



## Merit System Council

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**Andrew Johnson Office Building  
912 South Gay Street, Suite L-100  
Knoxville, Tennessee 37902  
(865) 215-4446      FAX (865) 215-4448**

Gina Oster, Chairperson  
Jim Wright Jr., Vice Chairperson  
Jim Jennings, Council Member  
John Marshall, Alternate Council Member

Paula M. Taylor  
Executive Director

**MERIT SYSTEM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
Martha Dooley Grievance Hearing  
April 28, 2022, City/County Building Room 575, 400 W. Main Street**

Present at this hearing representing the Merit Council: Gina Oster, Chairperson; Jim Jennings, Council Member; Jim Wright, Jr., Council Member; John Marshall, Alternate Council Member; Chancellor Sharon Bell, Hearing Officer; Attorney Gary Prince, Knox County Sheriff's Office Legal Counsel; Attorney John Valliant, Legal Counsel for Martha Dooley; Myers Morton, Knox County Law Director.

Chancellor Bell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Chancellor Bell discussed the "Motion Challenging Gina Oster As Conflicted Merit Board Member for the Hearing On April 28, 2022" filed by Attorney Gary Prince. After hearing from Attorney Gary Prince and Attorney John Valliant regarding the motion, Chancellor Bell stated that her finding was that Mrs. Oster was not an employee of the Sheriff's Office.

Chancellor Bell recognized Jim Wright Jr. to answer whether he believes that Mrs. Oster is an employee of the Knox County Sheriff's Office, Mr. Wright stated that Mrs. Oster was not an employee. Chancellor Bell then recognized Jim Jennings to answer whether he believes that Mrs. Oster is an employee of the Knox County Sheriff's Office, Mr. Jennings stated that Mrs. Oster was not an employee.

Chancellor Bell then recognized Mr. Jennings to announce his decision in the Dooley hearing, Mr. Jennings stated that he found that the Sheriff did not comply with procedures established by the Merit System Council and that the dismissal occurred for political reasons. He stated that the remedy was to return the car and to pay modest legal fees. Chancellor Bell then recognized Chairperson Oster who announced that her decision was that the Sheriff did not comply with procedures established by the Merit System Council and that the dismissal occurred for political reasons. She stated that the remedy was to return the car and pay reasonable legal fees. Chancellor Bell then recognized Mr. Wright who announced that his decision was that the Sheriff was arbitrary in the interpretation of cause and the remedy would be to return the car and gas card.

There being no other business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:13 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Approved:

Paula M. Taylor  
Executive Director

Gina Oster  
Chairperson