JOPLIN CITY COUNCIL
INFORMAL MEETING NOTES
JULY 1, 2019

Mayor Shaw called the July 1, 2019 Informal Meeting of the Joplin City Council to order at 5:15 p.m.

In attendance were Council Members: Melodee Colbert-Kean, Keenan Cortez, Doug Lawson, Anthony Monteleone, Diane Reid Adams, Mayor Gary Shaw, Ryan Stanley, and Phil Stinnett. Also, in attendance were Interim City Manager Dan Pekarek and City Attorney Peter Edwards. Taylor Brown was absent for the informal meeting but was present via phone conference for the regular city council meeting.

## Municipal Court Annual Review and other updates

Lamonte Ratcliff, Municipal Court Administrator, provided a review of the 2018 Yearly Report of Joplin's Municipal Court, stating the court continues to be one of the busiest municipal courts in the Southwest region of Missouri. The Court staff handles a variety of dockets throughout the week, excluding Friday. Current court staff consists of seven full time court clerks, one part-time court clerk, one court administrator, and one judge.

Director Ratcliff provided the following information in the report:

### Court dockets are as follows

Monday:

- Initial Arraignment at 8:00a.m.
- In Custody inmates seen by the judge
- Persons with warrants allowed to see the judge, if court is still in session

Tuesday:

- Initial Arraignment at 8:00a.m.
- In Custody inmates seen by the judge
- Code Enforcement Docket at 10:00a.m. (1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month)
- Appear with Counsel Docket and Pro Se Trials 1:30p.m.

Wednesday:

- Show Cause and Public Defender Docket at 8:00a.m.
- Bond forfeiture proceedings occur during the morning docket
- Alternative to Violence Programs (set up at the back of the court room)
- Attorney Steve Hays Docket at 9:00a.m. first Wednesday of each month

Thursday:

- Initial Arraignment at 8:00a.m.
- In Custody inmates seen by the judge
- Attorney Docket at 10:00a.m.
- Attorney Docket at 1:30p.m.
- Attorney Trial Docket at 3:00p.m.

**Note:** During the monthly Division IV "Change of Judge" court docket in Carthage, the 8am I.A. docket and 10am attorney docket in Joplin are cancelled.

There are 80 attorneys listed with the Court. There are approximately 55-60 attorneys with open cases. The Court saw an overall increase of 1,344 open attorney cases, as the number increased from 1,170 in 2017 to 2,514 open cases.

*Division IV Court*

The Joplin Municipal Court conducts court in two locations – Joplin and Carthage. This has been taking place since November of 2017.

The Division IV Judge has set aside one Thursday each month to hear Joplin Municipal cases in his Carthage court room. The senior sentencing clerk with the assistance of the court administrator, handles the monthly dockets in Carthage for the municipal court, as court files have to physically be present for the Judge's review, and hand-written judgment in each case.

As stated earlier, each month a Thursday morning docket does not take place in Joplin, as there is not enough staff allowing for simultaneous court dockets in both Joplin and Carthage.

The court staff prepares an average of approximately 300 cases for transport to the monthly hearings in Carthage. This is unique, as The Division IV Judge has confirmed that Joplin is the only Municipal Division within the circuit that has a full docket set aside for the hearing of "Change of Judge" cases.

There are a number of attorneys who consistently file motions for a Change of Judge. Within the group, there is one who has 82% of his cases under a "Change of Judge" status.

As of January 2019, there were 365 open cases under the jurisdiction of Division IV – with approximately 62% (226) being attributed to a single attorney.

To date, there are 310 open cases prepared for transport to Division IV, for the July 18, 2019 docket.

**CASE FLOW**

The following list depicts various totals for the Court during FY 2018. There were 10,626 new citations/violations filed with the court during FY 2018. This number represents new citations only. The clerk's workload also consists of handling reoccurring issues with case files that have not been closed. Cases that are not paid at the TVB (Traffic Violations Bureau) are circulated through the court office and handled by several clerks – before being closed. However, there are situations where closed cases are re-opened and recirculated.

There were 5,517 citations/violations completed (TVB & Judge). Of those 1,906 were paid through the TVB and 3,611 went before the Judge. Other completed cases totaled 5,891 (further explained on page 5). The grand total of completed cases numbered 11,408.

Completed cases are those that moved from a reoccurring status within the Court to a "Closed" status, and ultimately being stored for a retention period of either three, twelve, or fifty years in one of the two storage areas allotted for the municipal court. There is an onsite storage area in the court office. The other storage area is located at the 500 block of South Kentucky (City storage facility).

**INCODE REPORT OF CITATIONS / VIOLATIONS FY 2018**

*(SIMILAR INFORMATION IS SENT TO O.S.C.A. ON A MONTHLY BASIS)*

| | |
|---|---|
| Citations/ Violations by Filed Date | 10,626 |
| Citations/Violations Paid up Front (TVB) | 1,906 |
| Citations/Violations Before Judge(s) | 3,611 |
| Total Citations/Violations Completed | 5,517 |
| Total Other Completed | 5,891 |
| Grand Total Completed | 11,408 |
| Net difference (filed/completed) | -782 |
| Total Warrant Issued | 8,917 |
| Warrants Cleared | 9,084 |
| Change in Total Warrants (end of year) | -167 |
| Total Fines/Fees Paid | 1,190,779.67 |

**Notes concerning list/chart above**

**Total Other Completed** (**5,891**) are cases that have been completed by means other than the Judge (at the Bench) or TVB, such as: closed by administrative order; declined prosecution; nolle pros; closed by SIS; closed after suspension; or referred to county (see chart at the bottom of page).

**The following chart is the breakdown of the total number of new citations written by City departments during FY 2018, as recorded by the INCODE case management system.**

| **November '17 Through October '18** | **FY 2018** |
|---|---|
| Police (traffic, non-traffic, misc.) | 10,570 |
| Animal Control | 48 |
| Code Enforcement | 5 |
| Parking Authority | 0 |
| Other (Fire, Health Dept., Court) | 3 |
| Totals | 10,626 |

**Note: The Health Department issued one citation and the Court created two case files based on requests for the return of a firearm.**

**The next chart is a partial breakdown of cases that were not fully circulated through the municipal court (Total Other Completed, noted on page 4).**

| **Designated Status** | **FY 2018** |
|---|---|
| Declined Prosecution | 305 |
| Nolle | 2,206 |
| Referred to County | 51 |
| Voids | 188 |

Director Ratcliff answered questions of the city council following the report. The city council thanked Director Ratcliff for the report.

**Other Business:**

Mr. Stinnett stated the area on South Main Street from 15th St. to 20th is a disaster due to weeds overtaking some flower displays. He also stated there are weeds growing in the decorative rocks in area in Campbell Parkway. He asked the interim city manager if city staff can look into these issues.

Dr. Reid Adams asked for better signage at 32nd and Indiana to alert travelers of lane closures. City staff will look into it.

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Barbara Gollhofer, City Clerk