

January 12, 2021

Semi-Annual Report for July 15, 2020 – January 20, 2021

City Prosecutor – Samuel Erskine

To: Mayor Scholl and Council Members

Introductory note:

Thank you for considering this written report as a supplement to my appearance at council proceedings today. As with my most recent report, the COVID pandemic continues to dominate as the most significant issue affecting court operations. As you can see from the statistics provided in this report, case referrals and cases issued during 2020 were essentially unaffected as compared with the numbers for 2019. I have made efforts to efficiently manage current cases in light of pandemic considerations and to preserve crucial contacts (with witnesses, victims, etc.) on cases currently awaiting trial, but the inevitable result of the current inability to hold jury trials means that there will be a backlog of trials to be held once the court system is fully operational again. In that respect, I expect 2021 to be similar to 2019 in terms of the need to process a backlog of trials. Given the improvements in court efficiencies made over the past several years – with credit due to Judge Lindgren, Melanie, April, and the attorneys handling court-appointments – I am confident that this ‘recovery’ will go smoothly once the court resumes full operations.

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Police reports received/processed	380	411
Total cases referred	242	290
Total cases charged	184	190*
Jury trials held	8	0

*Cases charged will likely increase as there are still 2020 cases pending review or awaiting additional evidence.

Closing:

Despite difficult circumstances, the numbers above reflect positively on the continued hard work of the police department, and Judge Lindgren and court staff have done an excellent job of continuing court operations to the full extent possible – including switching to holding court via telephone/remote appearances when necessary – during this time. While court operations have settled into a reliable (albeit different) rhythm at this point, I am still eagerly anticipating a return to something more ‘normal’ sometime soon. I have no doubt you all are as well.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy year for all of you and your families,

Samuel Erskine

City Prosecutor for the City of St. Helens