

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING ANNUAL REPORT OF CONNEAUT MUNICIPAL COURT FOR 2020

WHEREAS, In accordance with the provisions of Section 1901.14 of the Ohio Revised Code, Conneaut Municipal Court has filed with this Board their 2020 Annual Report as required by law; and

WHEREAS, Said report which shows the work performed by the court, a statement of receipts and expenditures of the civil and criminal branches, and the number of cases heard, decided and settled has been duly examined by this Board; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, By the Board of Commissioners of Ashtabula County, Ohio, that said report is hereby accepted and filed.

**ASHTABULA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CERTIFICATION PAGE**

Resolution No. 2021-137

March 30, 2021

**RESOLUTION ACCEPTING ANNUAL REPORT OF CONNEAUT MUNICIPAL COURT
FOR 2020**

Upon the motion of Casey R. Kozlowski, seconded by J.P. Ducro IV.

VOTE:

**Kathryn L. Whittington
J.P. Ducro IV
Casey R. Kozlowski**

**Aye
Aye
Aye**

CERTIFICATE OF CLERK

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of a resolution acted upon and duly passed by the Board of County Commissioners of Ashtabula County, Ohio, on the date noted above.



Crystal Sturgill, Clerk of the Board
Board of County Commissioners
Ashtabula County, Ohio

Nicholas A. Iarocci
Judge
Telephone (440) 593-7410

Julie Myers
Clerk
Telefax (440) 593-6402

Conneaut Municipal Court
Conneaut City Hall
290 Main Street
Conneaut, Ohio 44030



March 18, 2021

Ashtabula County Commissioner Casey Kozlowski
25 West Jefferson Street
Jefferson, Ohio 44047

RE: Conneaut Municipal Court Annual Report 2020

Dear Mr. Kozlowski:

Enclosed please find the Annual Report for the Conneaut Municipal Court for calendar year 2020, which is being sent to you pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 1901.14(A)(4).

Calendar year 2020 marked the 91st year of operations for the Conneaut Municipal Court. The Conneaut Municipal Court serves the City of Conneaut and Lake Erie to the Canadian Border and specifically, the following agencies: Conneaut City Police Department, Conneaut City Zoning Department, Ashtabula County Dog Warden, Ashtabula County Humane Society, Ashtabula County Sheriff's Department, Ohio Bureau of Employment, Ohio Department of Liquor Control, Ohio Department of Natural Resources – Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, Division of Watercraft, Division of Wildlife; Ohio Department of Public Safety, Ohio Department of Taxation, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Ashtabula County Metroparks and Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

As with all things in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically affected the operations of the Conneaut Municipal Court. The Court issued eleven (11) emergency orders in response to COVID-19 relating to Court operations. Even so, the Court experienced the following *increases* in cases disposed of by the Court when compared to 2019:

- 23.8% increase in the number of Felony Criminal cases
- 4.9% increase in the number of Misdemeanor Criminal cases
- 75% increase in the number of OVI cases

At the same time, the Court experienced the following *decreases* in cases disposed of by the Court when compared to 2019, much of which can be attributed to COVID-19 and the significant closure of the weigh scales at I-90 during the year:

- 38.9% decrease in the number of Traffic cases
- 38.7% decrease in the number of Civil cases
- 77.2% decrease in the number of Small Claims cases

A Criminal or Civil case imposes a greater burden on Court personnel than does a Traffic case. The Criminal Division imposes a greater burden on the Law Director's Office than does the Traffic Division. The Civil and Criminal Divisions of the Court never produce substantial revenue for the City, as can be the Traffic Division.

Under Title 19 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Conneaut Municipal Court created the Municipal Court Improvement Fund and Municipal Court Security Fund, which are court special project funds and referred locally by the Conneaut Finance Department as "214 Accounts." The monies in these Funds are financed entirely by court costs and are only disbursed by Court Order, and are not generally available to Conneaut City Council or the Board of Commissioners of Ashtabula County.

All of the computer, security, and video arraignment systems acquired by and maintained by the Conneaut Municipal Court have, for the last 29 years, been funded entirely from these special project funds, and no tax dollars or general revenue funds have been used to pay for the acquisition or maintenance of these systems. During the 29-year history of these Funds, the sum of \$1,635,349.13 has been spent out of said funds without any burden being placed on the City or the County's General Funds.

In 2019, the Conneaut Municipal Court employed five full-time and two part-time employees. In 2020 and at present, the Conneaut Municipal Court employs five full-time and one part-time staff who work in the Criminal, Civil and Traffic Divisions of the Court, and the Probation Department. The Court also created a court security division and hired two new part-time staff who provide security to the Court and all of City Hall. Of all Court employees, one full-time and two part-time staff (along with two other "on call" staff) provide security for the Court and City Hall.

Despite COVID-19, the Court has been very busy. The Court conducted three jury trials, one of which was conducted off-site at Corpus Christi Parish Center to allow for increased social distancing. This jury trial was the first off-site trial conducted by the Court in recent memory.

The Court makes note that it is preparing to transfer long overdue unpaid fine and cost accounts to the Ohio Attorney General Office for collection in 2021, which may explain the substantial reduction of the number of Financial Status and Review Hearings from 2019 to 2020.

As a result of the substantial cooperation and improved working relationship between the Court and City, many accomplishments and tasks have been completed in 2020. Much of this work was completed as a result of CARES Act/COVID-19 funding which the City received and

generously allocated to the Court, and the aggressive work of the Court to seek and obtain grant funding. The following represents the work and accomplishments completed by the Conneaut Municipal Court in 2020:

Courtroom Improvements

- Purchase and Installation of new BIS Recording System (obviating need for court reporter presence)
- Purchase and installation of new “Acoustical Systems” acoustical panels to improve sound quality
- Purchase and Installation of new lighting
- Clean up/reorganization of bench area
- Remove and dispose of antiquated video-conferencing equipment for Conneaut Jail inmates
- Purchase and Installation of three new laptops on bench and counsel tables to allow for recording and video-conference hearings for any reason
- Purchase and utilization of *whereby.com* to conduct video-conference hearings
- Redesign and construct a larger jury box, and installation of woodwork and chair rail throughout courtroom
- Purchase and installation of plexiglass in jury box, bench, counsel tables, witness stand, and Jury Room
- Purchase and installation of mounted camera and other software and equipment to LIVESTREAM all court proceedings on YouTube
- Purchase new furniture for Courtroom and Jury Room to allow for easier sanitization

Administrative Improvements

- Create Security and Health Screening Desk at Entrance of City Hall for the benefit of all City staff and offices, particularly for the operation of the Court, and retention of part-time court security officers to staff security desk
 - Purchase and installation of metal detection unit, thermal imaging camera/temperature unit, laptop, desk, and other items for court security
- Development and Adoption of:
 - Job Descriptions for Court Personnel (never previously existed)
 - Employee Handbook/Personnel Policy (never previously existed)
- Development and Adoption of:
 - New Local Rules of Court (effective March 2 and revised on October 13)
 - New Waiver Schedule – Traffic and Criminal Violations (effective June 1)
 - Civil Division Cost and Fee Schedule (effective June 1)
- Development and Adoption of (continued):
 - Criminal/Traffic Division Cost and Fee Schedule (effective June 1)
 - Court Forms (.pdf fill-in) commonly used by the parties
 - New Records Retention Policy (effective March 2)

- Revision and Update of Suspended License Intervention Program (SLIP)
- Revision and Update of First-Time Offender Program

Court Website

- Enhanced court website and made readily accessible on website Local Rules, Waiver and Cost Schedules, Court Forms, and other orders and developments of the Court

Specialized Docket Court

- Development and Adoption of Local Rules for “Renewal Court” Specialized Docket (Mental Health/Opioid Use/Substance Use Disorders) – to be implemented in 2022

Office

- Terminated long-time use of “paper” calendar system
- Developed and implemented Outlook calendar system for all cases and other court matters
- Retained new IT contractor to handle all IT work for court
- Purchase and installation of new server, Wi-Fi and Router for Court and Courtroom
- Established new server settings to save and share access to common documents
- Terminated use of expensive paper law book purchased and purchased less expensive Westlaw Online Legal Research
- Purchase and installation of air purifiers for office, probation office and courtroom
- Purchase of Cloroxpro Electrostatic Sprayer to disinfect courtroom and court hallway

Probation

- Improved Probation Complaints and other documents used by the Probation Department
- Developed Pretrial Assessment process for bond purposes

Grants

- Applied for and obtained emergency Ohio Supreme Court Remote Technology 2020 Grant for \$5,675.08 to purchase and install three new laptops for use in courtroom and Conneaut City Jail
- Applied for and obtained Ohio’s Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding (CESF) Grant for \$19,805.00 to purchase, install and implement Ohio Court Supervision Systems (OCSS) Probation Software and purchase several COVID items for use by the Probation Department and the Court.

I am pleased to report to you that the Conneaut Municipal Court will continue to serve our community by timely and correctly disposing of all cases filed with this Court. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this report, and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'N' followed by a horizontal line and a large loop.

Nicholas A. Iarocci, Judge

NAI/jam
Enclosures

**IN THE CONNEAUT MUNICIPAL COURT
CONNEAUT, OHIO
ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2020**

<u>CRIMINAL BRANCH</u> (Misdemeanors)	2020
Cases Pending January 1, 2020	06
Cases filed during year 2020	384
Cases transferred in or reactivated	83
Total cases for 2020	473
Cases pending December 31, 2020	02
Cases disposed of during year 2020	471
<u>CRIMINAL BRANCH</u> (Felonies)	
Cases pending January 1, 2020	04
Cases filed during year 2020	92
Cases transferred in or reactivated	47
Total cases for 2020	143
Cases pending December 31, 2020	03
Cases disposed of during year 2020	140
<u>TRAFFIC CASES</u>	
Cases pending January 1, 2020	14
Cases filed during year 2020	667
Cases transferred in or reactivated	47
Total cases for 2020	728
Cases pending December 31, 2020	06
Cases disposed of during year 2020	722
<u>OVI CASES</u>	
Cases pending January 1, 2020	00
Cases filed during year 2020	29
Cases transferred in or reactivated	00
Total cases for 2020	29
Cases pending December 31, 2020	01
Cases disposed of during year 2020	28
<u>CIVIL CASES</u>	
Cases pending January 1, 2020	66
Cases filed during year 2020	179
Cases transferred in or reactivated	0
Total cases for 2020	179
Cases pending December 31, 2020	55
Cases disposed of during year 2020	190
<u>SMALL CLAIMS DIVISION</u>	
Cases pending January 1, 2020	03
Cases filed during year 2020	13
Cases transferred in or reactivated	00
Total cases for 2020	16
Cases pending December 31, 2020	01
Cases disposed of during year 2020	15
TOTAL CASES DISPOSED OF DURING YEAR 2020	1,566

MISCELLANEOUS CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

2020

Preliminary Hearings	51
Search Warrants Issued	46
Cases appealed to Higher Court	00
Jury Trials	03
Extradition Proceedings	12
Rule (4) Bond Hearings	03
Financial Status and Review Hearings	32
Declarations of Forfeitures	90
Revocation Hearings	37
Expungements	02
Pre-trials	440
Trial	02

MISCELLANEOUS CIVIL PROCEEDINGS

Marriages	13
Judgment Debtors Examination	00
Landlord-Tenant Cases filed	42
Hearings on Motions	02
Cases Appealed to a Higher Court	00
Judgments Transferred In	00
Appeals (Bureau of Motor Vehicles)	01
Writs of Restitution Issued	20
Pre-trials	06

TRUSTEESHIP PROCEEDINGS

Trusteeships Pending January 1, 2020	01
Trusteeships Filed During Year 2020	00
Trusteeships on Docket During Year 2020	01
Trusteeships Dissolved During Year 2020	00
Trusteeships Pending December 31, 2020	01

ESCROW PROCEEDINGS

Escrows Filed During Year 2020	02
Escrows Dissolved During Year 2020	01
Escrows Pending December 31, 2020	01

CITY OF CONNEAUT ASHTABULA COUNTY
SUPPLEMENTAL SCHEDULE
DECEMBER 31, 2020

RECEIPTS	Undistributed Collections 12/31/2019	2020 Collections	Total To Distribute	Distributed To City	Distributed To County	Distributed To State	Distributed To Others	Adjustments	Undistributed Collections 12/31/2020
Criminal/Traffic	\$ 5,365.00	\$ 281,298.90	\$ 286,663.90	\$ 194,289.22	\$ 26,768.80	\$ 54,268.90	\$ 6,492.47		\$ 4,844.51
Civil	\$ 5,854.72	\$ 128,623.99	\$ 134,478.71	\$ 28,092.46	-	\$ 4,692.93	\$ 98,231.13		\$ 3,462.19
Trustee	\$ 390.00	\$ 780.00	\$ 1,170.00	-	-	-	-		\$ 1,170.00
	\$ 11,609.72	\$ 410,702.89	\$ 422,312.61	\$ 222,381.68	\$ 26,768.80	\$ 58,961.83	\$ 104,723.60	\$ -	\$ 9,476.70
DISTRIBUTION ALLOCATIONS:									
FINES & COSTS				\$ 132,749.82	\$ 23,518.80	\$ 15,855.00	\$ 6,492.47		
MUNICIPAL COURT IMPROVEMENT FUND				\$ 42,668.00					
MUNICIPAL COURT SECURITY FUND				\$ 1,500.00					
ADULT SUPERVISION FUND				\$ 6,085.00					
AUTOMATED PAYMENT FUND				\$ 4,009.50					
DUI JAIL RE-IMBURSEMENT				\$ 1,546.00					
DRUG CPD				\$ 65.00					
DUI EDUCATION FUND				\$ 689.00					
INDIGENT ALCOHOL INTERLOCK FUND				\$ 925.00					
PROBATION FUND				\$ 7,265.00					
INDIGENT ALCOHOL TREATMENT				\$ 720.00					
INDIGENT DRIVERS ALCOHOL TREATMENT				\$ 1,333.50					
SUSP LICENSE INTERVENTION PROGRAM				\$ 215.00					
NON-MOVING VIOLATIONS				\$ 1,068.40					
CIVIL COSTS				\$ 21,472.46		\$ 4,692.93			
WEDDINGS				\$ 70.00					
DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT						\$ 3,111.50			
INDIGENT DEFENSE SUPPORT						\$ 26,552.00			
ROTARY REPARATIONS						\$ 8,750.40			
TRUSTEE							\$ 98,231.13		
JUDGEMENTS									
JURY FEES					\$ 718.00				
PUBLIC DEFENDER				\$ 2,532.00					
Total			\$ 222,381.68	\$ 26,768.80	\$ 58,961.83	\$ 104,723.60	\$ -		

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