

MONTANA SUPREME COURT PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 15, 2025, 1:00 p.m
Joseph P. Mazurek Justice Building
215 North Sanders, Helena
Attorney's Lounge, 4th floor

Chief Justice Swanson called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m. In attendance were Justices Baker, Bidegaray, and McKinnon. Also present were Bowen Greenwood, Clerk of the Montana Supreme Court; Jeanine Blaner, Supreme Court Staff Attorney; Kathleen Androlewicz, Electronic Services Coordinator; and Hannah Good and Blake Phillips, Law Clerks of the Montana Supreme Court.

Item 1: Approval of Revised Minutes from the May 20, 2025, Public Meeting

- All present Justices approved the Revised Minutes from the previous public meeting.

Item 2: Appointments to the Commission on Technology

- Chief Justice Swanson introduced the matter and noted that the terms of John Mudd, Executive Director of the State Bar of Montana, and Franklin Runge, State Law Librarian, are expiring. The Chief Justice reported that there was a recommendation to reappoint John Mudd and Franklin Runge given their expertise and tenure on the commission.
- Justice McKinnon moved to reappoint Mudd and Runge.
 - Justice Bidegaray seconded.
 - The motion was approved unanimously.

Item 3: Appointments to the District Court Council

- Chief Justice Swanson introduced the matter. The Chief Justice discussed the composition of the council pursuant to § 3-1-1602, MCA. Ex officio positions are nominated by the respective organizations they represent and appointed by the Supreme Court while the District Court Judge members are elected by the Montana Judge's Association and confirmed by the Supreme Court.
 - The Chief Justice noted that The Montana Association of Clerks of District Courts had nominated Janice Klempel of the Seventh Judicial District Court, Richland County, to fill the Clerk of District Court position.

- The Chief Justice noted that the Montana Juvenile Probation Officers Association nominated Jason Riphenburg of the Eighth Judicial District Court, Cascade County, to fill the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer position.
- The Chief Justice noted that the Hon. Rienne H. McElyea of the Eighteenth Judicial District Court, Gallatin County, was elected by the Montana Judges Association as the District Court Judge, Position 1 member.
- Judge Bidegaray proposed amending the order to clarify which members are ex officio to avoid future confusion.
- Justice Bidegaray moved to amend the order to insert the term “Ex Officio” before “Officer” in Janice Klempel and Jason Riphenburg’s titles
 - Justice Baker seconded the amendment.
 - The amendment was approved unanimously.
- Justice Baker moved to adopt the order as amended.
 - Justice McKinnon seconded.
 - The motion was approved unanimously.
- The Chief Justice stated that Judicial Assistant Lorrie Cole would circulate an amended order for signatures.

Item 4: Appointments to the Uniform District Court Rules Commission

- Chief Justice Swanson introduced the matter and discussed that Elizabeth Halverson had resigned her position as Civil Trial Attorney for Plaintiffs on the commission. Halverson and the Hon. Amy Eddy recommended Tanis Holm to complete Halverson’s term, which expires in 2028.
- Justice Bidegaray moved to adopt the order.
 - Justice McKinnon seconded.
 - Justice Baker noted that Holm was a good choice given her experience.
 - The motion was approved unanimously.

Item 5: Appointments to the Board of Bar Examiners

- Chief Justice Swanson introduced the matter and noted that Debra Parker resigned her position on the Board. The Chief Justice stated that Members of Board recommended John Lacey to fill her seat.
- Justice Baker moved to adopt the order.
 - Justice McKinnon seconded.
 - The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comment:

- Justice Baker noted that public comments had been submitted regarding amending the Continuing Legal Education (CLE) rules but that those comments were not on

the agenda for this meeting because the Court wanted to ensure that the commenters had sufficient notice to attend and be heard and that the Court had sufficient time to review the comments.

- Justice Baker suggested that the meeting regarding those comments should be held within the next three to four weeks because the CLE commission meets annually in early September and would need to discuss the new rules.
- The Chief Justice stated that he would coordinate a meeting within that time frame.

Chief Justice Swanson adjourned the meeting at 1:16 p.m.

Submitted by: Blake Phillips and Hannah Good on July 15, 2025.