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FEATURED TOP STORY

New City Attorney works for community

By Peter Wilson pwilson@news-graphic.com
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Emilee Buttrum was appointed city attorney in November.

News-Graphic Photo By Peter Wilson

Georgetown's new city attorney is a Kentucky native, who has worked for both the Covington and Lexington governments. Emilee Buttrum's focus in her new role has been continuous improvement.

"Keywords are continuous improvement, where I am new, stepping into things, just identifying within our capacity and our resources that we have areas where we can improve how we are doing things," Buttrum said.

The role of city attorney focuses on preparing legislation and reviewing contracts.

"As in-house counsel, my focus is moreso on contract drafting review, preparing legislation, research, not focused on litigation, we rely on outside counsel for that," Buttrum said.

A few ordinances have recently been approved by city council amending or replacing unwieldy or outdated ones. The approach to those laws is case-by-case.

“It depends on what the subject is, but we take a look at it, when it was passed, analyze and look at whether it is state law or within our home-rule authority. . . evaluate what has changed in the community since it was initially adopted, and then just evaluate based on the needs . . . making sure that we do so in a way that best fits the Georgetown community,” Buttrum.

Buttrum’s first job after graduating from Western Kentucky University was in economic development with the Chamber of Commerce in her hometown, Bowling Green.

“With that, and some of the work that I did on my own time, I worked a lot with the community,” Buttrum said, “I was working to get the players to the table, and connecting with the state to get incentives.”

In her first year at law school at Northern Kentucky University, Buttrum found a job as a law clerk for the city of Covington, and worked there all through school before taking an attorney job when she graduated. Buttrum is glad she discovered a niche she enjoys. Getting to work on the other, government side of her earlier business development work has been eye-opening, she said.

“I think I’m pretty good at this, and I still like it. . . I’ve been very fortunate to have this kind of niche open, and to be able to continue down that path. . . I really like my job,” Buttrum said, “There is something really cool about driving down the street and seeing that project that you have been working on, see the groundbreaking, or see it come together.”

Georgetown’s rapid growth presents “unique challenges,” Buttrum said.

“Where it is growing so fast, there has been, and there will be new challenges that they haven’t faced, and the opportunity to be a part of that, and a part of the solution is really exciting for me,” Buttrum said.

For Buttrum, the community comes first.

“Everything that comes across my desk, the ultimate question is, is this in the best interest of the city, which is the community, it’s not the city government,” Buttrum said.

Buttrum was appointed City Attorney in November 2023.

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