

Justice Court

Department Overview

Gallatin County has two Justice Courts, Department 1 and Department 2, each one administered by a full-time Justice of the Peace Judge. Justice Court is the venue responsible for original jurisdiction of all civil and criminal cases outside the city limits of Bozeman. The two courts provide an effective and efficient court system for the residents of the County through dedicated staff and efficient management, while being fiscally responsible within the allocated budget.

Gallatin County Justice Court is divided into three divisions: Criminal, Civil and Small Claims. Each Department handles all the divisions and below is a brief overview of each of the divisions.

The criminal division handles citations issued by the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office, Fish and Game, Highway Patrol, Airport and the Department of Transportation. The Court is also responsible for seeing people making their initial appearance on felony charges.

The civil division of Justice Court handles orders of protections, landlord/tenant disputes and contract disputes. The amount in dispute cannot exceed \$12,000.

Justice Court's small claims division handles contracts involving the recovery of money or recovery of specific personal property. The total amount cannot exceed \$7,000.

Given the potential of the sizeable workload increase of civil and criminal matters, Justice Court will need to continue to operate with two (2) full-time Justice of the Peace Judges for FY 2014. However, the two courts have historically operated below the authorized budget for personnel and operations since the establishment of two full-time judges in FY 2005.

Department Goals

- To increase the quality of services through education, training, and technology.
- Insure staff is helpful, friendly, and accurate in their dealings with the public.
- More efficient use of video arraignments via VisionNet© and SKYPE whenever appropriate.
- Continued bi-annual training for both Judges and Clerks.
- Move forward in implementing technology into the courts' operations as it becomes feasible and applicable.

Recent Accomplishments

- Updated the Courtroom technology so defendants can now make court appearances via SKYPE.
- Worked with the IT department to add updated documents to our website.
- Rewrote our mission statement to more accurately reflect Gallatin County Justice Court.
- Worked with the Gallatin County Sheriff's Office to open the lines of communication and ensure all paperwork for Orders for Protection, are carried out efficiently and correctly.
- Implemented additional training for the Supervisors and Clerks by taking advantage of the Strategic Government Resources Training.
- Implementation of Overdue Processing, a computer program that expedites collections of over-due fines.
- Activation of comprehensive case management software with jury module to accelerate the yearly jury-summons process.
- Increased use of Community Mediation Center in civil cases, resulting in an 85% settlement rate.
- On the job training for clerks on a twice a year basis.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Justice Court

Department Budget

Object of Expenditure	Actual FY 2012	BDUGET FY 2013	Actual FY 2013	Request FY 2014	Preliminary FY 2014	BDUGET FY 2014
Personnel	\$ 532,759	\$ 553,347	\$ 534,700	\$ 560,773	\$ 566,083	\$ 580,786
Operations	115,350	130,781	125,211	130,199	130,199	130,199
Debt Service	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Outlay	-	10,458	3,903	6,555	6,555	6,555
Transfers Out	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 648,109	\$ 694,586	\$ 663,814	\$ 697,527	\$ 702,837	\$ 717,540

Budget by Fund Group

General Fund	\$ 648,109	\$ 694,586	\$ 663,814	\$ 697,527	\$ 702,837	\$ 717,540
Special Revenue Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debt Service Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Project Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enterprise Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internal Service Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Trust & Agency Funds	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	\$ 648,109	\$ 694,586	\$ 663,814	\$ 697,527	\$ 702,837	\$ 717,540

Funding Sources

Tax Revenues	\$ 119,272	\$ 220,964	\$ 218,754	\$ 178,213	\$ 180,547	\$ 194,951
Non-Tax Revenues	513,110	388,415	69,800	490,660	453,999	467,469
Cash Reappropriated	15,727	85,207	375,260	28,654	68,291	55,120
Total	\$ 648,109	\$ 694,586	\$ 663,814	\$ 697,527	\$ 702,837	\$ 717,540

Department Personnel

No. of Positions	FT/PT	Title	FTE 2012	FTE 2013	FTE 2014
2	Full-Time	Justice of the Peace	2.00	2.00	2.00
1	Full-Time	Executive Assistant	1.00	1.00	1.00
1	Full-Time	Management Supervisor	0.00	1.00	1.00
7	Full-Time	Justice Court Clerks	8.00	7.00	7.00
11		Total Program	11.00	11.00	11.00

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2014 Budget Highlights

Personnel

- Justice Court has restructured the supervisory aspect of the office to ensure the clerks are receiving proper training and supervision. The Clerk of Justice Court and Executive Assistant are components in ensuring the Court runs smoothly and efficiently every day.

Operations

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Capital

- Capital Reserve \$6,555

County Commission Goals/Department Response

The County Commission established a set of overarching goals for the County government. Listed below are the goals, followed by the methods by which the Department is striving to fulfill those goals.

Align community needs with budgetary decisions

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Adhere to long-term plans

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Demonstrate exceptional Customer Service

- Customer service in a courteous, professional and friendly manner.
- Prompt, accurate and timely processing of cases filed.
- Civil Judgments entered in a timely manner.
- General Temporary Orders of Protection are ruled upon and issued on the same date they are received in court.

Serve as a Model for Excellence in Government

- Effective, efficient court easily accessible to the public.

Improve communication within county government, other jurisdictions and our public

- Access to website.

Be an Employer of Choice and improve employee retention

- Provide professional development to staff.

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Workload Indicators / Performance Measures

Workload Indicators		Actual	Actual	Estimate	Projected
Indicator		FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
1.	Cases filed	8,781	7,991	7,090	
2.	Court collections	\$80,902.61	\$69,810.69	\$73,150.69	

Performance Measures		Actual	Actual	Estimate	Projected
Measure		FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
1.	Number of Orders for Protection filed	99	142	149	
2.	Jury Trials Scheduled	72	150	78	
3.	Average In-Custody Appearances			780	
4.	Average number of cases handled in Open Court			1,872	
5.	Omnibus Hearings			2,080	
6.	Change of Plea Hearings			728	
7.	Mediations			104	

Comments