

TOWN COUNCIL

STAFF REPORT

Municipal Court Department



MEETING DATE:	March 12, 2024
PROJECT:	January Activity Report
PROJECT MANAGER:	Lisa Cunningham, Clerk of Court

Court Summary

Town of Bluffton Municipal Court convenes every Tuesday morning. In January 2024 a total of four morning sessions. The Municipal Court currently has 349 cases pending which is a combination of 304 criminal/traffic cases, 23 jury trial requests, and 22 defendants enrolled in alternative programs.

Indigent Defense cases

Town of Bluffton currently contracts with the 14th Circuit Public Defenders Office to provide Indigent Defense Counsel to all defendants who meet the Annual Federal Poverty Guidelines. Year to date our Indigent Defense Attorney has 602 cases which is a combination of 41 pending and 561 disposed on the docket as of January 2024.

Alternative Programs

Defendants are sometimes offered the opportunity to complete Alternative Programs in lieu of convictions on their traffic and/or criminal record.

There are currently 3 active participants in the Conditional Discharge Program. The Conditional Discharge Program requires the completion of 40 hours of community service as well as a drug and alcohol program. Participants must also pay a program fee of \$150.00 upon completion.

There are currently 6 active participants in the Alive@25 classes which are offered through the National Safety Council. Alive@25 classes are for traffic offenders under 25 years of age who have never had a traffic infraction and the current charge pending carries no more than 4 points.

Traffic Education Program referred to as TEP has 7 active participants. The TEP Program cost is \$280.00 plus the cost of online driving class. It is designed for offenders who have pending moving violations except for Driving under the Influence, Driving under Unlawful Alcohol Concentration, and Reckless Driving.

Alcohol Education Program referred to as AEP has 0 active participants. AEP is only inclusive for alcohol related charges such as minor in procession of alcohol or false identification for

offenders between the ages of 17-21. AEP costs \$250.00 plus the cost of online driving class and alcohol education classes.

Pre-Trial Intervention referred to as PTI has 6 active participants. PTI is a program for first-time offenders charged with non-violent crimes all charges are accepted in the program except for Driving Under Influence (DUI) or Driving under Unlawful Alcohol Concentration (DUAC). Program cost \$350.00 plus the cost of online driving class, counseling and/or drug testing.

TEP, AEP, and PTI are directly managed through the Solicitors office. The Court provides a referral and the Solicitors Office provides a completion or termination report upon completion date.



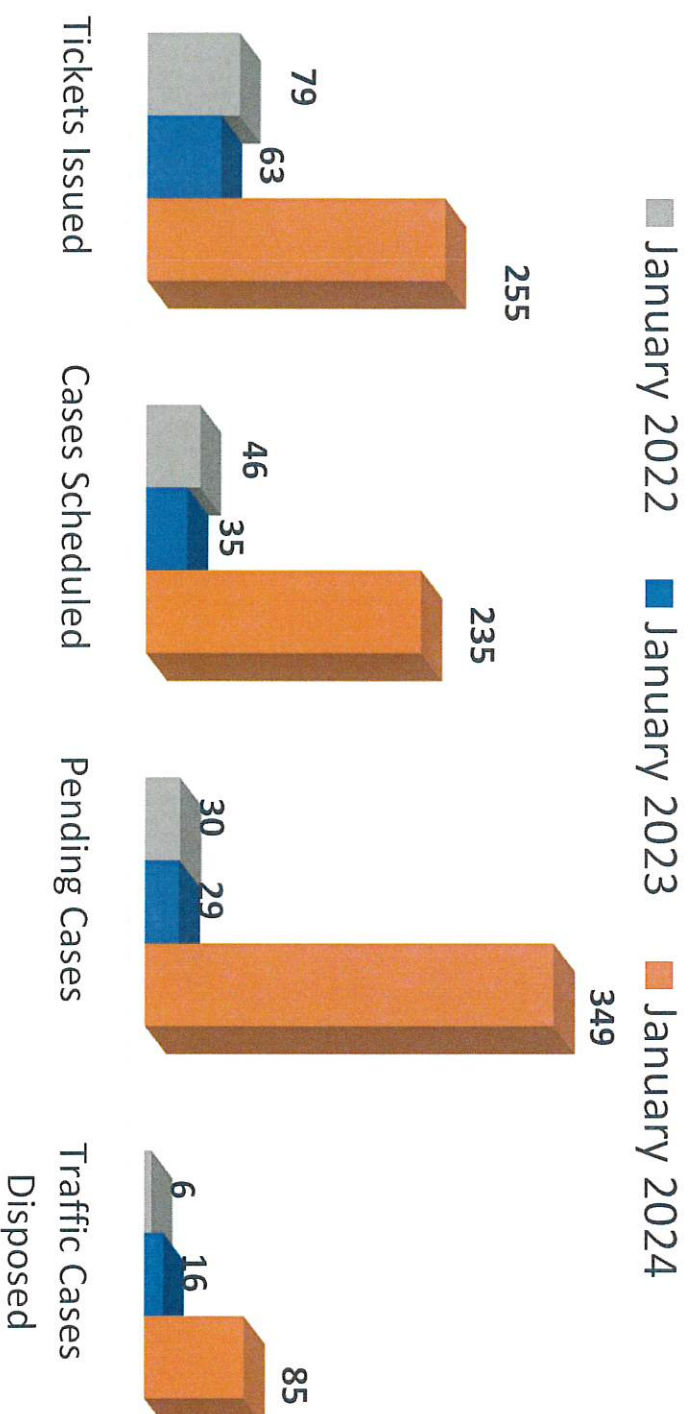
Town of Bluffton Municipal Court Statistics for January 2024

Presented by:

Lisa Cunningham, Clerk of Court

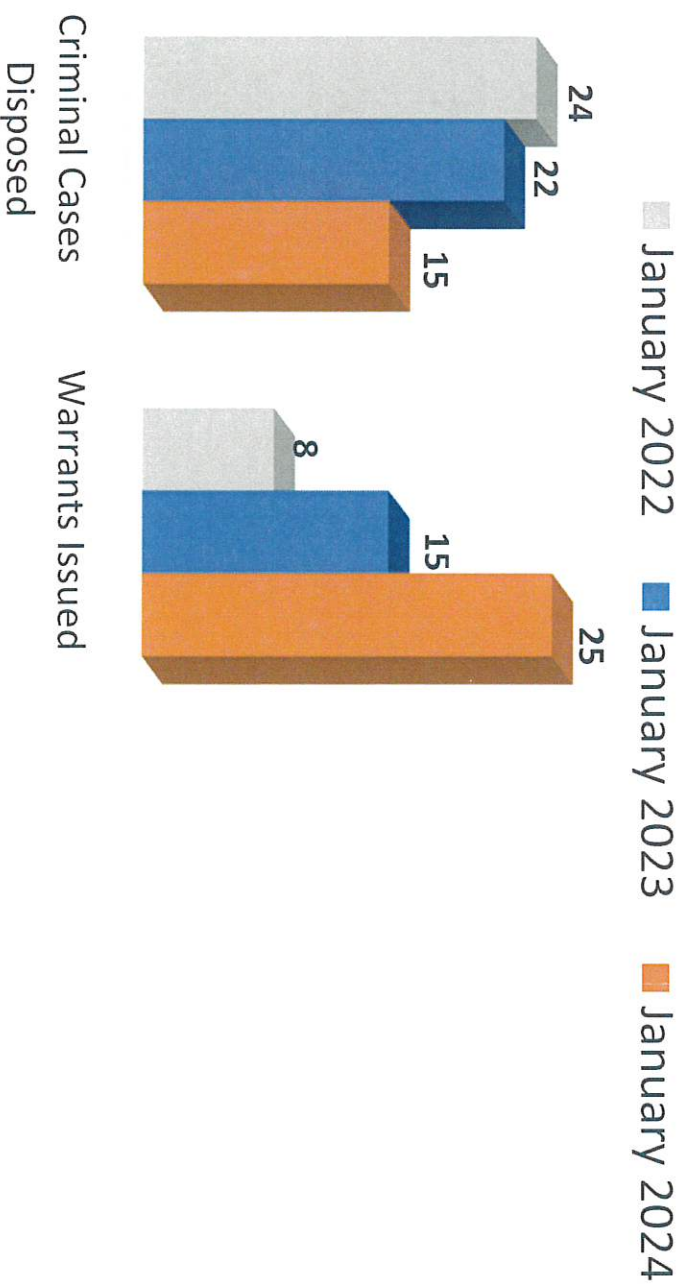


Town of Bluffton Municipal Court



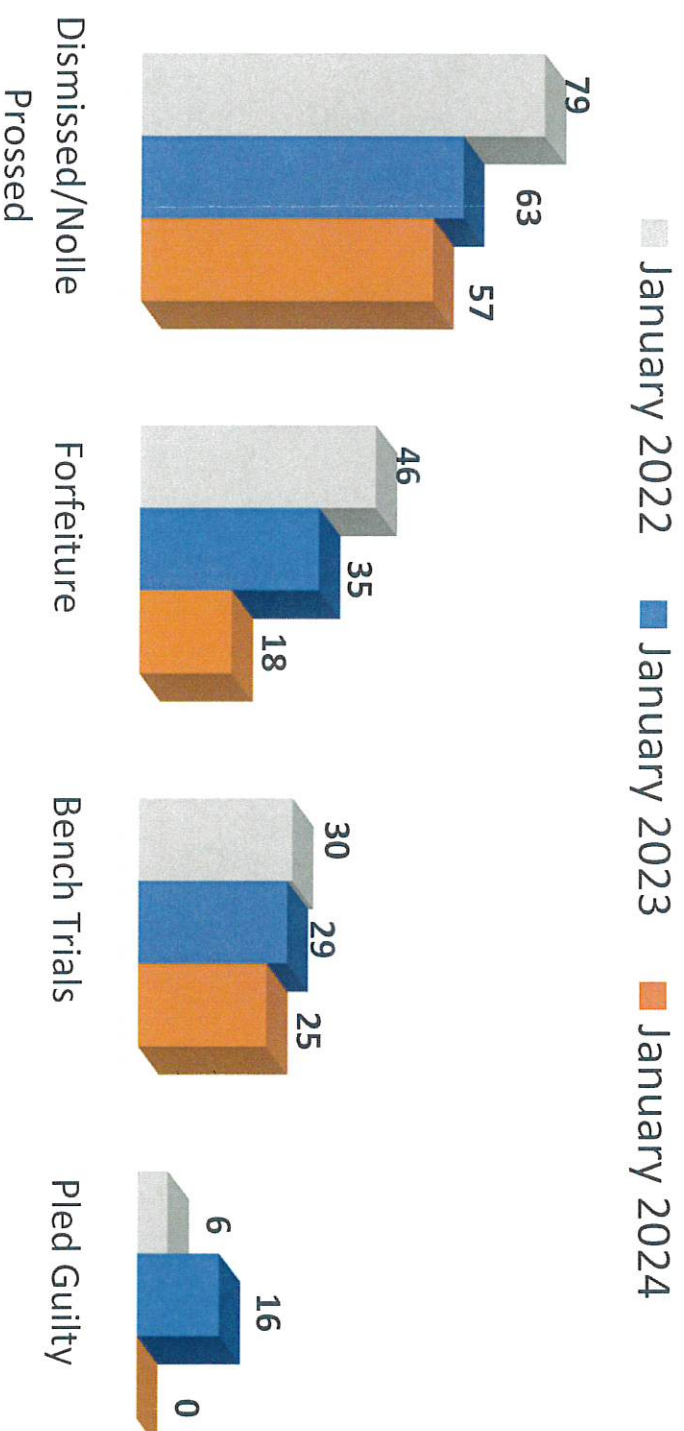


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Terminology

- **Disposition** the ruling of the court, the final outcome of the violation.
- **Dismissed** no prosecution because either a program was completed, or motion granted.
- **Nolle Prosequi** the prosecutor or officer did not wish to prosecute the case.
- **Forfeiture** the bond was posted, and defendant did not appear for court, so it was converted to a fine.
- **Guilty Bench Trial** the Judge ruled in favor of the State.
- **Not Guilty Bench Trial** the Judge ruled in favor of the Defendant.
- **Pled Guilty** the defendant did not contest the violations.
- **Disposed** the case is no longer pending and a disposition has been indicated.
- **Pending** the cases awaiting trial or currently enrolled in a program