



Memorandum

To: Public Safety Interim Budget Committee

From: Daniel Guzynski, Chief of Prosecution Services Bureau

cc: Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen

Date: December 5, 2024

Re: Interim Budget Committee Meeting – December 16, 2024

PSB Leadership

Dan Guzynski, Chief of Prosecution Services Bureau
Meghann Paddock, Department of Justice Training Coordinator

General Prosecutors

Thorin Geist
Eric Kitzmiller
Caitlin Creighton
Open position- Stephanie Robles starting December 16, 2024.
Open position- In recruitment stage.

Specialized Prosecutors-+

FWP Prosecutor	Open Position-recruitment Half time general prosecutor and half time FWP Prosecutor (50% funded by FWP)
Patrick Moody	Full time Department of Corrections Prosecutor (100% funded by DOC)
John Nesbitt	Full time Montana State Fund Prosecutor (100% funded by State Fund)
Ed Hirsch	Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (100% funded by DOT)

Paralegals

Megan Schneckloth
Tia Corwin
Lisa Centifanto

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

215 North Sanders
PO Box 201401
Helena, MT 59620-1401

(406) 444-2026
Contactdoj@mt.gov
mtdoj.gov



PSB Current Case Load

PSB's primary mission is prosecuting criminal cases on behalf of counties that request assistance. Cases are referred to PSB when the case is too complex for the local county attorney to prosecute or when the county attorney has a conflict.

Homicide and Attempted Homicide Cases

PSB is currently prosecuting 26 homicide/attempted homicide cases. PSB has carried approximately this number of homicide cases during the last couple of years. This number has increased dramatically since 2017.

Sexual Assault Cases

PSB is currently prosecuting 28 sexual assault prosecutions. PSB has carried approximately this number of sexual assault prosecutions during the last couple of years.

Declination of Cases

During the last several years, PSB has communicated with the Montana County Attorney Association that PSB does not have a lot of capacity to handle additional cases; however, that it is PSB's policy to accept homicide and sexual assault cases. PSB has advised county attorneys to rely on neighboring counties for assistance in cases that do not involve homicide or sexual assault.

Since tracking declination of county cases began in October 2023, PSB has formally declined 17 cases due to lack of resources. PSB believes that this number does not adequately reflect the counties need for PSB services because counties have been advised that due to resource limitations PSB is primarily accepting homicide and sexual assault cases.

PSB Other Duties

PSB attorneys and staff also have a prominent role in training prosecutors and law enforcement throughout Montana. PSB attorneys interact with prosecutors daily to provide technical expertise. PSB also takes an active role in training law enforcement at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy. PSB members work with DOJ's executive team on various projects including drafting of proposed legislation. Most notably during the 2023 session was the revamping of the human trafficking laws. PSB is also in charge of sexual assault reporting and fentanyl reporting to the legislature.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

215 North Sanders
PO Box 201401
Helena, MT 59620-1401

(406) 444-2026
Contactdoj@mt.gov
mtdoj.gov

AUSTIN KNUDSEN



STATE OF MONTANA

Costs of Prosecution

Counties do not reimburse DOJ for the costs of PSB counsel or paralegals for their travel, which includes transportation, hotel, and per diem. Counties do pay the costs of all trial expenses including expert witness fees, witness travel, transcripts, and preparation of exhibits.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

215 North Sanders
PO Box 201401
Helena, MT 59620-1401

(406) 444-2026
Contactdoj@mt.gov
mtdoj.gov