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Missoula County

Media Release

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Justice of the Peace Interim Appointment Process Set

The Board of Missoula County Commissioners has set the process of appointing Justice of the Peace, Karen Orzech's replacement, following the announcement of her retirement last week. Because Judge Orzech's effective retirement date on July 8, 2016 precedes the expiration of her term, the Commissioners will recruit interim candidates to fill the position throughout the remainder of 2016. Those seeking the interim appointment must submit a letter of interest and a summary of qualifications to the Missoula County Human Resources Department by Monday, May 16. The interim Justice of the Peace will serve from July 11, 2016 through December 31, 2016.

As defined in statute [§ 3-10-204](#), "A justice of the peace must reside in the county in which the justice's court is held." Further, "a person is not eligible for the office of justice of the peace unless the person is a citizen of the United States and has been a resident of the county in which the person is to serve for 1 year preceding election or appointment." Compensation will be set by the Missoula County Compensation Board, effective July 1, 2016. The current hourly rate established through June 30, 2016 is \$32.06.

Additional screening tools and qualifications will be determined at the Commission's discretion. Interviews will be held in mid-June and the appointment will be decided by a majority vote.

Because Judge Orzech is retiring after the June 7 primary election, those seeking the office will be placed on the November general election ballot. Interim candidates can run for the election but are not required to do so. As provided in statute [§ 13-14-118](#), a "10-day period for accepting declarations for nomination of statements of candidacy and nominating petitions for the office must be declared."

The Commission has set the 10-day window to open July 11 and close July 20, 2016. During this period, candidates must file and pay the required filing fee with the Missoula County Elections Office. All those eligible will be placed on the Nov. 8 ballot to be elected by Missoula County voters. The winner of the election will take office on Jan. 1, 2017.

Those interested in applying for the interim Justice of the Peace position should mail their submission to 200 West Broadway, Missoula, MT 59802 or submitted by attachment to gbrown@missoulacounty.us.