

GRESHAM FAMILY & BANKRUPTCY LAW

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Hello,

Mediation is a voluntary process where the mediator facilitates negotiation between the parties, enabling them to reach their own solution to their issues. While I am an attorney, in this arrangement I am your mediator and a neutral member of your settlement. This agreement can be as simple or as creative as you both choose, but must be voluntary. The mediator assists the parties by identifying various issues, developing options for their resolution, and to help them reach a final agreement which accommodates the interests and needs of the parties. I work with you both to resolve these issues, and when finalized, will prepare a written agreement reflecting your agreement.

In order to facilitate you during the COVID-19 issue I will make changes to our process. I would like to schedule video meetings where I can explain various steps necessary to help you finalize your decisions. These meetings can occur in my separate conference rooms or video from your home. I charge \$150 for the initial meeting which represents the time necessary to discuss your needs and help you both to consider the options and decide if mediation is appropriate. I am more than willing to discuss your financial circumstances and how to address payment of my fees. After this first meeting, if you elect to go forward, I will ask you to make a deposit towards my future fees which will vary based upon the complexity of your case. For all mediation cases, I require that the parties review and sign a standard Mediation Agreement.

After our first meeting, I will charge by the hour, my usual fee is \$300 for the time we spend in meeting. Again, we can discuss how to address the payment of my time as necessary. If you need additional information, I will charge hourly for any time spent researching your questions each or preparing for our meetings, (such as spreadsheets, issues to value retirements or to prepare support calculations). Often a couple will be able to complete their settlement in three meetings in addition to the initial meeting. However, if you have reached a complete and informed decision, your agreement can be completed in one session after our first meeting. After you have finalized your agreement, I will prepare a summary of the terms you have arrived at. All three of us will all sign with summary at which time we can discuss me drafting and finalizing the divorce documents. While this may seem like more time than you need, we can finish the settlement phase as quickly or as lengthily as needed. In mediation you are both in control of this step. (See my attached example of time needed)

The time it takes to complete mediation will again vary depending upon the complexity of your case. The average mediation takes three to six sessions. I recommend we meet bi-weekly with the parties until completed. Some non-complex matters can be resolved in two or three sessions. Matters involving emergencies or upcoming deadlines or other dates can be arranged accordingly. It is important that you are aware that all offers and other comments in the mediation process are confidential and inadmissible in court if you are unable to mediate your issues successfully.

Once you have arrived at your final settlement, I will be able to prepare the pleadings needed to finalize your divorce. This is a separate fee for preparing documents and the cost will be based upon the complexity of your final documents (such as a parenting plan, child support, selling a home or dividing pensions). We will discuss this in detail when we meet. If either of you have your own counsel, your attorney may choose to prepare the final documents based on the mediated agreement instead. While I am able to mediate your case without separate attorney's involvement, if you have an impasse or concerns beyond my neutral responses, I recommend you should consult with outside counsel. I strongly encourage active involvement of the parties' independent counsel if they are a part of the team and the attorney may elect to attend some or all mediation sessions.

When you are ready, please contact my office to schedule an initial appointment with me and both parties. Thereafter, mediation sessions are scheduled either with each party privately, or jointly as determined by the mediator and your schedules. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or how I can assist you in this journey.

Sincerely,

/s/ Lillian S. Watson

Lillian Suelzle Watson
Mediator/Attorney at Law

Mediation information

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