

GRATIOT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
65B DISTRICT COURT MAGISTRATE APPOINTMENT**

**RESOLUTION NUMBER 26-439
ADOPTED JULY 21, 2026**

WHEREAS 65B District Court continues to prepare for anticipated staffing changes while ensuring the Court maintains an adequate number of magistrates to appropriately share on-call responsibilities; and

WHEREAS Samantha Thompson possesses the experience, education, ethics, and demeanor necessary to professionally execute the responsibilities of a District Court Magistrate while continuing to serve in her current capacity; and

WHEREAS Ms. Thompson's prior judicial experience, combined with her knowledge of court operations and commitment to public service, demonstrates her ability to effectively fulfill the responsibilities of a District Court Magistrate; and

WHEREAS immediate appointment is requested to allow Ms. Thompson to continue completing the educational and training requirements required of all magistrates appointed within the State of Michigan and to ensure she is prepared to assume the responsibilities of the position when it becomes available; and

WHEREAS on July 2, 2026, the State Court Administrative Office concurred with the Court's recommendation and approved Local Administrative Order LAO 2026-02, Appointment of Non-Attorney Magistrate Samantha Thompson.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gratiot Board of Commissioners does hereby concur and approves appointment of Samantha Thompson to the position of District Court Magistrate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board also approves the filing of a \$50,000 Public Official/Performance Bond with the Gratiot County Treasurer

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Ms. Thompson shall not receive compensation as a Magistrate until one of the current Magistrates vacates the position, which is anticipated to occur on December 31, 2026.

The resolution set forth was offered by Commissioner _____ and supported by Commissioner _____.

A majority of the members-elect having approved such resolution deems the resolution APPROVED.

STATE OF MICHIGAN)
)ss
COUNTY OF GRATIOT)

I certify that the foregoing is a true and accurate copy of the resolution adopted by the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners, that such resolution was duly adopted at a regular meeting held on the 21st day of July 2026, and that notice of such meeting was given as required by law.

Angie Thompson, Gratiot County Clerk

65B District Court – Gratiot County

MEMORANDUM

To: Gratiot County Board of Commissioners
From: Charles Perkins, 65B District Court Administrator
Date: 07/10/2026
Re: Samantha Thompson, District Court Magistrate Appointment

District Court continues to prepare for anticipated staffing changes while ensuring the Court maintains an adequate number of magistrates to appropriately share on-call responsibilities

Chief Judge Sullivan, Judge McDonald, presumptive Judge-Elect Bever, and I have determined that Samantha Thompson possesses the experience, education, ethics, and demeanor necessary to professionally execute the responsibilities of a District Court Magistrate while continuing to serve in her current capacity as Judge McDonald's Executive Judicial Assistant.

Samantha Thompson was previously appointed as a Magistrate with the 92nd District Court serving Luce and Mackinac Counties. Her prior judicial experience, combined with her knowledge of court operations and commitment to public service, demonstrates her ability to effectively fulfill the responsibilities of a District Court Magistrate.

On July 2, 2026, the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO) concurred with District Court's recommendation and approved Local Administrative Order LAO 2026-02, Appointment of Non-Attorney Magistrate Samantha Thompson. A copy of the approved Local Administrative Order is attached for the Board's review.

In addition to SCAO approval, the appointment process for a magistrate requires approval by the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners and the filing of a \$50,000 Public Official/Performance Bond with the Gratiot County Treasurer.

Samantha Thompson will not receive compensation as a Magistrate until one of the current magistrates vacates the position, which is anticipated to occur on December 31, 2026. Immediate appointment is requested to allow Samantha to continue completing the educational and training requirements required of all magistrates appointed within the State of Michigan and to ensure she is prepared to assume the responsibilities of the position when it becomes available.

District Court respectfully requests that the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners approve the appointment of Samantha Thompson as a Magistrate of the 65B District Court and authorize the filing of a \$50,000 Public Official/Performance Bond for Samantha Thompson with the Gratiot County Treasurer.

Approved by: _____, Gratiot County Board of Commissioners.

State of Michigan
65B JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
Gratiot County



Stewart D. McDonald
District Court Judge P30191

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Administrative Order 2026 -

APPOINTMENT OF NON-ATTORNEY MAGISTRATE

In accordance with Administrative Order 2009-6, effective January 1, 2010, and MCL 600.8501 and 600.8503, and upon approval of the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO),

IT IS ORDERED:

1. The judges of the 65B District Court appoint Samantha Thompson as non-attorney magistrate with the approval of the Gratiot County Board of Commissioners and the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO).
2. Samantha Thompson:
 - a. Is a registered elector in the County of Gratiot.
 - b. Will serve at the pleasure of the judges of the district court.
 - c. Will take the constitutional oath of office.
 - d. Will file a performance bond in the amount of \$50,000 with the Gratiot County treasurer and chief judge.
 - e. Will complete a training course in traffic law adjudication and sanctions given by SCAO.
3. Magistrate Samantha Thompson is authorized to perform the following duties:
 - a. Arraign and sentence upon pleas of guilty or nolo contendere for violations of the following acts or parts of acts, or local ordinances substantially corresponding to the following acts or parts of acts, if the maximum permissible punishment does not exceed 90 days in jail, a fine, or both [MCL 600.8511(a)]:
 - 1) SPORT FISHING, part 487 of the natural resources and environmental protection act, MCL 324.48701 to 324.48740;
 - 2) WILDLIFE CONSERVATION, part 401 of the natural resources and environmental protection act, MCL 324.40101 to 324.40120;

- 3) MARINE SAFETY, part 801 of the natural resources and environmental protection act, MCL 324.80101 to 324.80199;
 - 4) MOTOR CARRIER ACT, MCL 475.1 to 479.43;
 - 5) MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ACT, MCL 480.11 to 480.25;
 - 6) DOG LAW OF 1919, MCL 287.261 to 287.290;
 - 7) MICHIGAN LIQUOR CONTROL CODE, MCL 436.1703 and 436.1915;
 - 8) GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES, part 5 of the natural resources and environmental protection act, MCL 324.501 to 324.513;
 - 9) LITTERING, part 89 of the natural resources and environmental protection act, MCL 324.8901 to 324.8907;
 - 10) HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSES, part 435 of the natural resources and environmental protection act, MCL 324.43501 to 324.43561;
 - 11) RECREATIONAL TRESPASS, part 731 of the natural resources and environmental protection act, MCL 324.73101 to 324.73111; and
 - 12) TRESPASS, MCL 750.546 to 750.552c.
- b. Arraign and sentence upon pleas of guilty or nolo contendere for violations of the Michigan vehicle code, MCL 257.1 to 257.923, or local ordinances substantially corresponding to provisions of the Michigan vehicle code, if the maximum permissible punishment does not exceed 93 days in jail, a fine, or both, except for violations of MCL 257.625 and 257.625m or local ordinances substantially corresponding to these provisions. However, the magistrate is authorized to arraign defendants and set bond with regard to violations of MCL 257.625 and 257.625m or local ordinances substantially corresponding to these provisions. [MCL 600.8511(b)]
- c. Arraign and sentence upon pleas of guilty or nolo contendere for violations of the following acts, if the maximum permissible punishment does not exceed 93 days in jail, a fine, or both [MCL 600.8511(c)]:
- 1) OFF-ROAD RECREATION VEHICLES, part 811 of the natural resources and environmental protection act, MCL 324.81101 to 324.81150 or local ordinances substantially corresponding to these provisions, except for violations of MCL 324.81134 and 324.81135. However, the magistrate is authorized to arraign defendants and set bond with regard to violations of MCL 324.81134 and 324.81135; and

- 2) SNOWMOBILE, part 821 of the natural resources and environmental protection act, MCL 324.82101 to 324.82160 or local ordinances substantially corresponding to these provisions, except for violations of MCL 324.82128 and 324.82129. However, the magistrate is authorized to arraign defendants and set bond with regard to violations of MCL 324.82128 and 324.82129.
- d. Accept pleas of guilty or nolo contendere and impose sentence for misdemeanor or ordinance violations punishable by fines and that are not punishable by imprisonment by the terms of the statutes or ordinances creating the offenses. [MCL 600.8512a(b)]
 - e. Issue search warrants under general authorization. [MCL 600.8511(g); MCL 780.651(4)]
 - f. Issue warrants for the arrest of persons or summons to appear in court upon written authorization of the prosecuting or municipal attorney and set pre-arraignment bonds. Written authorization is not required for vehicle law or ordinance violations within the jurisdiction of the magistrate, if a police officer issued a traffic citation in accordance with MCL 257.728 and the defendant failed to appear. [MCL 600.8511(e); MCL 764.1(1)]
 - g. Fix bail and accept bond in all criminal cases. [MCL 600.8511(f)] Set bond and order the defendant to appear before the circuit court in the county for a hearing when the person has been arrested for violation of a personal protection order and the circuit court judge will not be present or available within 24 hours after an arrest. [MCL 764.15b(3)]
 - h. Conduct first appearances of defendants before the court in all criminal and ordinance violation cases, including acceptance of any written demand or waiver of preliminary examination and acceptance of any written demand or waiver of jury trial. However, the magistrate may only accept pleas of guilty or nolo contendere expressly authorized under MCL 600.8511 or MCL 600.8512a. [MCL 600.8513(1)]
 - i. Conduct arraignments for a contempt of court violation or a probation violation, if the violation arises directly out of a criminal case for which the magistrate has authority to conduct the first appearance and involves the same defendant, and if the maximum permissible penalty for the offense does not exceed one year in jail, a fine, or both. The magistrate may accept a plea and set bond, but may not conduct a contempt or probation violation hearing or sentencing. [MCL 600.8511(d)]
 - j. Hear and preside over civil infraction admissions, admissions with explanation, motions to set aside default or withdraw admissions, and conduct informal

hearings in civil infraction actions, and impose all sanctions allowed by statute, under the authority of MCL 600.8512a(a), MCL 600.8512 (traffic, parking, recreational marihuana, and medical marihuana civil infractions), 600.8719 (municipal civil infractions), MCL 600.8819 (state civil infractions), and other applicable sections of these acts. Informal hearings involving traffic or parking violations shall not be conducted until the magistrate has successfully completed the SCAO training course in traffic law adjudication and sanctions.

- k. Approve and grant petitions for the appointment of attorneys to represent indigent defendants accused of misdemeanor offenses punishable by imprisonment for not more than one year or ordinance violations punishable by imprisonment. [MCL 600.8513(2)(a)]
- l. Suspend payment of court fees by indigent parties in civil, small claims, or summary proceedings actions, until after judgment has been entered. [MCL 600.8513(2)(b)]
- m. Upon written authorization of the prosecuting or city attorney, sign nolle prosequis, dismissing any criminal or ordinance violation cases over which the district court has jurisdiction and release any bail bonds or bail bond deposits to the persons entitled to them, unless the preliminary examination or trial has commenced or a plea of guilty or nolo contendere has been accepted by a district court judge. [MCL 600.8513(2)(c)]
- n. Execute and issue process to effectuate authority expressly granted by law to district court magistrates. [MCL 600.8513(2)(d)]
- o. Administer oaths and affirmations and take acknowledgments in writing. [MCL 600.8317]
- p. Perform marriages and charge a fee of \$10 which shall be deposited with the court for transmission to the funding unit at the end of each month. [MCL 600.8316]
- q. Issue summonses to appear and show cause why the animal should not be destroyed, issue other preliminary orders, conduct hearings, and make necessary dispositive orders, regarding animals alleged to be dangerous and to have caused serious injury or death to a person or a dog. [MCL 287.322]
- r. Conduct probable cause conferences and all matters allowed at the probable cause conference, except for the taking of pleas and sentencings, under MCL 766.4. [MCL 600.8511(h)]
- s. Issue a suppression order for a search warrant affidavit. [MCL 780.651(9)]
- t. Issue a suppression order for a search warrant tabulation until the final disposition of the case unless otherwise ordered. [MCL 780.655(2)]

- u. Hear, preside over, and issue orders regarding abandoned vehicles filed under MCL 257.252a, 257.252b, and MCL 257.252d. [MCL 257.252f]
- 4. Magistrate Samantha Thompson is authorized to serve as magistrate in Gratiot County and Clinton County.

Effective Date:

Dated: June 18, 2026



Lisa Sullivan, Chief Judge

Dated: JUNE 30, 2026



Stewart D. McDonald, 65B District Judge