

**Columbia County**  
**JUDICIARY COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**November 8, 2022**

*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, Jeffrey A. Leckwee, and Joe Harvestine  
**Excused Absence:** Tess Carr  
**Also Present:** Chris Polzer, Judge Voigt, Judge Cross, Judge Hepler, Susan Raimer, Brenda Yaskal, Julie Kayartz, Susan Fisher, and Jamie Henriksen

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

- 1) Meeting called to order at 8:31 a.m. by Chair Shimpach.
- 2) Posting compliance was met per Open Meetings Law.
- 3) ***Motion was made by Harvestine to approve the agenda. Seconded by Leckwee. Motion carried.***
- 4) ***Motion was made by Leckwee to approve the previous meeting minutes from the regular Judiciary Committee Meeting on October 11, 2022. Seconded by Harvestine. Motion carried.***
- 5) **Public Input.** None.
- 6) **Chairman's Communications.** Shimpach stated that the Youth Government Day went well. He felt the participating youth enjoyed the day and had asked great questions.
- 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 Harvestine to approve all of the expenditures. Seconded by Leckwee. Motion carried.***
- 8) **Next meeting date** will be Tuesday, December 13, 2022, 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 Finance Committee's decision to cut the 2023 funding for the OWI and Drug Treatment Courts. They have had lengthy discussions on how to get these programs back into the 2023 budget. No decision is final until voted on by the full County Board in November. County Board Chair Chris Polzer expressed his support of this reinstatement. Judge Hepler found a Court Reporter, which happens to be the former OWI Treatment Coordinator, who will be starting her new role in November. The Court Reporter in Judge Cross's Branch is retiring soon, but Judge Cross has already found a replacement. Judge Cross stated the Courts continue to struggle to find Public Defenders for indigent defendants and are having to use County funds to appoint counsel. There are possible solutions being reviewed. These defendants are to reimburse the County, but this can be a lengthy process with repayment of attorney fees being low on the hierarchy of payment obligations. Shimpach would like an update at the next Judiciary Committee Meeting as to the numbers of cases the Judges still have on their backlogs. The elevator in the Courthouse is undergoing repairs currently and is non-operational. They are hoping to have this up and running soon. There is a Security Training for all Courthouse staff on December 9, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. The Courthouse will be shut down to the public for this training.

**III. Clerk of Courts:**

- **General Review of Department Activities.** General discussion of monthly activities provided by Clerk of Courts, Susan Raimer. Raimer discussed changes and challenges in the Clerk of Court's Office operations due to COVID-19 with court case numbers continuing to increase. This increase continues to create an enormous amount of work for her staff. Columbia County hosted some local students on October 26<sup>th</sup> for Youth Government Day and that went extremely well. Norm Bednarik from the American Legion is already planning for next year. There have been some changes with CCAP, so there are some issues to be resolved. Raimer attended her final Clerk of Courts Conference as the Clerk of Courts. Julie Kayartz, current Register of Probate, will be sworn in, as the new Clerk of Courts, on January 3, 2023.

**IV. District Attorney:**

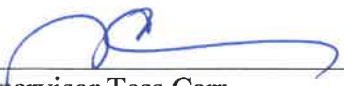
- **General Review of Department Activities.** General discussion of monthly activities provided by DA Brenda Yaskal. Yaskal discussed changes and challenges in the DA's Office operations due to COVID-19. Yaskal said about half of her staff went to a DA Conference last week. Other Counties are struggling with some of the issues we are as well. Her new Assistant District Attorneys are practicing with prosecuting and preparing opening statements. She said it is a step in the right direction. Yaskal has a large murder trial coming up that utilized genetic genealogy, which is the first of its kind in Wisconsin.
- **Line Item Transfer - Outlay** – discussion. Motion made by Leckwee to approve the line item transfer request as presented, seconded by Harvestine. Motion carried.

**V. Corporation Counsel/Child Support Office:**

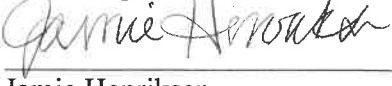
- **General Review of Department Activities.** General discussion of monthly activities for Corporation Counsel and Child Support provided by HR Program Coordinator, Jamie Henriksen. The Corporation Counsel Office and the Child Support Agency continue to be busy with Child Support hearings, Guardianship cases, zoning enforcement, and other County business. The State has changed access to the electronic records, which is part of the issues that need to be resolved that was previously presented by Susan Raimer. The County is reviewing how to respond as access to the Child Support records has been removed for the Attorneys. The County is reviewing how to handle long-term zoning violators for 2023, so changes are likely.

*Motion was made by Leckwee to adjourn the meeting at 9:31 a.m. Seconded by Stevenson. Motion carried.*

Secretary of Record,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor Tess Carr  
Committee Secretary

Recording Secretary,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jamie Henriksen  
HR Program Coordinator

cc: Judiciary Committee Members  
Chair Polzer  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair Brusveen  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair M. Rohrbeck  
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