

**PAULDING COUNTY COURT
COUNTY ANNEX BUILDING**

**201 E. CAROLINE STREET, PAULDING, OHIO 45879
SUZANNE SHUMAN RISTER, JUDGE**

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Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today about the possibility of converting Paulding County Court from a part-time court to a full-time court.

The Court handles civil, criminal, and traffic dockets. Each of those dockets has grown in volume annually and continues to do so. The busiest docket is the traffic docket.

In 2012, when the Fort to Port Highway (U.S. 24) opened between Toledo and Fort Wayne, Indiana the traffic cases increased significantly. U.S. 24 is a vital economic link between Toledo and Fort Wayne and it is heavily traveled through all of Paulding County.

Currently, Court is in session three (3) days per week. On Mondays arraignments are heard in the mornings. Also the Court hears pre-trial issues, plea hearings, sentencing hearings, bond matters, and probation violations. On Thursdays all civil matters are heard such as small claims, evictions, and garnishment hearings. Additionally, jail arraignments are heard on Thursdays as well as motion hearings. The only possible day left for jury trials is Wednesdays.

Jury trials are handled as best we can. But the problem with the congested court docket is that jury trials are scheduled out several weeks, if not months. In short, justice delayed is justice denied.

The court's staff is all full-time with a Clerk of Courts, four (4) deputy clerks and one (1) Bailiff. The Court also has a Probation Office with three (3) staff members. The Court is also responsible for the Victim's Assistance Office, as well.

There is no remaining time left in the week for administrative duties. I work through lunch and stay late or arrive early in order to attend to all of the duties of Judge of County Court.

The funding authority for this Court is the Paulding County Commissioners and they fully support this Court becoming a full-time Court. The local bar association, as well, is very supportive of the court becoming a full-time Court. I believe the Commissioners sent a letter of support and I have with me a Resolution of support from the bar association as well.

I very much enjoy the work. The difficulty is the part-time status does not allow me to attend to all matters and give each the time it deserves.

Thank you for your consideration.