

BUDGET REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND JUDICIARY

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the 2026 Interim

July 1, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The second meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on Justice and Judiciary of the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue was held on July 1, 2026, at 9:00 AM ET/8:00 AM CT in Room 131 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Stephanie Dietz, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Stephanie Dietz, Co-Chair; Senator Keturah J. Herron; and Representatives Daniel Elliott, Jennifer Decker, and Scott Sharp.

Guests: Zach Ramsey, Director, AOC; Debbie Hall, Director, Office of Statewide Programs, AOC; and Danny Rhoades, Executive Officer, Department of Court Facilities, AOC.

LRC Staff: Zachary Ireland, Perry Papka, and Spring Emerson.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the June 3, 2026 meeting were not approved due to the lack of a quorum and will be deferred to the next meeting.

Administrative Office of the Courts

Zach Ramsey, Director, AOC; Debbie Hall, Director, Office of Statewide Programs, AOC; and Danny Rhoades, Executive Officer, Department of Court Facilities, AOC presented information on the statewide program reorganization solution to reduce operating expenses without impacting frontline services.

In response to Chair Dietz, Director Ramsey said the reorganization process was directed by the Chief Justice, but involved all leaders within the AOC, to formulate a plan that was ultimately approved by the Supreme Court. Director Hall added that in order to reduce the supervisory layers across all departments, they created a single regional administrator as frontline support for the much larger regions. More information will be available after August 1.

In response to Senator Herron, Director Hall said the number of participants remains around 2,500 to 3,000 at any given time, and if that number remains steady, it will be possible to stay within the constraints of the departmental budget. Director Ramsey said

Committee meeting materials may be accessed online at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/CommitteeDocuments/17>

they have daily discussions and planning sessions, as the reorganization goes into effect August 1.

In response to Chair Dietz, Director Ramsey said the 25% increase in filing fees is effective July 1 for both circuit and district filings. They anticipate being structurally balanced this year. Chair Dietz commented that an increase in communication with trial level judges and clerks would help the Representatives and Senators that are getting so many questions. Director Ramsey agreed, adding that his department participated in a regional meeting last week and thought it was helpful and informative, and they will continue to engage in those forums.

In response to Senator Herron, Director Hall said they have 14 contracts across the state with the comprehensive caregivers, which has historically also included some funding for supplemental treatment services.

In response to Representative Sharp, Officer Rhoades said the estimated completion date of the Greenup County Judicial Center will be determined after the site selection and procurement processes have been completed.

In response to Chair Dietz, Officer Rhoades said the Boyle County facility is expected to be complete in approximately a year and a half. Some of the functions being performed in that building will not be affected by the roof replacement. The county intends to continue occupying the building during ongoing construction.

In response to Senator Herron, Director Ramsey said the first thing being implemented is the new e-filing system and will begin in Jefferson County. The expectation is for it to go live in early 2027 with file and serve, then the plan is to pivot very quickly to Fayette County and then from there, to go statewide throughout 2027.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:54 AM ET/8:54 AM CT.