



**COMMISSIONERS COURT  
COMMUNICATION**

COURT ORDER NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

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DATE: 11/5/2024

**SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF AN ATTORNEY EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT ENGAGING THE FIRM OF POPE, HARDWICKE, CHRISTIE, SCHELL, KELLY & TAPLETT, L.L.P. AS OUTSIDE COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENSE OF TARRANT COUNTY EMPLOYEE STEVEN GIL IN A LAWSUIT ENTITLED ANTHONY R. JOHNSON, SR., ET AL. V. TARRANT COUNTY, TEXAS, ET AL., ACTION NO. 4:24-CV-686-O**

**COMMISSIONERS COURT ACTION REQUESTED**

It is requested that the Commissioners Court consider an Attorney Employment Agreement engaging the firm of Pope, Hardwicke, Christie, Schell, Kelly & Taplett, L.L.P as outside counsel for the defense of Tarrant County employee Steven Gil in a lawsuit entitled Anthony R. Johnson, Sr., et al. v. Tarrant County, Texas, et al., Action No. 4:24-cv-686-O.

**BACKGROUND**

Tarrant County employee Steven Gil has been sued in an inmate civil rights case. Pursuant to Local Government Code Section 157.901, it is necessary for outside counsel to be employed to represent this individual in the lawsuit entitled Anthony R. Johnson, Sr., et al. v. Tarrant County, Texas, et al., Civil Action No. 4:24-cv-686-O in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas, Fort Worth Division.

With approval, Tarrant County employee Steven Gil will have representation in this federal suit.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The fiscal impact associated with this action is unknown at this time, however, the law firm is to use all reasonable means to resolve this matter at a total cost of no more than \$30,000.00 per individual, subject to further court approval. Funding is available in account 61500-2025 Self-Insurance Fund 191200000 Self Insurance /585071 Litigation Expense.

SUBMITTED BY	Criminal District Attorney	PREPARED BY:	Polly Maxwell
		APPROVED BY:	Mark Kratovil

POPE, HARDWICKE  
CHRISTIE, SCHELL, KELLY & TAPLETT, L.L.P.  
ATTORNEYS

Established 1952  
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ROBERT E. HARDWICKE  
(1889 - 1970)

ALEX POPE, JR.  
(1913 - 1988)

ROBERT E. HARDWICKE, JR.  
(1917 - 1991)

MICHAEL L. ATCHLEY  
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October 15, 2024

Commissioners Court  
Administration Building  
100 E. Weatherford, Room 502-A  
Fort Worth, Texas 76196-0609

Re: **ATTORNEY EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT – RE: SERGEANT STEVEN GIL**  
*Anthony R. Johnson, Sr., et al. v. Tarrant County, Texas, et al.*, Civil Action  
No. 4:24-cv-686-O, in the United States District Court for the Northern  
District of Texas, Fort Worth Division

Dear Judge O'Hare:

Thank you for considering me to serve as outside conflicts counsel in this matter. Specifically, I am writing to confirm that POPE, HARDWICKE, CHRISTIE, SCHELL, KELLY & TAPLETT, LLP (the "Law Firm") and Tarrant County, Texas (the "County") agree that the Law Firm will, upon approval by the Tarrant County Commissioners, represent Tarrant County officer Steven Gil (the "Client") in his individual capacity with regard to the above matter.

**Scope of Engagement:** The Law Firm is authorized to represent the Client in this matter and to appear on the Client's behalf before courts, arbitration panels, or similar authorities as may be required to represent the Client. Except as may be limited by the attorney-client privilege, the Law Firm agrees to keep the County apprised of the status of the case as the case progresses.

**Services and Rates:** The legal services to be provided by the Law Firm include, but are not limited to, conferences (both in person and by telephone), correspondence, research, analysis, investigation, preparation of legal documents, meetings with parties, witnesses, and other necessary persons, negotiations, written discovery and depositions, trial and hearing preparation, appearances in court and in mediation, and all related work required to represent the Client properly in this matter.

The rates for legal services provided by the Law Firm are as follows:

**\$300.00 per hour** for attorney services rendered by Law Firm. Additional expenses as may be required to represent the Client may be charged to the County, including but not limited to court costs, filing fees, postage and copy charges, courier fees, costs to create exhibits, expert and consultant fees, and other reasonably necessary items. **The Law Firm, however, will not hire outside experts or consultants, will not incur travel expenses, and will not incur any other substantial expense without the County's prior approval.** The Law Firm will work with counsel for the County in this lawsuit pursuant to joint defense and common interest privileges to the extent ethically possible in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to reduce costs. The County understands that the Law Firm's ethical duty of loyalty is solely to the Client.

The Law Firm agrees to keep track of time and to submit redacted bills on a periodic basis for payment. Time will be billed in 1/10th increments. In order to meet any existing deadlines and in order to preserve and protect the Client's interests, the Law Firm may have needed to perform certain necessary services prior to formal approval of this contract and may bill for such services.

The Law Firm shall use all reasonable means, including the utilization of dispositive pretrial motions, as appropriate, to resolve this matter as quickly and inexpensively as reasonably and ethically possible. The Law Firm cannot guarantee specific outcomes or guarantee the amount of time that will ultimately be needed to adequately represent the Client, as much depends on actions taken by the opposing party, the Court, and other matters beyond my control, and I have not yet had an opportunity to fully review all relevant materials or formulate any sort of a reliable budget. The Law Firm will endeavor, however, to complete this assignment for less than \$30,000.00 if possible. In the event the billing reaches \$30,000.00, the Law Firm shall brief the Tarrant County Commissioners Court on the budget and request an additional reasonable amount to complete the matter.

**NOTICE TO CLIENTS:** The State Bar of Texas investigates and prosecutes professional misconduct committed by Texas attorneys. Although not every complaint against or dispute with a lawyer involves professional misconduct, the State Bar's Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel will provide you with information about how to file a complaint. Please call 1-800-932-1900 toll-free for more information.

Sincerely,

POPE, HARDWICKE, CHRISTIE,  
SCHELL, KELLY & TAPLETT, LLP

By:   
Michael L. Atchley

AGREED:   
Sergeant Steven Gil

SIGNED AND EXECUTED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

COUNTY OF TARRANT  
STATE OF TEXAS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tim O'Hare  
County Judge

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CERTIFICATION OF  
AVAILABLE FUNDS: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Criminal District Attorney's Office\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tarrant County Auditor

\*By law, the Criminal District Attorney's Office may only approve contracts for its clients. We reviewed this document as to form from our client's legal perspective. Other parties may not rely on this approval. Instead those parties should seek contract review from independent counsel.