



# WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

[www.washoecounty.gov](http://www.washoecounty.gov)

## STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: January 13, 2026

**DATE:** December 17, 2025

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Chris Wilson, Chief Justice of the Peace, Sparks Justice Court  
(775) 353-7620, [cwilson@washoecounty.gov](mailto:cwilson@washoecounty.gov)  
Jessica Longley, Justice of the Peace, Sparks Justice Court  
(775) 353-7620, [jlongley@washoecounty.gov](mailto:jlongley@washoecounty.gov)  
Erica Flavin, Justice of the Peace, Sparks Justice Court  
(775) 353-7620, [eflavin@washoecounty.gov](mailto:eflavin@washoecounty.gov)

**THROUGH:** Chris Wilson, Chief Justice of the Peace

**SUBJECT:** Recommendation to acknowledge and approve, effective February 1, 2026, for Sparks Justice Court, a waiver of the six-month cooling off period for Judge Kevin Higgins. [\$0 net impact]. (All Commission Districts.) FOR POSSIBLE ACTION

---

### **SUMMARY**

Sparks Justice Court requests approval to waive the six-month cooling off period for Judge Kevin Higgins following his upcoming retirement on January 31, 2026. To alleviate Court congestion, Sparks Justice Court will request Judge Higgins to sit as a senior judge due to the difficulty in obtaining coverage.

**Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item:** Court Operations

### **PREVIOUS ACTION**

On April 26, 2016, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the Washoe County "Cooling Off" Period Policy for Former Employees.

### **BACKGROUND**

The enactment of Assembly Bill 424 (AB 424) passed in the 81st Legislative Session (2021), requires the Court to hold hearings seven days a week, 365 days a year. Properly staffing the weekends and holidays has created an operational hardship. For over 22 years, Judge Higgins has served on Sparks Justice Court, serving for nearly 9 years as Chief Judge and he can fill in as needed as a Senior Judge soon after his retirement.

**AGENDA ITEM # \_\_\_\_\_**

On April 26, 2016, the Board of County Commissioners approved the requirement of a six-month “cooling off” period before a former employee, official, or county commissioner can enter into an independent contractor agreement with the County after leaving service. The BCC may waive the six-month cooling off period in cases of urgent operational need or hardship. Such waivers are considered on a case-by-case basis. Waiver must be approved by the Board in a public meeting, and the requestor must submit a staff report justifying the operational hardship.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Recommendation to acknowledge and approve, effective February 1, 2026, for Sparks Justice Court, a waiver of the six-month cooling off period for Judge Kevin Higgins. [\$0 net impact].

**POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Board agree with staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be:

*Move that the Board of County Commissioners approve and acknowledge, effective February 1, 2026, for Sparks Justice Court, a waiver of the six-month cooling off period for Judge Kevin Higgins. [\$0 net impact].*