

September 21, 2010

Charleston / Nitro municipal judge to resign

By [Jim Balow](#)

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Shawn Taylor, Charleston's municipal judge since 2005, said Tuesday he is resigning at the end of October to devote more time to his law practice.

Taylor, 44, is also resigning as Nitro's city judge effective Oct. 29.

Charleston Mayor Danny Jones said he will ask City Council to appoint Anne Charnock, Taylor's court clerk, to fill out the remaining eight months of Taylor's term as judge.

Jones appointed Taylor as interim municipal judge in March 2005 when Judge Carol Bloom resigned. Taylor won a four-year term as judge in 2007, running unopposed.

"What really motivated me to resign, that's a part-time position [as judge], and I have a full-time job practicing law with Farmer, Cline & Campbell," Taylor said Tuesday. "My law practice is limited to Social Security disability claims. My practice has grown so much the federal disability hearings overlap with my court dates.

"For example, tomorrow I have five Social Security disability cases. This month there were 12 court dates, and I found that because of my Social Security hearings, I had to miss six."

When choosing between a hearing before a federal judge or a city court date, the federal judge won, he said. "For Municipal Court, the positive thing is there is a provision that says the court clerk can sit in." Charnock filled in whenever he missed court, he said.

"I was elected to do the job as Charleston municipal judge. I didn't believe it was fair to continue. I've been contemplating this for several months. I informed Mayor Jones, informally, about a month ago.

"Because of the filing period coming up in November, rather than there be confusion about whether I was running, I decided to announce this now."

Taylor said he notified Nitro Mayor Rusty Casto last week about his plans to resign from the judgeship there.

For several years, Taylor was city judge in three area communities. He said he was judge in St. Albans from 2006 to 2008, when he was invited to join Farmer, Cline & Campbell.

"This is with mixed emotions. I love that job as municipal judge," he said.

Jones said he has known for several days that Taylor was resigning. "I just think he's too busy. Shawn's very good at what he does. Fortunately for him he's doing very well, but he's got a family. That's what he needs to focus on."

Charnock said she was surprised when Taylor told her he was resigning, but said serving as judge has been a longtime goal of hers.

Charnock's father, John, died this year after a long career as a lawyer, city judge and city attorney under mayors Mike Roark and Chuck Gardner.

"Dad was judge from 1967 to 1975 and was the clerk for eight years before that, so I would be following in his footsteps, assuming I'm appointed," she said.

"I always wanted to practice law with my father. Dad and I were Charnock and Charnock for 26 years. I still have my law practice. I thought it would be neat to be municipal judge."

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