

Office of Hearing Examiner

Sue Tanner, Hearing Examiner

Contact Information

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Department Description

The Office of Hearing Examiner is Seattle's quasi-judicial forum for reviewing factual and legal issues raised by the application of City Code requirements to specific people or property. As authorized by the Seattle Municipal Code, the Office conducts hearings and decides appeals in cases where citizens disagree with a decision made by a City agency. Many of the matters appealed to the Hearing Examiner relate to land use and environmental permit decisions and interpretations made by the Department of Planning and Development. The Hearing Examiner also hears appeals in many other subject areas and makes recommendations to the City Council on rezone petitions, major institution master plans, and other Council land-use actions. Pursuant to authority granted in 2004, the Hearing Examiner provides contract hearing examiner services to other local governments as well.

The Hearing Examiner, and Deputy Hearing Examiners appointed by the Hearing Examiner, handle all pre-hearing matters, regulate the conduct of hearings, and prepare decisions and recommendations based upon the hearing record and applicable law. The Code requires all examiners to be attorneys with training and experience in administrative hearings. The Hearing Examiner also appoints an administrative analyst to oversee the administrative areas of the office, a paralegal to assist with hearings and decision preparation, and an administrative specialist to support all other office positions and provide information to the public.

Policy and Program Changes

In developing the 2011 Adopted Budget, the City of Seattle's General Fund was facing a \$67 million shortfall. The 2011 Adopted Budget includes reductions for all General Fund-dependent functions. The 2011 Adopted Budget for the Office of Hearing Examiner reflects administrative and technical reductions in order to help close the General Fund gap.

City Council Provisos

There are no Council provisos.

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	Summit	2009	2010	2011	2012
Appropriations	Code	Actual	Adopted	Adopted	Endorsed
Office of Hearing Examiner Budget Control Level	V1X00	577,231	555,745	570,567	585,036
Department Total		577,231	555,745	570,567	585,036
Department Full-time Equivalents Total*		4.63	4.63	4.63	4.63

** FTE totals are provided for informational purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Personnel Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here.*

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Resources	Actual	Adopted	Adopted	Endorsed
General Subfund	577,231	555,745	570,567	585,036
Department Total	577,231	555,745	570,567	585,036

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Office of Hearing Examiner Budget Control Level

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Office of Hearing Examiner Budget Control Level is to conduct fair and impartial hearings in all subject areas where the Seattle Municipal Code grants authority to do so (there are currently more than 50 subject areas) and to issue decisions and recommendations consistent with applicable ordinances.

Summary

The Mayor and the Council worked with the Coalition of City Labor Unions to identify mechanisms for reducing labor costs in the face of the City's strained financial situation. As a result of ratified agreements with represented employees and commensurate savings for non-represented positions, this program will achieve \$5,000 in savings.

Increase budget by \$20,000 for citywide adjustments to labor and other operating costs due to inflation, health care, and similar changes, for a net increase from the 2010 Adopted Budget to the 2011 Adopted Budget of approximately \$15,000.

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Expenditures/FTE	Actual	Adopted	Adopted	Endorsed
Office of Hearing Examiner	577,231	555,745	570,567	585,036
Full-time Equivalents Total*	4.63	4.63	4.63	4.63

** FTE totals are provided for informational purposes only. Changes in FTEs resulting from City Council or Personnel Director actions outside of the budget process may not be detailed here.*