
Webinar – JPAAC Presents:
Justice of the Peace Ontario –
Are You Right for this Role?

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT

Webinar – JPAAC Presents: Justice of the Peace Ontario – Are You Right for this Role?

[0:00:09] [Soft instrumental music plays.]

[0:01:33]

Moderator: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to today's event, Justice of the Peace Ontario. Are you right for this role?

I'm Lee McCormack, Producer from the Events and Multimedia Services team, and thank you for joining us today wherever you may be in the province of Ontario.

Housekeeping

[0:01:48]

Moderator: Before we proceed, I'd just like to advise you on the Teams live event platform we were using here today. All attendee microphones and cameras are disabled for this event. Closed captioning is available. It can be accessed by hovering your cursor over the video stream and then selecting the closed captioning button to toggle on or off. For French translation, select the gear icon next to the closed captioning button and this will give you your language options. Captions will begin to appear at the bottom of the window.

And we will be using Slido today to facilitate some engagement.

Slido

[0:02:22]

Moderator: And you can join at slido.com on a separate browser or by scanning the QR code you see on the screen right now. And you can join as a participant with code #JPAAC 25.

Housekeeping

[0:02:38]

Moderator: The presentation we have today has been pre-recorded and will be followed by a live Q and A with JPAAC's Chair Nicholas Charitsis, along with Senior Advisory Justice of the Peace Lauren Scully, Core JPAAC member, and Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Louise Logue, Core JPAAC member.

In today's event including the Q and A segment will be recorded and posted along with the transcripts to the JPAAC website.

Right now I'm pleased to present the 2025 JPAAC webinar: *Justice of the Peace Ontario: Are You Right for this Role?*

Housekeeping

[0:03:24]

Nicholas Charitsis: It really is my pleasure to be presenting again before you on our webinar, Justice of the Peace Appointments Advisory Committee, *Are You Right for this Role?*

Introductions

[0:03:37]

Nicholas Charitsis: So this year I've had the opportunity to have done well over 300 interviews across the province and now as chair of the committee I do have the opportunity to present to you in this webinar with a little bit more experience in the role. I was first appointed to Justice of the Peace Appointments Advisory Committee in 2022 where I served as a regional community member. I then became lead of the Region and later appointed Chair in May of 2024.

I am a lawyer by trade that was called to the Bar at Osgoode Hall Law School, and I earned my Bachelor of Business Administration from York University Schulich School of Business in 1999.

I've worked as a per diem assistant Crown attorney, and I've been practicing criminal defense at my own firm, Charitsis Law, since 2006.

I'd now like to introduce my co-host Her Worship, Libby Garg. [Hereafter referred to as Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Garg.]

[0:04:40]

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Garg: Thank you very much, Nick, and welcome everybody.

As Nick mentioned, I am Libby Garg, and I was called to the Ontario Bar in 2013 and practiced criminal law prior to transitioning into business.

Prior to my appointment, I was an entrepreneur in the restaurant and technology sectors and I'm proudly Syilx and a member of the Okanagan Indian Band from British Columbia, although I've made my professional life in Ontario.

I'm a graduate of the University of British Columbia's law school and earned a bachelor's degree in commerce and economics as well as a law degree from the same school.

I've served on numerous committees in my role as Justice of the Peace, including of course the JPAAC committee as a senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace, the Gladue Bail Operations Committee, Gladue Youth Subcommittee, as well as the Indigenous Initiatives Advisory Committee.

Thank you very much. And next slide.

Agenda

[0:05:32]

Nicholas Charitsis: Thank you and today's agenda will consist of our introductions which we've just completed. Her Worship Garg will then start us off with a land acknowledgement. We'll get into JPAAC's mandate and manner of operating. We'll talk a little bit more about who we are as a committee. We'll discuss the role of justice of the peace in the province of Ontario. And then we're going to ask, are you right for this role? And it's important that you go back, and you watch our webinar from the 2024 process, which really is an introductory webinar towards this one and they kind of both go into together.

We'll then look a before you apply what you should be considering. We're going to discuss some important application tips, the selection criteria that JPAAC uses. I'm going to point out that our committee has changed them for the new process. We've had an opportunity to do an overhaul of the criteria and consolidate them from 22 down to just 11.

Then we're going to talk about if you are selected for an interview, what you should be doing and then discuss preparing for an interview, giving you some tips with respect to that, and finally, we'll end off with why you should apply for this position.

Next slide, please.

Land Acknowledgement

[0:06:56]

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Garg: Thank you and starting off with a land acknowledgement.

Today we're gathered for this webinar with individuals anticipated to join us from all across the province of Ontario. Ontario has the largest Indigenous population of any other province in Canada. There are approximately 130 First Nations in Ontario and growing Inuit and Métis populations. Ontario is covered by 46 treaties and other agreements.

Acknowledging the land and traditional territory is a practice of Indigenous people and can be helpful in learning about the land and area that we're on. Canada's history didn't begin with the arrival of the settlers or the creation of Canada or Ontario. It recognizes that the history of first peoples in this continent began much earlier.

I am pleased today to co-host this meeting from the City of Hamilton on the traditional territories the Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabeg peoples. This territory is covered by the upper Canada treaties and adjacent to Haldimand Treaty Territory.

We are thankful to be able to work and live in these territories and we're thankful to the indigenous peoples who have cared for these territories since time immemorial.

Thank you. Next slide.

JPAAC's Mandate

[0:08:09]

Nicholas Charitsis: And thank you, Your Worship Garg, what a great way to start off the webinar, a very respectful way and we do appreciate your comments.

Now just to start off with JPAAC's mandate, our committee is born from the *Justices of the Peace Act* and that *Act* specifies what our mandate is.

So, three things we really are responsible for as a committee. First is to classify candidates for appointment as justice of the peace. The second is to report on those classifications to the Attorney General, and the third is to provide advice to the Attorney General respecting the process. And as I discussed a little bit earlier in the webinar, we have made some changes to the process, and we are constantly trying to renew and update it so that we are allowing for the most inclusive and the best possible process for individuals who are interested in applying.

Justices of the peace are appointed by the Lieutenant governor in Council on the recommendation of the Attorney General. So, it's important to note that JPAAC does not appoint justices of the peace. We are simply advising the Attorney General and making recommendations to the Attorney General with respect to appointments.

Next slide, please.

JPAAC's Manner of Operating

[0:09:27]

Nicholas Charitsis: So, our manner of operating JPAAC, the framework of JPAAC again is set out in the *Justices of the Peace Act* and the key functions include the following.

So, at the request of the Attorney General, we are to advertise for applications for vacant Justices of the Peace positions across the province. We are then to review and evaluate all the applications that are received in response to the advertisement, including interviewing all of the candidates. Of the candidates who are successful in the process when conducting the review and evaluation process, it's done with respect to some criteria.

We look and assess for the candidates work experience, their leadership, their community awareness and personal characteristics. We also recognize the desirability of reflecting the diversity of Ontario society in the appointments of justices of peace. For us, it's very important that the bench is a reflection of the people that it serves and that's why we're looking deep into the various communities across the province to find individuals who are reflective of those communities.

We really classify candidates into 3 categories. It's either highly recommended, recommended or not recommended and then we provide the list of classified candidates to the Attorney General with brief supporting reasons for the candidates that are classified as either highly recommended or recommended.

Next slide, please.

Who We Are

[0:10:59]

Nicholas Charitsis: So, who we are when we are a full committee, there are 38 members that are composed of the Core Committee and seven Regional Committees.

So the Core Committee consists of myself, the chair, the Honourable Justice Paul Renwick, a judge of the Ontario Court of Justice and the Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace. In this process, the acting SIJP will be Her Worship Louise Logue.

So, there are 7 regions of JPAAC across the province. These regions mirror and reflect the courts of the Ontario Court of Justice. So, there's a Toronto region, the Central East region, Central West, the East, the West, the Northeast, and the Northwest. So, each of these regions are set up as almost microcosms of the core of JPAAC, meaning that each of these regions have a lead. The regions are also consisting of a Senior Regional Justice of the Peace and a member from the Law Society of Ontario, who are all appointed by the Attorney General

Next slide.

Role of a Justice of the Peace in Ontario

[0:12:14]

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Garg: In this next section, we'll go first over the role of a justice of the peace, following which we'll consider some characteristics that the committee is often looking for, for successful recommendations to the Attorney General for appointment.

For justice of the peace, we preside over both in court as well as office responsibilities under the *Criminal Code* and the *Provincial Offenses Act*.

Under the Criminal Code, we preside primarily over bail hearings and case management. A bail hearing is the stage following an individual's arrest and where their release is contested. The justice of the peace in this instance hears information about the case and weighs risk before making a decision about whether that individual is going to be released or detained. In case management, our function is judicial oversight to ensure parties are moving the matters through the court system as they need to. This often also involves dealing with self represented individuals or individuals prior to their council being retained and helps these individuals navigate the early stages of the justice system, such as seeking disclosure and making a legal aid application if that's something that's right for them.

In the office setting we preside over the intake office, where we consider search warrants, production orders, and peace bond applications, as well as Form 2 applications for orders for examination under the *Mental Health Act*.

In the prevention in the Provincial Offences context, we preside over the full range of matters that come before the court, from case management to resolution as well as trials. This means that we manage the case management function similar to the Criminal Court context. We also preside over guilty pleas for individuals who wish to take responsibility for the charges before the court and plead guilty as well as we sit as a triers of fact in a trial context, under the legislation of the *Provincial Offences Act*, which is broad and contains, for example, the *Highway Traffic Act*, *Liquor License Act*, *Environmental Protection Act* and *Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act*, to name only a few. In this instance, as a Trier of fact, we listen to the evidence, we make determinations about what happened in a matter, and then we apply those facts to the law to arrive at a decision. In this capacity, we're judicial independent officers and there's no legal education required and we'll go into a little bit more of the education that's provided for newly appointed justices of the peace as well as continuing education in further slides.

I'd like to slow down at these next few points because depending on life stage they may be relevant to applicants. It's important to note that a Justice of the Peace position is a full time and lifetime appointment with mandatory retirement at age 65. Following age 65, Justices of the Peace may continue to serve if they seek annual permission from the Chief Justice and are granted that permission to continue to serve in either a full-time capacity or as a per diem Justice of the Peace up until age 75.

The salary for justice of the peace is \$172,010.00 a year. And I'd also like to note that there are no base court location transfers for a minimum of five years following appointment, and even then, only if a base court vacancy meets the court's operational needs. In order to understand this is helpful to dig in a little bit to what exactly a base court is and the chair is going to go into a little bit more about this and the how to fill out an application or how to fill out the application section.

However, the base court is essentially where you'll be at pending for court the majority of the time and so in this instance it's important to think a lot about what it means for your lifestyle, the lifestyle perhaps of your children or any spouse or partner involved when you're making applications to various base courts. Because a justice at the peace position, as mentioned by the Chair, is appointed, and it is different from other perhaps employment contexts where an individual may apply to one location and seek a transfer fairly early on to another location. The justice of the peace position doesn't operate like that and decisions about where to post vacancies is an in-depth one and requires

individuals to be a part of that community, for minimum of five years, but the hope is that the individuals appointed to those communities continue to serve in that community capacity.

Next slide, please.

Role of a Justice of the Peace in Ontario (Cont'd)

[0:17:02]

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Garg: The role of justice of the peace includes extensive travel. This is important at the beginning of appointment as there's ten weeks of initial education and this is spread over approximately 10 months. This requires a newly appointed justice of the peace to be away from their home, for one to two weeks at a time during this initial education period for in-class, in-person training at often Toronto, but other places in Ontario as well. We also, following initial education, have ongoing education two times year at various places throughout Ontario and this again requires in person attendance at these various conferences, in addition to this, we also have other annual regional meetings and seminars throughout the year that can include travel as well.

The Justice of the Peace position isn't in person position which means depending on the professional background that you come from that may be quite a departure from what you're used to, if you're used to a remote position, perhaps. Justices of the peace work from their courthouse in person and are there to serve the public specifically where they're either communication or access to justice issues. It's important that the justice of the peace is able to be in person at that courthouse.

Also, as a justice of the peace, our schedules can change on a daily basis and often morning of, which means that being able to respond to flexibility in scheduling changes is important to be happy and fulfilled in this role. Sometimes you can get a call the morning of to say that whatever assignment you had anticipated attending that day is going to change and even the courthouse and it's important to be able to be flexible to change what you had anticipated to do on a short term basis or on a short notice basis and often during the morning of.

Next slide please.

Are You Right for This Role?

[0:19:10]

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Garg: When considering are you right for this role, the role of the justice of peace is fundamentally one of making decisions. So in order to demonstrate that, and the Chair will go into this a little bit more in the following slides, the committee is looking for applicants who have a demonstrated ability to make complex decision-making and exercise good judgement.

We're also looking for community connection and that goes back to the five year rule with respect to transfers of base courts. Community connection as a lay bench is very important. We're expected to be representatives of the community, in our capacity as a justice of the peace and understand the nuances of communities to which we apply.

We're also looking for applicants who have a demonstrated knowledge of this role, as mentioned this is a lifetime appointment and it's important that the committee is able to see that the applicants demonstrate that they've taken the time to really understand what the role entails. The parts of it that may be interesting to them, and the parts that may pose a challenge, and have really thought through those nuances and how they apply to the life of the applicant. In this respect, court observations provide the opportunity to truly get an appreciation for how justice of the peace proceeds during the day and what type of environment they work in, which is often fast paced but can also come with various challenges. The ability to learn and use new technologies is of course an asset as the court continues to embrace technology in response to access to justice and making sure that individuals are able to access our courts in a variety of ways. There's also the impact on a personal level that is important to consider. And there's in our role we often hear and witness trauma and there's psychological and physical demands as mentioned previously with the necessity to be flexible in scheduling and also to hear challenging testimony at times in a courtroom setting.

We're looking as well for a high level of achievement and leadership in employment and community service of course. Including high ethical standards and work and personal life, as well as cultural competency. That represents a community to which you're applying and an understanding of the diversity and issues specific to each of these communities.

Other characteristics that we look for are integrity, communication, interpersonal skills, compassion and empathy.

Thank you. Next slide.

Before You Apply

[0:21:59]

Nicholas Charitsis: And thank you, Your Worship, for that summary with respect to the role of the justice of the peace, I'm going to talk a little bit about what candidate should be thinking about before they apply. And in last year's webinar in 2024, we talked about whether this is a calling for an individual and is it a right calling for you. We've had the opportunity to look at our process and to give you a little bit of statistics. So in the last process there were over 1500 applicants for 50 vacancies. In fact, there were less than 50 justices of the peace that were appointed in the last process for various reasons, but that basically, if you do the general math, it's just less than 3% of applicants who will be appointed in any given process.

So it's important before you apply to ask yourself, is this role right for you and are you right for this role? Because it's very important that individuals who are applying for this understand that the committee is looking for a very specific type of person for this position if you refer to the JPAAC website for the application form and instructions, you'll start to get a better understanding as to what we're looking for as a committee and if you review the selection criteria, that's also posted on the JPAAC website. It's important that you find yourself and see yourself in each of those criteria, read the Frequently Asked Questions section of the application. These frequently asked questions are constantly being updated by our committee to give the public who is interested in applying the most information that they can receive with respect to the application process. And before you apply, I know we're in an AI world now, but please don't rely on rely on AI tools to answer any of the questions in your application, you're encouraged to check for correct spelling and grammar, and your responses should be original and will be evaluated as part of the application process itself.

Another important tip to consider before applying is review your social media content as it will be screened for your suitability for the role of the Justice of the Peace. This is a a lifetime appointment and we are looking for individuals that understand discretion.

Consider resolving any litigation or claims or any outstanding matters that might adversely affect reflect the Ontario Court of Justice should you be appointed. I can tell you that there are some great applicants that I've seen in this process who unfortunately have an outstanding small claims court claim and you know, they just are unlikely to be appointed by the Attorney General despite having a very strong application and a strong interview. So please clean that all up before you apply to become a Justice of the Peace.

Next slide please.

Important Application Tips

[0:25:05]

Nicholas Charitsis: So here are some important application tips and it's important to note that failure to complete all parts of the application or follow the instructions as written will result in your application being deficient and not reviewed. So as a committee, we have come up with a very strict set of guidelines with respect to what constitutes deficient application. Essentially, once your application is submitted, if it doesn't comply with the Criteria and the requests in the application, it simply won't be considered for any type of interview or going to the next stage in the process, so we ask you to complete all required sections of the form. Do not leave any sections blank.

Indicate the order of your base court location preferences by entering a number next to the court location to which you are applying, using the numbers one through six with one as your first choice.

Select at least one location and up to a maximum of 6. To ensure your preferences are considered, do not use anything more than - do not - number any of the base court locations once and only use numbers, letters or symbols such as check marks or Xs are not accepted.

So a base court location is what Her Worship Garg was explaining earlier is where a Justice of the Peace will be spending most of their time. So when you're looking at this application and you're looking at the vacancies, please consider that when you are Selecting #1 as your choice, that is the location that if you are successful enough to get an interview and to be recommended for appointment and ultimately appointed, that's where you will be for the for at least five years if you are appointed as justices of the peace.

So we also ask applicants to observe justices of the peace who are presiding in court. For more information on how to observe justices of the peace, please see the Access to Court Proceedings section of the JPAAC website. You need to observe criminal bail court, criminal case management, provincial offenses, early resolution court, and provincial offenses trial court for each vacancy or region to which you are applying. The reason we've put this in here as one of the important applications tips is that as a committee we've seen over and over again the best applicants and the best interviews of applicants are the ones who observe court regularly. In fact, even if you are selected

for an interview, the committee recommends that you continue with court observations because you'll get a better sense as to the role and the jurisdiction of a justice of peace in each of the courts that you potentially would be serving in.

We also ask that you provide the names of four referees. Two persons who have direct knowledge of your work experience and two persons who have an understanding of your participation in community service. Direct involvement would be preferred. Choose a mix of references who can speak to your different work and community service experiences. You must provide current contact information for all referees. Now just a little note on references. We've seen time and time again applications where individuals have only listed two or three app references in their application in past, the committees let that go and you in a previous process may have even received an interview by our committee and simply not putting 4 references in your application this time will likely result in no interview being granted to your application. Another thing about references is you don't need to find the most senior person in your organization. It's not impressive to the committee if you list the CEO of your company or the managing director of your organization as your reference if they have really no direct involvement in being able to comment on your work ethic, your leadership, and the other criteria that we're looking at. So please choose references that are most likely to be able to speak about your Criteria that we're looking for in the application process.

Next, complete the authorization and attestation by checking the box and typing your name and dating the last page of the application form. In fact, in the previous process from 2024, there were a few applicants that neglected to do so. Their application was stellar, their interview was amazing, and that alone could have resulted in an appointment not being made by the Attorney General. So please look at that last part of the application and don't neglect to do that.

Another thing we ask is as a committee is to follow the maximum word counts where integrated in the application. You have to recognize that our committee consists of lay people from across the province, some of which still have full time jobs. There are Regional Senior Justice of the Peace that are still in court or managing courts and we have over 1500 applications to review. If your application goes well over the word limit, you can imagine some of these people who are on our committee that work very hard and do their best to select the best individuals to be recommended justice of the peace we'll just stop reading our application if it's too long, so please do that. There's word

count and there's spell check. There's so many tools available to you when you're filling out the application and use them.

Finally, use JPAAC's current prescribed application form. So we've had in the past applicants that have used the previous years application for the current process and that simply will result in deficient application that will not be reviewed.

Next slide.

Selection Criteria

[0:31:28]

Nicholas Charitsis: So the next slide has to do with the new selection criteria that the JPAAC has streamlined for this process we've gone from 22 criteria down to 11. I'm not going to read them one by one. I'm going to direct all of our participants who are in the webinar to go to our website and to review these criteria. It's important that as an applicant that you see yourself in each of these criteria and you see how you can in fact explain to our committee how you see yourself in the criteria, but what you've done in order to demonstrate that these criteria apply to your application.

Next slide.

If You Are Selected for An Interview

[0:32:12]

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Garg: If you've been selected for an interview, congratulations. There are four areas that the JPAAC committee will be reaching out to you for. The first is education, the JPAAC committee will be looking for transcripts and proof of postsecondary education or equivalency program and in this instance, when you're putting together your application, it's helpful to start to gather these documents as a JPAAC committee will be reaching out to you for it.

The second is if you've applied to a designated bilingual vacancy. Vacancies that are indicated as bilingual require an assessment of a candidate's ability to communicate at a superior level in French. You will be required to perform a French proficiency language test if you've applied to a position that is designated as bilingual and again, the JPAAC committee will reach out to you in this regard.

Next slide, please.

If You Are Selected for An Interview (Cont'd)

[0:33:09]

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Garg: The third is if you've applied to a designated Indigenous vacancy. Priority will be given to applicants who identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit and have a meaningful, ongoing and demonstrated connection to an Indigenous community. In this instance the JPAAC committee will reach out to you to provide a government-recognized recognized documentation, such as a status card or an alternative documentation of kinship or community connection. However, we recognize that indigeneity in connection to one's Indigenous identity can be complex often due to systemic displacement or other historical factors, some individuals may not have a continuous connection to their communities or may face barriers to obtaining formal documentation. In this instance, you'll be offered the opportunity to provide an up to 400 words written description of your personal journey of reconnecting with your Indigenous identity. This statement should include, where possible, information about your First Nation or community affiliation and lived experience relevant to your Indigenous identity.

Next slide please.

If You Are Selected for an Interview (Cont'd)

[0:34:17]

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Garg: The final area where a committee may reach out to you is for security and disclosure checks. This is relevant if you've been a member of a professional organization or a regulatory body that in which case you'll be required to permit us to as a JPAAC committee to seek and be to have disclosure provided about any complaints, charges, insurance or compensation claims made against you.

Professions with organizations or associations can include, but aren't limited to, accountants, foresters, lawyers, military officers, nurses, paralegals, police officers, social workers, and teachers.

Again, JPAAC will provide you with the required security and disclosure authorization forms to complete after you've been selected for an interview, and JPAAC may also wish to obtain information from other sources. However, making all of these inquiries will make every effort to maintain confidentiality.

Next slide, please.

Preparing for the Interview

[0:35:24]

Nicholas Charitsis: OK, preparing for the interview. So if you've been fortunate enough to be selected for an interview, you'll be notified and the JPAAC administration will give you your date well in advance for the interview. It's important to note, is a professional panel interview we have seen from across the province various different types of individuals show up to our interview. Please do not show up in a t-shirt and sweatpants to the interview. This is a lifetime appointment. It's very important that you present yourself as being professional and someone who is really going to be presiding in court and command respect of the court. So the interview itself and the way you appear in the interview is very, very important.

The interviews will be conducted in person. In this process, it's a lot different than what you might have seen in the last several processes just before COVID and committee members may attend both in person and virtually so we're looking at a virtual process for - Or a hybrid process for many of the JPAAC members. But individuals who are going to be interviewing will be interviewing in person.

In person candidates will be contacted by JPAAC to inform them of the date time and location of the interview. If you've applied to a single region, the interview panel will consist of up to 8 JPAAC members. But if you've applied to multiple regions, please expect the panel to be considerably larger. In some cases we've had up to 12 to 15 panelists that are interviewing one candidate and that's just a function of how we are set up as a committee when you consider that we have 7 regions across the province. If you've applied to two or more regions, you can see how the number of panelists quickly add up.

Interviews are fast paced and will typically only last between 40 to 45 minutes and JPAAC urges you to be concise and mindful of the time frame. So another tip with respect to the interview, don't spend the first 10 minutes of the interview answering why you want to become a justice of the peace, this should be something that is very succinct, something that you've been thinking about and something that you can explain to the committee in a very short manner.

JPAAC is looking for how you meet all the selection criteria and exhibit the traits, the character, temperament, disposition, presentation and preparation needed to be successful in the role of a justice of the peace, how you demonstrate your position and

thought process to make timely decisions with complex issues and how well you handle stress and conduct yourself during the interview process.

The JPAAC encourages you to continue observing Justice of the Peace in court even after being granted an interview.

Time is not given at the interview for the applicant to ask any questions.

Next slide.

Why Apply

[0:38:35]

Nicholas Charitsis: So we've reached the end of the webinar, and it's important to ask yourself why to apply for this position.

As I indicated earlier, it's really less than 3% of the applicants who may be appointed in any given process. So when thinking about why you may want to apply, really serving the community, this is the calling being a role model within your community as a justice of the peace. The position is extremely respected. You have an opportunity to make a real impact on people's lives. You can just imagine for a moment that you may be sitting at a bail hearing. You might have a young person who is before the court and really it might be a crossroads in their future as to what happens next. As a justice of the peace, you have such an important role to look at that individual and to determine how your decision will impact their life and perhaps maybe even you might be able to structure conditions in that bail that could help that young person to achieve the most that they can out of their own life.

We want you to consider this position because you'll bring your individual perspective and your lived experience to the justice system, and this is an opportunity for personal and professional growth and development. Remember this is a lifetime appointment. You have the ability as a justice of the peace to grow in the profession, to make decisions that ultimately some of which may even create precedent in the courts. So think about these things when you're applying. And why it's important to apply. Yes, the salary is attractive and the benefits are great, but when you're looking at this position, it really is important to go back to the idea and the notion that we talked about in our previous webinar as to why this is a calling and the role itself is a prestigious milestone in public service.

I'd like to just end off by saying that the committee encourages all interested candidates who've previously submitted their application but were not selected or an interview or maybe selected for an interview and not appointed to apply again. The reason is that as the applications come out year after year, JPAAC has the ability to see the candidate's maturity as an applicant in the process. And I can tell you just in the last process where there were 45 justices of the peace appointed, some of those appointments were candidates that had applied year in, year out. There was a candidate that had applied five years in a row without even getting an interview in the sixth time, which was in the 2024 process, the candidate got an interview. Impressed, the panel recommended to the Attorney General and ultimately became an appointed justice to the peace so the committee recommends that candidates continue building their skills and abilities to meet all of the qualifications and selection criteria for a justice of the peace and to include any updated information in their new application.

So JPAAC doesn't have a written test for one to become a justice of peace? What it is your application itself that's a live document which is your life's work of skills and experience that go into this document. It's really not something that should be considered as a one-off where you apply and hope to be appointed. In fact, we see that most of the candidates who are at least appointed over the years have applied to our committee for two years.

And in closing this year's webinar I'd like to thank everyone for participating in this Webinar we will be advising everyone who is on the webinar of the ways that this webinar can be downloaded and the slides for your future consideration and your review prior to the application process.

Next slide.

And thank you.

Housekeeping

[0:43:09]

Moderator: Alright, so thank you for tuning in to watch our webinar. We hope you found it informative.

I'll now introduce JPAAC's Chair Nicholas Charitsis as well as Senior Advisory Justice of the Peace Lauren Scully Core JPAAC member.

Biographies

[0:43:32]

Nicholas Charitsis: Yes, thank you for the introduction and I wanted to say that we are now hosting a live Q and A session. My name is Nick Charitsis, I'm the Chair of JPAAC. A couple of changes since we recorded this webinar a couple months ago, Her Worship Scully is now on the core of JPAAC and his Honor Renwick has taken on other responsibilities.

Justice of the Peace Vacancies – 2025

[0:44:19]

Nicholas Charitsis: The vacancies have now been released where the application is now live and you can see for yourself which base courts are available to apply to and the other important thing to take into consideration is that court observations have now become in person and previous processes applicants were able to attend court virtually and use that as a method of complying with the requests of the committee. I know it's a little bit more difficult now. There's some more travel that needs to happen to get to the courts and we encourage everyone to make the court observations in person. We're going to allow candidates, in fact, to continue with court observations after submitting their application. We're going to be a little bit more lenient on the Court observation section of the application knowing that the observations now need to be done in person.

Biographies

[0:45:12]

Nicholas Charitsis: If I could now introduce her worship Scully and we we can then go into the live Q and A.

Senior Advisory Justice of the Peace Scully: Thank you, Mr Charitsis.

Good afternoon everyone. My name is Lauren Scully. I'm currently the Senior Advisory Justice of the Peace for the Ontario Court of Justice. In that role, I work in the Office of the Chief Justice in Toronto.

But just by way of background prior to being appointed as a Justice of the Peace in 2011, I was a criminal defense lawyer and criminal duty council lawyer and then I was a provincial offenses prosecutor for a municipality and municipal solicitor.

After being appointed as a Justice of the Peace, I eventually became the Regional Senior Justice of the Peace for the Northeast Region and my base court is actually North Bay within the Northeast region.

Thank you.

[0:45:59]

Moderator: All right. Thank you, Your Worship. And we also have Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Louise Logue, Core JPAAC member.

[0:46:05]

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Logue: OK, kwey, kwey. Thank you, Lee.

My name is Louise Logue, justice of the Peace in and for the province of Ontario assigned to Ottawa. This month will be my 15th year anniversary as a justice of the peace. Prior to being appointed as a Justice of the Peace, I worked as a registered nurse and a behavioural pharmacologist working with individuals, mostly youth who had significant and serious drug dependencies and psychiatric disorders. I spent approximately 20 years working with the Ottawa Police Service in developing for police services across Canada early identification and early intervention strategies, which led to the development of the youth intervention and diversion units that in response to the Youth Criminal Justice Act could implement diversionary measures rather than not criminalizing young people where possible. I've done extensive work with a variety of agencies across Canada and the US in gangs prevention and drug facilitated sexual assault prevention.

So those are my areas of expertise, but for the past 15 years sitting on the bench and proud to be an Indigenous member of the Ontario Court of Justice Indigenous justices of the peace. My home nation are the Algonquin Anishinaabe Nation and I'm proud to serve on the territory, the unceded territory of my nation.

Thank you.

Moderator: All right. OK, I understand some questions are flying in, so let's get to the questions.

All right, we'll go to Slido now and you'll see questions by other attendees and if you have a question from someone else you want to answer, you can like that question and Slido will automatically bump up this question in the queue the more votes the asker

has, the more likely our team is to see it respond. And we hope to get as many questions as we can as time permits today. Please do not include any personal information in your questions or post questions that are related to your specific application. We will respond to general questions about the justice of the peace position and the committee process.

If your question was not answered during the session, please review the committee's Frequently Asked Questions page on the JPAAC website at www.ontariocourts.ca/ocj/jpaac.

OK, so let's go to Slido now. And we have our first question, which is do you need legal experience or law enforcement experience to be a justice of the peace?

Senior Advisory Justice of the Peace Scully: Thank you. I will answer that question.

So no, you do not need legal or law enforcement experience to be a justice of the peace. We have justices of the peace from all sorts of different professional and work and volunteer backgrounds as you heard Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Logue came from a nursing and mental health and drug addiction working background. We have former scientists from center of Forensic Sciences, we have people who came from teaching you they might have been a teacher, a principal, a vice- principal, that sort of thing, we have people from all different walks of life and different professions.

Having said that, of course, it's very important for applicants to understand what the role of a justice of the peace entails. And really how that role fits within our criminal justice system in Canada and our provincial offences system in Ontario. And so I think it's important still that you do your homework around our criminal justice system and how that works and what the role of the justice of the peace entails. And there are a lot of places you can do that, including, of course, reading everything on the JPAAC website. Also, the Ontario Court of Justice has a public facing website. I would read everything on there and even the Supreme Court of Canada has a lot of great general information about our justice system. So that's what I would speak to on that. Thank you.

Moderator: OK. Next question we have, how many hours of court monitoring are needed, can we start today until application is submitted by first week of November?

Nicholas Charitsis: Yeah, I'll take that question.

We're not looking at measuring court observations and hours. We're as a committee we're looking at the types of court observations that applicants make. So it's very clear in this process the application itself instructs candidates to observe the very specific courts that justices of the peace preside in. So you'll be required to do at least one court appearance in provincial offences court, whether it be a trial or set date court that's fine and you'll be required to report on what you observed in that court and tell the committee your understanding of what's happening in that court. You'll be required to make at least one observation in bail court, and I recognize that there may be several remands in bail court and maybe you might not be able to observe an actual contested bail hearing take place, but at the very least report on your experience in bail court whether it be remands or a hearing itself taking place, and explain in your application what you're observing, what you're understanding to be happening in the bail court. And then criminal case management it's another opportunity to watch a great chunk of work of justice of the peace role is in criminal case management. So observe what's happening there. Pay attention for what the Defense Council is saying. What the prosecution is saying. If it's a self represented accused, are they asking for an adjournment or is there discussion about disclosure? Are there terms like section 11B waiver being used? Try to take that all in your observations and report all that back in your application, so you can start now.

Absolutely you can start observing court immediately and we would recommend that you do at least one of those 3 observations that I indicated and if you can't do more than one of each, then we encourage you to continue to do observations after the deadline to submit your application in the event that you're selected for an interview, one of the questions in the interview will be have you done any more court observations? And then you'll be able to report back, so given that there is a time that you can report the applications. I appreciate that there's a cut off but keep a log of the applications, sorry of the observations that you've been making in court even beyond November.

Next question.

Moderator: OK. Next question we have is, would a typical work week involve the majority of time in court or office during the day 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM? How often would one need to work nights or weekends?

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Logue: I can take that one if you'd like.

A typical work day not only involves in being in court, in open court but also involves your preparatory time before the court opens so often if we're in bail court and we have 15 matters to look to review the paperwork before that's provided to us, then we're going to come in maybe around 7:30 or so and be able to read that before then going into the courtroom.

The other additional time when we're not being seen to be presiding on the day in court is our travel time to our courts, so in Ottawa for example, we look after and we preside in the courts throughout the east region. So that includes Kingston, Brockville, Cornwall, Belleville, et cetera. So our travel time to court, we have to get there in time to read our materials and then preside at 9:00 AM and then depending on what time court finishes you have your travel time back home.

We don't work night shift per se, albeit sometimes if we have a decision to write, we may choose to write our decision at the end of the day, if it's a decision that we're giving on a on a subsequent date.

Weekends we do work work weekends. The court is open 365 days a year, so we do work weekends, but it's on a rotational basis. So if we're 35 justices of the peace, we rotate through each weekend a different justice of the peace is assigned. And if you do have to work weekends, you get a day off in lieu, in the future that you can take back during the week.

Senior Advisory Justice of the Peace Scully: And Nick, if I can just add to what Her Worship Logue has indicated in terms of night shifts there is in the Central East region a provincial telewarrant center currently.

It's usually only justices of the peace whose base court is in Central East Region who would preside in the 24/7 Telewarrant center. However, that could certainly change in the future if that is expanded and they have what they call a telewarrant rotation. It's about a two week period where they work certain day shifts and certain night shifts, and the night shifts are overnight usually 7:00 PM to 7:00 AM and they consider urgent telewarrant applications from across the province that police are submitting. And so they don't, obviously do that rotation every two weeks, it rotates throughout all of the justices of the peace in their region. So they might do it a couple times a year. It really varies somewhat. So I just want to add that. Thank you.

Moderator: Thank you. Can you discuss the training period for a justice of the Peace role? Are there supports in the first weeks or months if additional questions arise?

Senior Advisory Justice of the Peace Scully: I can speak to that one. In the first really it's I would say the first nine to 10 months are quite intensive. There is the education that you've heard about currently it is 9 weeks of in-person education that takes place usually in downtown Toronto and that is currently spread out over about 8 1/2 months. There's also mentoring that occurs, so all new justices of the peace are assigned a mentor. At least one mentor, often more than one. Sometimes we call them a primary and secondary mentor and they are people that the new Justice of the Peace would observe in the courtroom and they would sit with them and discuss after and before court what's been happening, ask questions and also once the new justice of the peace starts to preside in court, their mentor would at first observe them and give them constructive feedback and answer any questions they have.

There's also a Regional Senior Justice of the Peace for each of the seven regions and that person that justice of the peace is responsible for scheduling all of the justices of the peace in their region and also assigning the mentors to the new justices of the peace. That RSJP is a great source of information and support as justices of peace embark on their new role. As well as what are called local administrative justices of the peace so they are responsible for one to maybe 3 or 4 court locations where they are sort of the person on the ground so to speak, in those courthouses working on different initiatives and helping to keep things running smoothly from administrative perspective. They can also be a great source of support.

There's also myself and what's called the Senior Justice of the Peace. Currently it's Her Worship Jane Moffatt and she oversees all of the education for new justices of the peace and also of course there is Her Worship Logue, who is a great resource and support for many Justices of the Peace, but particularly for the Indigenous justices of the peace in the province.

There are also two co chairs of the French Language seminar for all French bilingual justices of the peace and they are often a good support for those presiding in French and bilingual courts. There are also people in the office of the Chief Justice that have specific roles that can sometimes answer questions and the new justices will learn about who those people are and what the supports are when they have their first meeting with everyone from the Office of the Chief Justice and their RSJP.

Moderator: All right, next question we have, how important are the written answers on my application? Are they less important than my work experience, education or awards?

Nicholas Charitsis: OK. I'll take that question.

The written answers to an application are really a reflection of the applicant's attention to detail their strength in written communications and also originality, so I mentioned in the prerecorded webinar that we've been seeing more and more in this AI world sections of the application almost entirely been written by AI. We have the tools to identify that type of response in the application so your written answers are important.

I indicated also in the webinar that there's no written test to become a, justice of the peace, however the application form itself is akin to a written test. Are the answers sorry, the written answers to your questions, less important than the work experience and education and awards so know there's a mix of criteria that the committee looks at one through 11. We look, we call them codes on the committee. We use the codes to assess the candidate so there's what we call on the committee code 5. Code 5 has to do with attention to detail and a poorly written application would definitely be a code 5 and we'd look at code 5 as excluding the candidate from preceding any further in the process.

Your work experience and education are also very important. You need to keep in mind that there are some statutory thresholds to be eligible to be appointed justice of the peace so you've gotta have at least 10 years of work experience in any given field and you some people may not meet that threshold and apply anyway hoping that we don't catch it but we look very carefully to ensure that the recommendations that we're making to the Attorney General comply with what's in the legislation.

Education and awards you need to have does someone with a masters degree are they more competitive than someone that has a bachelor's degree or a college education because of their level of education? I don't necessarily think that is a factor because we're looking at other criteria in the application form we're looking at leadership. We're looking at community involvement and where you might not have the highest level education you can make up for it in other areas like some of the awards, so I hope that answers the question with respect to written answers.

Moderator: Aside from observing court proceedings are there any other activities one should undertake to increase familiarity with the role requirements?

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Logue: Alright, I can take that one in part and I'd invite my Co presenters to jump in.

I would suggest that obviously observing the court proceedings gives you a good understanding or a basic understanding of what the role of the justice of the peace is while in court. Outside of court in order to understand what the justice of the peace is being asked to do, who in executing our duties on the bench is becoming familiar with the community and what the issues are that bring individuals before the courts, so understanding the issues within the community and also what resources are there within the community that can serve to assist or reduce the frequency of recidivism of once a person is connected with those services.

So I do believe strongly that understanding your community in the location where you're looking to apply and preside, understanding that community and its resources to address the issues would go a long way in helping to understand the duties that we are we are asked to do on the bench.

Your Worship Scully? Anything to add?

Senior Advisory Justice of the Peace Scully: Yes, now those are great suggestions Your Worship Logue and I would add as I spoke about earlier sort of doing your homework in terms of reading anything you can from any reputable source. You reputable website about our justice system. So you may look at for example, the public facing websites of some of the stakeholder groups like Legal Aid Ontario who employs duty counsel who appear before us in court. Ministry of the Attorney General, who employs the Crown attorneys who appear before us in court. And see what they have to say about how they conduct their business or what their role is.

I would read the *Justices of the Peace Act* there is a link to it on the JPAAC website. Of course, reading everything on the JPAAC website, the public website of the Ontario Court of Justice and any other source where you can find out really what our justice system is all about and how we fit into that system.

Thank you.

Moderator: Next question we have today, what is the most challenging part of the rule? What do you wish you had known before you applied?

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Logue: I'll jump in and just say I wish I would have known years and years ago what a wonderful position this is to be privileged to serve as justice of the peace in and for the province of Ontario. We have an opportunity to make huge differences in the lives of individuals, to influence future generations in considering careers in justice.

But with respect to the day-to-day activity, every day is different. Getting to meet the community know oftentimes when people come before us, they're at their lowest possible point and there are many, many times when justices of the peace can make decisions that actually play a huge role in changing that trajectory that they've been on. So the satisfaction I wish I would have known just how satisfying this job was before coming. Is it hard work? Absolutely. It's not always easy to see people at their worst point. And some of the cases that come before us are quite painful to have to hear the facts about. But we have an opportunity in this position to make a difference. And that's a good place to be.

Senior Advisory Justice of the Peace Scully: Yeah, I can add that I think what's most challenging really depends on the individual and you're sort of your strengths and your weaknesses and your personality. I think one of the things that can make it challenging is also what makes it interesting and that is the breadth of the type of work that we do.

So, for example, in provincial offenses court. Although a large volume of the work we do involves cases under the Highway Traffic Act, that is not the only Act we deal with. We deal with actually hundreds of pieces of legislation in provincial offenses court, so everything from Occupational Health and Safety Act to the Environmental Protection Act, Tobacco Tax Act I mean all sorts of acts and that makes it challenging to deal with these things sort of on the fly in the courtroom and respond appropriately. But it also makes it very interesting because you're always learning new things you could be on the bench as a Justice of the Peace for 20 years and see something in your courtroom one day that you've never seen before. And that is a challenge, but it's also what I think makes this job very exciting. Very interesting. You know, there's never sort of much of a dull moment in that respect. So you're always learning something new.

Yeah, I think people might find it challenging from what I've heard from other people. They might find it challenging that they don't control their own schedule. They may have come from a profession or an occupation, or maybe a high level of their previous profession or occupation where they are able to control their own schedule. As justice of

the peace you do not control your own schedule, Your schedules determined by your regional senior justice piece who has an obligation to make sure all of the courts in their region are covered by a justice of peace. And So what court you're presiding in on any given day when you receive your non presiding days when you have to travel to another court isn't determined by yourself, that's determined by your RSJP.

The other thing some people find challenging is the transition to being Justice of the Peace from their previous role where they might have been very heavily involved in their community. Or maybe in politics, in volunteer work and all of those things that the community service and the volunteer work that led them to in part be a good candidate for a justice of the peace, they may now have to give up. Some of that they may not have to give up all of it, but you would have to look at things conflicts, appearance of bias. There may be certain things you can no longer do when you become a justice of the peace. So for example, sitting on boards or for example, you can no longer be a member of a political party once you become a justice of the peace, you know, you'd have to carefully look at social media, you'd even have to talk to your family about these issues. You know, no more lawn signs on election time. You know, that sort of thing. You have to look, you know, talk to your kids about their social media. For both security reasons, but also for appearances of bias and conflicts, and so that transition can be very difficult for some people who were very heavily involved and very sort of public, public facing person in their community as judicial officers, just like judges, as justices of the peace, our decisions in court speak for themselves and speak for us. We don't generally speak on things publicly outside of our decisions in court.

Thank you.

Moderator: Next question, I have noticed that most of the appointees to the justice of the Peace rule have a legal background. Is that a strong factor in process to select candidates for interviews?

Nicholas Charitsis: I'll take that question.

The legal background is really just a head start for an applicant to understand the language that is used in court. I can tell you in my experience on the committee there have been several lawyers who have been interviewed that have not been excellent interviews for the role of justice of the peace. You have to realize that the committee is balanced in its members and how do you get selected for an interview, just pause and think about that for a moment. So each individual member on the committee is going to

read your application and after reading your application, they're going to decide should this candidate proceed further in the process, so when I say the committee is balanced, you have our community members on the committee who are not lawyers, who do not have a legal background, and we'll see things in your application that are relevant to them as community members in the community that you're applying in.

So the advantage I believe in having a legal background is really understanding the terminology. There's a certain kind of language if you go to court and you observe that seems foreign to people who don't have the experience of being in court. But I don't think that is necessarily an impediment to moving forward to an interview if you look at the most recent.

Appointees to the role of just the piece you'll look at their backgrounds and there is quite kind of mix one of the interesting components of this process that we have is because the committee is balanced and people who serve on the committee come all walks of life. We have justices of the peace from so many different areas and professions, as Her Worship Logue indicated, from nursing to teaching to Policing to the clergy, even, most recently, an appointee.

So it is not necessarily an impediment to being selected for an interview if you don't have a legal background and I think the balance of the committee, particularly the community members who also don't have a legal background, your application might speak to them more so than an application that is written in a legal term type of capacity. So hope that answers that question for you.

Moderator: To observe proceedings. Oh, sorry, shuffle there. Why is it important? Sorry. OK, we're back here.

All right. Can we submit our application in French for a bilingual position?

Nicholas Charitsis: Yes. Short answer and you'll note for this particular process that there is a large number of bilingual court vacancies in this competition for 2025/2026 and you are permitted to submit your application in French.

Moderator: All right. And I think we have time for one more question. Is there extensive travel involved in the position of a justice of the peace?

Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Logue: So I'll take that one, I can tell you that when I was first appointed the circumstances with respect to operational needs

were such that there was lacking judicial officers in the Cornwall area. So if I drove from Ottawa to Cornwall Health five days a week presided all day, came back, drove back the next morning, came back.

So yes, there can be, there are other times when you might be on your way to a satellite court say from Ottawa to Cornwall and halfway there you get a phone call saying in fact we need you to go preside in Brockville, there's a matter there that you need to be presiding on so you could be redirected the night before to a satellite court or you could be redirected when you're halfway to a satellite court. To go to a different satellite court.

When I say satellite court, I mean courts outside the headquarters or your assigned location which in Ottawa would be the courthouse on Elgin St or the provincial offences Court on Constellation Drive. But if the RSJP or the regional Senior Justice of the Peace needs you elsewhere because someone called in sick where there was an accident or an issue has arisen. Then you will be and can be redirected. That means that you have to be prepared to drive in all sorts of weather whether it's freezing rain, snow, rain or beautiful sunny day. You do have to be prepared to travel. Enough, enough miles, I can tell you 80 000 miles in the second year that I was appointed is the total amount I did. But that was a very unusually year, so not to scare anyone, but you do have to go to the satellite courts just as much as you do to your assigned court.

Moderator: All right, we're going to try and get one more question in here. To observe proceedings can we just go in person? Do we require do we require advance permission?

Senior Advisory Justice of the Peace Scully: So I can address that one.

For criminal courts in particular, you should be going in person. That is because there's currently an interim observer policy. There is a link to that policy on the JPAAC site and it's also on our public facing Ontario Court of Justice website. That policy was put in place due to what we were we call bombings where there were some severe disruptions, racist language, inappropriate behavior on video happening in various courts across Ontario and so as a result, there are very few people that are able to observe courts virtually or on video. Those would be maybe victims people like that, but the general public or JPAAC applicants would have to go in person at the present time to observe. That may change. And so certainly keep an eye on the Ontario Court of Justice website if there are any changes to that.

You don't need advance permission to go in person to a courtroom. There are very few courtrooms that would be closed to the public if it's a in camera or confidential matter but that is rare. Most courtrooms are fully open and you just would walk in and watch.

In terms of provincial offenses, court while technically the current interim observer policy does not apply to those courts and so in theory you could observe on video assuming that's an available option in a particular POA you have to understand there may be circumstances where you are excluded from observing by video again because of concerns around zoom bombing situations and also there's nothing quite like observing in person. And keep in mind that the justice of the peace is for the most part, presiding in person in a courtroom. There may be occasions when they're in their office presiding on Zoom into another location, but usually we're in the courtroom physically and I think you lose something by not observing that process in person. And so that's what I would speak about that.

Thank you.

Moderator: All right. Well, thank you very much to everyone that submitted your questions today and thanks to our hosts, Nicholas Charitsis, Senior Advisory Justice of the Peace Scully, and Senior Indigenous Justice of the Peace Logue for their thoughtful answers.

Fortunately, we're at a time and we're sorry if we did not get to all of the remaining questions if your questions were not answered today, please refer to JPAAC's website at www.ontariocourts.ca/jpaac where you can find their Frequently Asked Questions page. And if you have additional questions, please email the committee's coordinator at JPAAC Info Sorry, JPAAC.info@ontario.ca.

Today's event has been recorded and will be on the JPAAC website for later viewing if you haven't done so already, make sure to view the current advertisement of the new Justice of the Peace vacancies and sign up for our email notifications, also available on the JPAAC website.

This concludes today's event.

Enjoy the rest of your day.