



MEMO

Department

To: Common Council
From: Hon. John Proffitt, Municipal Judge
Date: March 3, 2025
Re: 2025 Change to Judicial Calendar

Background information:

In the history of the Municipal Court, there was a time when court was held every Tuesday. I believe that during COVID that changed, and when Judge VanDrunen was appointed temporary municipal judge after Judge Windorff resigned, he only held court on the first and third Tuesdays. With that schedule, initial appearances were scheduled both at 9 AM and 3PM on both Tuesdays. During the school year, truancy court was held at the junior high on one Tuesday and at the senior high on the other Tuesday. Any full trials were scheduled at 1 PM on either Tuesdays. This made for a really tight schedule.

Strategic Plan:

To alleviate the congestion on court days, we consulted with the SROs at both schools and Inge Murphy, Admin Services Supervisor at the Police Department to see if they would be open to moving the truancy court to the second Tuesday of the month, and have citations written by patrol officers to all be assigned to the first Tuesday of the month at 9 AM. I explained that I would be able to devote more time to each student, and have more opportunity to involve the parents, staff and the student in discussing how best to change the trajectory of the child, either in terms of attendance, performance or behavior modification. They agreed that having the day devoted to the students would likely be beneficial.

By having the first Tuesday morning schedule devoted to initial appearances, we have the afternoon schedule available for any pre-trial motions to be made by the city attorney, and the late afternoon is available for any juvenile defendants scheduled to appear in municipal court rather than in school.

By reserving the third Tuesday exclusively to full trials, refusal and indigency hearings, there is not the risk of running over into afternoon initial appearances that have historically been held at 3 PM on the old schedule.

We have been operating the court on this schedule for the first two months of 2025, and it has worked well. At the end of the school year, we will check in with the SROs and the police department to see if the schedule is working for each of them. There was some initial concern that the change might eliminate some of the time the clerk of courts has for administrative tasks, but that has not been the case. Our Initial appearances all brought forward to the first Tuesday have been able to be handled in the morning, leaving the clerk of courts free to perform her post-court responsibilities in the afternoon..

Budget: There is no budget impact to this change in the way the court is scheduled. Neither are there any additional hours being requested for the court schedule. It is a simple administrative reallocation of the existing hours to eliminate crowding of the court docket that could happen under the previous schedule.

Since neither court hours or budget are impacted, I do not know if committee or council action is required, but I wanted to submit this change in scheduling for your consideration. A copy of the full 2025 court calendar is attached.

Staff Recommended Action:

A suggested action by staff to help shape the discussion surrounding the agenda item.
Please note: While this is a suggested action, Council has the ability to pursue a different direction if desired.