

MONTANA SUPREME COURT PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 08, 2026, 1:15 p.m.

Joseph P. Mazurek Justice Building

215 North Sanders, Helena

Attorney's Lounge, 4th Floor | Also Available via Zoom Conference

Chief Justice Swanson called the meeting to order at 1:16 p.m. In attendance were Justices Baker, McKinnon, Bidegaray, and Rice. Justice Gustafson attended via Zoom.

Also present were Bowen Greenwood, Clerk of the Montana Supreme Court; John Mudd, Executive Director of State Bar of Montana; and John Carr and Sarah Rollins, Law Clerks of the Montana Supreme Court. Ryan Davies, Information Technology Director, was present via Zoom.

Item 1: Approval of the Minutes from the August 18, 2026, Public Meeting

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

Item 2: Appointments to the Access to Justice Commission

- Justice Baker introduced the matter, noting every year six members of the Access to Justice Commission turnover. This year both legislative members' terms expire, but because one of them will be out of the legislature and the other is up for election she recommends holding those two positions vacant until after the election. Two judicial members, Hon. Leslie Halligan and Hon. David Carter are both willing to renew. Two other members, Clerk of Court member Rick Cook and Aimee Grmoljez who represents the business community, will not seek another term.
- Justice Baker offered recommendations for Rick Cook's and Aimee Grmoljez's replacement. Amy Spangler, Teton County Clerk of District Court, is originally from Choteau and began working in the court as Clerk of Municipal Court in Dickinson, North Dakota in 2018 before moving back to Montana in 2025 and then being elected as the Clerk of Teton County District Court in 2026. The other nominee is Jessie Luther, an attorney in Helena, who has two decades of experience in governmental affairs, lobbying and campaign finance. Ms. Luther currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Montana Chamber of Commerce, as a director on the Board of Treasure State Resources Association, and as a director on the Board of Energy Share.
- Justice Baker moved for the reappointment of Hon. Leslie Halligan and Hon. David Carter, for the appointment of Jessie Luther and Amy Spangler, and to wait until after the election to appoint the two legislative members.
 - Justice Bidegaray seconded.
 - The motion was approved unanimously.

Item 3: Appointments to the Commission of Continuing Legal Education

- Chief Justice Swanson introduced the matter, noting two longstanding members' terms are expiring, and they are not continuing – Casey Heitz and Paul Stahl. The Court thanked them for many years of service. The Chief Justice also noted Marsha Goetting's term is expiring, but she would like to continue to serve on the commission.
- The State Bar has nominated Michael Talia and Shane Colton.
- John Mudd, Executive Director of State Bar of Montana, noted they have tried to find people who care about teaching and service. He noted Marsha has been a great addition to the commission, and they are thrilled she is wanting to continue. Mr. Mudd stated Shane Colton teaches aviation law and has an interest in continuing to teach law. He also said Michael Talia is a former bar trustee. Mr. Mudd noted both nominees are willing to join the commission and are dedicated people.
- Chief Justice moved to renew Marsha Goetting's appointment and to appoint Michael Talia and Shane Colton for three-year terms expiring September 30, 2029.
 - Justice McKinnon seconded.
 - The motion was approved unanimously.

Item 4: Appointments to the Civil Jury Instructions Guidelines Commission

- The Chief Justice introduced the matter, noting five members' terms will expire, and all have requested to be reappointed.
- Chief Justice moved to reappoint Hon. Jessica Fehr, Hon. Matthew Cuffe, John Amsden, Sean Goicoechea, and Matthew Hayhurst for four-year terms expiring September 30, 2030.
 - Justice Rice seconded.
 - The motion was approved unanimously.

Chief Justice Swanson adjourned the meeting at 1:27 p.m.

Submitted by: Sarah Rollins