



COMMISSIONERS COURT
COMMUNICATION

REFERENCE NUMBER _____

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DATE: 08/06/2024

SUBJECT: **CONCURRENCE WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF CHRISTINA LOPEZ AS THE PUBLIC PROBATE ADMINISTRATOR**

***** CONSENT AGENDA *****

COMMISSIONERS COURT ACTION REQUESTED

It is requested that the Commissioners Court concur and ratify the appointment of Christina “Christa” Lopez as the Public Probate Administrator effective July 26, 2024.

BACKGROUND

On January 26, 2016, the Commissioners Court, through Court Order #121836, approved participation in the Public Probate Administrator Pilot Project.

On September 10, 2019, the Commissioners Court, through Court Order #131065, ratified the appointment of Molly Keathley as part-time Public Probate Administrator. Ms. Keathley resigned her position effective July 25, 2024.

Texas Estates Code section 25.00251(a) permits a “statutory probate court judge, with the concurrence of the commissioners court” to appoint a Public Probate Administrator “for all statutory probate courts in the county unless the commissioners court has authorized additional public probate administrators.” Currently, the Tarrant County Commissioners Court has authorized a single Public Probate Administrator.

Judge Chris Ponder, presiding Judge of Probate Court No. 1, has signed the attached designation naming Judge Brooke Allen, presiding Judge of Probate Court No. 2, to appoint and administer the office of Public Probate Administrator in Tarrant County. Such a designation is authorized by Estates Code section 25.00251(b). However, both Judges have agreed on Ms. Lopez serving. On July 26, 2024, Christina Lopez was sworn in as the Public Probate Administrator and her corporate surety bond in the amount of \$100,000.00 was approved. Judge Allen now seeks the concurrence and ratification of the Commissioners Court for the appointment of Christina Lopez as the Public Probate Administrator. Ms. Lopez will not handle any funds personally. All payments will continue to be made into the registry of the court by Court Order and these funds will be managed by the County Clerk. Previously, payments were deposited into the treasury and handled by the auditor, but all funds have now been transferred into the court registry as now allowable by Texas law.

SUBMITTED BY:	Probate Court No. 2	PREPARED BY: APPROVED BY:	Judge Brooke Allen
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FISCAL IMPACT

The ratification of the appointment of a successor Public Probate Administrator allows Tarrant County to continue collecting the approximately \$10.00 supplemental fee on each probate proceeding as allowed by Texas Government Code section 135.102(b)(13) & (c)(4). The premium on the corporate surety bond is \$350.00 bi-annually. Ms. Lopez is paid an additional \$2.00 per hour for her performance as the PPA in addition to her wages as the Decedents Estates Examiner for Probate Court No. 2.