluation of settlement options, and exercises strong control over potential exposure. Through consistent attention to long-term liability trends and emerging risks, supports well-informed decision-making that protects the City's financial and institutional stability.

Score: 3.87

General Comments:

The City Attorney appropriately evaluates legal exposure, settlement considerations, and litigation strategy while supervising outside counsel and keeping the City's broader operational objectives in mind. Significant litigation matters presented to the City Council are typically well-prepared and supported by enough information for Council to make informed decisions. Each decision City Council has made this last year has been after the City Attorney's office has provided valuable information in a simple and easy to understand method, in mostly complex situations. These decisions have also protected the City from significant financial exposure. Continued emphasis on early risk identification, litigation forecasting, and regular reporting on significant cases along with focus on recent legislative developments, current events, and other external developments that may have a nexus to ongoing or emerging legal issues will further strengthen the City's risk-management practices. Overall, the office strikes an appropriate balance between vigorously defending the City's interests and recognizing when settlement is the prudent course of action.

- III. FULFILLMENT OF CHARTER DUTIES:** In fulfilling the duties of City Attorney, demonstrates consistent performance as the chief legal advisor to the City Council, providing clear, accurate, and timely guidance on complex municipal matters. Effectively represents the City in litigation and legal proceedings. Ensures full compliance with the Open Meetings Act and the Public Information Act through diligent oversight and guidance. Ensures that all ordinances, resolutions, and contracts are thoroughly reviewed for legal sufficiency; and continually safeguards the City's legal and institutional interests through proactive risk mitigation and steadfast adherence to the City Charter.

Score: 3.5

General Comments:

The City Attorney fulfills her Charter responsibilities with professionalism, sound legal judgment, and a strong commitment to protecting the City's interests. She provides knowledgeable guidance on municipal legal matters, supports compliance with applicable open-government requirements, and reviews ordinances, resolutions, contracts, and other City documents for legal sufficiency. Her work provides an important foundation for lawful and informed decision-making by the City Council and City administration. Overall, the City Attorney has fulfilled the core responsibilities established by the City Charter at a level that meets and often exceeds expectations while continuing to have opportunities to improve the precision, consistency, and clarity of legal guidance provided to the governing body.

- IV. FISCAL MANAGEMENT:** Exercises responsible budget stewardship, ensuring that departmental resources are managed efficiently and transparently. Achieves regular legal activities within budgetary goals and limits. Utilizes in-house legal staff to limit cost. Performs legal tasks/settlements with appropriate authorization from City Council. Appropriately seeks outside counsel and adequately supervises production of work.

Score: 3.31

General Comments:

The City Attorney exercises responsible stewardship of departmental resources and manages the office's budget in a prudent and fiscally responsible manner. Consistent attention to controlling costs has been given while ensuring that the office continues to provide effective legal services to the City Council and the organization, ensuring taxpayer resources are managed appropriately and transparently. The City Attorney has effectively balanced the use of in-house attorneys and outside counsel, relying on internal expertise whenever appropriate while engaging outside counsel when specialized knowledge or conflicts require it. Overall, the City Attorney has demonstrated fiscal management that clearly meets and at times exceeds expectations.

- V. LEGAL CONSULTATION:** Demonstrates a deep and continually developing knowledge of municipal, state, and federal law. Consistently anticipates and mitigates legal risks, providing practical, defensible advice that considers and balances the overall goals and objectives of the City. Proactively identifies potential issues when aware of them to avoid problems from occurring. Is decisive in reaching timely decisions and initiating action. Even under significant political or public pressure, exercises steady, well-reasoned judgment that upholds the City's legal and institutional interests.

Score: 3.37

General Comments:

The City Attorney demonstrates continually developing knowledge of municipal, state, and federal law, with particular strength in municipal law, which is central to the responsibilities of the position. She demonstrates sound judgment when addressing complex or sensitive matters and remains committed to protecting the City's legal and institutional interests. She generally maintains independent legal judgment and appropriately balances legal risk with the City's policy objectives, including projects and constituent issues that have required ongoing legal support. Overall, the City Attorney provides legal consultation that meets or exceeds expectations.

VI. GOVERNANCE SUPPORT, INDEPENDENCE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COUNCIL:

Consistently provides candid and independent legal advice grounded in professional integrity, while maintaining a clear and appropriate distinction between offering legal counsel and influencing policy direction. Treats all Council Members equitably, fostering trust, fairness, and confidence in the City's legal processes.

Score: 3.64

General Comments:

The City Attorney maintains a professional and constructive relationship with the City Council and provides candid, independent legal advice grounded in professional integrity. She is willing to advise the City Council on what the law requires, even when that advice may be unpopular. This also instills confidence in City Council to ask difficult legal questions. Her accessibility and approach supports confidence in the City's legal processes and assists the Council in carrying out its responsibilities in a lawful and informed manner. The City Attorney's office is effective when it provides candid legal guidance grounded in the law, even when that guidance may not align with the preferences of individual elected officials. This independence strengthens Council's confidence in the city's legal processes and supports sound governance.

VII. COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSIVENESS : Consistently demonstrates responsiveness to inquiries from Council, administration, and the public, and thoughtfully receives, evaluates, and incorporates feedback to strengthen relationships, improve processes, and enhance public confidence. In addressing complex or sensitive issues, communicates with tact, transparency, and respect for differing viewpoints, reinforcing confidence in the integrity and professionalism of the City's legal function.

Score: 4.01

General Comments:

The City Attorney has been responsive and accessible when legal assistance has been needed and has demonstrated professionalism in communications even when receiving difficult feedback. She consistently and promptly responds to constituent matters and Council inquiries, including prompt responses to calls and emails, even outside of regular business hours when necessary. Council greatly

appreciates the open communication the City Attorney permits by allowing direct communication by Council with other attorneys in her office on matters being handled by them. The City Attorney demonstrates professionalism and a commitment to communication and responsiveness

VIII. LEADERSHIP: Demonstrates strong organizational leadership by effectively guiding and developing the legal staff, fostering a high-performing team grounded in professionalism and ethical conduct. Remains consistently responsive to the needs of City departments and executive leadership, providing timely legal support that enables operational continuity and informed decision-making. Through her commitment to maintaining rigorous professional standards and strict ethical compliance, reinforces the integrity and credibility of the City's legal function.

Score: 4.17

General Comments:

The City Attorney demonstrates strong leadership through her commitment to professional standards, ethical conduct, accountability, and quality legal service. She supports the development of legal and support staff and provides important guidance to City departments and executive leadership. She sets an appropriate tone and direction for the City Attorney's Office. She holds herself and all her employees accountable to represent the city as best as possible. Under her leadership she has fostered meaningful growth in both the capabilities of individual attorneys and the overall depth of the organization. Her steady approach contributes to organizational continuity and informed decision-making. Continued focus on staff development, internal coordination, and proactive planning will further strengthen the effectiveness of the office. Periodic updates to Council regarding departmental initiatives, operational improvements, and keeping performance metrics period providing greater visibility into the department's work throughout the year would enhance transparency and help Council better understand the value and impact of the legal department's efforts.

IX. PROFESSIONALISM: Consistently upholds the highest standards of ethics and professional integrity by fully complying with State Bar obligations and adhering to the City's Ethics requirements. Demonstrates a strong commitment to protecting the City's institutional integrity, ensuring that legal processes and decisions remain grounded in transparency, accountability, and the rule of law. Even when delivering difficult or politically sensitive advice, maintains independence, reinforcing trust in the office's impartiality and professionalism.

Score: 4.08

General Comments:

The City Attorney consistently demonstrates professionalism, ethical conduct and a commitment to protecting the city's legal interests. She remains committed to protecting the integrity of City processes and ensuring that legal advice is grounded in the rule of law rather than political considerations. Throughout the evaluation period, she has maintained impartiality and she protects the integrity of the City's legal processes and provides advice grounded in applicable law, transparency, accountability, and the best interests of the organization. Providing additional public explanations on the city's legal framework on matters of significant community interest can help strengthen transparency and understanding while preserving the office's independence and professional responsibilities.

NARRATIVE EVALUATION

What would you identify as the City Attorney's strengths, expressed in terms of the principal results achieved during the rating period?

The City Attorney's principal strengths during this evaluation period have been her leadership of a capable and increasingly mature legal organization, her strategic oversight of the City's litigation portfolio, and her responsible stewardship of public resources. The Council has confidence that significant litigation matters are managed thoughtfully and that settlement recommendations are presented objectively with sufficient information to allow the City Council to make informed decisions. Her prudent use of outside counsel, her continued development of in-house expertise, particularly in utility regulation, and her investment in mentoring attorneys have strengthened the depth of and services provided by her office. Throughout the evaluation period, she has consistently demonstrated professionalism, independence, sound legal judgment and a commitment to protecting the City's long-term legal and institutional interests. These strengths have contributed to a generally well-managed office that provides valuable legal support to the City Council and the organization as a whole.

What other comments do you have for the City Attorney (for example, about priorities, expectations, or specific objectives for the next year)?

Ms. Nieman has excelled and has continued to strengthen her office and the provision of legal services to the City during this evaluation period. The City Attorney remains willing to engage candidly on difficult legal issues and makes herself available to Council to discuss issues as they arise, often on short notice. Looking ahead, the City Attorney could continue emphasis on improving the practicality and actionability of legal advice, ensuring that legal guidance not only identifies legal constraints but also identifies legally defensible paths forward for the Council as policymakers. Ms. Nieman's ongoing and continued focus on opportunities for departmental cost savings and resource usage are appreciated. Finally, continuing to foster constructive communication, both internally and externally, will further strengthen relationships with Council, City departments, and the public.

The Council thanks Ms. Nieman for her dedication and believes that this constructive feedback is well addressed in the *2026-2027 goals attached to this narrative.

The Council looks forward to her leading her office in the next year.

City Attorney Goals and Objectives

In accordance with the City Attorney's Employment Agreement, the following goals and objectives have been jointly developed for the City Attorney for the next evaluation period of August 2026-August 2027.

See attached Exhibit "A" for Goals 1-5.

The Time Frame or Target Completion Date is August 2027 to be addressed in self-evaluation. Mid Year Check-in February 2027.

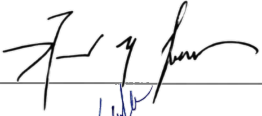
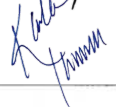
Reviewer's Name		Overall Rating 3.81
Reviewer's Signature 	Date 9/3/2026	
Employee's Signature* 	Date 9/3/2026	

Exhibit “A”

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT EVALUATION PERIOD

September 2026-August 2027 | Aligned to the FY 2027-FY 2028 Strategic Plan

Strategic Pillar	Priority Statement	Key Commitments	Proposed Measures
GOOD GOVERNANCE	TBD	Continue strengthening transparent, ethical, and legally compliant government by providing timely legal counsel to the Mayor, City Council, and City departments; enhancing Open Records processes; supporting implementation of legislative changes; and promoting consistent governance practices across the organization.	TBD
PUBLIC SAFETY	TBD	Continue providing effective legal representation and prosecution services that support Police, Fire, Municipal Court, Animal Services, code Enforcement, and other public safety partners through litigation management, ordinance development, regulatory compliance, and legal training.	TBD
INFRASTRUCTURE	TBD	Provide proactive legal support for capital improvement projects, procurement, real estate transactions, economic development initiatives, and other strategic investments while reducing legal risk and improving operational efficiency.	TBD
ECONOMIC MOBILITY	TBD	Support sustainable economic growth by providing timely legal services for development projects, procurement, real estate transactions, economic development initiatives, and other strategic investments while reducing legal risk and improving operational efficiency.	TBD
QUALITY OF LIFE	TBD	Support initiatives that enhance parks, libraries, museums, public art, environmental programs,	TBD

		neighborhood services, and other quality-of-life investments by providing practical legal guidance that advances City priorities while ensuring compliance with applicable laws and minimizing legal risk.	
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