

**RESOLUTION ACCEPTING ANNUAL REPORT OF CONNEAUT MUNICIPAL COURT FOR 2021**

WHEREAS, In accordance with the provisions of Section 1901.14 of the Ohio Revised Code, Conneaut Municipal Court has filed with this Board their 2021 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. 2022-197**

**April 05, 2022**

**RESOLUTION ACCEPTING ANNUAL REPORT OF CONNEAUT MUNICIPAL COURT  
FOR 2021**

**Upon the motion of Kathryn L. Whittington, seconded by Casey R. Kozlowski.**

**VOTE:**

**J.P. Ducro IV**

**Casey R. Kozlowski**

**Kathryn L. Whittington**

**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.



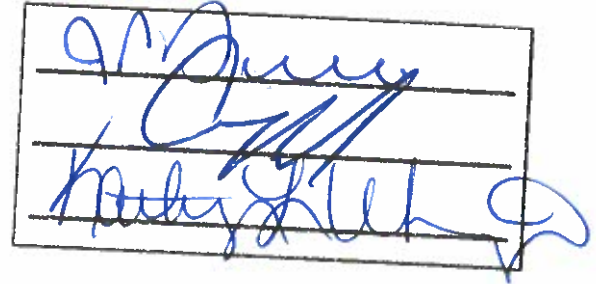
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Lisa Hawkins, Clerk of the Board  
Board of County Commissioners  
Ashtabula County, Ohio

*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 21, 2022

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

**RE: Conneaut Municipal Court 2021 Annual Report**

Dear Commissioner Kozlowski:

Enclosed please find the Annual Report for the Conneaut Municipal Court for calendar year 2021, which is being sent to you pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 1901.14(A)(4).

Calendar year 2021 marked the 92<sup>nd</sup> 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 2021, the continuing COVID-19 pandemic dramatically affected the operations of the Court. In 2021, the Court issued four (4) additional emergency orders relating to Court operations (for a total of fifteen (15) orders issued in 2020 and 2021) in response to COVID-19. In 2021, COVID-19 has also significantly affected the number of the cases filed with and disposed of by the Court when compared to 2020 (changes comparing 2020 and 2019), as follows:

- 5.7% decrease in the number of Felony Criminal cases (23.8% increase)
- 25% decrease in the number of Misdemeanor Criminal cases (4.9% increase)
- 25% decrease in the number of OVI cases (75% increase)
- 6.1% increase in the number of Traffic cases (38.9% decrease)
- 3.2% increase in the number of Civil cases (38.7% decrease)
- 13.3% decrease in the number of Small Claims cases (77.2% decrease)

While a small increase in Traffic cases was experienced in 2021, closure of the weigh scales at I-90 during the year resulted in a reduced number of cases in comparison to prior calendar years. In addition, and as a direct result of COVID-19, the Court conducted only one jury trial in 2021.

I believe it is important to note that more than 40 criminal cases filed against Norfolk and Southern Railroad by the City of Conneaut have been stayed by the Court, and have remained pending for several months since the Ohio Supreme Court is considering the issue of federal preemption over local regulation of railroads. The Ohio Supreme Court will be rendering a decision on this issue in the near future and will have a direct impact on the cases filed with the Court. The pending cases before the Court will not be disposed until after the Supreme Court issues its decision, which is expected sometime in 2022.

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 30 years, all of 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 30-year history of the Court Improvement Fund and Municipal Court Security Fund, the sum of \$1,727,934.55 has been utilized from such Funds without any burden being placed on the City or the County’s General Funds.

In 2021, the Conneaut Municipal Court employed five 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 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. As a result of an agreement reached between the Court, City Manager and Finance Director, the costs associated with employment of Court Security Staff are shared equally between the Court - utilizing the Special Project Funds - and the City of Conneaut.

The Court makes note that it intends to transfer long overdue unpaid fine and cost accounts to the Ohio Attorney General Office for collection in late 2022 or 2023. The only problem associated with completing this task is the Court’s current Case Management System (CMS) with Civica. The current CMS does not allow for such transfer. As explained below, the Court is

hopeful that the substantial upgrade to the current CMS as a result of the Court obtaining a significant grant from the Ohio Supreme Court will better facilitate the transfer of such accounts.

The Court's aggressive efforts to obtain grant funds to improve the operations of the Court continue. On May 18, 2021, Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor notified me that the Court was a recipient of the 2021 Ohio Supreme Court Technology Grant Fund. Funds for this grant are made available under the Ohio Courts Technology Initiative established to facilitate the exchange of information and warehousing of data by and between Ohio courts and other justice system partners, to deliver technology goods and services to courts, operate the Commission on Technology and the Courts, and to aid in the orderly adoption and comprehensive use of technology in Ohio courts.

The Court was awarded a total grant award from the Supreme Court for \$95,005.00 for two separate projects for which the Court applied. The first project, which will be fully funded by the grant in the amount of \$72,794.00, involves a significant upgrade to the Court existing CMS with Civica. The project will dramatically modernize an outdated CMS and substantially improve efficiencies in the Clerk's office. The upgrade of the current aged CMS software with a modern, more efficient system will enable the Court to:

- Manage cases with less effort and in a more intuitive manner;
- Reduce pressure on staff and resources by streamlining and improving the time to process case management, thus decreasing operational costs;
- Decrease the risk of human error and improve data accuracy; and
- Produce timely, better-informed and more accurate reports.

More importantly, the upgraded CMS will substantially assist Court staff and improve public service by allowing staff access to frequently requested information and/or functions via a web-based portal.

The second project, which was fully funded by the grant in the amount of \$22,211.00, involves a substantial upgrade to the panic alarm system in all of Conneaut City Hall and the Court which is located on the second floor of City Hall. The security system and equipment, known as the Centurion Elite Notification System, is manufactured by Ohio-based company Response Technologies which has installed similar equipment in many courts and public buildings in the State of Ohio and across the country. The Centurion Elite Notification System utilizes wireless panic alarms which, when activated, send location specific messages directly to law enforcement radios accelerating response time. Along with two-way radio capability, the system can send text, email, and calls to phones and create computer pop-ups to building personnel. The system, which was installed throughout all of City Hall in the Summer of 2021, integrates with existing camera and security equipment in City Hall. There are no reoccurring fees or third-party involvement as the system would remain the property of the Court and City. Each panic alarm sensor also communicates with the main Centurion Elite to notify the City's system administrator of a low battery, tamper, or removal of a device without delay adding to the reliability that lacks with our current duress alarm system. Sensors were strategically placed in several locations in the Court and City Hall.

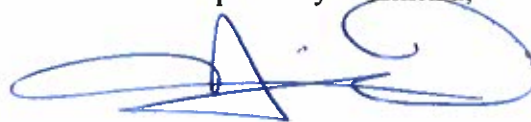
Since becoming Conneaut Municipal Court Judge on January 1, 2020, the Court has been able to secure for the Court **four separate grants** in the total amount of **\$120,485.00** for various technology upgrades to Court operations.

Finally, I wanted to inform you that I intend to start a Specialized Docket known as "Renewal Court" in 2023 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, while increasing the likelihood of future criminal justice involvement. There are many logistical challenges that the Court faces in starting this Specialized Docket, which I have been working on since I became Judge. I have been working with the Mental Health and Recovery Services Board, and with the assistance of MHRSB we expect that the Renewal Court will be exclusively funded with grant monies. The one key obstacle that exists in operating Renewal Court is that we have very little space in City Hall in which to do so. I am hopeful that City Manager Hockaday and I can tackle and overcome these challenges.

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,



Nicholas A. Iarocci  
Judge

NAI/jam  
Enclosures

**IN THE CONNEAUT MUNICIPAL COURT  
CONNEAUT, OHIO  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2021**

<b><u>CRIMINAL BRANCH</u></b> (Misdemeanors)	<b>2021</b>
Cases Pending January 1, 2021	02
Cases filed during year 2021	317
Cases transferred in or reactivated	54
Total cases for 2021	373
Cases pending December 31, 2021	20
Cases disposed of during year 2021	353
<b><u>CRIMINAL BRANCH</u></b> (Felonies)	
Cases pending January 1, 2021	03
Cases filed during year 2021	102
Cases transferred in or reactivated	37
Total cases for 2021	142
Cases pending December 31, 2021	10
Cases disposed of during year 2021	132
<b><u>TRAFFIC CASES</u></b>	
Cases pending January 1, 2021	06
Cases filed during year 2021	740
Cases transferred in or reactivated	35
Total cases for 2021	781
Cases pending December 31, 2021	12
Cases disposed of during year 2021	769
<b><u>OVI CASES</u></b>	
Cases pending January 1, 2021	01
Cases filed during year 2021	20
Cases transferred in or reactivated	00
Total cases for 2021	21
Cases pending December 31, 2021	00
Cases disposed of during year 2021	21
<b><u>CIVIL CASES</u></b>	
Cases pending January 1, 2021	55
Cases filed during year 2021	217
Cases transferred in or reactivated	00
Total cases for 2021	272
Cases pending December 31, 2021	65
Cases disposed of during year 2021	207
<b><u>SMALL CLAIMS DIVISION</u></b>	
Cases pending January 1, 2021	01
Cases filed during year 2021	12
Cases transferred in or reactivated	00
Total cases for 2021	13
Cases pending December 31, 2021	00
Cases disposed of during year 2021	13
<b>TOTAL CASES DISPOSED OF DURING YEAR 2021</b>	<b>1,495</b>

**MISCELLANEOUS CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS****2021**

Preliminary Hearings	64
Search Warrants Issued	49
Cases appealed to Higher Court	02
Jury Trials	01
Extradition Proceedings	05
Rule (4) Bond Hearings	01
Financial Status and Review Hearings	27
Declarations of Forfeitures	26
Revocation Hearings	54
Expungements	02
Pre-trials	376
Trial	07

**MISCELLANEOUS CIVIL PROCEEDINGS**

Marriages	09
Judgment Debtors Examination	00
Landlord-Tenant Cases filed	58
Hearings on Motions	06
Cases Appealed to a Higher Court	00
Judgments Transferred In	00
Appeals (Bureau of Motor Vehicles)	02
Writs of Restitution Issued	28
Pre-trials	16

**TRUSTEESHIP PROCEEDINGS**

Trusteeships Pending January 1, 2021	01
Trusteeships Filed During Year 2021	00
Trusteeships on Docket During Year 2021	01
Trusteeships Dissolved During Year 2021	00
Trusteeships Pending December 31, 2021	01

**ESCROW PROCEEDINGS**

Escrows Filed During Year 2021	01
Escrows Dissolved During Year 2021	01
Escrows Pending December 31, 2021	00

CITY OF CONNEAUT ASHTABULA COUNTY  
 SUPPLEMENTAL SCHEDULE  
 DECEMBER 31, 2021

RECEIPTS	Undistributed Collections 12/31/2020	2021 Collections	Total To Distribute	Distributed To City	Distributed To County	Distributed To State	Distributed To Others	Adjustments	Undistributed Collections 12/31/2021	
Criminal/Traffic	\$	4,785.00	\$ 304,495.91	\$ 309,280.91	\$ 188,747.80	\$ 41,928.00	\$ 58,213.63	\$ 14,947.48	\$ (102.00)	\$ 5,342.00
Civil	\$	3,462.19	\$ 112,845.68	\$ 116,307.87	\$ 37,262.28	\$ -	\$ 5,664.72	\$ 70,684.99	\$ 96.55	\$ 2,792.43
Trustee	\$	1,170.00	\$ 715.00	\$ 1,885.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 650.00	\$ -	\$ 1,235.00
	\$	9,417.19	\$ 418,056.59	\$ 427,473.78	\$ 226,010.08	\$ 41,928.00	\$ 63,878.35	\$ 86,282.47	\$ (5.45)	\$ 9,369.43
DISTRIBUTION ALLOCATIONS:										
FINES & COSTS				\$ 123,908.18	\$ 38,808.00	\$ 19,969.00	\$ 14,947.48	\$ (5.45)		
MUNICIPAL COURT IMPROVEMENT FUND				\$ 43,752.67						
MUNICIPAL COURT SECURITY FUND				\$ 1,474.00						
ADULT SUPERVISION FUND				\$ 6,226.50						
AUTOMATED PAYMENT FUND				\$ 4,161.50						
DUI JAIL REIMBURSEMENT				\$ 1,564.00						
DRUG CPD				\$ -						
DUI EDUCATION FUND				\$ 663.00						
INDIGENT ALCOHOL INTERLOCK FUND				\$ 850.00						
PROBATION FUND				\$ 10,847.00						
INDIGENT ALCOHOL TREATMENT				\$ 620.00						
INDIGENT DRIVERS ALCOHOL TREATMENT				\$ 1,361.29						
SUSP LICENSE INTERVENTION PROGRAM				\$ 150.00						
NON-MOVING VIOLATIONS				\$ 1,019.66						
CIVIL COSTS				\$ 29,272.28		\$ 5,664.72				
WEDDINGS				\$ 140.00						
DRUG LAW ENFORCEMENT						\$ 3,176.35				
INDIGENT DEFENSE SUPPORT						\$ 26,297.28				
ROTARY REPARATIONS						\$ 8,771.00				
TRUSTEE							\$ 650.00			
JUDGEMENTS/RENT							\$ 70,684.99			
JURY FEES										
PUBLIC DEFENDER										
Total			\$ 226,010.08	\$ 41,928.00	\$ 63,878.35	\$ 86,282.47	\$ (5.45)		\$ -	