

JUSTICE COURT ANALYSIS on THE MERGING OF THE MONTICELLO CITY JUSTICE COURT

Commissioners – I am sending this to you in advance of next week’s commission meeting. I will also ge this on the agenda for discussion and possible approval. I am also sending this to Kaeden Kulow from Monticello City.

As we prepare for the upcoming commission meeting, it is important to carefully review the implications of merging the Monticello Justice Court with the San Juan Justice Court. This proposed merger not only affects financial allocations between the entities but also introduces additional responsibilities for the County Attorney’s Office. A thorough evaluation of the workload and compensation structure will be essential to ensure fairness and transparency for all parties involved.

At the December 16 commission meeting, it was talked about merging the Monticello Justice Court with the San Juan Justice Court and splitting the income and expenses - 70% to the County and 30% to the City but this does not take into account the added workload of the SJC Attorney’s Office and the added pay for the increase in the workload.

1. Currently, the County is paying for the prosecutorial services for the San Juan County Justice Court. This amount is unknown as there is no way to calculate what part of the CA budget is dedicated to SJC justice Court.
2. The merging of the Monticello City Justice Court with the SJC justice court should not cost the County anything.
3. In 2025, Monticello City contracted its prosecutorial work to a 3rd party (me) for \$1,500.00 per month based upon the following: (12 hours a month x \$125.00 per hour = \$1,500.00 or \$18,000.00 annually). I believe this amount needs to be updated to better represent the current workload as well as an hourly rate that better reflects the market average.
4. In 2025, Monticello City was paying for the judge’s compensation at the rate of \$175.00 per hour. The conflict public defender for Monticello City also billed at \$175.00 per hour. I believe the attorney’s office services should also be billed at the \$175.00 per hour. Historically, more than 12 hours a month has been dedicated to Monticello City justice court cases. I believe 20 hours a month is a better estimate of the time needed to address the Monticello Justice Court needs.
5. In short, the County Attorney’s Office will be taking on all this extra work so Monticello City needs to pay for the extra work that will be added to the County Attorney’s workload which, based upon above, will be \$42,000 per year.

6. Monticello City should be required to pay this full amount before the 70%/30% split. If The solution is not to increase the Attorney's Office budget by \$42,000 as this would result in the County paying 70% of the increase (in addition to the amount stated in Paragraph 1 above) and Monticello City only paying \$30% which would cost the County an additional \$29,400.00
7. In addition, if the Count Attorney's Office budget is increased by \$42,000, the County would also be required to pay benefits in addition which is an extra cost to the County.
8. I believe the better way would be to have Monticello City pay the prosecutor compensation as a 1099 contractor and then the County and the City split the proceeds 70%/30%.

Dated this 12th day of December, 2025.

Best,

Mitchell D Maughan

San Juan County Attorney