

MONTANA SUPREME COURT PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, December 10, 2024, 1:15 p.m.

Joseph P. Mazurek Justice Building

215 N. Sanders, Helena

4th Floor Conference Room

Chief Justice McGrath called the meeting to order at 1:15 p.m. In attendance were the Chief Justice and Justices Baker, Gustafson, McKinnon, Shea, Sandefur, and Rice.

Also in attendance were Bowen Greenwood, Supreme Court Clerk of Court; Jeanine Blaner, Supreme Court Staff Attorney; Kathleen Androlewicz, Electronic Services Coordinator; and Elizabeth Webster and Shane Cashin, Law Clerks.

Item 1: Minutes from November 19, 2024, Public Meeting

- The Court unanimously approved the minutes from the previous public meeting.

Item 2: Appointments to the Commission on Rules of Evidence

- The Court thanked Justice Gustafson for assembling member candidates and applauded her choices.
- The Court unanimously reappointed Judge Elizabeth Best (chair); and appointed Justin Starin (civil trial attorney representing primarily plaintiffs); David McLean (civil trial attorney representing primarily defendants); Hallie Bishop (criminal law prosecutor); Colin Stephens (criminal law public defender); Ann Moderie (estate and probate planning adjunct member); and Kai Groenke (family law adjunct member) each for a four-year term ending December 31, 2028.
- To stagger member terms of service, the Court unanimously appointed Caitlin Boland Aarab (civil trial attorney representing primarily plaintiffs); Julie Lichte (civil trial attorney representing primarily defendants); Brett Irigoien (criminal law prosecutor); Claire Letow (criminal law public defender); and a law professor to be designated by the Dean of the University of Montana law school each for a two-year term ending December 31, 2026.
- The Court noted that it would sign the corresponding Order at that day's conference, after correcting a typographical error.

Item 3: Appointments to the Sentence Review Division

- The Chief Justice makes appointments to the Sentence Review Division pursuant to § 46-18-901, MCA.

- District Court Judge John Warner's term as the Alternate Member of the Sentence Review Division expires December 31, 2024. The Court thanked him for his service.
- The Chief appointed District Court Judge-elect Jeffrey W. Dahood as the Alternate Member for a three-year term expiring December 31, 2027.

Item 4: Appointments to the Commission on Technology

- Supreme Court Administrator Beth McLaughlin, Flathead County Clerk of Court Peg Allison, and District Court Judge Randal I. Spaulding are all retiring.
- The terms of Commission members Representative Fiona Nave, Judge Stacey Nerison, and P. Mars Scott expired on October 31, 2024.
- Justice Shea announced member candidates for appointment and reappointment, and the Court thanked all outgoing members for their service.
- The Court unanimously appointed Dave McAlpin (Supreme Court Administrator member) for a term expiring March 31, 2026; and Paige Trautwein (Clerk of District Court member); Judge Adam Larsen (District Court Judge member); and Sean Goicoechea (Public member) each for a term expiring October 31, 2027.
- The Court unanimously reappointed Fiona Nave (Legislature member) and Judge Stacey Nerison (Automation Chair Courts of Limited Jurisdiction member) each for a term expiring October 31, 2027.

There was no public question or comment.