

Columbia County
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 14, 2023

Notice: These minutes have not been approved by the Judiciary Committee and are subject to additions and/or corrections. They will be approved at next month's regularly scheduled committee meeting.

Present: Eric J. Shimpach, John A. Stevenson, Tess Carr, Jeffrey A. Leckwee, and Joe Harvestine
Also Present: Judge Voigt, Judge Cross, Judge Hepler, Brenda Yaskal, Julie Kayartz, Joseph Ruf, III, and Jamie Henriksen

I. Call to Order. Posting Compliance. Approve Agenda. Approve Minutes. Expenditure Reports.

- 1) Meeting called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chair Shimpach.
- 2) Posting compliance was met per Open Meetings Law.
- 3) ***Motion was made by Leckwee to approve the agenda. Seconded by Carr. Motion carried.***
- 4) ***Motion was made by Leckwee to approve the previous meeting minutes from the regular Judiciary Committee Meeting on January 10, 2023. Seconded by Harvestine. Motion carried 4-1 with Shimpach abstaining.***
- 5) **Public Input.** None.
- 6) **Chairman's Communications.** Chair Shimpach said he was happy to be back and thanked Vice Chair Stevenson for running the meeting in his absence.
- 7) **Expenditure Reports.** After a review of the expenditure reports for the Judges, Clerk of Courts, District Attorney's Office, Corporation Counsel Office, and Child Support Office, ***a motion was made by Stevenson to approve all of the expenditures. Seconded by Leckwee. Motion carried.***
- 8) **Next meeting date** will be Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 8:30 a.m. in the Courthouse basement conference room.

II. Judges:

- **General Review of Department Activities.** General discussion of monthly activities provided by Judge Voigt. The Courts continue to work on the backlog from COVID-19 as well as processing new cases. The Judges expressed concern with the dwindling number of Public Defenders available along with the number of experienced Assistant District Attorneys (ADAs) in Columbia County. They all continue to discuss ideas to improve this situation. Judge Voigt also discussed his frustration with technology failures. Discussion continued that this is happening throughout the building with some recent Wi-Fi issues affecting daily Court operations. Some members of the Judiciary Committee plan to attend the next IS&P Committee Meeting to discuss possible solutions. Stevenson, Chair of the IS&P Committee, asked that the departments within the Courthouse create a list of issues to be discussed at the next IS&P Committee Meeting.

III. Clerk of Courts:

- **General Review of Department Activities.** General discussion of monthly activities provided by Clerk of Courts, Julie Kayartz. Kayartz stated there is a new Deputy Register in Probate starting next week. She had some interviews last week and one more this week to replace a Deputy Clerk of Courts. Kayartz is one of nineteen new Clerk of Courts throughout the State headed to training this week. Kayartz added that the elevator is finally up and running, which has been very helpful for everyone.

IV. District Attorney:

- **General Review of Department Activities.** General discussion of monthly activities provided by DA Brenda Yaskal. Yaskal said she continues to struggle hiring ADAs, as she still has three vacancies. Yaskal has a Legal Secretary, who has worked in her office in the past, coming back as a part-time Legal Secretary. Yaskal is optimistic this she will be a great addition to her office. Yaskal is also struggling with technology. She said she has had issues with the phones in her office for some time now. She is hoping to have her technological issues resolved soon.
- **Revised Position Descriptions – Victim Witness Coordinator, Legal Assistant, and Legal Secretary** – discussion. Motion made by Leckwee to approve all three (3) of the proposed revised position descriptions as presented, seconded by Carr. Motion carried.
- **Position Replacement Request – Part-Time Legal Secretary** – discussion. Motion made by Carr to approve the position replacement request for a Part-Time Legal Secretary as presented, seconded by Leckwee. Motion carried.
- **Ordinance – Amend Chapter 7 – County Fees – District Attorney** – discussion. Yaskal has revised fees being charged for documents generated from her office. Motion made by Carr to approve the Ordinance – Amend Chapter 7 – County Fees – District Attorney as presented, seconded by Harvestine. Motion carried.
- **Teen Court** – discussion. The Judiciary Committee would like a letter explaining the invoice and detailing what services were performed before a payment will be approved. The Committee would also entertain someone from CESA 5 participating in next month's Judiciary Committee Meeting as an option.

V. Corporation Counsel/Child Support Office:

- **General Review of Department Activities.** General discussion of monthly activities for Corporation Counsel and Child Support provided by Corporation Counsel/HR Director Joseph Ruf, III. The Corporation Counsel Office and the Child Support Agency continue to be busy with Child Support hearings, Guardianship cases, zoning enforcement, and other County business.

Motion was made by Leckwee to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 a.m. Seconded by Stevenson. Motion carried.

Secretary of Record,

Recording Secretary,



Supervisor Tess Carr
Committee Secretary



Jamie Henriksen
HR Program Coordinator

cc: Judiciary Committee Members
Chair Polzer
1st Vice Chair Brusveen
Internet