

COURT BULLETIN

June 2016

On the Hill...

Trial Court Identifies Options as FY17 Budget Moves to Conference Committee

The House and Senate versions of the budget went to a Conference Committee in early June. The six-member committee is working to reconcile the House's \$639.8 million and Senate's \$643.4 million versions of the Trial Court's budget, and to issue a compromise bill which will then be presented to the House and Senate for ratification. Once ratified, the Legislature sends a budget to the Governor who has ten days to review it. The current fiscal year ends June 30.

The Committee members are: Senate Ways and Means Chair Karen Spilka, House Ways and Means Chair Brian Dempsey, Senate Ways and Means Vice Chair Salvatore DiDomenico and Senator Viriato DeMacedo, House Ways and Means Vice Chair Stephen Kulik and Representative Todd Smola.

On June 14, the Baker administration updated its financial assessment and reported that tax collections and tax revenues are significantly below expectations. They projected a revenue shortfall in the range of \$450 to \$750 million, which will impact the work of the Conference Committee and may affect the schedule for finalizing the FY17 budget.

Trial Court Plans to Address Anticipated Funding Gap

The Trial Court is anticipating a FY17 budget shortfall, and is actively identifying steps that must be taken to operate at the level of funding that will be recommended by the Legislature. Court leaders have determined that staffing levels will need to be reduced. The extent of these reductions will depend on final funding. Current plans to implement this budget reduction do not include layoffs or a hiring freeze. These plans include the following:

- Retirement Incentive: Offer a one-time, \$10,000 incentive payment to employees who retire by September 2nd and selectively replace those positions.
- Cancel the Court Officer Academy scheduled for August 2016. We hope to revisit the possibility of a class in calendar year 2017.

Once the budget is signed into law, the Trial Court will make final decisions and announce details of its plans.

State Capital Plan Issued

In May, Governor Baker issued a new five-year capital investment plan that provides a blueprint for capital spending through 2021 and increases borrowing for the upcoming year by 3 percent to "maintain existing assets and make targeted investments." The plan provides \$250 million for Trial Court capital projects over the next five years, including construction of a new courthouse in

Western Mass. Veterans Treatment Court Opens



Those attending the event included, from left, Court Administrator Harry Spence, Holyoke District Court First Justice Maureen Walsh, presiding District Court Judge Laurie MacLeod, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Francisco Ureña, District Court Chief Justice Paul Dawley, Veterans Court Program Manager Edward Callahan, and Trial Court Chief Justice Paula Carey.

The Western Mass. Veterans Treatment Court marked its official opening last month at the War Memorial Building in Holyoke.

Hosted by Judge MacLeod, the afternoon featured remarks by Chief Justice Carey, Court Administrator Spence, Chief Justice Dawley, Secretary Ureña, Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse, Northwestern District Attorney David Sullivan, Hampden District Attorney Anthony Gullini, and Mentor Coordinator Attorney Archer Battista. The program concluded with a 10-minute documentary about the Western Mass. Veterans Treatment Court by filmmaker Dan Lohaus.

[See photos](#)

Strategic Planning Teams Present Final Recommendations

Leaders for the Strategic Plan 2.0 teams presented their final recommendations to the Strategy Leadership Team (SLT) on June 6th. Later in the month they summarized their reports for the Chief Justices, Deputy Court Administrators and Directors.

Proposed tactical plans were presented and discussed for the following areas:

- organizational decision making and support
- judicial experience
- next generation technology
- access to justice & court user experience
- talent and career development
- case flow management
- Probation practice
- Probation services
- Probation workforce development
- Probation business processes & IT

Recommendations incorporated four key themes:

- continuous improvement
- race and implicit bias
- user experience
- public trust and confidence

Court leaders took these opportunities to ask questions and expressed deep appreciation for the extensive work done by the planning teams to develop thoughtful action plans that would support the Trial Court's goals in these key areas.

Strategic Plan 2.0 will be reviewed with the Supreme Judicial Court in July and meetings with external stakeholders are scheduled for July and August. The plan will incorporate ongoing input as the process continues. Statewide meetings will be held in the fall to review the plan with court staff.

Who's who:

- **Strategic Plan 2.0 Team Members**
- **Probation's five Strategic areas; Strategic Planning Committee members**

Springfield Court Service Center Holds Open House



Court Service Center Attorney Hector Zavala helps visitors with financial forms before they appear in court.

The Springfield Court Service Center held an open house in May to mark its official opening. The Court Service Center has helped over 3,000 people since January.

Along with community partners, court leaders, judges, and staff from the Hampden County Hall of Justice, those attending the event included Representatives Jose Tosado and Carlos Gonzalez, and Senators James Welch and Eric Lesser.

[See photos](#)

Planning for Retirement: When and How to Start

No matter where you are in your career, it's never too early to start planning for the financial aspects of your retirement.

The Human Resources Department regularly fields questions from employees, managers and judges about the retirement process. At workshops and other training sessions, there is significant interest in accurate information about this important area of life planning.

When should I retire? The decision to retire is based on a number of factors, including family needs, health status, job satisfaction, and interest in new areas. Underlying all of these factors, however, is the difficult question: "Can I afford to retire?"

[Read More](#)

Office of Court Management Update...

In the Works: Overview of Court Capital Projects



Almost there. Major renovation and expansion of the Salem Probate and Family Courthouse, part of which is shown above, will be ready for occupancy in early 2017.

Court Capital Projects and Facilities Management work together to represent the Trial Court during the planning, programming, design, construction and post-occupancy of courthouse construction and improvement projects.

To see the latest list of major projects slated for 2016, along with more detailed descriptions of several projects now underway or set to begin in the near future, click the link below.

[More details](#)

"All Hands" Facilities Meetings Increase Employee Engagement

Last month, Facilities Management held its second annual spring "All Hands" meetings at the following courthouses:

- Region I at Chicopee District Court
- Region II at Ayer District Court
- Region III at Peabody District Court
- Region IV at Fall River Justice Center
- Region V at Roxbury Municipal Court

The employee-driven All Hands meetings are held at various courthouses around the state in the spring and fall in each Facilities Management region.

Before each session, employees submit questions to the Facilities administrative office. Led by Director John Bello, management and staff discuss the questions in an informal, open forum designed to generate discussion.

"When we started these sessions in 2015, management set an agenda with pre-set topics. As a result, most of the dialogue was one-way, from our executive staff to the employees," says Director Bello. "We wanted to change the nature of the conversation."

The goal is to engage each of the department's 400 employees. With help from the Judicial Institute, the management team created an online survey that was sent to Facilities staff across the state. Many of the survey suggestions have been incorporated into the 2016 sessions.

The October All Hands sessions are scheduled at the following locations:

- Region I at Hampshire County Courthouse
- Region II at Marlboro District Court
- Region III at Lawrence Superior Court
- Region IV at Taunton Trial Court
- Region V at Somerville District Court

For more information regarding October's All Hands sessions, contact Administrative Coordinator Susan Lawlor at susan.lawlor@jud.state.ma.us.

Corrections, Comments... e-Learning Center Default Password

And the password is... Last month's article on the Trial Court's new e-Learning Center included the wrong default password. To sign in and see available courses and

your transcript, use **change1t**.

What's happening at your courthouse?



Tell us the latest, so we can share it.

Share best practices your courthouse has developed...

Send us your news, photos, and upcoming events you'd like to share with your Trial Court colleagues...

Keep in touch: execofc@jud.state.ma.us.

Read your monthly *Bulletin*...

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Coming Up in July / August:

- Innovation at Work: New Franklin County Family Drug Court Opens
- In the Field with Community Corrections Community Service
- New Court Officers Graduate, Assigned to Courts