

Department Overview

Gallatin County has two Justice Courts, Department 1 and Department 2, each one administered by a full-time Justice of the Peace Judge. Justice Court is the venue responsible for original jurisdiction of *all* civil and criminal cases outside the city limits of Bozeman. The two courts provide an effective and efficient court system for the residents of the County through dedicated staff and efficient management, all-the-while being fiscally responsible within the budget allocated to them.

Justice Court has realized a 25% increase in cases filed since 2000. Simultaneously, Justice Court collections have increased from \$957,895 to \$1,844,336.90, hovering in this range since calendar FY year 2008; unfortunately, this large increase in revenue is not fully realized by Gallatin County, since a considerable portion of these revenues are transferred to the State of Montana. Nevertheless, the increase in cases and fines is a direct result of an increase in law enforcement officers and significant increases in the number of debt filings.

Again, Justice Court has been subjected to a potential increase in criminal and civil-lawsuit filings by way of the Montana State Legislature. Numerous new laws affecting the criminal justice system are being enacted. Penalties for misdemeanor DUI and BAC statutes now provide for contempt of court, increased monetary and incarceration penalties, and longer driver's license suspensions, which means the possibility of more criminal litigations taking place in this court.

In addition, the crime of aggravated DUI has been added to the statutes, which allows for the suspension or revocation of a driver's license for prior DUI / BAC convictions, the installation of ignition interlock devices, and a maximum of 1-year incarceration for convicted persons with a BAC of .160 or greater.

Furthermore, the monetary civil jurisdictional limits for Justice Court were increased. Prior limits set for the court were \$3,000 for small claims and \$7,000 for civil complaints. The new limits are now \$7,000 and \$12,000 respectively. This monetary statute change will mean fewer filings at the District Court level and more filings in Justice Court and an anticipated workload-increase of up to 45% for Justice Court and its staff.

Given the potential of the sizeable workload-increase of civil and criminal matters in this judicial system due to new laws and increased, jurisdictional civil limits, Justice Court will need to continue to operate with two (2) full-time Justice of the Peace Judges for FY 2012. However, the two courts have historically operated below the authorized budget for personnel and operations since the establishment of two full-time judges in FY 2005.

Department Goals

- Maintain an effective, efficient court and provide for an easily accessible Justice Court to the public.
- Insure staff is well trained, helpful, friendly, and accurate in their dealings with the public.
- Bailiff's presence during Law & Motion.
- More efficient use of video arraignments via VisionNet® and web-cam whenever appropriate.
- Continued bi-annual training for both Department 1 and Department 2 Judges.
- Continued bi-annual training for clerks.
- Enlarge second courtroom to a size allowing for full utilization.
- Updating both courtrooms with courtroom management technology tools for criminal and civil proceedings.
- Installation of a web-cam on the current video / computer system, which would allow litigants who are not residents of Bozeman or the surrounding area to appear via the court's video system.

Recent Accomplishments

- The addition of Overdue Processing, a computer program that expedites collections of over-due fines.
- Activation of comprehensive case management software with jury module to accelerate the yearly jury-summons process.
- Staff professionalism and efficiency increased by due diligence of the court's executive assistant.
- Increased use of Community Mediation Center in civil cases, resulting in an 85% settlement rate.
- On the job training for clerks on a twice a year basis.
- Scanning documents for easy retrieval / emailing.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Justice Court

Department Budget

Object of Expenditure	Actual FY 2010	Final FY 2011	Actual FY 2011	Request FY 2012	Preliminary FY 2012	Final FY 2012
Personnel	\$ 507,345	\$ 535,637	\$ 532,288	\$ 571,896	\$ 549,462	\$ 555,994
Operations	98,128	129,087	102,581	129,855	129,855	129,855
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Outlay	-	20,000	-	20,000	20,000	20,000
Transfers Out	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 605,473	\$ 684,724	\$ 634,869	\$ 721,751	\$ 699,317	\$ 705,849

Budget by Fund Group

General Fund	\$ 605,473	\$ 684,724	\$ 634,869	\$ 721,751	\$ 699,317	\$ 705,849
Special Revenue Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debt Service Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Project Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enterprise Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internal Service Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trust & Agency Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 605,473	\$ 684,724	\$ 634,869	\$ 721,751	\$ 699,317	\$ 705,849

Funding Sources

Tax Revenues	\$ 56,422	\$ 125,549	\$ 119,272	\$ 100,594	\$ 98,975	\$ 126,512
Non-Tax Revenues	25,134	549,598	513,110	563,102	573,767	578,904
Cash Reappropriated	523,917	9,578	2,488	58,055	26,575	433
Total	\$ 605,473	\$ 684,724	\$ 634,869	\$ 721,751	\$ 699,317	\$ 705,849

Department Personnel

No. of Positions	FT/PT	Title	FTE
2	Full-Time	Justice of the Peace	2
1	Full-Time	Executive Secretary	1
8	Full-Time	Justice Court Clerks	8

Total Program 11

2012 Budget Highlights

Personnel

-

Operations

-

Capital

- Capital Reserves \$20,000 for replacement of copier/printers in 2012 or 2013.

County Commission Goals/Department Response

The County Commission established a set of overarching goals for the County government. Listed below are the County Commission's goals, followed by the methods by which Justice Court is striving to fulfill those goals.

Exceptional Customer Service

- Customer service in a courteous, professional and friendly manner.
- Prompt, accurate and timely processing of cases filed.
- Civil Judgments entered in a timely manner.
- General Temporary Orders of Protection are ruled upon and issued on the same date they are received in court.

Be Model for Excellence in Government

- Effective, efficient court easily accessible to the public.

Improve Communications

- Access to Website.

To be the Employer of Choice

- Provide professional development to staff.

WORKLOAD INDICATORS / PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Workload Indicators		Actual	Actual	Estimate	Projected
Indicator		FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
1.	Cases filed	12,500	14,000	13,500	
2.	Court collections	1,950,000	2,950,000	2,000,000	

Performance Measures		Actual	Actual	Estimate	Projected
Measure		FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
1.	Video arraignments	1,700	1,850	2,000	
2.	Law and Motion	5,000	6,200	6,500	
3.	Judge Trials	2,100	2,150	2,200	
4.	Jury Trials	462	463	465	
5.	Mediations	208	208	208	
6.	Hearings	2,600	2,800	3,000	
7.	Omnibus Hearings	2,050	2,150	2,300	

Comments