Meeting Notes

Oregon Law Commission

Municipal and Justice Courts Work Group

September 30, 2026

I. Call to Order

In attendance: Jessica Minifie, Kimberly McCullough, Lindsey Detweiler, Judge Emily Oberdorfer, Judge Dan Cross, Judge Erin Zemper, Tim Dooley, Charlie Conrad, Kate Lynch, Amy Zubko

Introductions were made, and the group identified three topics: follow-up on the prior meeting, collection in closed cases, and ODAA's concerns about notice and transferred workload.

Tim Dooley reported no additional concerns after reviewing the prior meeting notes and appreciated that the draft incorporated his suggestion.

II. Discussion

a. Closed Cases and Outstanding Financial Obligations

OJD clarified that it considers cases closed upon entry of final judgment, even when debt remains, while some local courts may describe those cases as open. Collecting transferred debt while preserving local distribution formulas would require substantial changes to Odyssey and could create significant costs.

OJD proposed statutory authority allowing local courts to write off debt or transfer it to the state, application of the state distribution formula to transferred debt, electronic data compatible with Odyssey, and notice from the local court directing debtors to pay the state. Concerns were raised that requiring compatible electronic records could impose substantial costs on closing courts; a limited spreadsheet submission might be workable, but technical requirements needed clarification from OJD on what was necessary.

The group discussed continuing to collect restitution and compensatory fines payable to victims, including identifying the information needed to transfer those obligations. After receiving technical details, Jessica Minifie will prepare draft language addressing OJD's requests, excluding restitution and compensatory fines from local discretion to write off debt. Before drafting by LC, OJD will provide additional information on how to transfer the data.

b. Closure Notice and Transferred Workload

ODAA requested one year's notice rather than six months to allow budget and staffing preparation, participation by district attorneys and law enforcement in agreements shortening the notice period, and consideration of county reimbursement for transferred municipal court workload. The reimbursement proposal contemplated declining payments over several years; concerns included calculating costs, administering billing, and requiring payments from cities closing courts for financial reasons.

Discussion supported a longer notice period for budget planning and community participation, while recognizing that additional notice would not eliminate county resource constraints. Jessica was asked to change the draft notice period to one year, and Amy proposed following up with ODAA about whether the additional time would address its concerns.

When asked whether district attorneys and law enforcement should join the entities authorized to agree to shorter notice, several participants raised questions about the addition, citing simplicity and existing avenues for input. Some participants disagreed that those avenues provided district attorneys a voice in the process.

Participants also raised questions about adding notice to public defense contractors. Similar to the conversation about the DAs, the point was made that the closure of a municipal court would engender a significant amount of outreach. Jessica indicated that these informal responses would guide drafting rather than constitute a formal small-group voting process.

III. Scheduling

Kimberly McCullough and Lindsey Detweiler would consult OJD technical staff about the minimum data needed for debt and victim-payment collection, with information tentatively expected early the following week. Distribution of that information was requested to assess counties' capabilities, and Jessica anticipated preparing an updated draft within a few days after receiving it.

Another small-group meeting was anticipated before the full work group's October 28 meeting.