

MINUTES
BENCH BAR COMMITTEE
Monday, February 7, 2022
By C. Edward S. Mitchell, Chairman

Attendance

Participants were: Judge Butts, Judge Tira, Brian Bluth, Robert Cronin, Bob Elion, Tom Heap, Ed Mitchell, Cliff Rieders and Adrienne Stahl

Method: the meeting was conducted by conference call.

Judge Butts informed the committee that the Court Administrator's office has prepared and distributed a schedule of the courtrooms and judges who will be covering each for the period of time from February 2022 to June 2022.

Judge Butts also discussed pretrial procedures which are being used in criminal cases in an effort to expedite disposition of cases which will not be tried and to reduce interruptions of cases which will be going to trial.

There are two existing vacancies in the Lycoming County bench. Senior Judges Kenneth Brown and Dudley Anderson from Lycoming County, Jeffrey Smith from Bradford County, John Leete from Potter County and David Klementik from Somerset County are providing some coverage but the coverage provided by Judge Leete and Judge Klementik will end in the spring. It has not been decided how civil cases in which Judge Linhardt and Judge Tira have recused themselves will be reassigned.

Judge Tira informed the committee that, because of the two existing vacancies and limited Senior Judge coverage, maximum use of the available judicial time is important. As a result, requests for continuances will be more thoroughly scrutinized.

Adrienne Stahl informed the committee that the vacancies which were reported in her office at the last meeting have been filled. She requests that communications pertaining to scheduling be initiated by email to scheduling@lyco.org.

Judge Butts' secretary is leaving February 18. Judge Butts requests that any communications with her be initiated by email to her email address at nbutts@lyco.org.

Adrienne Stahl discussed the re-establishment of the Magisterial District Courts in the 29th Judicial District. The map which recently appeared in the Williamsport Sun-Gazette is incorrect. The proposed re-establishment plan including a correct map is attached.

There are also vacancies among the Magisterial District Courts which are being covered by Senior Magisterial District Justices.

Prothonotary Tom Heap reported that automation in criminal cases including e-filing has been in place since September 2021 and appears to be working satisfactorily. His office is moving to a new case management system for civil cases beginning April 1. This will not result in changes in filing immediately. E-filing in civil cases is anticipated to become available in June 2022. In July or August, Prothonotary Heap anticipates updating fees including the elimination of some of the nuisance fees.

With no other issues, the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be May 2, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

C. Edward S. Mitchell
Chairman

**Proposed Reestablishment Plan for the Magisterial District Courts of the
29th Judicial District, Lycoming County, Pennsylvania**

As required pursuant to constitutional and statutory provisions, reestablishment is a process by which the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania reviews the boundaries of the magisterial districts within each judicial district, except the First Judicial District—Philadelphia County. This review is undertaken in each year following the official reporting of the decennial census figures. The review is based upon reported population figures, case types and filings, case weights, geographic positioning of the magisterial districts, and related issues.

To inform you of this process, and to offer the opportunity for public comment to the proposal, copies of the proposed plan are available for review at the Lycoming County Courthouse, 48 West Third Street, Williamsport, PA 17701, in the Office of the District Court Administrator and in the Law Library. Copies are also available at each Magisterial District Court and the James V. Brown Library, 19 East Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17701. Additionally, it may be viewed online at <https://www.lyco.org/Courts>.

All comments to the proposed plan must be in writing and received **no later than February 18, 2022**. Comments specific to the proposed plan will be included with the proposed plan submitted to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC). All comments must be addressed as follows:

Office of the District Court Administrator
c/o Reestablishment Proposal Comments
Lycoming County Courthouse
48 West Third Street
Williamsport, PA 17701

Comments may also be emailed to astahl@lyco.org with “Reestablishment Proposal Comments” in the subject line.

Summary of Proposed Changes to the Magisterial District Courts of the 29th Judicial District, Lycoming County, Pennsylvania

The 29th Judicial District of Pennsylvania is comprised of six magisterial districts. In order to better balance the workloads within those magisterial districts, the following changes in the magisterial district boundaries are being proposed:









- 1) Effective January 1, 2023, Magisterial District 29-1-02 will include Williamsport wards 8 and 9 in addition to the wards within the district's existing boundaries—wards 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, and 13.
- 2) Effective January 1, 2023, Magisterial District 29-1-01 will exclude Williamsport wards 8 and 9. Consequently, Magisterial District 29-1-01 will include wards 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.
- 3) Effective January 1, 2024, Magisterial District 29-3-04 will include Loyalsock Township precincts 1, 2, and 6 in addition to the municipalities within the district's existing boundaries—Armstrong Township, Cogan House Township, Duboistown Borough, Hepburn Township, Jackson Township, Lewis Township, Loyalsock Township precinct 3, Lycoming Township, McIntyre Township, McNett Township, Old Lycoming Township, and Susquehanna Township. The effective date of this realignment is delayed until January 1, 2024, because the magisterial district judge in Magisterial District 29-3-04 is assisting Magisterial District 29-3-03 during a two-year judicial vacancy (2022 and 2023).
- 4) Effective January 1, 2024, Magisterial District 29-3-02 will exclude Loyalsock Township precincts 1, 2, and 6. Consequently, Magisterial District 29-3-02 will include Cascade Township; Eldred Township; Fairfield Township; Gamble Township; Loyalsock Township precincts 4, 5, and 7; Montoursville Borough; Plunketts Creek Township; South Williamsport Borough; and Upper Fairfield Township. The effective date of this realignment is delayed until January 1, 2024, because the magisterial district judge in Magisterial District 29-3-04 is assisting Magisterial District 29-3-03 during a two-year judicial vacancy (2022 and 2023).

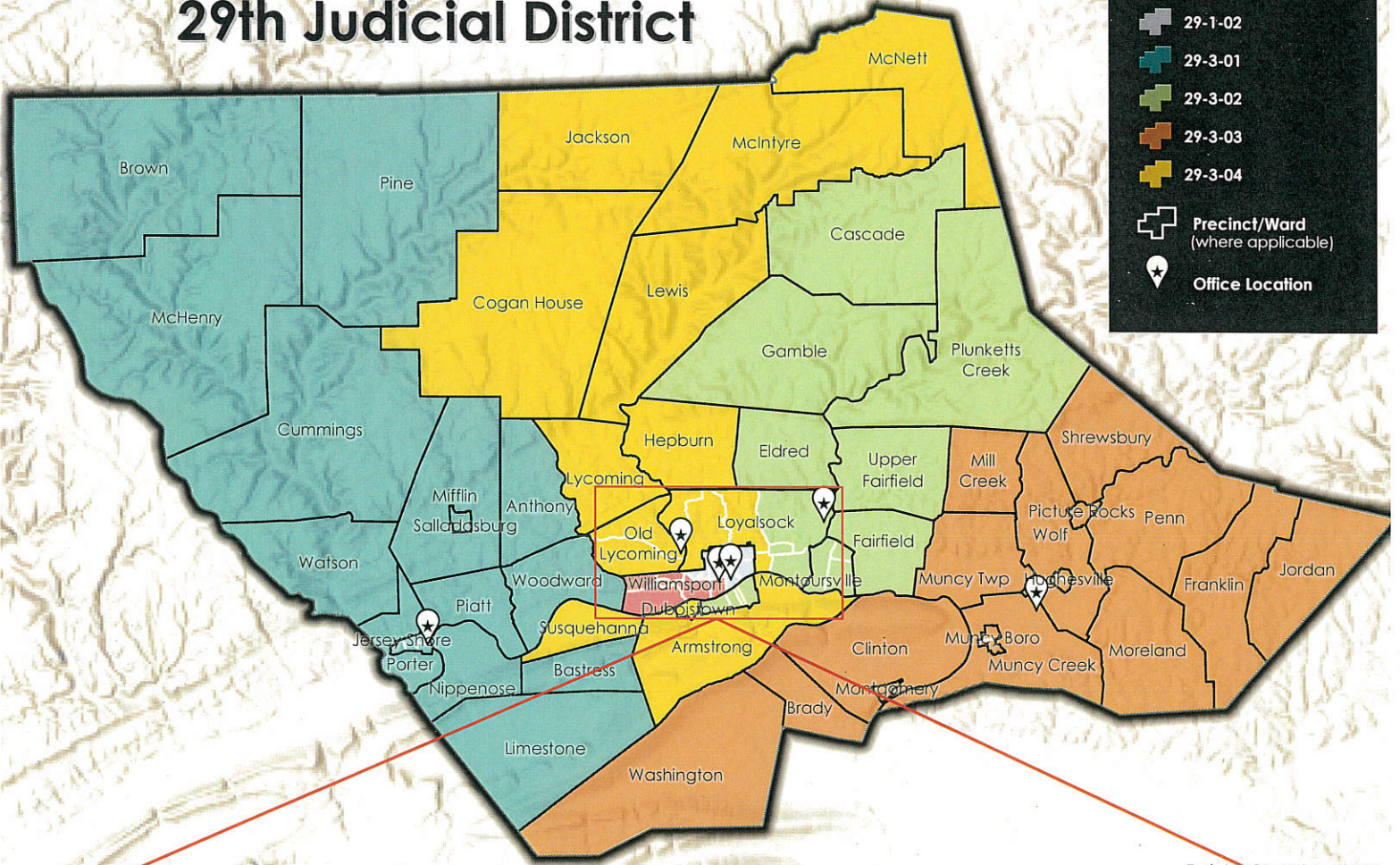
Magisterial Districts 29-3-01 and 29-3-03 will be reestablished with their current jurisdictional boundaries. Lycoming County is at the lower end of the caseload range when compared to other judicial districts in its class; however, Lycoming County is geographically the largest county in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. If a magisterial district were to be eliminated, the residents of Lycoming County would be denied adequate access to the courts due to the distance they would be required to travel to court.

Attached is a map of the proposed magisterial district boundaries as well as the Magisterial District Summary Worksheets that will be submitted to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC).

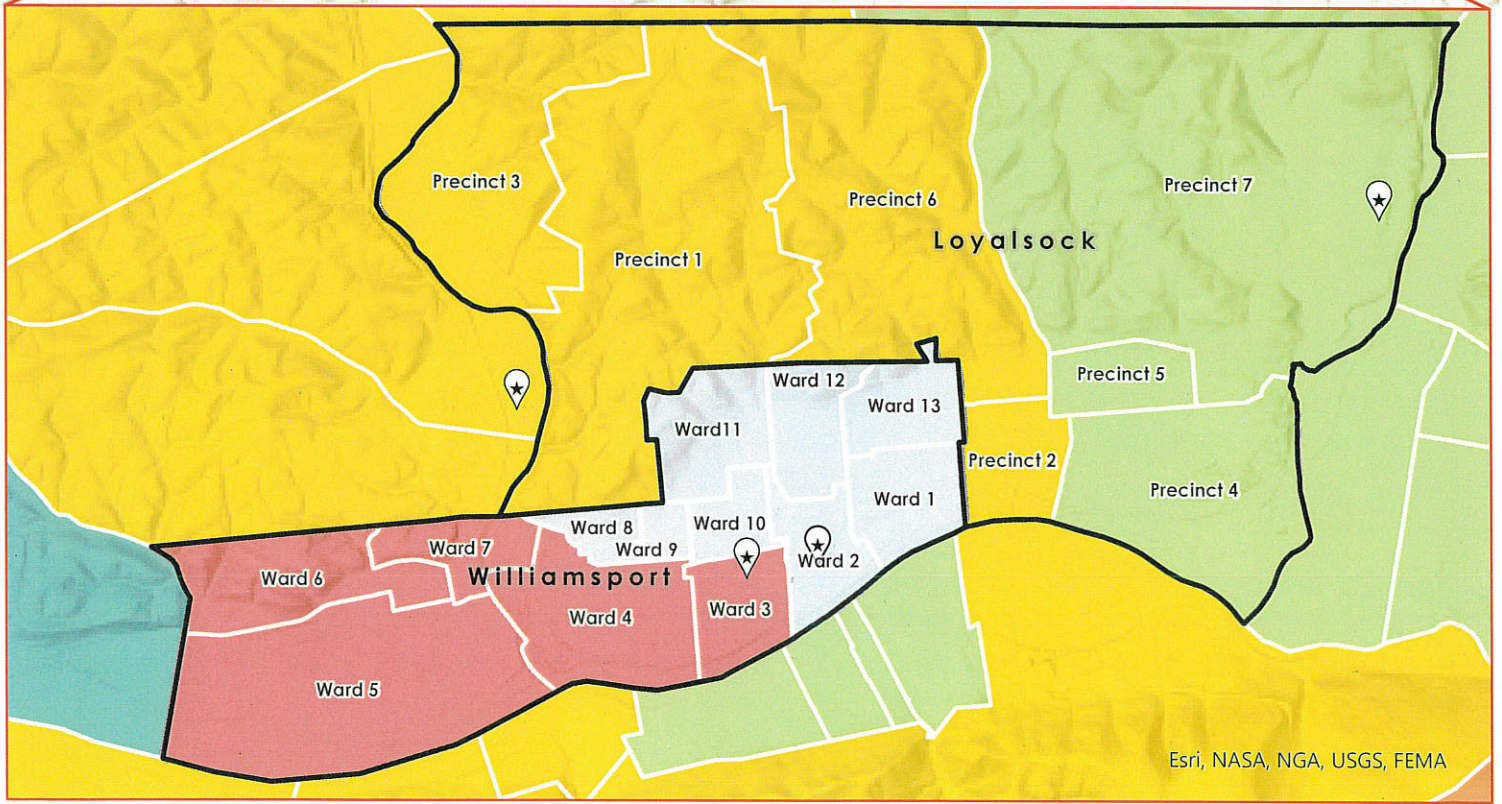
Magisterial Districts for the 29th Judicial District

Magisterial District

-  29-1-01
-  29-1-02
-  29-3-01
-  29-3-02
-  29-3-03
-  29-3-04
-  Precinct/Ward (where applicable)
-  Office Location



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA