

**Columbia County**  
**JUDICIARY COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**December 13, 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:** John A. Stevenson, Tess Carr, Jeffrey A. Leckwee, and Joe Harvestine  
**Excused Absence:** Eric J. Shimpach  
**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 8:32 a.m. by Vice Chair Stevenson.
- 2) Posting compliance was met per Open Meetings Law.
- 3) ***Motion was made by Leckwee to approve the agenda. Seconded by Stevenson. Motion carried.***
- 4) ***Motion was made by Harvestine to approve the previous meeting minutes from the regular Judiciary Committee Meeting on November 8, 2022. Seconded by Leckwee. Motion carried.***
- 5) **Public Input.** None.
- 6) **Chairman's Communications.** None.
- 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 Leckwee to approve all of the expenditures. Seconded by Harvestine. Motion carried.***
- 8) **Next meeting date** will be Tuesday, January 10, 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. Judge Voigt provided approximate numbers of case counts for Columbia County from pre-pandemic to current. The Judges expressed concern with the dwindling number of Public Defenders available along with the number of experienced Assistant District Attorneys in Columbia County. The Judges expressed gratitude to the Judiciary Committee Members for their assistance in reversing the Finance Committee's decision to cut the 2023 funding for the OWI and Drug Treatment Courts. There was a Security Training for all Courthouse staff on December 9, 2022, from 1:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. The Courthouse was shut down to the public for this training. The Judges thought the training went well and was beneficial for everyone. Columbia County Chair Chris Polzer added he had received very good feedback from staff who also the training was beneficial. They all added that Sergeant Max Jenatscheck, from the Sheriff's Office, did a phenomenal job leading the training, encouraging everyone to assess the situation and act. There has been some discussion about changing and improving the gate to the secured area. This will hopefully be completed before the end of the year.
- **Position Replacement Request – OWI Treatment Court Coordinator** – discussion. Motion made by Leckwee to approve the position replacement request for an OWI Treatment Coordinator as presented, seconded by Carr. Motion carried.
- **Position Replacement Request – Deputy Register in Probate** – discussion. Motion made by Carr to approve the position replacement request for a Deputy Register in Probate as presented, seconded by Leckwee. Motion carried.

**III. Clerk of Courts:**

- **General Review of Department Activities.** General discussion of monthly activities provided by Clerk of Courts, Susan Raimer. Raimer said she is starting to pull reports from 2022 but doesn't expect any surprises as she anticipates her numbers to come out below the projected budget. Raimer is looking forward to retirement from Columbia County after 30+ years here. She is confident that Julie Kayartz will be great in her new role as Clerk of Courts. The Clerk of Courts Association appoints a mentor to assist new incoming Clerks, so Julie will have plenty of assistance with her transition, should she need it. The Committee Members thanked Susan Raimer for her work and dedication to Columbia County and wished her well.
- **Line Item Transfer - Outlay** – discussion. Motion made by Leckwee to approve the line item transfer request as presented, seconded by Stevenson. Motion carried.
- **Revised Position Description – Constitutional Office Deputy to Deputy Clerk of Court** – discussion.
- **Position Replacement Request – Deputy Clerk of Court F.K.A. Constitutional Office Deputy** – discussion. Motion made by Leckwee to approve both of the revised position description and the position replacement request for a Deputy Clerk as presented, seconded by Harvestine. Motion carried.

**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 reported that her most experienced Assistant District Attorney ("ADA") provided his notice to work closer to home. He is a State employee, but this is a huge loss for Columbia County, leaving Yaskal as the only Attorney in her office with enough experience to handle larger cases. The position vacated by ADA Lippert has been posted and she is hoping that is filled soon. Her new ADAs are practicing with prosecuting and preparing opening statements and can handle smaller cases right now. She said it is a step in the right direction. She has had an intern in her office once a week. He is still in school to receive his law degree. He will be graduating soon, so she said he can start with some experience.
- **Position Replacement Request – Victim Witness Coordinator** – discussion. Motion made by Carr to approve the position replacement request for a Victim Witness Coordinator as presented, seconded by Leckwee. 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 Assistant Corporation Counsel Susan Fisher. 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. With January around the corner, the County will again work with Planning & Zoning to begin issuing citations for septic tanks that are not pumped timely for Columbia County residents.

*Motion was made by Leckwee to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 a.m. Seconded by Harvestine. Motion carried.*


Secretary of Record,

Recording Secretary,



---

Supervisor Tess Carr  
Committee 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  
          Internet