Meeting Notes

Oregon Law Commission

Municipal and Justice Courts Work Group

September 16, 2026

I. Call to Order

In Attendance: Judge Mary James, Jim Nass, Tim Dooley, Monte Ludington, Jessica Minifie, Amie Fender-Sosa, Chris Perdue, Lindsey Detweiler, Heather Marek, Gus Patel-Tupper, Judge Juliet Britton, Charlie Conrad, Amy Zubko, Nora Robison

The meeting opened with thanks to members for their work in the small groups since the August 19 meeting and an update that the small groups had made progress on several issues assigned to the work group.

II. Discussion

a. Records of Abolished Local Courts

The group first received an update on the small group addressing records of abolished local courts, including draft language prepared by Jessica Minifie. The small group identified several areas for possible revisions, including whether district attorneys and law enforcement should be included in section 1(2)(b), OJD's suggestion to refer to "cases and case records," a question from LOC about the word "currently" in section 1(5), and suggested revisions to section 2(5).

The small group also considered the business processes that would apply when records from an abolished local court are transferred to circuit court, particularly when a case has outstanding financial obligations. OJD had not anticipated entering every transferred local court case into Odyssey unless a legal issue later required circuit court action, but cases with unpaid obligations could require identification and entry into both the case-management and financial systems. The discussion also identified complications because different revenue-distribution statutes apply depending on the court that entered the judgment.

Several possible approaches were discussed. One approach would require OJD to identify cases with outstanding obligations and continue applying the applicable local-court revenue distributions, which could require information from the local court and significant system changes. A second approach would apply circuit-court revenue distribution after transfer, reducing some system-configuration issues but still requiring affected cases and financial obligations to be entered into OJD systems. A third approach would transfer records without outstanding financial obligations remaining for circuit court administration.

The group also discussed existing collection practices. Municipal courts may use the Department of Revenue or independent collection agencies; most use collection agencies, and collection contracts are generally with the city rather than the court. Questions remain about whether transferred cases should be removed from collections and turned over to OJD and how that process would operate in higher-volume jurisdictions.

The group agreed that additional small-group work is needed before determining how to proceed on the financial-obligations issues.

b. Limitations on Municipal Appeals

The small group addressing limitations on municipal appeals met on September 4 and discussed the issues and existing case law. Following that discussion, HB 2460 was reviewed to determine how the issue had previously been addressed and the scope of the work group's current assignment. During the meeting on September 16, Judge James passed along a request from the Commission Chair that the municipal appeals issue be discussed in the full Commission before additional work proceeds.

c. Violation Appeals under ORS Chapters 19 and 138

The Commission Chair similarly requested that further work concerning Chapters 19 and 138 be paused pending discussion at the full Commission. Jessica Minifie had continued working on draft language concerning Chapters 19 and 138 intended to clarify aspects of the appeals process discussed by the small group.

III. Scheduling

The Commission will consider the paused appeals issues at its September 25 meeting, after which further direction will be communicated to the work group. The next full work group meeting is scheduled for October 28.

IV. Open Questions

- Further work is needed to determine how outstanding financial obligations should be handled when records from an abolished local court are transferred to circuit court, including how affected cases would be identified and administered and which revenue-distribution rules would apply.
- Further consideration of municipal appeals and Chapter 19 and 138 proposals will depend on direction from the Commission following its September 25 meeting.