

CLEVELAND HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL COURT

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



JUDGE J.J. COSTELLO

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CLEVELAND HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL COURT
Judge J.J. Costello
40 Severance Circle
Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44118

March 29, 2024

Cuyahoga County Executive Chris Ronayne
Cuyahoga County Council
Mayor of Cleveland Heights Kahlil Seren
Council of the City of Cleveland Heights

Re: Cleveland Heights Municipal Court - 2023 Annual Report

Dear County Executive, Cuyahoga County Council Members, Mayor, and Cleveland Heights Council Members:

Pursuant to Section 1901.14(A)(4) of the Ohio Revised Code, enclosed you will find information about the work performed by the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court, a statement of receipts and expenditures of the civil and criminal branches, respectively, the number of cases heard, decided, and settled, and any other data the Supreme Court of Ohio, the Secretary of State, and the legislative authorities require. The Report will highlight some of the new and continued improvements and community collaborations the Court undertook last year.

Throughout this past year, the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court continued to serve its vital purpose of administering justice. We do so efficiently and judiciously, always upholding the Court's independence, integrity, and impartiality. I am beyond proud of our incredibly capable, diverse, and dedicated staff; without all of them, none of this would be possible. And with that, I am pleased to provide you with the 2023 Annual Report of the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court.

ABOUT THE COURT

The Cleveland Heights Municipal Court has jurisdiction within the corporate limits of Cleveland Heights. The subject-matter jurisdiction of the Court, that is, the types of cases that the Court can hear, includes preliminary hearings in felony cases, traffic and criminal misdemeanors, civil cases in which the amount of money in dispute does not exceed \$15,000, and small claims cases

in which the amount of money in dispute does not exceed \$6,000. The judge also has the authority to perform marriages.

ABOUT THE JUDGE

I was elected to serve a six-year term as Judge of the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court beginning January 1, 2018. I was reelected in November of 2023 for an additional six-year term. I am a lifelong Cleveland Heights resident, and my wife and I are proudly raising our two sons here.

I earned my Bachelor of Science degree from Miami of Ohio and my Juris Doctor degree from Case Western Reserve School of Law. After being admitted to practice in Ohio, I opened up a law practice in Cleveland Heights. I then joined a boutique law firm handling primarily landlord-tenant matters, real estate management, and code enforcement defense. Before taking the bench as Judge, I served as an Acting Judge of the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court.



In February of 2021, I was appointed to the Supreme Court of Ohio's Commission on Technology and the Courts. The Commission advises the Supreme Court of Ohio on matters such as the promulgation of standards for the development and use of information technology systems in Ohio courts, the development and implementation of educational and training programs, the exchange of data and information by and between Ohio courts and other justice system partners for greater efficiency of judicial administration, and any other issues necessary to aid and promote the orderly adoption and comprehensive use of technology in Ohio courts.

I also serve on the Court Technology Committee for the Ohio Judicial Conference, which explores new developments in court technology and related policies and serves as a resource to help Ohio judges effectively use technology.

I serve on the Ohio Judicial Conference's Civil Law and Procedure Committee, which analyzes pending legislation with a judicial impact on civil laws and procedures and reviews issues and proposals relevant to judges with civil jurisdiction. It makes recommendations to improve the Ohio Revised Code, Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure, and relevant Supreme Court Rules of Superintendence.

I serve on the Ohio Judicial Conference's Legislative Committee. The Committee approves the Conference's legislative platform, which the various committees develop. The Committee meets almost monthly via conference call to discuss the Conference's legislative priorities and reactions to other legislation that impacts the judiciary and the fair administration of justice.

My peers have elected me to serve as a trustee of the Association of Municipal /County Judges of Ohio. The Association promotes the development and enhancement of judicial professionalism, efficiency, and responsiveness to improve the administration of justice and foster public confidence in the judicial system. It annually sponsors a winter and summer meeting to provide continuing legal education and to promote an interchange of ideas and experiences among its members.

I serve as Secretary for the Northern Ohio Municipal Judges Association, which allows local municipal court judges an opportunity to meet, discuss best practices, and stay apprised of any current legislative or procedural changes relevant to our jobs.

I am a member of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association's Bench/Bar Committee, which brings together Chairs of the various CMBA sections and administrative judges from courts in Cuyahoga County for a series of broad-based discussions. The goal is to improve our justice system while opening up pathways for communication between the bench and bar.

Finally, but maybe most importantly, I am actively engaged in educational outreach programs such as reading and visiting elementary school students at our schools and participating in various discussion panels.

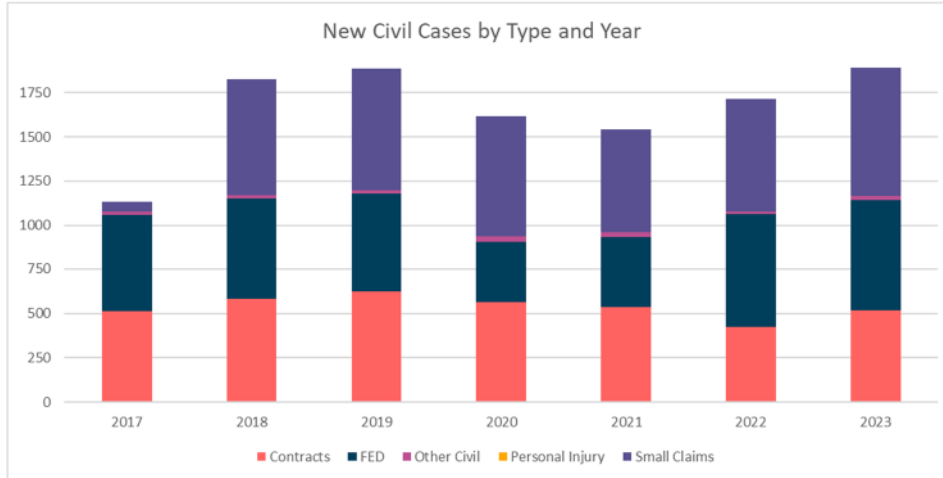
CASE FILINGS

The Court heard a total of 10,197 cases in 2023. This is a reduction of around 6.3 percent from 2022. Of those incoming cases, 1,917 were civil filings, 6,852 were traffic cases, and 1,428 were criminal cases.

According to the Supreme Court of Ohio 2023 case statistics, the average number of incoming cases per judge statewide was 6,812. The average number of incoming cases per judge in Cuyahoga County was 6,075. After adjusting incoming cases to a per-judge caseload, we had one of the highest numbers of cases compared to the other twelve general division municipal courts in Cuyahoga County. In addition, according to the Supreme Court of Ohio case statistics, in 2023, we heard nearly forty percent more cases than the average number of cases heard per municipal court judge in Ohio.

Civil Cases

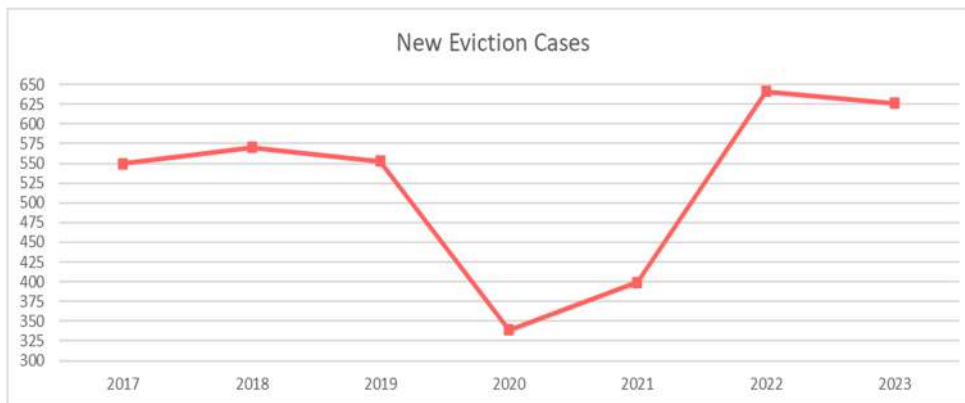
Civil case filings include contract cases, forcible entry and detainer (eviction) cases, personal injury cases, and small claims cases.



The Court continues to encourage and facilitate the settlement of civil cases, especially small claims, evictions, and rent deposit actions. For example, landlords and tenants can enter into binding

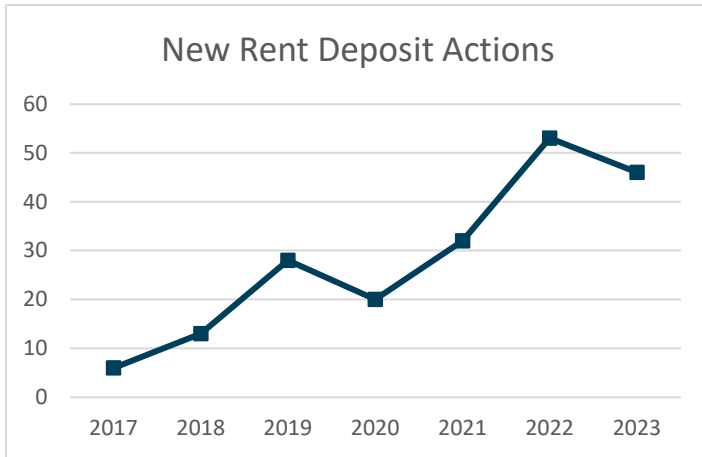
agreements, either with a pay-to-stay or with an agreed move-out date, with status hearings scheduled for a later date. The status hearing docket provides landlords with the assurance that if breached, the Court will enforce the agreement, and for the tenants, if they comply, there is no eviction judgment against them. This status docket has dramatically reduced the number of eviction judgments against tenants.

Although slight, for the first time since the end of the eviction moratorium, the Court saw a



decrease in the number of eviction filings. Primarily because of the settlement status docket, of those evictions filed where both the landlord and the tenant appear at

that first eviction hearing, the Court settles and resolves approximately 90% of them without a judgment on that day.



For the first time in several years, the Court saw a decrease, in what has been a dramatic increase, in the number of rent deposit actions initiated with our Court.

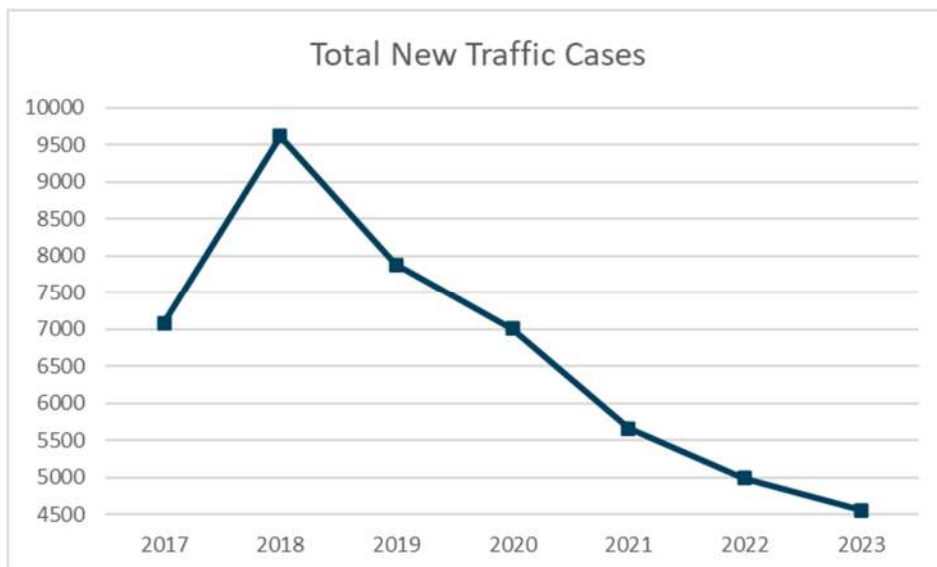
In Ohio, if a landlord fails to fulfill any obligation imposed upon it by the law or the lease, or violates a building, housing, health, or safety codes that apply to any condition of the premises that could

materially affect the health and safety of an occupant, the tenant may give notice in writing to the landlord, specifying the acts, omissions, or code violations that constitute non-compliance. After a reasonable time considering the severity of the condition, up to thirty days, a tenant may deposit all rent due with our Court. We then set the matter for a hearing to see if some resolution can be reached or, alternatively, determine how and under what conditions some or all of the rents should be returned to the tenant or the landlord.

Throughout 2023, the Court has tried to educate the public on rent deposit actions. The form used by tenants, available both from the clerk and online, was updated to make it more user-friendly. In addition, I have attended several events, including “You talk, I listen” events, put on by Councilwoman Davida Russell, where I presented by “Landlord/Tenant Law 101.”

Traffic Cases

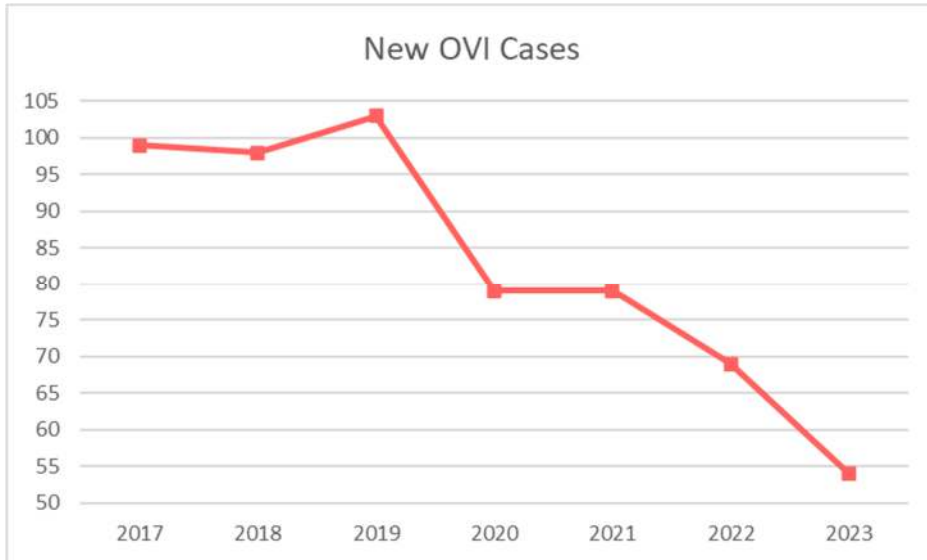
The total number of traffic cases filed in 2023, broken down by charges for operating a vehicle



under the influence of alcohol or drugs (OVI) and all other traffic cases, decreased from the prior year.

Many of these traffic cases include driving under suspension (DUS) charges. While an individual does not have the right to drive without a valid license, this Court recognizes

that being unable to drive results in general inconveniences, loss of employment, the inability to gain employment, and family hardships. Driving without a valid license also burdens law



enforcement, municipal courts, and the general public who drive with valid licenses and proper insurance. The Court has a DUS Reinstatement Docket every Wednesday afternoon for these reasons. These dockets, presided over primarily by

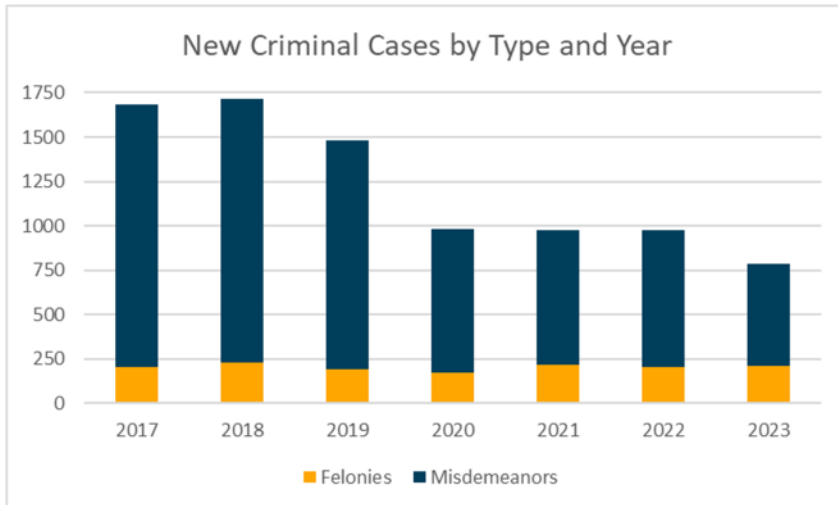
Magistrate **Kimberly Bolton**, seek to assist the defendants in identifying the requirements to become valid and allowing them to do so. This docket has succeeded in helping traffic offenders leave the cycle of suspensions and become valid, insurance-carrying drivers.

Criminal Cases

Of the total number of criminal cases heard by the Court, 1,280 were misdemeanors, including everything from a litter on public property offense with a maximum fine of \$150 to first-time domestic violence charges that carry a maximum sentence of 180 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

The remainder of the cases were felonies. The Court only has jurisdiction to hold initial appearances and preliminary hearings in felony matters. At the initial appearance, the Court informs the defendant of their rights, the nature of the charges, and the possible penalties and then sets bail. At a preliminary hearing, the Court determines if there is probable cause to bind the accused over to the Court of Common Pleas or order the accused discharged.

The number of criminal cases had been on a downward trend over the previous few years. As seen from the chart on the next page, the number of misdemeanors was down over two hundred new filings compared to the prior year, while the number of felony cases saw a slight increase from the preceding year.



The Court provides appointed counsel on felony cases at the bail hearing and preliminary hearing. The Court also provides appointed counsel to all indigent defendants facing possible jail time.

On all criminal matters, in setting bond, there is a presumption of pretrial

release by the least restrictive means necessary to reasonably assure appearance in court and promote public safety. At the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court, that means that in most cases, other than felonies and crimes of violence, defendants are released on their own recognizance without needing to post a monetary bond. In addition, the determination on bail is generally made under twenty-four hours and never more than forty-eight hours after the arrest, even on weekends and holidays.

Housing Code Violation Cases

The criminal matters referenced above include complaints filed by the City of Cleveland Heights alleging violations of the City’s Health, Housing, Building, Fire, or Safety Codes. Like all criminal cases, a city, through its prosecutor, has complete discretion in deciding whether to bring a criminal charge and the nature of the charge to bring. Although it depends on the nature of the charge and how it is charged, the maximum penalty for an individual in a code violation case is a \$1,000 fine and six months in jail; the maximum penalty for an entity in a code violation case is a \$5,000 fine.

Although punishment may be warranted, I emphasize compliance with code requirements as the primary goal of criminal prosecution; we, as a community, are best served when properties are repaired, rehabilitated, and maintained. The Court uses community control supervision, also known as probation, as a means to that end. After an offender is sentenced, some of the penalty is suspended, and the Court places the offender on community control. That community control includes conditions that require the offender to develop and present a compliance plan acceptable to the Court and then bring the property into compliance within that timeframe. If that occurs, the Court closes out the case without further penalty. If the offender violates any community control conditions, the Court can impose all or part of the suspended sentence.

We have a housing court diversion program in collaboration with the City and Home Repair Resource Center. To be accepted into the program, the subject property must be owner-occupied. Once the defendant is accepted into the program, they must meet with the Home Repair Resource Center and develop and present an acceptable compliance plan to the Court. If the defendant then follows and completes the compliance plan, the case is dismissed, no conviction appears on their record, and they can apply to have the record of the case sealed or expunged.

In 2023, the City filed 97 criminal housing violation cases. Each case alleged a single count of failing to comply with a housing violation notice against the named defendant. Of those, 45 were filed against individuals who owned and resided in their homes here in Cleveland Heights, and 52 were not owner-occupied and instead were filed against individuals or entities.

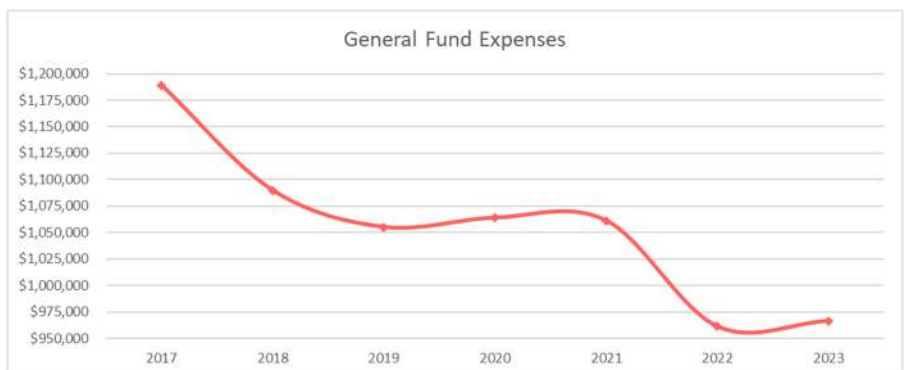
As of the writing of this Report, seven of the 97 were later voluntarily dismissed by the City; 12 have warrants for failing to appear; one has a pending trial; 39 remain under the supervision of the Court; and 39 have been brought into compliance.

Of the 39 that remain under the Court’s supervision, 17 are owner-occupied properties in the diversion program, and 22 are on community control. The average number of days between when the City first inspected those properties and when it was filed with the Court was 476 days; the average number of days those cases have been pending with the Court since they were filed is 203 days.

Of those brought into compliance, 15 were through the diversion program. The other 24 were sentenced and placed on probation with the condition that the property be brought into compliance, and they have since done just that. The average number of days between when the City first inspected those properties and when it was filed with the Court was 425 days; the average number of days between when it was filed with the Court and when it was determined that it was in compliance was 161 days.

EXPENSES

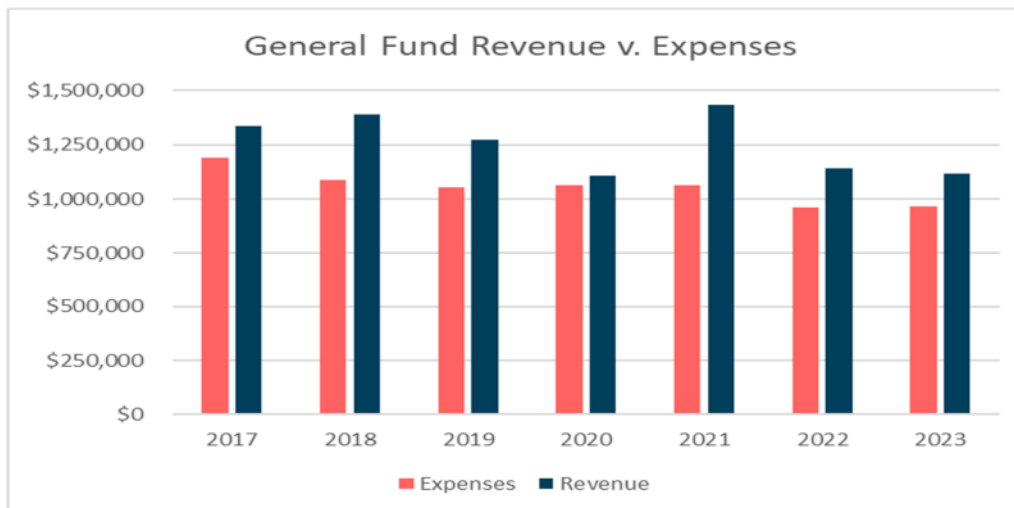
The Court’s 2023 general operating expenses, from which it paid for employee salaries and benefits, postage for all required notices and entries that must be sent to litigants, translator expenses for non-English speaking litigants, and much



more, was \$966,348.20. This was, once again, under budget. In addition, the expenses in 2023 were only about a half percent increase from 2022.

REVENUE

The Court should never be viewed as a revenue center - our mission is to administer justice. In 2023, the Court collected fines, costs, and fees totaling \$2,058,546.57. Of this, \$1,138,220.45 went to the City of Cleveland Heights, \$89,893.62 to Cuyahoga County, and \$250,013.79 to the State of Ohio. There was also \$76,077.00 distributed to the Court's special projects fund and \$45,642.00 to the Computer Fund. The remainder goes primarily to litigants from the collection of civil judgments and special funds designed to provide for alcohol and drug abuse assessment and treatment for persons who are charged with committing a criminal or traffic offense where substance abuse was a contributing factor leading to the offense.

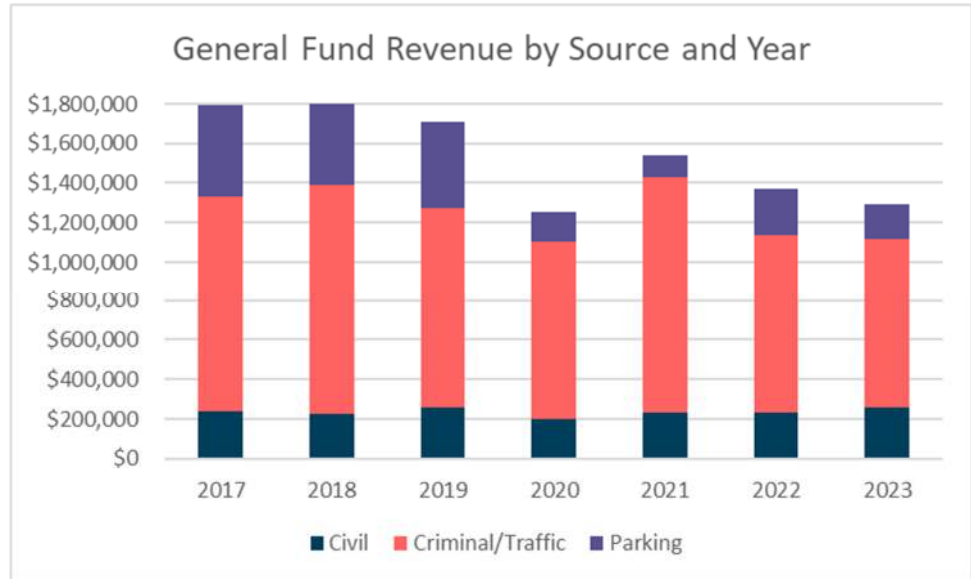


The general fund revenue from criminal fines and costs and civil costs collected by the Court totaled \$1,115,030.70. In 2023, just as it has for the last six years,

the Court's general fund revenue collected by the court exceeded the general fund expenses. In addition to the Court's revenue shown in the chart above, \$229,924.61 was collected on parking fines and costs that went to the City's general fund.

The Court's commitment to equity is unwavering. While diligently collecting fines, fees, and costs, it ensures transparency in payment options and closely monitors payment plans. Under the guidance of Magistrate Kimberly Bolton, the Court conducts ability-to-pay hearings, focusing on creating reasonable payment plans, offering community service alternatives, and even providing job placement assistance where appropriate.

Our aim is to make the payment of fines and costs as convenient as possible. Payments can be made in person, by mail, or online from the Court’s website. We have also introduced the option to make payments over the phone. In cases



where all other attempts to collect the fines and costs have not succeeded, the Court has partnered with Capital Recovery Services, Inc., a service that comes at no added expense to the Court, demonstrating our commitment to facilitating the payment process.

TECHNOLOGY

The Court's technological advancements are not to be overlooked. Thanks to a recent grant of over \$72,000.00, our probation management software has been upgraded to integrate more fully with the case management software. A kiosk in the Court lobby now allows probationers to conveniently check in for appointments, update their contact information, and answer preselected questions. This innovative solution not only saves time for probation officers but also for compliant probationers.

With the recent grant, we are at the forefront of technological advancements in the legal system. We are beginning to test and implement new technologies like e-warrants and virtual courtrooms. Our virtual courtroom, integrated into our existing case management software, will allow us to conduct many hearings virtually, saving time and resources. This technological upgrade is a testament to our dedication to providing efficient and effective services to the public.

In addition to those improvements, ours was one of the first municipal courts to allow litigants to file documents electronically. We have also upgraded our online docket so that everyone can access electronic images of the actual filings. When someone goes to the Court’s website, one can see the actual motion itself rather than simply seeing a docket entry that a motion was filed on a case. With these improvements, we have, for several years, been almost entirely paperless.

Our Court continues to send court filings and notices by email rather than simply hard copies through the mail. Finally, the Court implemented a texting module that automatically sends individualized text reminder messages based on the specifics of a case.

COURT PERSONNEL

Magistrates, Visiting Judges, and Acting Judges

Under Civil Rule 53, Criminal Rule 19, and Traffic Rule 14, a court of record may appoint one or more magistrates who shall have been engaged in the practice of law for at least four years and be in good standing with the Supreme Court of Ohio at the time of the appointment. Magistrates must earn 40 hours of continuing legal education, including 10 hours of instruction through courses offered by the Ohio Supreme Court Judicial College, every two years. Further, as part of the 10-hour Judicial College education requirement, three hours of instruction must be designated as “judicial conduct,” which may include courses on topics such as judicial ethics, judicial professionalism, and access to justice.

Magistrates are authorized to conduct most, but not all, court cases, but only by reference from the judge. All magistrate orders and decisions are subject to objection and review by the judge. In this Court, I refer non-OVI traffic cases, ability-to-pay hearings, and most civil cases, other than forcible entry and detainer trials, to the magistrates.

Kimberly Bolton joined the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court as a magistrate in April 2018. A native of Cleveland’s east side, Magistrate Bolton holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science from Hiram College and earned her Juris Doctor degree from Ohio Northern University Pettit College of Law. Before taking the bench, Magistrate Bolton opened her criminal and civil law practice. Magistrate Bolton came to the Cleveland Height Municipal Court from the City of Cleveland Heights, where she was an Assistant Law Director. She oversaw much of the civil and traffic dockets and reviews and conducts probation violation hearings.

In addition to the Magistrate, the Court was occasionally assisted by assigned and acting judges. The Chief Justice of the Ohio Supreme Court may assign a retired judge to serve on a court when a judge is unavailable due to recusal or otherwise. The Honorable **Joseph Gibson**, a retired Lake County Court of Common Pleas Judge, and the Honorable **Deborah A. LeBarron**, formally of the Euclid Municipal Court, each served in that capacity this last year.

The Court also had several acting judges who sat for me when I was temporarily absent during vacations and judicial conferences. **Peggy Foley Jones**, a highly regarded mediator, arbitrator, and private judge for nearly 20 years and Judge on the Cuyahoga County, Ohio Common Pleas Court for 12 years, serves in this role. So, too, does **Rod Mastandrea**, a Cleveland Heights High

School graduate and practicing criminal defense attorney defending the rights of accused defendants for over 15 years. Finally, **Leslie Johns** is a criminal defense lawyer who serves as a part-time magistrate at the Shaker Heights Municipal Court. Their support was greatly appreciated.

Clerks

Clerks are entrusted with recording and preserving all court proceedings by maintaining a general index, a docket, and other records. State law also mandates that a clerk receive, collect, and disburse all monies.

Our Clerk's Office was led by Sandra Berry, a Certified Public Accountant certified in government accounting and auditing. Her many accolades include a professional certification award from the Ohio Association of Municipal / County Court Clerks and a Certificate of Educational Achievement in Government and Auditing from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Lisa Walker, who holds a bachelor's and a master's degree and served as a deputy clerk for both our Court and the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas, served as the Chief Deputy Clerk. Assisting those supervisors, the Clerks Department also included **Michael Amaddio**, **Anissa Flemister**, **Antoinette Jones**, **Mark Koss**, **Karen Szekely**, **Lorraine Mumaw**, and **Samira Parker**.

Bailiffs

The Court's bailiffs are responsible for the safety and security of all persons entering the courthouse and maintaining order and the required decorum during all courtroom proceedings. Chief Bailiff Cassandra M. Jones led the bailiff department. She joined the Court as a deputy bailiff in August 2005. She holds a bachelor's in political science from Cleveland State University and an associate's degree in paralegal studies. In 2023, while maintaining her full-time role with the Court, she earned a master's degree in business administration with a specialization in organizational leadership from Youngstown State University. She served as my personal bailiff and managed all the day-to-day functions of the Court. This past year, she began the Certified Court Management Program, a national certification curriculum that addresses the educational needs of court leaders. The Department also included **Carletta Lloyd** and **Samuel Cooke, Jr.**, each of whom joined the Court in 2022.

To help ensure the safety and security of all persons entering the courthouse, the Court utilizes a walk-thru metal detector, a security wand for use at the point of entry when necessary, and a 24-hour closed-circuit camera surveillance system consisting of 14 cameras in certain areas of the courthouse including the upstairs probation offices. The bailiffs operate and help maintain that equipment. In addition to providing security, they also check in persons scheduled for court

hearings, assist with establishing ability-to-pay agreements, preserve and properly dispose of evidence, do outside service, conduct eviction move-outs, and run LEADS (criminal background) reports on defendants for traffic and criminal cases. Each bailiff is certified and trained through the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy.

Probation Department

The Court's probation department included Chief Probation Officer William "Skip" Gibson and Probation Officer **Sherri Travis**.

Chief Probation Officer **Gibson** holds a Bachelor's Degree from Cleveland State University and a Master's in Education Administration/Counseling from Case Western Reserve University. He served 26 years as an Intensive Probation Manager for the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court, and he has served the last eight years as Chief Probation Officer for the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court. Probation Officer **Travis** has a Bachelor's Degree from Bowling Green State University and a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice from Kent State University. Before joining the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court in 2018, she served as a probation officer with the Euclid Municipal Court for nearly ten years.

The probation department primarily supervises offenders while on community control. Rather than impose jail, many offenders are put on community control, better known as probation. Often, community control includes prohibitions, like not having any further convictions or not using alcohol and non-prescribed drugs. It also often includes specific requirements, like completing anger management or anti-theft programs. The probation department focuses on putting a probationer in the best position to succeed by monitoring progress, but they also report probation violations.

The probation department also assists the Court with numerous other functions. For example, the probation officers conduct investigations and prepare pre-sentence reports for criminal and traffic cases as referred by the Court. Those reports provide the detailed background information needed for a more informed court sentencing disposition. Last year, 194 pre-sentence investigation reports were prepared, 69 for traffic and 125 for criminal cases. The probation department also occasionally assesses jailed defendants to provide the Court with information to assist with setting bail and suggesting and providing viable alternatives to cash bonds. One alternative the Court is increasingly utilizing is GPS monitoring of defendants while they wait to conclude their cases. Rather than sit in jail, the defendant is released with a tracking device.

The probation staff also assists in court warrant investigations, permitting, when possible, the offender to schedule a date and time to turn themselves in rather than requiring a police arrest process. The Court has partnered with Cleveland's In the Neighborhood Program to allow

individuals with warrants to appear in court without the threat of being arrested. In addition, the Court has begun partnering with other municipal courts so that individuals who have warrants in multiple jurisdictions and voluntarily appear on a warrant before one judge can address the warrants they have in those other jurisdictions more easily.

The probation department also provides the electronic monitoring connection for defendants, both pre- and post-conviction, and it receives constant reports enabling it to notify both victims and the police if there is an issue of non-compliance. Last year, the Court placed eleven individuals on electronic location monitoring, and there were 402 days of monitoring defendants for alcohol through a SCRAM.

The probation department provides restitution collection services, monitoring the payments offenders make to repay their victims. Last year, \$8,707.94, \$5,327.94 from traffic cases, and \$3,380 from criminal cases in restitution payments made to victims through the probation department.

The Court and its probation department continue to partner with the Cleveland Municipal Court and its specialized dockets, including the Mental Health Docket, the Drug Court Docket, and the Veterans Court. The defendants referred to these dockets from Cleveland Heights are still ultimately monitored by this Court, but this partnership enables the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court to provide defendants with the benefits of these specialized dockets without the cost and time of creating a duplicative specialized court itself.

The probation department also monitors all community service orders from the Court. The Court orders community service as part of the punishment or permits it for indigent defendants instead of paying fines and costs. Last year, defendants completed 1,514 hours of community service. Of that, 565 hours were done through the Cleveland Heights Public Works Department. The probation department also makes community service referrals with several local providers, such as food banks, education centers, libraries, and various non-profit agencies within Cleveland Heights and surrounding areas.

On April 4, 2023, a new law went into effect that created sweeping changes to the process of criminal record removal. For example, while a defendant has long been able to seal a criminal record, that record can now potentially be expunged. The difference is that sealing a record removes it from all public records, and the public can no longer access the criminal record. An expungement results in a complete destruction of the record so that the record is permanently irretrievable. For every sealing or expungement filed, the probation department prepares a report detailing the defendant's prior criminal history and their efforts at rehabilitation. Last year, the probation department prepared a total of 40 such reports.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is an honor to serve Cleveland Heights as its Judge. Whatever the case before me, I seek to uphold the ideals of our judicial system and enhance our community. I could only do this work with the support of my capable and dedicated staff. We strive to meet and exceed our obligations to the citizens of Cleveland Heights and the public at large.

In addition to the support of my staff, we continue to work well with our partners, including Mayor Kahlil Seren and the members of City Council. I want to thank Police Chief **Chris Britton**, Cleveland Heights Law Director **William Hanna**, Housing Director **Allan Butler**, and their staff. I also must acknowledge Information Technology Director **Ryan Prosser**, Director of Public Works **Collette Clinkscale**, Finance Director **Andrew Unetic**, **Airesse Rowe-Gilmore** in Human Resources, and every one of their staff for all the behind-the-scenes work that helps the Court function. We are also fortunate to work with many others dedicated to their profession, including victim's advocate **Deborah Benn**, **Dave Brock**, and the staff at Home Repair Resource Center, as well as numerous attorneys, including defense attorneys on our criminal and traffic indigent appointment list. Without all of them, the work of the Court could not be done.

Finally, as always, I think it is important to note that I am supported by an incredible community of active, vocal, and passionate citizens. The citizens of Cleveland Heights are, simply put, incredible. Although this Report is meant for the Cleveland Heights City Council, Cuyahoga County Council Members, and the County Executive, I hope that the citizens of Cleveland Heights find it helpful in understanding the features, functions, and benefits of the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J.J. Costello". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Judge J.J. Costello

CRIMINAL/TRAFFIC BRANCH RECEIPTS

	2021	2022	2023
City of Cleveland Heights			
Local Costs	633,434.30	411,136.90	369,157.00
Computer Fund	45,931.00	33,288.00	30,942.00
Indigent Fund	14,199.95	9,768.99	9,209.09
Special Projects Fund	76,636.30	55,619.20	51,547.20
Fines	733,054.00	556,375.40	530,977.50
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Sub-Totals	1,503,255.55	1,066,188.49	991,832.79
 Cuyahoga County			
CRIS	32,187.00	24,262.50	22,805.00
Crime	810.00	659.21	416.00
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Sub-Totals	32,997.00	24,921.71	23,221.00
 State of Ohio			
Indigent Defense Support Fund	251,259.25	184,949.65	162,370.14
General Revenue	1,221.00	602.00	492.00
Victims Crime	64,493.00	48,764.50	45,511.65
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Sub-Totals	316,973.25	234,316.15	208,373.79
 Other Receipts			
Debt Collection	11,593.00	36,510.91	30,339.75
OVI Fines	8,865.00	7,049.90	8,026.00
Miscellaneous	7,503.55	7,397.80	6,764.50
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Sub-Totals	27,961.55	50,958.61	45,130.25
 TOTAL			
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	1,881,187.35	1,376,384.96	1,268,557.83

CRIMINAL/TRAFFIC BRANCH DISBURSEMENTS

City of Cleveland Heights	2021	2022	2023
Fines	588,529.54	466,482.27	464,774.56
Costs	634,788.34	413,179.17	369,884.62
Housing	1,765.00	1,245.00	945.00
Computer Fund	45,943.00	33,288.00	30,936.00
Special Projects Fund	76,636.30	55,618.70	51,577.00
Indigent Fund	15,420.95	9,768.99	9,905.55
Drug Fines	85.00	0.00	25.00
Other Cost	3,594.95	7,397.80	6,764.50
Sub-Total	<u>1,366,763.08</u>	<u>986,979.93</u>	<u>934,812.23</u>
 Cuyahoga County			
Regular Fines	51,484.00	40,443.90	27,473.40
Uniform Traffic Fines	88,459.50	46,058.10	35,377.72
REDDS	32,197.00	24,262.50	22,805.00
Crime Stop	810.00	659.21	416.00
1/2 Liquor Fines	222.50	437.50	0.00
Public Defender	2,147.50	2,720.00	3,511.50
Reimburse/Witness/Jury	362.00	396.00	310.00
Sub-Total	<u>175,682.50</u>	<u>114,977.21</u>	<u>89,893.62</u>
 State of Ohio			
RRF/Victims Fund	64,511.00	48,764.50	45,502.65
Indigent Defense Support Fund	251,259.25	181,474.75	162,370.14
Seat Belt	4,010.00	1,941.00	3,110.00
Expungements	1,710.00	895.00	570.00
1/2 Liquor Fines	222.50	437.50	0.00
BMV Fees	225.00	90.00	60.00
Pharmacy Board (Drug)	160.00	75.00	30.00
Sub-Total	<u>322,097.75</u>	<u>233,677.75</u>	<u>211,642.79</u>
 Other Disbursements			
Debt Collection	11,134.80	36,154.91	30,339.75
OVI Housing Fund*	2,667.00	2,253.00	2,700.00
OVI Arrest Agency*	1,120.00	1,078.00	977.00
Sub-Total	<u>14,921.80</u>	<u>39,485.91</u>	<u>34,016.75</u>
 TOTAL	<u><u>1,879,465.13</u></u>	<u><u>1,375,120.80</u></u>	<u><u>1,270,365.39</u></u>

*Money from these two funds goes directly into accounts for the Cleveland Heights Police Department

CIVIL/SMALL CLAIMS BRANCH RECEIPTS

City of Cleveland Heights	2021	2022	2023
Local Costs	229,784.00	235,023.99	260,936.00
Computer Fund	12,612.00	13,195.00	14,706.00
Special Projects Fund	20,985.00	21,990.00	24,500.00
Sub-Total	<u>263,381.00</u>	<u>270,208.99</u>	<u>300,142.00</u>
State of Ohio Legal Aid	32,656.00	35,220.00	38,371.00
Judgements & Deposits	475,696.49	470,562.68	446,924.72
Bailiff Fee	0.00	0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous Receipts	2,019.64	2,450.00	2,665.00
Sub-Total	<u>510,372.13</u>	<u>508,232.68</u>	<u>487,960.72</u>
TOTAL	<u><u>773,753.13</u></u>	<u><u>778,441.67</u></u>	<u><u>788,102.72</u></u>

CIVIL/SMALL CLAIMS BRANCH DISBURSEMENTS

City of Cleveland Heights	2021	2022	2023
Costs	229,730.22	235,596.63	260,936.00
Computer Funds	12,612.00	13,195.00	14,706.00
Bailiff Fees	0.00	0.00	0.00
Marriage Fees	2,019.64	2,400.00	2,665.00
Special Projects Fund	20,985.00	21,990.00	24,500.00
Sub-Totals	<u>265,346.86</u>	<u>273,181.63</u>	<u>302,807.00</u>
State of Ohio Legal Aid	32,650.00	35,200.00	38,371.00
Judgements & Refunds	475,696.49	470,562.68	446,924.72
Sub-Totals	<u>508,346.49</u>	<u>505,762.68</u>	<u>485,295.72</u>
TOTAL	<u><u>773,693.35</u></u>	<u><u>778,944.31</u></u>	<u><u>788,102.72</u></u>

LANDLORD-TENANT RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

RECEIPTS:	2023
Rent on Deposits January 1, 2022	62,040.47
Deposits in 2021	136,137.16
	<u>198,177.63</u>
DISBURSEMENTS:	
City of Cleveland Heights	1,886.02
Rent Disbursed	119,072.69
TOTAL	<u>120,958.71</u>
Rents on Deposit at December 31, 2023	<u><u>77,218.92</u></u>

NEW CASE FILINGS

	FELONY	MISDEMEANOR	O.V.I.	TRAFFIC	PER INJ	CONTRACT	F.E.D.	OTH CIV	SM CLMS	TOTAL
January	27	66	1	436	0	39	44	4	59	676
February	21	30	2	414	0	30	47	2	57	603
March	20	64	3	459	0	33	50	1	56	686
April	11	34	6	409	0	21	70	2	59	612
May	14	39	5	387	0	40	56	3	58	602
June	13	61	5	396	0	74	40	0	56	645
July	17	57	5	248	0	42	80	1	60	510
August	11	57	4	358	0	63	70	3	61	627
September	15	43	2	399	0	29	41	0	57	586
October	30	51	8	409	0	38	55	1	99	691
November	14	36	6	309	0	33	37	4	52	491
December	18	35	7	280	0	74	36	1	53	504
Total New	211	573	54	4504	0	516	626	22	727	7233

REACTIVATED OR REDESIGNATED

	FELONY	MISDEMEANOR	O.V.I.	TRAFFIC	PER INJ	CONTRACT	F.E.D.	OTH CIV	SM CLMS	TOTAL
Administrative	7	31	1	166	0	0	1	0	0	
Individual		17	2	44	0	0	0	0	0	
January	7	48	3	210	0	0	1	0	0	269
Administrative	19	30	1	204	0	0	1	0	4	
Individual		15	0	61	0	0	0	0	0	
February	19	45	1	265	0	0	1	0	4	335
Administrative	13	33	0	202	0	0	1	0	0	
Individual		15	0	66	0	0	0	0	0	
March	13	48	0	268	0	0	1	0	0	330
Administrative	6	23	2	143	0	0	0	0	0	
Individual		18	1	49	0	0	0	0	0	
April	6	41	3	192	0	0	0	0	0	242
Administrative	5	20	0	149	1	1	0	0	0	
Individual		10	0	38	0	0	0	0	0	
May	5	30	0	187	1	1	0	0	0	224
Administrative	13	34	1	159	0	0	0	0	0	
Individual		12	1	56	0	0	0	0	0	
June	13	46	2	215	0	0	0	0	0	276
Administrative	5	33	1	127	0	1	0	0	0	
Individual		17	0	37	0	0	0	0	0	
July	5	50	1	164	0	1	0	0	0	221
Administrative	13	37	1	161	0	1	0	0	0	
Individual		21	1	58	0	0	0	0	0	
August	13	58	2	219	0	1	0	0	0	293
Administrative	11	35	0	112	0	0	1	0	0	
Individual		24	2	24	0	0	0	0	0	
September	11	59	2	136	0	0	1	0	0	209
Administrative	16	23	1	124	0	2	1	0	0	
Individual		12	0	30	0	0	0	0	0	
October	16	35	1	154	0	2	1	0	0	209
Administrative	8	20	0	108	0	1	0	0	0	
Individual		8	2	19	0	0	0	0	0	
November	8	28	2	127	0	1	0	0	0	166
Administrative	9	26	2	125	0	0	0	0	0	
Individual		5	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	
December	9	31	2	138	0	0	0	0	0	180
Total Reactivated	125	519	19	2275	1	6	5	0	4	2954
Grand Total	336	1092	73	6779	1	522	631	22	731	10187