

Interview Summary

Name of person interviewed

Amber Gandy

Relationship to the case

Witness

Person conducting the interview and preparing written statement

Amanda Batiz, Operations Division Manager, Superior Court

Location of Interview

Millville Municipal Court

Date of Interview

12/15/2022- Thursday

Time of Interview

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Summary:

I am currently a keyboarding clerk and I have worked for Municipal Court for four years, two of which have been in my current position. My supervisor is Kim Hamlyn. My duties include working on sending out notices to appear; rescheduling notices; working on the execute warrant report; working on the charge report; court preparation; clerking on the bench for court days; executing daily clerical functions; updating the city website; creating and sending ZOOM links to anyone who needs one; assisting with in-person or virtual court; going through court calendars. I am usually the only one who handles the court preparation. When I am unavailable, Kim assigns the court dates. Sometimes the deputy will fill in. Kim assigns the work specifically to everyone. In court there is usually a court clerk and a sound recorder with Judge Witcher.

Court scheduling is staggered for in-person and virtual hearings. For example: First appearances are 9:00 a.m.; Not guilty pleas and pro-se are 9:30 a.m.; 10:30 a.m. is reserved for attorneys; criminal first appearances are in the afternoon; 1:15 p.m. is reserved for public defender on virtual days and 2:00 p.m. for trials. In-person hearings are scheduled by charge for certain offenses, or someone can request to come in-person. Mondays are our in-person dates and virtual is Wednesday. Mondays are our busiest days. We can have between 40-50 cases for the morning on Mondays and for the afternoon 20-30 cases. For virtual court we have about the same case count and schedule with the same staggered schedules. The Court Administrator is responsible for overseeing the scheduling of the court cases. The Judge does not have any role in the scheduling of the cases. We always go to the Court Administrator when we receive a request to reschedule; a request for in-person; or a request for virtual. She decides whether requests for postponement or rescheduling are granted.

I am familiar with the Supreme Court's order dated November 18, 2021, regarding the scheduling of court matters. According to the order, I believe anything with a consequence of magnitude would be scheduled in-person, for example, driving on a revoked list would be scheduled in-person. I am also familiar with the Supreme Court's order dated October 27, 2022. I know the Court Administrator went over the orders with everyone. There were no changes with schedules because of the recent order. Kim

Hamlyn had a meeting with everyone in the office. She went over the order with everyone. She also provided a copy of it to everyone. We had to sign off that we received it and went over it.

For the scheduling of interpreting cases, we have two people that speak Spanish and interpret in the office. When Spanish speaking individuals come to the window and ask when their court date is, the bilingual staff help them. If they are scheduled for virtual and able to get on to virtual, we use language line for virtual interpreting. Sometimes they ask for their case to be heard in-person. When the notes on the file say that the person needs an interpreter, we provide an interpreter. When I am in court and the case is currently scheduled for in-person and needs a return court date I reschedule the case in-person on a day that the Spanish interpreter is here. If the interpreting case is scheduled virtually and needs a return date, I still leave them on for virtual and reschedule to a virtual date. I then put a note on the file so that we make sure we pull up language line for interpreter during the virtual hearing. When we receive the tickets from the police department, the case is already scheduled for a court date. The court date is already on the ticket. The officer schedules the date on the ticket.

Millville Municipal Court does not have many materials or handouts in Spanish or any other languages to explain the court process to litigants. I know of the public defender form that is in Spanish and English. That is the only one. If Spanish speaking individuals are at the window or calling in on the phone, I usually ask the bilingual staff to help with the call. When I have been on ZOOM I have had people say that they need a different language so we pull it up on language line and an interpreter will join the meeting.

Cases requiring an interpreter are not scheduled intentionally on the days the interpreter is available for in-person services. We keep the date that is issued on the ticket, we will stay with whatever court date that is. I don't think the police departments know the days for interpreters. If a litigant requests an interpreter when they call or come in before the court date, the case is not moved to a different date- whether virtual or in-person. We don't change the date the police department provides. Requests from people to move from virtual to in-person are typically granted and likewise, if people ask for their case to be moved to virtual and it can be, that is granted as well.

Cases are not scheduled for in-person hearings based their last name or surname. A person's last names does not play any part in scheduling a matter. I schedule a lot of cases and I do not base it on their last name. I look at the calendar to see what days are available or I look at the ticket to determine a notice for postponement to see what is available.

The Judge is never consulted by staff in the scheduling of cases. A couple of weeks ago he wanted to have a meeting with the Court Administrators. He wanted us to model Bridgeton Municipal Court. We were trying to set up a meeting. Ray Compari the City Administrator, myself, Judge Witcher, Kim Hamlyn, and Amber Oliver were there. The meeting took place towards the end of October. I remember that at the time, he was talking about people being scheduled for in-person and he wanted to go through each case and find out why they were here. I don't know what his complaints were outside of that. He never expressed his reasons for wanting to go through each of the cases. He

didn't have anything to support his complaint or a reason for wanting to go through the cases. The meeting only lasted five to ten minutes. After he brought up that he wanted us to model after Bridgeton we tried to get a meeting with Bridgeton Municipal Court to try and model after that. He had said he wanted us to model after them because the AOC has watched their court sessions and that they do an amazing job at it. We did not implement any changes following the meeting because at the meeting the Court Administrator started to go through the calendar of the people who were in. Judge Witcher had questioned people on the record and asked them if they had been given a virtual option. The questions were directed to English speaking and Spanish speaking litigants. We have not heard any complaints from litigants. A lot of people that come to court want to come in-person or have trouble with virtual.

Date:

12/21/22

Amber Gandy
Full Name



Date:

Amanda A. Batiz
Signature of Person Conducting the Interview
/S/ Amanda Batiz

Date:

Kelly Johnston
Signature of Management Witness
/S/ Kelly Johnston