

January 25, 2023

Semi-Annual Report for July 21, 2022 – January 25, 2023

City Prosecutor – Samuel Erskine

To: Mayor Scholl and Council Members

Introductory note:

As with previous reports, I will begin this memorandum with a brief snapshot of prosecution statistics that I have kept since beginning in my position as city prosecutor:

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>
Police reports received/processed	380	411	341	341
Total cases referred	242	290	232	250
Total cases charged	184	190	195	175*
Jury trials held	8	0	0	2

*Several cases still pending further review/awaiting additional evidence

As indicated by the numbers compiled in the table above, case referrals and cases charged appear generally stable over the course of the last four years despite the pandemic era disruptions. Additionally, it seems likely that 2022 represents the beginning of a thaw for the resumption of jury trials (as it has been in courts across the state). Overall, the health of the court – at least to the extent that can be revealed by these statistics – appears to be strong and on pace to hopefully return to pre-pandemic functionality in the coming year.

Items to watch in 2023:

Much of my report is often retrospective in terms of referencing work already accomplished, but there are several items which I thought were important to highlight in this report relating to work currently ongoing or items which I hope to re-assess later this year. Among these items are the following:

- (1) Assisting in a review of the implementation and efficacy of the changes that were adopted with respect to addressing derelict and abandoned vessels in St. Helens waterways;
- (2) Working with the court and community treatment agencies to revise and streamline the communication process for individuals engaged in court-ordered treatment programs;
- (3) Ongoing reconstruction and improvements to related to victims' rights issues on municipal court cases (in order to do things like provide better notice of rights, facilitate the recovery of restitution, etc.)

The first and third items represent long-term projects that have involved – at least with respect to item one – efforts of a large group of interested stakeholders (including members of the council). The second item relates to issues that have only recently come to the attention of the court and my office. I would be happy to offer additional details regarding these agenda items and my role in reviewing and addressing issues related to these items if such detail could be helpful (and I anticipate offering more detailed assessments of work done with respect to these items in subsequent reports).

Closing:

As I have indicated in my closing notes for prior reports, I continue to believe that the municipal court is functioning well. City staff, including court staff and the members of the police department, continue to be professional, pleasant to work with, and effective and thoughtful in carrying out their duties. Having substantial perspective on the functionality of municipal courts in other jurisdictions, I continue to believe that the St. Helens court is a model example of professionalism and functionality.

As always, if any of you have questions or follow-up for me based on the information in this report, I am happy to answer questions in-person or by email or phone.

Thank you,

Sam Erskine

Samuel Erskine

City Prosecutor for the City of St. Helens