MEETING MINUTES
Commission on Technology
October 20th, 2025 (via Zoom)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Justice Jim Shea, Chair
Paige Trautwein, Ravalli Clerk of District Court
Judge Audrey Barger, COLJ Automation Chair (Hill County Justice Court Judge)
Judge Stacey Nerison, Dawson County Justice Court Judge
Judge Adam Larsen, 14th JD District Court Judge
Sean Goicoechea, Public Member (Attorney)
John Mudd, Executive Director State Bar of Montana
Dave McAlpin, Supreme Court Administrator
Franklin Runge, State Law Librarian
Ryan Davies, IT Division Director (Non-voting staff member)

Absent
Representative Fiona Nave, Member of Legislature
Bowen Greenwood, Clerk of the Supreme Court

Approval of Previous Minutes

Motion to approve May 29th meeting minutes: Franklin L. Runge
Seconded by: Dave McAlpin
Outcome: Minutes approved unanimously.

Project Updates

Full Court Enterprise (FCE)

- **Milestone Achieved**: All Montana trial courts are now live on FCE, completing an 8-year statewide rollout that began in 2017.
- **Strategic Alignment**: The project aligns with the Judicial Branch's IT Strategic Plan, emphasizing centralized systems and operational efficiency.
- **Infrastructure Impact**:
    - Transitioned from over 100 field servers to 6 centralized servers (3 for district courts, 3 for limited courts), significantly reducing maintenance overhead.

    - Improved support capabilities for IT staff and reduced hardware costs.
- **Data Sharing Enhancements**:
    - The OCA will begin work on data sharing projects to reduce manual processes by the courts.
    - Example: License suspensions entered in FCE are now automatically transmitted to the Montana Motor Vehicle Division (MVD), eliminating manual paperwork and reducing errors.
- **Security Upgrade**:
    - Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) implemented for all off-network users to prevent unauthorized access and mitigate cybersecurity threats.

E-Filing System

- **Progress**: 8 additional courts onboarded since the last meeting.
- **Strategic Pause**: Rollout intentionally slowed to focus on a system refresh.
- **Funding**: Funding secured from the legislature to modernize the e-filing platform.
- **Vendor Engagement**: Discovery phase contract signed with Thomson Reuters to assess system architecture and longevity.
- **Pending Inquiry**: Awaiting vendor response on how much additional lifespan the refresh will provide before a full system replacement is needed.

Courtroom Technology Modernization

- **Scope**:
    - Prioritizing rural and under-equipped courtrooms lacking integrated audio systems.
    - Focus on enabling remote participation and improving court record quality.
- **Use Case**: Some new judges are traveling to rural courtrooms more frequently; technology upgrades ensure consistent access and recording capabilities in all locations.
- **Goal**: Improve access to justice, reduce travel burdens for attorneys, and enhance court record reliability.

Jury Management System Overhaul

- **Vendor**: Numo (formerly Avenue).
- **Current Phase**: SetupConfiguration week completed in October 2025.
- **Timeline**:
    - Hopeful that pilot courts can begin using the system by mid 2026.
    - Implement Jury to other courts for the 2027 term.
- **Major Hurdle**:

    - Numo's system restricts back-to-back jury service, which conflicts with Montana's statutory and practical needs—especially in rural counties like Petroleum County.
    - Statutory ambiguity acknowledged; concern raised about potential legal challenges if jurors are excluded simply because they served the previous year.
- **Next Steps**:
    - OCA to negotiate with Numo to allow back-to-back service.
    - May require additional funding for system customization.

Workers' Compensation Court Integration

- **Transition**: Court moved from Department of Labor and Industry to the Judicial Branch.
- **Progress**:
    - Website and file migrated to judicial servers.
    - Weekly configuration meetings underway to transition from Clio to FCE.
- **Limitation**: No funding for historical data migration; court will manually backdate data from Clio.
- **Target FCE Go-Live**: January 2026.

Supreme Court CMS (C-Track)

- **Status**: Product nearing end-of-life.
- **Action**: Early discussions underway with Bowen Greenwood on potential replacement.
- **Next Steps**: May seek legislative funding in the next session; RFP process likely.

Discussion Topics

Transition from FTR to Zoom for Court Reporting

Background:

- Historical momentum toward Zoom driven by cost savings, centralized support, and strategic alignment.
- Court reporter concerns prompted a pause and reevaluation.

Technical Comparison:

Feature	FTR	Zoom + Express Scribe
Sound Isolation	Yes	No (planned by Zoom)
Foot Pedal Support	Native	Via Express Scribe ($90/year)

Feature	FTR	Zoom + Express Scribe
Cost	$800/yr current license $2,100/yr new license	~$330/year
Auto-Transcription	No	Yes (AI-generated)
Ability to Remote Support	No	Yes
Storage	Local	Cloud (FedRAMP-secured, indefinite)

Operational Considerations:

- Zoom Rooms require exclusive use—cannot run FTR and Zoom Room simultaneously.
- Gallatin County and several other courts successfully using Zoom Rooms.

Strategic Direction:

- Justice Shea Suggested adding a court reporter representative to the Commission.
- Suggestion to survey court reporters using Zoom Rooms.
- Sean suggested researching national trends. Ryan indicated that he could see what information the National Center for State Courts has on the topic.
- Emphasis on the importance of court reporters to ensure the accuracy of the court record – also balancing modernization, cost-efficiency, and statutory compliance.

Retention of Full Court V5 Data

Issue:

- OCA has retained legacy V5 data snapshots post-FCE conversion.
- This is stale duplicate data to what was converted to FCE.

Proposal:

- Retain V5 data for 3 years post-conversion, then delete.

Concerns:

- Some courts have reviewed the V5 data for historical data.
- Dev environments used for testing must remain unaffected.

Decision:

- Motion passed to allow deletion on a jurisdiction-by-jurisdiction basis, contingent on local approval.
- Ryan Davies to assess technical feasibility of selective deletion.

Standardization of Judicial Bench Technology

Current State:

- All judges have laptops.
- ~50% use desktops on the bench; others use their laptop and docking stations.

IT Recommendation:

- Standardize on laptops + docking stations for cost savings and support efficiency.

Judge Feedback:

- Strong support from Judge Larsen and Judge Barger.
- Laptops improve mobility, Zoom integration, and reduce support complexity.

Risks:

- Forgotten laptops; contingency plans needed (e.g., remote access, backup devices).

Next Steps:

- Ryan to meet with Dave McAlpin to discuss policy.
- Consider gradual transition via attrition.

Clerk of Court Laptop Provision

Proposal:

- Provide laptops to elected clerks (not deputies) to enable remote work and continuity.

Use Cases:

- Clerk caring for spouse post-surgery.
- Clerk facing 4-hour daily commute due to bridge closure.

Support:

- Strong endorsement from Paige Trautwein and Audrey Barger.
- Emphasized importance for e-filing continuity and emergency preparedness.

Budget Consideration:

- Dave McAlpin to coordinate with Cathy on funding.
- Policy to be applied consistently across jurisdictions.
- Allow Clerks of Courts to opt into a laptop.

Missoula Municipal Court Online Case Resolution Pilot

Proposal:

- Missoula to pilot a third-party app for online case resolution (e.g., online pleas, document sharing).
- Requires API integration with FCE.

Concerns:

- Leapfrogs other statewide priorities (e.g., MVD, DPHHS data exchanges).
- Unclear technical details and compliance with judicial procedures.
- No funding from Missoula for OCA/vendor work.
- Potential legal and operational risks.

Decision:

- Not prioritized at this time.
- Judges Barger and Nerison to meet with Missoula for more information.
- Revisit in future meeting.

Administrative Items

- **Next Meeting**: Tentatively March–April 2026.
- **Acknowledgment**: Franklin L. Runge recognized for his service and contributions as he departs the Commission.

Note: Meeting minutes were prepared by Ryan Davies with assistance of AI.