

MOUNT VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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INTRODUCTION

The Mount Vernon Municipal Court's Annual Report (2020) chronicles Court operations and major accomplishments for the year. Last year's successes would not have been possible without the Court's dedicated employees.

COVID-19

The big story of 2020 was, of course, the COVID-19 global pandemic. Beginning in March, the Court adopted policies recommended by the Ohio Supreme Court, Knox Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control to slow the spread of the virus. Virtual hearings were conducted more frequently. Court employees worked from home, if possible. The number of people allowed in the courtroom and hallway was limited to allow for six feet of social distancing. Health screenings and face coverings were required to enter the Court. Surfaces were sanitized and air purifiers were installed.

In 2020 there was a decrease in the number of misdemeanor criminal and traffic cases filed with the Court possibly due to the pandemic. Criminal cases were down by 283 cases and there were 1,266 fewer traffic cases compared to 2019. 55 fewer eviction cases were filed in 2020 compared to 2019. The reduction is likely the result of a moratorium on evictions imposed by the CDC from September to the end of the year.

PERSONNEL

In February, Clerk of Court Stephanie Hardman was discharged from her position due to her inability to account for missing funds. Ms. Hardman was replaced by Mary Jo Hawkins, former Clerk of the Knox County Court of Common Pleas, who served as temporary Clerk until November when Clerk Lisa Mazza was sworn in.

At the end of the year, Tom Smith retired from his position as the part time Court Security Officer. Tom was a very dedicated employee who will be missed.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The Court is dedicated to enhancing the general public's understanding of how the legal system works. The Court's Facebook page currently has over 2,500 followers who receive information regularly about the Court's programs and activities. Follow us at www.facebook.com/MTVMunicipalCourt. We hope that the Annual Report (2020) will also be useful to that end.

Sincerely,

John C. Thatcher

John C. Thatcher, Judge

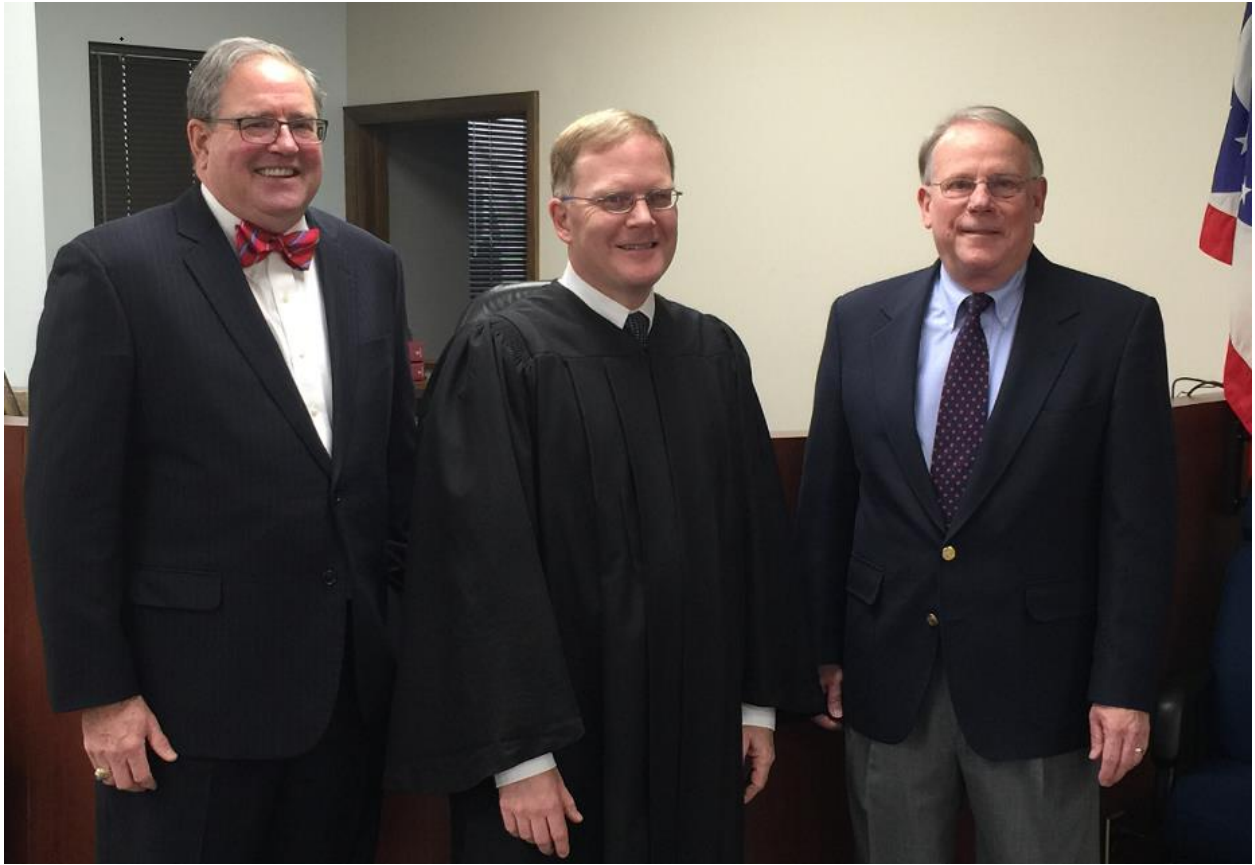
***JOHN C. THATCHER, JUDGE
STAFF***

Kenneth E. Lane	Acting Judge
Kim M. Rose	Acting Judge
Stephanie Hardman (terminated 2/11/20)	Clerk
Mary Jo Hawkins	Temporary Clerk
Lisa R. Mazza (appointed 11/13/20)	Clerk
William Champlin	Bailiff
Thomas Brown	Court Security Officer
Thomas Smith (retired 12/31/20)	Part-Time Court Security Officer
Dave Priest	Chief Probation Officer
Joel Carter	Special Docket Coordinator
Susie Eisel	Probation Officer
Julie Fisher	Probation Officer
Lisa Shaw	Probation Officer
Cheryl Jarrell	Probation Assistant/Deputy Clerk



Judge's Staff

Thomas Smith (Part-Time Court Security Officer), Judge John C. Thatcher, Thomas Brown (Court Security Officer) and William Champlin (Court Bailiff).



Acting Judges

Kim M. Rose, Judge John C. Thatcher and Kenneth E. Lane.

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT PROBATION

The Department's main goal is to restore offenders to the status of law-abiding citizens. We believe the goal can be achieved through collaborative relationships between Probation Officers, the offenders we supervise and our community partners.

Partnerships with community service-providers enhance our rehabilitation efforts. These efforts reduce recidivism, protecting the public from future crimes and reducing incarceration costs.

The integrity of offender programming with our community collaborations was maintained with limited disruption throughout the mandatory Coronavirus health restriction. Resources were redirected to address high risk behavior and maintain offender accountability within the community setting. The Department focused on the implementation of safe evidence-based contact approaches to create virtual and hybrid rehabilitative opportunities.

PROGRAMS

Supervised Community Service

The Knox County Thayer Road Horse Park project site was added to the total of non-profit programs visited. Since the implementation of the program in 2016, there have been nineteen individual non-profit organizations served by the program. Projects included: cleaning up Mound View Cemetery in observance of Memorial Day; trash pick-up of abandoned homeless camps along the viaduct; and completing multiple projects at the Bladensburg Community Center and Ariel-Foundation Park.

Indigent offenders may perform community service to work off fines and costs. Over \$41,000 were credited to fines and costs last year. Community service hours are also imposed as internal sanctions in lieu of costly jail terms for low level probation violations.

Thinking for a Change

A Probation Officer and a Behavioral Healthcare Partners ("BHP") counselor co-facilitate Thinking for a Change ("T4C") classes. The program consists of a sixteen-week course of study that addresses criminal thinking errors in moderate and high-risk offenders. Twelve offenders graduated from T4C.

Moral Reconciliation Therapy

Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) seeks to decrease recidivism among offenders by increasing moral reasoning. There were nineteen referrals. Five individuals continue to receive services with eight offenders being successfully discharged from the MRT program.

Trauma Group

Trauma Group is an evidence-based program that teaches offenders how to recover from traumatic events, past and present, by achieving a form of acceptance

through a process of enhancing positive coping skills and setting realistic life goals. The program is new to the Department's in-house recovery services is widely used as a therapeutic process and supervision tool to break the cycle of self-destructive offender behavior. There were four male and seventeen female offenders that graduated from the program. There are a total of twelve individuals that continue to attend trauma programming.

Hands Down Violence Awareness Program

Hands Down is an eight-week class for offenders who have committed offenses of violence such as domestic violence, assault, menacing and violations of protection orders. The program is instructed by Tyler Hitzfield of Central Ohio Assessment and sixty-three of the sixty-eight referred participants have graduated.

Automated Random Drug Testing Program

Routine drug testing of offenders allows officers to monitor compliance with supervision terms. The Indiko Plus Analyzer and Paracelsus software system enables the Department to adapt substance abuse service delivery to drug testing and current drug use trends. The Paracelsus Call-In System was implemented as a best practice screening model that promotes the randomization of offender testing. Donors combined for 12,410 drug test assays results.

The City of Mount Vernon utilizes the testing equipment to test seasonal workers. The Department also provided drug testing for Armor Court, the Knox County Common Pleas specialized drug court program, the City Law Director's pretrial supervision cases and courtesy supervision testing for adjoining county probation departments.

GPS and Continuous Alcohol Monitoring (SCRAM)

As a form of community control, offenders who are prohibited from having contact with victims or consuming alcohol are fitted with a GPS or SCRAM (continuous alcohol monitor) device to assist with supervision compliance. These devices have been a successful alternative to the cost of incarcerating offenders awaiting trial or at the time of sentencing. The units were increasingly used last year as an alternative supervision tool through the COVID-19 Pandemic. The daily cost of electronic monitoring is \$12 compared to approximately \$65 per day to house an inmate at the Knox County Jail. Fifteen offenders were considered full-sobriety for 886 monitored days. Eleven participants accounted for 503 days on GPS.

MERIT Court

There were twenty-three referrals to the Mandated Education and Referral Into Treatment (MERIT) Drug Court. There are ten active participants. Twelve graduated. One timed-out when the individual's probation expired.

GRANT RESOURCES

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services awarded the Department a \$30,000.00 Specialized Docket Grant which partially compensates our

MERIT Court expenses. We also subsidized operating expenses through the utilization of the second portion \$501,480 two-year Justice Re-investment and Incentive Grant (JRIG) awarded in 2019 from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections. The Department will seek a grant renewal in July of 2021.

The JRIG grant pays for a full-time Specialized Docket Coordinator, a full-time Probation Officer and partially for the Administrative Assistant. The JRIG grant subsidizes a drug and alcohol counselor from the Freedom Center who provides services for inmates at the Knox County Jail. The grant also allows for in-house outpatient mental health, drug and alcohol engagement groups and individualized assessments through BHP and the Freedom Center at the Probation Department. Grant funds pay for the automated random call-in and urinalysis system.

The Department of Public Safety awarded the Department \$13,025.00 from the Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding Program. Funds allowed the Department access to secure communication platforms for virtual meetings for the specialized docket treatment teams, individualized offender sessions with officers and the implementation of a hybrid classroom for the continuation of in-house mental health and substance abuse services. Funds paid for three laptops with camera and microphone capability, hotspot stipends for remote internet access and up to fifteen temporary data plans to allow offenders access to virtual communication applications.

OFFICER TRAINING

Officers completed several virtual continuing education training workshops through the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, the Ohio Supreme Court Judicial College and the National Association of Social Workers.

All Officers qualify annually to carry a firearm and Taser. They also participated in annual Tactical Decision Making, De-Escalation and Use of Force training facilitated by the Mount Vernon Police Department (MVPD). The training increased non-lethal skills by teaching various unarmed self-defense techniques.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, community outreach events for 2020 were cancelled. The First Responders Compassion Fatigue Workshop, co-hosted with Touchpointe, was rescheduled for spring of 2021.

2020 STATISTICAL REPORT

Caseload Activity

Number of cases as of January 1, 2019	1,081
Defendants Sentenced to Probation:	301
Level of Supervision:	
Low Risk	110
Moderate Risk	94
High Risk	38
Other (multiple cases)	59
Total Cases Closed:	461

Successful Terminations:	316
Early Termination	11
Unsuccessful Terminations:	144
Overall Caseload as of December 31, 2020:	921
Reporting Probation:	586
Non-reporting Probation:	292
Pretrial Bond/ PSI Supervision	43
Arrest Holders:	97
Probation Violations Filed:	60
Active Probation Warrants:	16 (total of 42 filed in 2020)
Total Jail Bookings from Municipal Offenders:	1033* Total number offenders.
Average days served:	7*

*The total number of Municipal Court inmate bookings and average jail days served also reflect additional time served based on a subsequent felony charge associated with a combined misdemeanor offense, or an initial Municipal Court bond appearance.

Municipal offenders accounted for approximately 1033 of the total 1447 Knox County Jail bookings. Time served from arrest holders, direct sentencing and filed probation violations accounted for approximately 33% of the annual inmate population. Municipal Court related offenders served 7,328 of the total 22,044 bed days with an average stay of 7-days. In comparison to 2019, Municipal cases accounted for 38% of the jail population with an average stay of 13-days. Overall, the jail population was drastically reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ELECTRONIC ALCOHOL MONITORING

SCRAM Units Installed	15	Electronic House Arrest/ GPS	11
Remote Breath/ OHAMS	0	Continuous Alcohol Days Monitored	886
Total Units SCRAM/ GPS	26	Tamper Violations	4
Avg. Cont. Alc. Monitoring days (National CAM avg. 120 days)	140	Daily Sobriety Compliance Rate (National Compliance Avg. 98.7%)	99.5%

AUTOMATED DRUG TESTING

Test Results

Total Individual Assays Tested	14,960
Positive	1,255
Negative	13,705
Positive Screen Rate	8.39%

Positive Drug Trend Rates

Amphetamines	14.11%	Heroin	.72%
Benzodiazepines	1.25%	Opiates	1.77%
Cannabinoid (THC)	26.05%	Oxycodone	.9%

Cocaine	.49%	Creatinine*	5.37%
EtG (Alcohol)	8.35%	Buprenorphine**	27.83%
Fentanyl	7.09%		

* Irregular Creatinine levels: Screens with < 20 mg/dL creatinine were considered to be adulterated or manipulated in some manner.

**Percentage of positive screens accounts for defendants who also participate in a Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Suboxone program.

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

Supervised Hours Worked:	746.5	In-House Participant Hours:	701.5
Total Credit hours:	4,644.5	Standard Comm. Service Hours:	3,196.5
Total Credit for Fines and Costs:	\$41,800		



Probation Department Staff

Dave Priest (Chief Probation Officer), Lisa Shaw (Probation Officer), Susie Eisel (Probation Officer), Julie Fisher (Probation Officer), Cheryl Jerrell (Probation Clerk), and Joel Carter (MERIT Drug Court Coordinator).



Clerk's Office Staff

Pam Fuller (Deputy Clerk), Tammy Cunningham (Deputy Clerk), Lisa R. Mazza (Clerk of Court), Jamie Miller (Deputy Clerk), Katie Spearman (Deputy Clerk).

MOUNT VERNON MUNICIPAL COURT

FIVE NORTH GAY STREET
THIRD FLOOR
MOUNT VERNON, OHIO 43050-3241
TELEPHONE: (740) 393-9510
FAX: (740) 393-5349

Lisa R. Mazza
Clerk

John C. Thatcher
Judge

William Champlin
Bailiff

Mount Vernon City Council Members
City Hall
40 Public Square
Mount Vernon, Ohio 43050

And

The Board of County Commissioners
117 East High Street, Suite 161
Mount Vernon, Ohio 43050

Dear Public Officials:

The following pages contain the case activity, financial receipts and disbursements for 2020. Pursuant to R.C. 1901.31 two of the main duties of my office are the responsibility for maintaining the public records and the receipting and disbursing of all monies collected.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lisa R. Mazza

Lisa R. Mazza,
Clerk of Court

The Mount Vernon Municipal Court was created by the Ohio General Assembly, pursuant to Section 1901.01, Ohio Revised Code. The Court hears cases throughout Knox County and has the authority to hear the following cases:

- Felony Cases – initial appearance/preliminary hearings
- Misdemeanor Cases – through final determination
- Civil Actions – up to \$15,000.00
- Small Claims Actions – up to \$6,000.00
- Administrative Appeals – BMV case appeals

CASES FILED IN 2020

Felony	70
Misdemeanor Criminal	836
OVI	152
Other Traffic	3,251
Personal Injury	6
Contracts	595
Other Civil Filings Including Transfers and BMV Cases	117
Forcible Entry & Detainer (Evictions)	172
Small Claims	61
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>5,260</u>

The Judge conducts hearings and finds probable cause to issue search warrants, pursuant to Rule 41 of the Ohio Rules of Criminal Procedure. During regular business hours these hearings are conducted in Court. After regular business hours the hearings are conducted electronically. In 2020 the Judge conducted forty-one search warrant hearings.

There were a total of sixty-five applications to seal the record of criminal cases filed and eleven marriages performed in 2020.

OVI CITATIONS ISSUED BY MONTH 2020

JANUARY	20
FEBRUARY	12
MARCH	17
APRIL	6
MAY	17
JUNE	20
JULY	19
AUGUST	7
SEPTEMBER	5
OCTOBER	10
NOVEMBER	14
DECEMBER	11
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>158</u>

2020 CITATIONS
“OPERATE VEHICLE UNDER THE INFLUENCE”

Ohio State Highway Patrol

1 st Offense	62
2 nd Offense	2
3 rd Offense	1
Felony	2
Physical Control	0
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>67</u>

Knox County Sheriff

1 st Offense	45
2 nd Offense	1
3 rd Offense	1
4 th Offense	1
Felony	3
Physical Control	4
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>55</u>

Villages

1 st Offense	2
3 rd Offense	1
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>3</u>

Mount Vernon Police Department

1 st Offense	28
2 nd Offense	1
3 rd Offense	1
Physical Control	3
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>33</u>

TOTAL **158**

2020 DISPOSITIONS
“OPERATE VEHICLE UNDER THE INFLUENCE”

Cases Pending 1/1/20	43
New Cases Filed 2020	158
Reactivated Cases	5
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>205</u>
“Guilty or No contest” plea at arraignment	9
Dismissed	8
Jury Trial	0
Changed Plea to “Guilty or No Contest”	59
Plea to a Reduced Charge	18
<u>TOTAL CASES COMPLETED</u>	<u>94</u>

**2020 DISPOSITIONS
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Cases Pending 1/1/20	121
Cases Filed 2020	3
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>124</u>
Plea of “Guilty” or “No Contest” or found “Guilty” at Trial	40
Reduced to lesser charge	15
Dismissed	41
Warrants Issued	5
<u>TOTAL CASES COMPLETED</u>	<u>101</u>

There were a total of 22 temporary protection orders issued in 2020.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2020

The Mount Vernon Municipal Court is mandated by the Ohio Revised Code to collect and disburse fines and fees to the law enforcement agencies throughout Knox County and the State of Ohio. The collection of these monies has a positive financial impact on the local government of Knox County.

Criminal and Traffic Division	805,276.68
Bond	187,402.00
Civil Division	802,817.83
Small Claims Division	20,407.49
Bond Account Balance on 12/31/19	31,214.65
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$1,847,118.65</u>

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS 2020

The Mount Vernon Municipal Court is governed by Section 1901.26, Ohio Revised Code, to establish a schedule of fees and costs to be taxed in any civil or criminal action or proceeding. Users of the Court are taxed these fees to pay for their utilization of the Court. The Court is required to collect costs for law enforcement agencies throughout Knox County and the State of Ohio to pay for services established by statute.

CITY OF MOUNT VERNON

CRIMINAL & TRAFFIC DIVISION

Court Costs	284,397.91
Computer Fund (Clerk) – fund to computerize the Clerk – R.C. 1901.261	36,771.99
Computer Fund (Court) – fund to computerize the Court – R.C. 1901.261	10,902.00
Fines - Mount Vernon Police Department	47,462.70
10% Bond Costs	245.00
Ohio State Highway Patrol City Fines	27,203.45
Enforcement Agency-OVI	86.00
Indigent Driver Alcohol Treatment and Monitoring– for the purpose of treatment and monitoring of indigent defendants who cannot afford alcohol treatment or interlock devices – R.C. 2949.094	8,780.80
Non-Moving Violations	40.00
Probation Services Fees	800.00
Probation Supervision Fees	44,676.20
Special Projects	15,429.00
Unclaimed Money	2,407.00

TOTAL **\$479,402.05**

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS 2020

CIVIL DIVISION

Court Costs	151,387.00
Computer Fund (Clerk)	8,810.00
Computer Fund (Court)	2,643.00
Special Project Fees	4,405.00
TOTAL	\$167,245.00

SMALL CLAIMS DIVISION

Court Costs	4,589.00
Computer Fund (Clerk)	610.00
Computer Fund (Court)	183.00
Special Project Fees	305.00
TOTAL	\$5,687.00

CITY GRAND TOTAL **\$652,334.05**

COUNTY OF KNOX

County Court Costs	27,996.50
Sheriff Fees	39,733.00
Ohio State Highway Patrol County Fines	6,757.55
Dog and Kennel Fees	1,730.00
County Liquor Fines	1,093.75
Housing Prisoners	7,781.00
Public Defender Application Fees	6,957.50
County Drug Fines	1,086.00
Enforcement Agency – OVI	381.00
<u>COUNTY GRAND TOTAL</u>	<u>\$93,516.30</u>

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS 2020

STATE OF OHIO

Ohio State Highway Patrol	30,582.23
Ohio State Highway Patrol (Drug Fund)	300.00
Ohio State Highway Patrol (DUI Arrest Fund)	3,414.00
Ohio State Highway Patrol (EMS)	3,378.77
Victims of Crime	28,780.80
Department of Natural Resources	5,260.00
Department of Taxation	250.00
Child Highway Safety Fund	335.00
State of Ohio Pharmacy Board	2,101.00
State of Ohio Liquor Board	1,093.75
Seatbelt Fund	16,330.00
Treasure of State (Expungements)	1,020.00
Indigent Defense Support Fund – governed to collect by R.C. 120.08	87,259.48
Drug LE/Justice Program	9,429.70
Address Confidential Program	2,713.75
Legal Aid – Civil	22,906.00
Legal Aid – Small Claims	671.00
<u>STATE GRAND TOTAL</u>	<u>\$215,825.48</u>

VILLAGES

Centerburg Police Department Fines	275.00
Danville Police Department Fines	3,535.00
Fredericktown Police Department Fines	7,283.00
<u>VILLAGES GRAND TOTAL</u>	<u>\$11,093.00</u>

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS 2020

KNOX COUNTY SHERIFF

Mileage and Service Fees	2,325.57
Jail Fees	1501.20
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$3,826.77</u>

FOREIGN SHERIFF

Criminal Division Mileage and Service	104.55
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$104.55</u>

MISCELLANEOUS CRIMINAL

Capital Recovery (collection costs paid by Defendants)	7,694.52
National Enterprise Systems (collection costs paid by Defendants)	551.75
Law Offices of Robert Schuerger (collection costs paid by Defendants)	10,254.87
Restitution	7,227.39
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$25,728.53</u>

MISCELLANEOUS CIVIL

Garnishment Pay Outs	522,574.26
Security	13,974.56
Escrow	10,570.56
Miscellaneous	59.00
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$547,178.38</u>

MISCELLANEOUS SMALL CLAIMS

Garnishment Pay Outs	14,819.60
Security	83.69
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$14,903.29</u>

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS 2020

BONDS

Bonds Charged/Refunded	2,325.57
Bonds Applied	20,737.20
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$179,214.30</u>

GRAND TOTAL DISBURSEMENT **\$1,743,723.88**

BALANCE FORWARD TO 2021

Bond Account Balance on 12/31/20	49,866.35
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$49,866.35</u>

EXPENSE REPORT 2020 - SALARIES

The Judge's salary is set according to R.C. 141.04 and 1901.11; the Clerk's by R.C. 1901.31; the Bailiff by R.C. 1901.32; the Deputy Clerks' by the Clerk; the Probation Officers' and Probation Clerk by the Judge and City Council; and Security Officers' by the Judge.

	Paid By City	Paid By County	Paid By State
Judge	37,950.00	25,300.00	77,979.00
Clerk & Bailiff	61,915.25	45,417.95	
Security Officers	64,417.85		
Deputy Clerks	241,749.87		
Probation Officers	163,715.20		
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$569,748.17</u>	<u>\$70,717.95</u>	<u>\$77,979.00</u>
Probation Clerk Paid from Probation Services Fund	\$19,302.08		

OTHER EXPENSES 2020

	Paid by City	Paid by County
PERS	77,608.17	9,590.53
Bailiff's Mileage & Training	1,519.32	
Workman's Compensation	15,023.10	714.07
Medicare	9,998.90	1,021.36
Telephone (Clerk)	4,485.51	
Telephone (Probation)	981.93	
Incidentals (Clerk) (office supplies, postage)	28,039.53	
Incidentals (Probation) (office supplies)	6,745.68	
Travel and Training (Judge and Clerk)	40.14	
Travel and Training (Probation)	1,455.00	
Computer Maintenance/Personnel (Court)	15,346.74	
Computer Maintenance/Personnel (Clerk)	79,749.13	
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>\$240,993.15</u>	<u>\$11,325.96</u>