

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING ANNUAL REPORT OF CONNEAUT MUNICIPAL COURT FOR 2025

WHEREAS, In accordance with the provisions of Section 1901.14 of the Ohio Revised Code, Conneaut Municipal Court has filed with this Board their 2025 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. 2026-162

March 24, 2026

**RESOLUTION ACCEPTING ANNUAL REPORT OF CONNEAUT MUNICIPAL COURT
FOR 2025**

Upon the motion of J.P. Ducro IV, seconded by Kathryn L. Whittington.

VOTE:

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

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

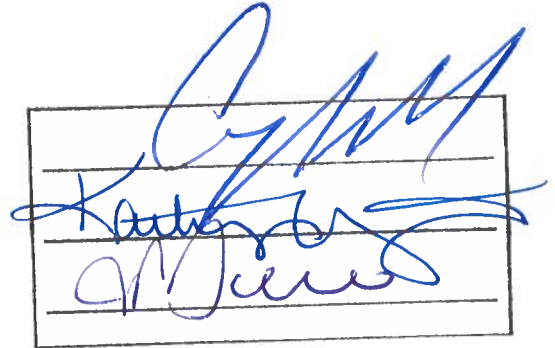
Nicholas A. Iarocci
Judge
Telephone (440) 593-7410

Angelina Vazquez
Clerk of Court
Telefax (440) 593-6402

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

March 17, 2026

Janet Discher
County Administrator
Board of Ashtabula County Commissioners
25 W. Jefferson Street
2nd Floor Old Courthouse
Jefferson, Oh 44047



**RE: Conneaut Municipal Court
2025 Annual Report**

Dear Ms. Discher:

Enclosed please find the Annual Report for the Conneaut Municipal Court for calendar year 2025, which is being sent to you pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 1901.14(A)(4).

Calendar year 2025 marked the 96th year of operations for the Conneaut Municipal Court. As you are aware, the Conneaut Municipal Court currently serves the City of Conneaut and Lake Erie to the Canadian Border, North Kingsville Village, Monroe Township, Kingsville Township, and Sheffield Township, and specifically, the following agencies: Conneaut City Police Department, North Kingsville Village Police Department, Ashtabula County Sheriff's Department, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Conneaut City Zoning Department, Ashtabula County Dog Warden, Ashtabula County Humane Society, 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, Ashtabula County Metroparks and Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

Court Staff

The composition of the Court staff in 2025 is as follows: Angelia Vazquez, Clerk of Court; Michelle Ross (transferred from Traffic Division to Criminal Division), Deputy Clerk – Criminal Division; Melissa Mott (replaced Lisa Talladino becoming the new Deputy Clerk – Traffic Division); Megan Lardi, Deputy Clerk – Civil Division; Shaun Benoit, Probation Officer; Jonathan Balcomb, Bailiff; and Stephanie Belconis, Renewal Court Coordinator. I am very pleased with the wonderful staff that is now serving the public at Conneaut Municipal Court.

In 2025, the Conneaut Municipal Court employed six full-time and one part-time staff who work in the Criminal, Civil and Traffic Divisions of the Court, the Probation Department and Security Division. In 2020, the Court created a Court Security Division and hired two additional 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. As a result of an agreement reached between the Court, the former City Manager and current Finance Director, the costs associated with employment of Court Security Staff are shared equally between the Court - utilizing the Special Project Funds discussed below - and the City of Conneaut.

Expansion of Court Jurisdiction

Effective January 1, 2025, and for the first time in the Court’s 96-year history, the jurisdiction of the Court was expanded beyond the City of Conneaut. H.B. 301 expanded the jurisdiction of Conneaut Municipal Court to include North Kingsville Village, Monroe Township, Kingsville Township, and Sheffield Township. The number of filings and cases handled by the Court as part of this report reflect in large part this jurisdictional expansion.

Number of Filings and Jury Trials

In 2025, the number of court filings (and a comparison with cases filed in 2024 and 2023, respectively) are as follows:

- **108** (83) (69) Felony Criminal cases (30+% **increase** over 2024)
- **325** (316) (313) Misdemeanor Criminal cases (3% **increase** over 2024)
- **51** (26) (20) OVI cases (51% **increase** over 2024)
- **1,091** (798) (910) Traffic cases (37% **increase** over 2024)
- **314** (279) (180) Civil cases (12.5+% **increase** over 2024)
- **15** (6) (9) Small Claims cases (150% **increase** over 2024)

In 2025, the Court conducted 6 jury trials, a slight decrease from the 7 jury trials that were conducted in 2024.

Special Projects Funds

Under Title 19 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Conneaut Municipal Court created the Municipal Court Improvement Fund and Municipal Court Security Fund, known as the Court Special Projects Funds and referred locally by the Conneaut Finance Department as “214 Accounts.” The monies in these Funds are financed entirely by court costs, are only disbursed by Court order, and are not generally available to Conneaut City Council or the Board of Commissioners of Ashtabula County. For the past 33 years, all the computer, security, and technology needs of the Court have been acquired, maintained and funded entirely from these Special Project Funds and other grant funds obtained by the Court, and no tax dollars or general revenue funds have been used to pay for the acquisition or maintenance of these items. During the 34-year history of the Court Improvement Fund and Municipal Court Security Fund, the sum of

\$2,130,268.23 has been utilized from such Funds without any burden being placed on the City or the County's General Funds.

Renewal Court

In 2023, the Court started a Specialized Docket known as "Renewal Court" with the goal of addressing the unique needs of offenders with mental health and/or substance abuse disorders that have contributed to an underlying criminal offense. On January 24, 2023, and with the considerable assistance of the Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board (MHRSB), Renewal Court received "Initial Certification" from the Ohio Supreme Court as a Substance Abuse Mental Illness (SAMI) specialized docket, one of only four SAMI courts in all of the State of Ohio. On June 7, 2023, Renewal Court received final certification from the Ohio Supreme Court.

To fund the salaries and costs associated with operation of Renewal Court, and with the continued assistance of the MHRSB, Conneaut Municipal Court, in August 2024, received Specialized Docket Subsidy Project grant funds from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) in the amount of \$35,000.00 for this state fiscal year. These funds are paying in part the salary of one of the Court's Probation Officers. Additionally, in January 2024, Conneaut Municipal Court received \$29,847.19 in Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) funds for fiscal year 2024. These funds will be used to pay the salary of the Renewal Court Coordinator. We are well on our way in accomplishing the goal to have operation of Renewal Court exclusively funded with grant funds.

Most recently, in November 2024, the Court received a \$30,000.00 grant from the OneOhio Recovery Foundation to be used over three years to purchase basic needs items for Renewal Court participants, such as personal hygiene products and toiletries, laundry detergent, as well as other necessary items such as phone cards, snacks, frames for certificates and picture albums, coffee mugs, planners, and school supplies.

Renewal Court has now conducted four graduations on April 4, 2024, August 8, 2024, July 10, 2025 and November 13, 2025. In roughly 3 years, Renewal Court has had 53 participants; 19 were successfully discharged; 9 unsuccessfully discharged; 4 neutrally discharged; 21 are currently in the program; and a few are pending admission. Renewal Court has a capacity of 25 participants. Stephanie Belconis, the former Felony Drug Court Coordinator for the Ashtabula County Common Pleas Court, serves as part-time Renewal Court Coordinator and has done an outstanding job.

Livestreaming and Video Remote Proceedings

Conneaut Municipal Court is one of a very small number of courts in all of Ohio to livestream criminal court proceedings. Since February 2021, Conneaut Municipal Court has been committed to transparency and ensuring that the community is able to view and have virtual access to the criminal court proceedings being conducted in its local courtroom. The Court's YouTube channel at [conneautohmunicipalcourt](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCconneautohmunicipalcourt) has proven to be very popular, having as of the date of this letter over 2,400 subscribers. In addition, the Court also conducts a substantial number of video

remote proceedings. Video remote proceedings of those charged with a crime and who are incarcerated saves significant staff time and expense and protects public safety from having the inmate transported to Court. In 2020, Conneaut Municipal Court conducted 290 video remote hearings; in 2021, 350 video remote hearings; in 2022, 415 video remote hearings; in 2023, 336 video remote hearings; in 2024, 324 video hearings; and in 2025, 402 video remote hearings. The Court is able to conduct livestreaming and video remote hearings as a result of grants the Court has received in the past for technology upgrades.

E-Filing, Website and On-Line Payments

In May 2025, the Ohio Supreme Court awarded Conneaut Municipal Court with its 2025 Technology Grant in the amount of \$23,595 for the purchase and implementation of E-filing as part of the Court's existing case management system. Installation and implementation of E-filing in Conneaut Municipal Court was substantially completed in 2025 and will be finalized in the first quarter of 2026. The E-filing system allows parties to electronically file documents. As part of the improvement of the Court's case management system, a new website was created and payments to the Court can now be processed on-line by accessing the Court's website at https://www.conneautohio.gov/departments/conneaut_municipal_court/index.php.

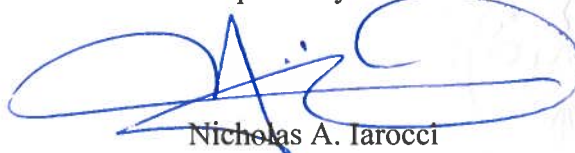
Collections

In 2025, I instituted a different hearing process to address the payment of outstanding fines and costs in criminal and traffic cases. It appears that the process is working. **In 2024, the Court collected \$269,924.08 in fines and costs. In 2025, the Court collected \$405,899.59, which represents an increase of over 50% from 2024, additional revenue in the amount of \$135,975.51.**

While we have every intention of implementing and utilizing in 2025 and 2026 the Ohio Attorney General Office (OAG) for collection of unpaid fines and costs when the new Clerk staff becomes more acclimated to their positions, the different hearing process employed by the Court in 2025 is paying dividends in the way of collections.

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,



Nicholas A. Iarocci
Judge

NAI/av
Enclosure

**IN THE CONNEAUT MUNICIPAL COURT
CONNEAUT, OHIO
ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2025**

<u>CRIMINAL BRANCH</u> (Misdemeanors)	2025
Cases Pending January 1, 2025	18
Cases filed during year 2025	325
Cases transferred in or reactivated	15
Total cases for 2025	358
Cases pending December 31, 2025	16
Cases disposed of during year 2025	342
<u>CRIMINAL BRANCH</u> (Felonies)	
Cases pending January 1, 2025	00
Cases filed during year 2025	108
Cases transferred in or reactivated	05
Total cases for 2025	113
Cases pending December 31, 2025	08
Cases disposed of during year 2025	105
<u>TRAFFIC CASES</u>	
Cases pending January 1, 2025	16
Cases filed during year 2025	1,091
Cases transferred in or reactivated	06
Total cases for 2025	1,113
Cases pending December 31, 2025	15
Cases disposed of during year 2025	1098
<u>OVI CASES</u>	
Cases pending January 1, 2025	00
Cases filed during year 2025	51
Cases transferred in or reactivated	00
Total cases for 2025	51
Cases pending December 31, 2025	01
Cases disposed of during year 2025	50
<u>CIVIL CASES</u>	
Cases pending January 1, 2025	89
Cases filed during year 2025	314
Cases transferred in or reactivated	01
Total cases for 2025	404
Cases pending December 31, 2025	127
Cases disposed of during year 2025	277
<u>SMALL CLAIMS DIVISION</u>	
Cases pending January 1, 2025	00
Cases filed during year 2025	15
Cases transferred in or reactivated	00
Total cases for 2025	15
Cases pending December 31, 2025	01
Cases disposed of during year 2025	14
TOTAL CASES DISPOSED OF DURING YEAR 2025	1,878

MISCELLANEOUS CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS**2025**

Preliminary Hearings	09
Search Warrants Issued	67
Cases appealed to Higher Court	03
Jury Trials	06
Extradition Proceedings	06
Rule (4) Bond Hearings	01
Financial Status and Review Hearings	109
Declarations of Forfeitures	66
Revocation Hearings	28
Expungements	08
Pre-trials	552
Trial	35

MISCELLANEOUS CIVIL PROCEEDINGS

Marriages	29
Judgment Debtors Examination	00
Landlord-Tenant Cases filed	60
Hearings on Motions	129
Cases Appealed to a Higher Court	01
Judgments Transferred In	00
Appeals (Bureau of Motor Vehicles)	04
Writs of Restitution Issued	19
Pre-trials	52

TRUSTEESHIP PROCEEDINGS

Trusteeships Pending January 1, 2025	01
Trusteeships Filed During Year 2025	00
Trusteeships on Docket During Year 2025	01
Trusteeships Dissolved During Year 2025	00
Trusteeships Pending December 31, 2025	01

ESCROW PROCEEDINGS

Escrows Filed During Year 2025	00
Escrows Dissolved During Year 2025	00
Escrows Pending December 31, 2025	00