3B District Court Annual Report 2024

3B District Court Staff:

Chief Judge/Presiding District Judge: Robert K. Pattison *(Term expires 2029)*

Chief Judge Pro-Tem: Jeffrey C. Middleton *(Term expires: 2027)*

Court Administrator/Magistrate: Tabitha Wedge *(hired 1987)* **Magistrate:** Luke Lori *(hired 2023)*

Probation Officer/Magistrate: Autumne Keifer *(hired 2014)*

Probation Officers: Daniel Frazine *(hired 2015),* Matthew Huff *(hired 2020)*

Judicial Secretaries/Court Recorders: Lori Rumsey *(hired 1991)* Laura Moore *(hired 2021)*

Deputy Clerks:

Michelle Baker *(hired 2013),* Sara Troyer *(hired 2017 resigns 2024),* Jenny Hagner *(hired 2019),*
Guadalupe Seymour *(hired 2021),* Priscilla (Macias) Walton *(hired 2021),* Shayna Hovarter *(hired 2021),*
Kim Steele *(hired April 2022),* Lisa Shugars *(hired September 2022)* Elaine Gibson *(hired Jan 2024)*
Stephanie Moore *(hired October 2024)* **Part-time Deputy Clerk:** Ella Yunker *(December 2024)*

3B District Court Highlights

"Some" Unexpected:

- Deputy Clerk resigns position and transfers to Friend of Court.
- Continued Clerical vacancies impact court hiring, training and case processing times.
- Clerical staff transition to different departmental areas of the court.
- Three employees have expectant newborns and a clerical staff member is on a twelve week maternity leave.
- Judge Pattison becomes the Chief Judge/Presiding Judge of District Court.
- Deputy Court Administrator's position is approved and development of a job description.

- Judge Pattison's Courts in Schools Program continues with plans to resume. The program includes assistance from Probation Officer/Magistrate Autumne Keifer. This program is designed to show local high school students a real court session, combined with information on the consequences of substance use and driving under the influence.
- Judge Middleton and Judge Pattison fulfill service assignments to other courts upon disqualification requests through Sate Court Administrator Office (SCAO).
- Tabitha Wedge continues to serve on the Michigan Court Administration's Association (MCAA) Board as Treasurer. She holds several Chairperson positions representing Court Administration on committees, maintains the Association website and actively assists with the planning and overseeing of the annual conference.
- Tabitha Wedge graduates the Certified Court Executive program. It is a partnership with the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) and the Michigan Court Administration Association (MCAA) to provide an affordable in–state opportunity for court managers.
- Judges, Administrator, Magistrates, Probation Officers and Clerks continue to take advantage of trainings and networking opportunities available through yearly Association related conferences, State Court Administrator and Michigan Judicial Institute trainings.
- Judge Middleton, Judge Pattison and Autumne Keifer remain active participants with the Community Corrections Advisory Board.
- Autumne Keifer and Luke Lori serve on the Twin County Community Probation Center (TCCPC) Board.
- Courthouse building renovation planning discussions continue.

3B District Court Caseload Dashboard

Non-Traffic Case Filing 2022-2024

Case Type	2022	2023	2024
Felony	1143	1174	905
Misdemeanors	1481	1207	1306
Civil Infractions	907	896	608
Totals	***3531***	***3277***	***2819***

Traffic Case Filing 2022-2024

Case Type	2022	2023	2024
Misdemeanor & Civil Infractions	5472	6505	6055
Parking	18	22	23
OWI	219	204	178
Totals	***5709***	***6731***	***6256***

Civil Case Filing 2022-2024

Note: Legislation guidelines and COVID restrictions impacted Landlord-Tenant case processing

Case Type	2022	2023	2024
Civil	1748	1735	2425
Small Claims	137	144	122
Summary	580	509	459
Totals	***2465***	***2388***	***3006***

Warrant Activity 2024

Search Warrants Issued: 330

Criminal Arrest Warrants Issued:

Felony: 229 *Misdemeanor: 336*

Bench Warrants Issued: 269

New/Revised Legislation Impacts:

- Landlord -Tenant Case Handling
- Small Claims amounts increase
- Clean Slate Set Aside continues
- Michigan Judicial Continued Education Credits
- Extreme Risk Personal Protection Orders (ERPO)

3B District Court Sobriety Treatment Court

The 3B District Court Sobriety Court continues to operate as a certified Sobriety Court through the State Court Administrative Office. The Sobriety Court receives:

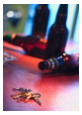
- Public Act 2 prevention funding provided for ignition interlock device installations for participants who qualify to have a restricted license in Michigan and alcohol/drug testing required by Sobriety Court guidelines.
- Michigan Drug Court Grant to assist with financial assistance for Luke Nofsinger, who serves as Defense Counsel, and D. Spencer Price who facilitates a weekly SUD CBT group to address criminogenic needs or risk factors that affect recidivism.

The goal of the sobriety-specialty courts is to reduce recidivism by providing participants with access to treatment, intensive supervision, and judicial review, for the purpose of maintaining long term recovery from substance use and increase public safety. The four-phase program takes, at minimum, 12 months to complete and participants are required to engage in treatment, attend recovery support groups, and complete community service, in addition to the court obligations of reporting to probation, reviews with the judge, and testing for drugs and alcohol.

New Participants in 2024—# 8

Successful Completions in 2024– # 9

Unsuccessful Discharges in 2024– # 1 (noncompliant)



Sobriety Court Team Members:

Jeffrey C. Middleton – District Judge
Autumne Keifer – District Court Probation Officer
Matthew Huff – District Court Probation Officer
Daniel Frazine – District Court Probation Officer
Pam Kiser – Day Reporting Center/Twin County Community Probation Center
Melissa Bliss – Community Corrections/SOBC Program Coordinator
Luke Nofsinger – Defense Counsel
D. Spencer Price –Private Treatment Provider
Betsy Wright– CMHSAS/Treatment Provider

On-site certification audit 2024; Program received certification thru 2028

3B District Court Financial Dashboard

2024 Revenue Collections

Caseflow Asst-OWI	$	7,034.96
Caseflow Asst-Drug	$	
Victim Rights Program-DC **	$	5,400.53
Court Costs**	$	174,798.95
Reimbursed Court Appt Attorney	$	34,907.34
Civil Fees (Various)	$	65,385.00
Civil Fees (Filing) **	$	62,946.00
Contempt Charges	$	250.00
Miscellaneous Revenue	$	24,798.50
Oversight Fees	$	46,014.95
Screening Fees	$	6,916.00
Bond Forfeitures	$	100.00
Ordinance Fines **	$	72,963.50
Interest CD	$	213.65
Cash Short/Over	$	-12.06
County Booking Fee	$	40.00
State Booking Fee	$	8.00
DC Jury Fees	$	80.00
Yearly Total:	$	501,845.32

***Indicates money collected is different than the portion that is retained at the county. Note: Court revenue figures may differ slightly from County records as they are generated yearly from January-December and may reflect credits and/or necessary adjustments that have been made.*

TOTAL FEES COLLECTED THRU THE 3B DISTRICT COURT FOR 2024:

Fees: $1,214,371.09
Bonds: $153,132.92
Witness/Jury Received: $2,740.80

2024 Total Monies handled through the Court: $1,370,244.81

Distribution of Various Court Revenue

The **State of Michigan** receives the following revenues from court cases:

- $40 from each traffic civil infraction.
- $10 from each non-traffic civil infraction.
- $50 costs and $75 Crime Victim Rights fee on each misdemeanor (changed effective 4/1/12).
- 56% - 79% from each civil case filing fee (depending on the case value).
- $10 from each $20 motion fee.

County Library Fund *receives the penal fine portion of assessments on all cases written under state law.*
Municipalities: Cities, Villages, Townships *receive 1/3 of the fine/cost assessments on cases written under ordinance violations.*

The majority of other revenue collected goes to St. Joseph County.

Credit Card Revenue: The court uses Allpaid, formerly Government Payment Services, and Fivepoint to accept credit card payments.

◊ Allpaid allows for payments to be made 24 hours a day, by telephone or online.

◊ Fivepoint allows for payments to be made online, the District Court counter or KIOSK area.

◊ *The Court is working to provide software programming changes to the Case Management System to allow payments to post to the cases from the online case viewing website.*

Total Credit Card Payments:
$ 471,842.46
Total Credit Card Transactions: 4401

3B District Court Probation 2024 Statistics:

Each Probation Officer is assigned individual clients resulting in direct supervision responsibilities. These include Alcohol/Drug testing orders, fees being paid, work history and meeting with probationers on a regular basis. Oversight fees are charged as an expense to monitor the defendant placed on a probation term. Screening fees are an additional requirement for various Alcohol and Drug convictions. Both of these fees are not subject to a State Breakdown and the monies collected are 100% payable to the County Funding Unit.

January 1st: Number of Adult Probationers 342

Between January 1st-December 31st: Number of Probationers entering 197

Between January 1st-December 31st: Number of Probationers Discharged 219

Breakdown Offenses for December 31st Probationers:

****Felony reduction offenses: 24***

****Misdemeanor offenses: 296***

Breakdown of Probationers Serious Offense Categories: ***Total: 320***

Drug Law Violation: 23 ***Operate while Intoxicated 98*** ***Other offenses: 199***

2024 Procedural, Operational & Legislation Highlights

District Court continues to face challenges throughout 2024:

***Hiring, training and transitioning of clerical staff positions*
***Short-staff with vacant clerical position until end of October 2024*
***Judicial Secretary/Court Recorder submits retirement notice for January 2025*
***Staff members are out on Family Medical Leave-maternity and paternity*
***Learning curve for conducting daily business after Juvenile/Probate and Friend Court transition to Three Rivers Court Building*
***Court participates in the National Center for State Court (NCSC) and State Court Administrators Office (SCAO) weighted caseload study*
***Board of Commissioners approve development and hiring of Deputy Court Administrator position*
***Court agrees to conduct a Mock Trial in 2025 for Home-schooled 8th Graders. Judge Middleton to oversee and judge performance*

Court Building Renovations:

**Planning and development phases begin with all affected departments
**Phasing and beginning steps continue for remodeling phase

Three Rivers Court Building:

**May 2024 marked the date the Juvenile/Probate and Friend of the Court relocated

Legislation Changes, Operational Administrative and Staff Knowledge Responsibilities :

***Alternative Funding for Trial Court-Implementation of Teams each with specific goals*
-Operational Costs Funding, Funding Distribution, Uniform Assessments & Indigency Determination and Collections systems
***Landlord Tenant case handling, court hearings and service requirements evolve increasing staff responsibilities*
***Clean Slate—Set Aside Legislation continues which increases staff responsibilities and required realignment of computer data to Michigan State Police records for data accuracy*
***Continued Judicial Education Program begins January 2024 requiring additional continued education certification credits for Judges and Magistrates*
***Multiple Court Rule & Administrative Order amendments throughout the year*
***Constant flow for amended and new form(s) with implementation and expiration date requirements*

Technology:

***Onbase upgrade planning due to Juvenile/Probate Court continues*
***Additional court cell phones necessary as County implements cellular and email security changes*
***County Email domain changes for everyone from .org to .gov*
***AI workforce with court representation begins*

Other:

***August primary for the St. Joseph County Sheriff and the Prosecutor and its impact on operations*