

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE – Mr. Thomas Ausman, Chair

The Judiciary Committee meeting was held in the Board Room at the Law Enforcement Center on May 4, 2023 at 6:00 PM. Members present were Thomas Ausman, Barry Cox and Chad Weaver. Others present were Jason McDearmon, James Fagerman, Sue Costello and Joel Horn.

1. Mr. Ausman called the meeting to order. There was no public comment.
2. The April 2023 claims and the budget status report were reviewed. A motion was made by Weaver to approve the claims. Mr. Cox seconded the motion. All voted ayes. Motion carried.
3. Court Services
 - a. Jason McDearmon reviewed the monthly report (See #63).
 - b. Mr. McDearmon informed the committee they have hired a Probation Officer to fill the vacant position and one of the secretaries has taken a job in another office.
 - c. Mr. McDearmon reported on the Drug Court retreat we hosted here on April 28th.
 - d. Mr. McDearmon reported their Case Management software(Tracker) has been certified by the state for the new data tracking requirements and we have been approved to get those expenses reimbursed. The state will reimburse us up to \$12,000.
4. Public Defender
 - a. James Fagerman presented the monthly report:

Category	February amended	March	April
Number of defendants on first of month	754	759	772
Number of new appointments	50	64	59*
Number of defendants taken by private counsel	4	6	1
Number of defendant resolved	41	45	51
Number of defendants at end of month	759	772	779
Plea agreements	36	35	42
Felony			19
Misdemeanors			23
Jury trials	0	0	0
Bench trials	0	0	1 not guilty
Felony	0	0	0
Misdemeanors	0	0	1
Sentence hearings	0	0	0
Felony	0	0	0
Misdemeanors	0	0	0

Dismissed cases	4	6	8
Juvenile appearance in court	123	116	115

Current Cases: Felony: 563, Felony Violations: 87, Misd/Traffic: 381,
Misd/Traffic Violations: 41 = 1072 cases

*12 current clients picked up new cases.

- b. Mr. Fagerman informed the committee one more participant has been approved to go through Drug Court bringing the current total to 15.
- c. Mr. Fagerman informed the committee that he has hired a new secretary to replace Barb Benson as she is planning to retire as soon as the new person is trained.
- d. Mr. Fagerman spoke to the committee about his continuing difficulties recruiting attorneys. He indicated he has two requests that would help him find and retain attorneys. First, he has found a part-time assistant who has prior experience with the county. This person would come work for us but he is requesting she be brought in at a higher step than he is authorized to offer. Mr. Ausman asked if this could be referred to Wages and Salary since it was not on the agenda. Mr. Horn indicated it could not be acted on tonight. Mr. Ausman requested it be added to the agenda for June. Secondly Mr. Fagerman requested that his part-time assistants be granted health insurance under the county's group health insurance plan. Mr. Horn indicated this could not be granted on a case by case basis. If we did this for these two employee's we would have to offer that to all part-time employees. This could cost as much as \$24,000 per employee to the county. The committee was not in support of changing our eligibility for the county's group health insurance plan.

5. Circuit Clerk

- a. Sue Costello presented her monthly report (See #64-65). There were no jury trials. Collections were \$9,367.74 for April.
- b. Mrs. Costello reported that she too has been certified and will receive the \$12,000 reimbursement from the state for modifying her software to collect the new required data.
- c. Mrs. Costello informed the committee the audit has been completed and there were no findings in her department. She received a "clean audit".
- d. Mrs. Costello updated the committee on the progress with the collection of the fee for child support payments. She indicated they have been having some success finding addresses with the new online service, BeenVerified. They have collected \$13,234 for the current fiscal year thru 4/30.

6. Court Administration

- a. Mrs. Costello requested an additional \$35,000 be added to the Courts budget to cover the cost of appointing outside attorneys. The overrun has been caused by the understaffing of the Public Defender's office which has necessitated the appointment of outside attorneys. Hopefully this expense will come down now that the office is getting up to full staffing. A motion was made by Mr. Cox to forward this request to the Finance Committee, seconded by Weaver, motion carried.

There being no other business, a motion was made and seconded to adjourn, motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Meeting Date: The next regular meeting – June 8, 2023 at 6:00 PM in County Board Room

MOTION: To place on file the Judiciary Committee's meeting report, April claim reports and related informational items, as presented.