



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 0138-2020, **Version:** 1

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The Municipal Court Judges have been provided funding since 1985 to pay court-appointed counsel when the public defender has a conflict of interest.

This legislation authorizes the Franklin County Municipal Court Judges to enter into contract with the Franklin County Commissioners and authorizes the expenditure for the purpose of providing court-appointed counsel. This legislation is necessary since it is the Court's responsibility under the laws of the State of Ohio and of The United States of America to provide legal counsel to indigent persons charged with serious offenses and loss of liberty offenses, when the public defender has a conflict of interest.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The amount for the expenditure is budgeted and available within the Court's 2020 general fund budget. **This ordinance is contingent on the passage of the 2020 operating budget, Ordinance 2925-2019.**

\$50,000.00 was spent in 2019.

\$50,000.00 was spent in 2018.

To authorize the Franklin County Municipal Court Judges, through the Administrative and Presiding Judge, to contract with the Franklin County Commissioners to provide legal counsel to indigent defendants in the Franklin County Municipal Court when the public defender has a conflict of interest; to authorize the expenditure of up to an amount not to exceed \$50,000.00 from the Court's general fund. (\$50,000.00)

**WHEREAS**, the Court has a responsibility to provide legal representation to indigent persons through an appointed counsel system when the public defender has a conflict of interest; and

**WHEREAS**, funds in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 is budgeted for the Franklin County Municipal Court Judges for this contractual agreement; and

**WHEREAS**, it has become necessary in the usual daily operation of the Franklin County Municipal Court Judges to authorize a contract and associated expenditures with the Franklin County Commissioners in order to assure the continuity of legal services to indigent persons when the public defender has a conflict of interest, thereby preserving the public peace, property, health, safety, and welfare; **Now, Therefore**

### **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:**

**SECTION 1.** That the Administrative and Presiding Judge of the Franklin County Municipal Court be and hereby is authorized to contract with the Franklin County Commissioners to provide legal counsel to indigent persons in the Franklin County Municipal Court when the public defender has a conflict of interest, in accordance with the following:

A. That the contract specifies that the Franklin County Commissioners agree to promptly pay the City of Columbus any reimbursement for the amount expended by this contract that the county receives pursuant to Section 120.33 (D) of the

Ohio Revised Code.

B. That the contract specifies that the Municipal Court Judges may elect to have the City of Columbus tender up to three installment payments to the Franklin County Commissioners. This measure will potentially alleviate the situation, when it exists, of having large sums of money remaining in the contract at its ultimate conclusion.

C. That the contract specifies that, if and when a sufficient surplus amount exists in the contract at the normal fiscal closing date in December of 2020, that upon the Franklin County Auditor's Office re-opening of their records in January of 2021, payment of legal fees to legal counsel continue until exhaustion of these funds or until receipt of the 2021 contract amount.

**SECTION 2.** That up to an amount not to exceed the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00) be and hereby is authorized to be expended from the Franklin County Municipal Court, to pay the cost thereof according to the account codes in the attachment.

**SECTION 3.** That this ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.