

# MISSOULA

2021 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

# VOTER GUIDE

YOUR SECRET BALLOT MEANS IT'S YOURS TO DECIDE.  
We hope that this independent, local, nonprofit-prepared info helps.



**FORWARD MONTANA**

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# WHO IS FORWARD MONTANA?

Forward Montana is a 501(c)4 nonprofit organization dedicated to training, mobilizing, and electing a new generation of progressive leaders in Montana. Since our establishment in 2004, we've grown into the largest youth civic engagement organization in Montana, with year-round staff in Billings, Bozeman, Missoula, and the Flathead Valley.

We build political power with and for young Montanans by driving a culture of civic engagement and by electing leaders and passing policies that are representative of the needs and vision of our generation. We envision a Montana where young people's voices lead and serve our communities, where both politics and policies reflect our generation's values, and where all people have equal opportunities for just and sustainable futures.

To create this guide, we sent each candidate a questionnaire. N/R indicates an unanswered question or lack of sufficient evidence to confidently assess the candidate's position.



# ELECTION DAY IS NOVEMBER 2ND.

## ★ OCTOBER 13: BALLOTS ARE MAILED OUT.

This is an all mail-in election. If you don't receive your ballot by October 20, check in with the Missoula County Elections Office at **(406) 258-4751**.

## ★ NOVEMBER 1 @ 12 PM: VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE.

### **Not sure if you're registered to vote?**

Check your registration status at [app.mt.gov/voterinfo/](http://app.mt.gov/voterinfo/).

You must be registered to vote by 12 PM on November 1 to cast a ballot in the municipal election. Voter registration forms can only be submitted in-person at the county elections office during the late registration period: October 5–November 1.

## ★ NOVEMBER 2 @ 8 PM: BALLOTS MUST BE RECEIVED.

Completed ballots may be returned by mail or in person, and must be received by the **Missoula County Elections Office on 140 N. Russell St.** by November 2 at 8 PM. If you're mailing your ballot, postage is already paid! Make sure mail it by October 26, i.e., seven days before the election. Remember, ballots received late won't count.

### **On Election Day, voters may also deposit their vote-by-mail ballot at any of these drive-through locations:**

- Ward 1 – Missoula County Library on 455 E. Main St.
- Ward 2 – Hellgate Elementary School Admin Office on 2385 Flynn Lane
- Ward 3 – The Elections Center on 140 N. Russell St.
- Ward 4 – Missoula County Fairgrounds on 1101 South Ave. W.
- Ward 5 – Missoula Early Learning Center on 2625 Briggs Ave.
- Ward 6 – Franklin Elementary School on 1910 S. 11th St. W.

*\* To see what ward you live in, see page 6.*

# WHAT'S HAPPENING TO LOCAL CONTROL IN MONTANA?

**#DYK: During the 2021 legislative session, multiple bills were passed that stripped local governments of their authority to address the most pressing issues facing our communities.**

The legislature and Governor's office passed bills that take away our local government's ability to address the affordable housing crisis by removing inclusionary zoning. The legislature also voted to limit local health departments' abilities to combat the COVID-19 pandemic by outsourcing public health decisions to state-level elected officials and the legislature.

**Read on to find out if your candidates for office support these efforts.**

# MAYORAL CANDIDATES

The mayor oversees all city departments and ensures that city policy and services are delivered in an effective, efficient, and equitable manner that is in compliance with city council’s directive. They drive policy for the city that determines what our community looks and feels like. Missoula has a “strong mayor,” which means the mayor is more than just a figurehead of our community — they are deeply involved in most decision-making processes and oversee all city departments.



## JOHN ENGEN\*

Endorsed by: Missoula Democratic Central Committee; Montana Conservation Voters; Senator Jon Tester

**\*INCUMBENT**



## JACOB ELDER

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

# WHAT DO THE MAYORAL CANDIDATES SUPPORT?



Engen



Elder

Do you support increased funding for community programs and resources that provide services to our houseless neighbors?

**YES**

**N/R**

Do you support efforts at the state level to diminish local authority over issues like housing?

**NO**

**N/R**

Do you support the current non-discrimination ordinance in Missoula, and are you willing to advocate for this policy at the state level?

**YES**

**N/R**

**N/R = NO RESPONSE**

## MAYORAL CANDIDATES: Q&A

**What is the single most impactful policy or action our municipality could take to support more affordable renting opportunities for low- and middle-income folks?**

**JOHN ENGEN:**

The Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which is the product of the city of Missoula's housing office, which I established as Missoula's mayor, combined with our urban renewal districts and housing policy, are powerful tools in supporting the development of permanently affordable homes for rent and ownership in our community.

**What is your vision for public safety in Missoula?**

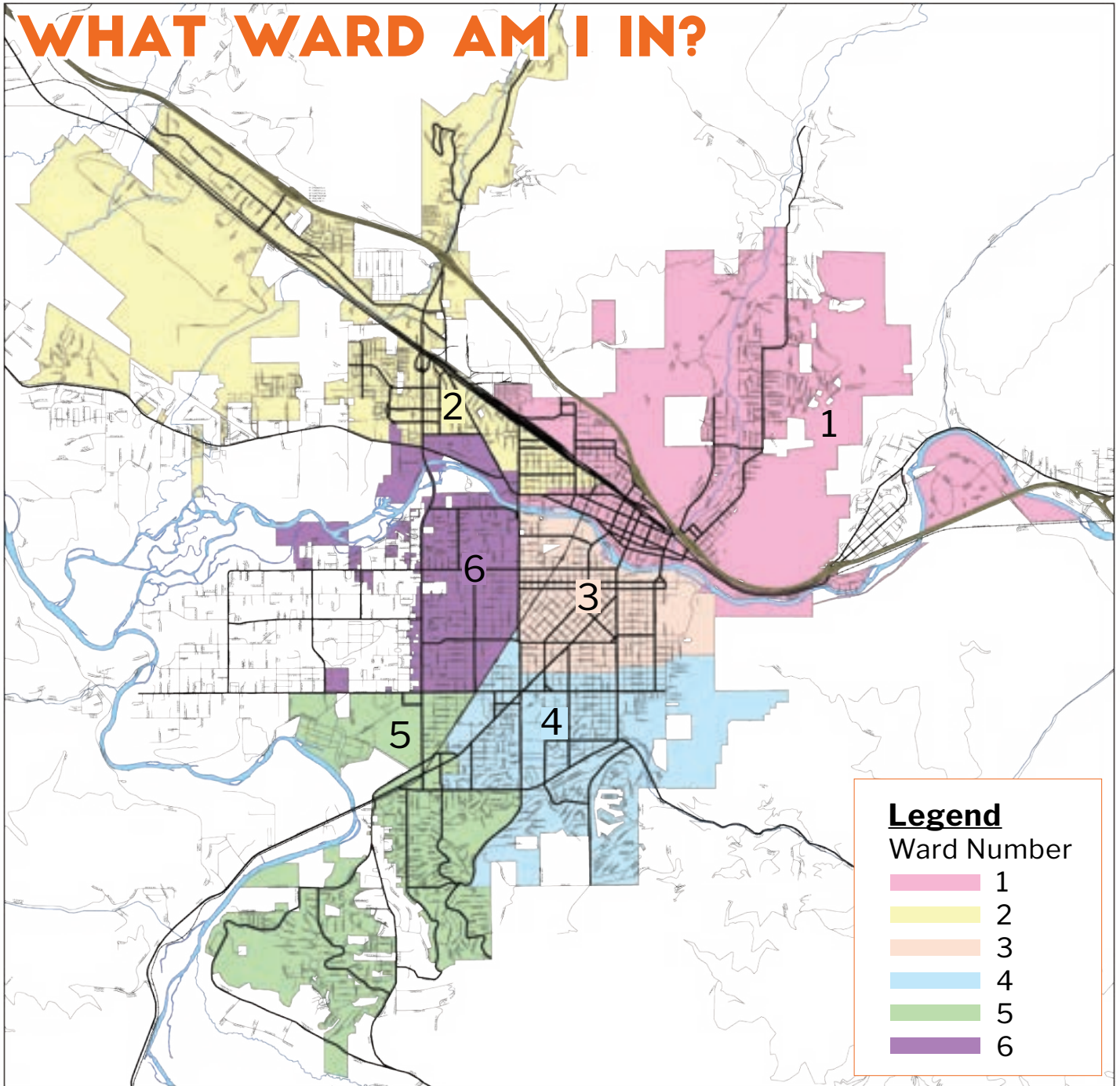
**JOHN ENGEN:**

Public safety is a fundamental responsibility of local government and one I've taken very seriously during my public-service career. We are evolving and innovating in the public safety arena through community-oriented policing and appropriate response. We've established our Mobile Support Team, which deploys EMTs and behavioral health professionals to respond to crisis calls that otherwise would be answered by police alone. We continue to train officers in crisis intervention, de-escalation, and implicit bias.

**\*MAYORAL CANDIDATE JACOB ELDER DID NOT RESPOND TO EITHER QUESTION.**



# WHAT WARD AM I IN?





# CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

City councillors craft and vote on city policies and budgets to represent the interests of the residents of their wards. They hold the mayor accountable and ensure that Missoula residents' interests are represented.

WARD 1



## JENNIFER SAVAGE

Endorsed by: Missoula County Democrats; Montana Conservation Voters; Bryan von Lossberg, City Council President



## JANE VANFOSSEN

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

WARD 2



## JORDAN HESS\*

Endorsed by: Missoula County Democrats; Montana Conservation Voters; Josh Slotnick, Juanita Vero, & Dave Strohmaier, Missoula County Commissioners



## REBECCA DAWSON

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

WARD 3



## DANIEL CARLINO

Endorsed by: Missoula County Democrats; Sunrise Movement; Western Montana Democratic Socialists of America



## DORI GILELS

Endorsed by: Josh Slotnick, Missoula County Commissioner; Debra Earling, Native American Novelist/UM Professor; Charlie Beaton, Big Dipper Ice Cream

WARD 4



## MIKE NUGENT

Endorsed by: Missoula County Democratic Committee; Montana Conservation Voters; Missoula Organization of Realtors



## ALAN C. AULT

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

WARD 5



## STACIE M. ANDERSON\*

Endorsed by: Missoula County Democrats; Montana Conservation Voters; Missoula Firefighters IAFF Local 271



## ROBERT C. CAMPBELL

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

WARD 6



## KRISTEN JORDAN

Endorsed by: Missoula County Democrats; Montana Conservation Voters; Western Montana Democratic Socialists of America



## TOM TAYLOR

No endorsements provided by the candidate at time of printing

\*INCUMBENT

# WHAT DO THE CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES SUPPORT?

**WARD 1**



Savage VanFossen

Identify what you think the minimum wage in Missoula should be.	\$15	N/R
Do you support changing Missoula's current vacation rental policy in order to support low- and middle-income homeowners and renters?	YES	N/R
Do you support recent efforts at the state level to diminish local authority over issues like housing?	NO	N/R
Do you support continued funding for the mobile crisis unit and additional efforts to address mental health and crisis situations?	YES	YES
Do you support the current non-discrimination ordinance in Missoula, and are you willing to advocate for this policy at the state level?	YES	N/R

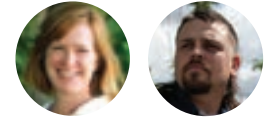
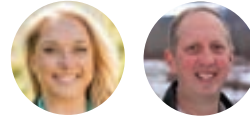
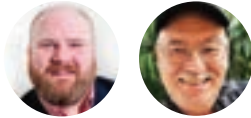
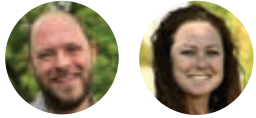
**WARD 2**

**WARD 3**

**WARD 4**

**WARD 5**

**WARD 6**



Hess Dawson

Carlino Gilels

Nugent Ault

Anderson Campbell

Jordan Taylor

**\$15 N/R**

**\$20 \$15**

**\$12 N/R**

**\$15 N/R**

**\$15 N/R**

**YES N/R**

**YES YES**

**YES N/R**

**YES N/R**

**YES N/R**

**NO N/R**

**NO NO**

**NO N/R**

**NO N/R**

**NO N/R**

**YES N/R**

**YES YES**

**YES N/R**

**YES N/R**

**YES N/R**

**YES N/R**

**YES YES**

**YES N/R**

**YES N/R**

**YES N/R**

**\*N/R = NO RESPONSE**

# CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES: Q&A

**What is the single most impactful policy or action our municipality could take to support more affordable renting opportunities for low- and middle-income folks?**

**WARD 1**

**JENNIFER SAVAGE:**

One possible impactful action to increase access to rentals for low- and middle-income residents would be to streamline the application process for renting a property in Missoula. A universal application portal would serve renters by only requiring one rental application, background check, and fee, while allowing landlords to access renters' information in one place. This would save time for renters and landlords while significantly reducing expensive, multiple fees renters pay when applying to rent properties.

**JANE VANFOSSEN:**

Missoula has a serious shortage of rental units. The city's building permitting process has been a major contributor to the problem. The city's current approach is to streamline approvals for public, subsidized apartment buildings. This may help in the short run, but clearing the logjam of building permit applications should be the long-term goal. Rationing of scarce resources rarely works in the long run.

**WARD 2**

**JORDAN HESS:**

The city's new Affordable Housing Trust Fund will help preserve and expand access to housing Missoulians can afford. The most impactful thing we can do locally is fully fund and implement this innovative, flexible tool. The trust fund can provide financing for affordable housing developments, support land banking so the city controls redevelopment, and empower community land trusts and resident-owned communities — to the benefit of renters and first-time home buyers alike.

**\*WARD 2 CANDIDATE REBECCA DAWSON DID NOT RESPOND.**

**DANIEL CARLINO:**

Creating a renters' union that can ensure rights of renters in our town to push for rent control, a universal rental application system, longer eviction notices, fully funding the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and for more units set aside for truly affordable housing and to push for much more.

**DORI GILELS:**

Prioritize expenditures of Affordable Housing Trust Fund monies for residential projects that include permanently affordable rental units. Permanently affordable units should also be included in the development of city-owned land. A good example is the city's partnership with Ravara Development on Scott Street. I know the city is also working to shorten the time frame and increase predictability in the permitting process for residential development.

**MIKE NUGENT:**

We should address every problem point of the issue. We need to examine and remove barriers to completion of housing, subsidized and market rate. We need to be more strategic with public funds to condition outcomes and affordability as appropriate when public funds are being utilized. Centralizing applications as a resource for landlords and a benefit to prospective tenants and cutting down on ridiculous application fees will also allow for more opportunity.

**\*WARD 4 CANDIDATE ALAN C. AULT DID NOT RESPOND.**

**STACIE M. ANDERSON:**

Land banking can impact both long-term affordability and control of what type of development happens. Controlling the cost of land can have a significant impact on the overall cost of a project. In 2020, the city of Missoula created an Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which is the single biggest tool Missoula can use to partner with the private sector to secure land for development.

**\*WARD 5 CANDIDATE ROBERT C. CAMPBELL DID NOT RESPOND.**

**KRISTEN JORDAN:**



Housing affordability is too complicated to only use one policy or action as a solution. At minimum, I would like to see a requirement for developers to ensure 10% of their multi-family projects include permanent affordable housing, a yet-to-be-determined sensible cap on single-family home permits, and sustained growth and creative investment into the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.



**\*WARD 6 CANDIDATE TOM TAYLOR DID NOT RESPOND.**

# MUNICIPAL JUDGE CANDIDATES

Municipal judges handle misdemeanor citations issued within the city by the Missoula police departments, order of protection hearings, and other civil violations. They are central to the authority of cities, to police, to maintain public safety, and to raise revenue. You or someone you know has likely interacted or will interact with a municipal judge. Because the law requires interpretation, municipal judges have an enormous responsibility with the potential to drastically impact your life or the lives of those you care about!

<b>DEPT. 1</b>		<p><b>JENNIFER STREANO</b> Endorsed by: Municipal Judge Candidates Eli Parker and Jake Coolidge</p>		<p><b>SAM WARREN</b> Endorsed by: Attorney Ken Dyrud; Attorney Paul Ryan; Private Investigator Otis McCullough</p>
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<b>DEPT. 2</b>		<p><b>THORIN A. GEIST</b> Endorsed by: Judge Jennifer Lint; Judge Howard F. Recht; Attorney W. Adam Duerk</p>		<p><b>ELI PARKER</b> Endorsed by: Municipal Judge Candidates Jennifer Streano and Jacob Coolidge; Attorney Colin Stephens</p>
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<b>DEPT. 3</b>		<p><b>JACOB COOLIDGE</b> Endorsed by: Municipal Judge Candidates Jennifer Streano and Eli Parker; Daisy Rooks, PhD</p>		<p><b>ETHAN C. LERMAN</b> Endorsed by: Senator Bryce Bennett; Attorney Paul Ryan; Former County Attorney Fred Van Valkenburg</p>
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## WHAT DO THEY SUPPORT?

Do you support a sliding scale for assessing fines based on individuals' ability to pay?

<b>DEPT. 1</b>		<b>DEPT. 2</b>		<b>DEPT. 3</b>	
					
Streano	Warren	Geist	Parker	Coolidge	Lerman
<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

# MUNICIPAL JUDGE CANDIDATES: Q&A

In your opinion, why do people commit crime?

DEPARTMENT 1

## JENNIFER STREANO:

I believe people commit crimes, specifically misdemeanors, for different reasons. I have represented the single mom stealing diapers, the homeless stealing alcohol, and the mentally ill yelling in public. People commit crimes because they are struggling with larger issues in their lives, including poverty, addiction, or mental illness. It is important to understand the underlying “why” someone committed an offense rather than focusing solely on the result of their actions.

## SAM WARREN:

Of course there is no single answer to the question. In many traffic offenses, the “reason” is often simply inadvertence. With respect to misdemeanor offenses, the reason can vary from substance abuse, boredom, economic disadvantage, or poor anger management to mental disorders, including antisocial disorders. There are certainly many other reasons that may never be identified with any certainty. Seldom will we be sure of the specific reason (or reasons) in many misdemeanor cases.

DEPARTMENT 2

## THORIN A. GEIST:

It's a complicated question, but I believe that most people want to remain law abiding and would do so given the choice... The problem is that not everyone has the same social and economic opportunities. Factors which contribute to criminal behavior include limited education, unemployment and/or underemployment, difficult and sometimes traumatic social and family dynamics, and insufficient resources to properly treat mental health and addiction issues.

## ELI PARKER:

People commit crime for many reasons, including poverty and homelessness, child abuse and neglect, trauma and mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, and more. Accordingly, different people may commit the same crime for very different reasons. Justice requires that we consider carefully the facts in each case, which include the biological, sociological, and psychological backgrounds of each offender.



# MUNICIPAL JUDGE CANDIDATES: Q&A

In your opinion, why do people commit crime?

DEPARTMENT 3

**JACOB COOLIDGE:**

Criminality has many contributing factors that vary based on the type of the offense. Causes of crime include homelessness, poverty, addiction, mental illness, economic strain, and rational choice. Municipal Court deals primarily with misdemeanors that occur within city limits, which are predominantly traffic offenses and crimes associated with poverty. Courts need to understand the social circumstances that cause crime in order to adequately respond in a meaningful and productive way.

**ETHAN C. LERMAN:**

Crime is usually a result of a combination of factors, but the principal drivers are substance abuse and mental health issues. Lack of adequate, stable housing can also be a contributing factor by creating instability and contributing to unemployment or underemployment.

What impact do you feel implicit bias and privilege have in a courtroom? What solution, if any, do you support?

DEPARTMENT 1

**JENNIFER STREANO:**

I believe implicit bias and privilege in the courtroom lead to disproportionate sentencing based solely on an unconscious bias rather than rational decision-making. These decisions are more likely to negatively affect our more vulnerable population and benefit the elite. As a judge, I would personally try to bring awareness to the issue and encourage training for defense attorneys, prosecutors, detention staff, and police officers.

**SAM WARREN:**

Unfortunately, many people have the unconscious habit of identifying individuals as members of a group (whether racial or class) and have built-in expectations that will tend to define the person inaccurately. The solution is simply to understand this tendency and appreciate the effect that it has on the individual.

**THORIN A. GEIST:**

Implicit bias and privilege exist in the criminal justice system, but the role of the judge is to apply the law fairly, impartially, and free from these concerns. What is fair in one circumstance may not be what is fair in the next. The judge's role is to ensure that everyone is treated equally, with respect and dignity, so that everyone receives a "fair shake."

**ELI PARKER:**

Implicit bias and privilege unfairly influence whether a person is in jail before trial, whether a person is found guilty or not, and whether a person's sentence includes incarceration, probation, fines, or a treatment and rehabilitation program. As a solution, I support education to raise awareness of inequalities in our court system, alongside judicial leadership focused on accountability, fairness, and dignity for all.

**JACOB COOLIDGE:**

Implicit bias and privilege play a significant role in the courtroom and criminal justice system. Race and socioeconomic status directly or indirectly impact outcomes. Unfortunately, the criminal justice system disproportionately impacts people of color and folks experiencing poverty at every level. We need a judiciary that is aware of the impact the court has on already vulnerable populations. Municipal judges need to work against this trend, not make it worse.

**ETHAN C. LERMAN:**

Implicit bias and privilege do unfortunately come into play, and these issues disproportionately impact people of lower income and minorities. Ensuring that we have racially and ethnically representative juries to try cases in front of and a robust and high-functioning Office of State Public Defender will go a long way in ensuring competent representation and fair trials for lower-income and minority populations.

# MUNICIPAL JUDGE CANDIDATES: Q&A

If you were given all the necessary personnel and resources, what program would make the greatest positive impact on our municipal courts?

DEPARTMENT 1

**JENNIFER STREANO:**

The Municipal Court deals with a significant number of minor traffic offenses. The current response has been to use warrants and jail as punishment. This does not solve the problem. I plan to start a traffic court working with individuals to identify and resolve barriers preventing them from restoring their driving privileges. Ultimately, this will be a more effective and cost-saving solution for the Missoula community.

**SAM WARREN:**

A program similar to ROAD Court which is being implemented in J.P. Court, which provides a specialized and intense program for repeat offenders.

DEPARTMENT 2

**THORIN A. GEIST:**

Municipal court has jurisdiction over misdemeanor offenses, which make up most of the crimes that are committed in Missoula. Right now, the court system doesn't have the resources to handle the workload, let alone the ability to track individuals as they progress through existing sentencing and treatment options. Missoula's decision to hire a third municipal court judge and support staff is a big step towards solving the problem.

**ELI PARKER:**

I support treatment courts that address the causes and conditions of criminal behavior. Through peer support and an ongoing structured program, treatment courts challenge and support individuals to make changes that prevent further criminal offenses, improve public safety, and reduce the high costs of incarceration.

**JACOB COOLIDGE:**

Programs that address housing instability, mental illness, and addiction are pivotal in addressing misdemeanor criminality. The Court will not solve these issues by itself. With adequate resources, the Court could collaborate with local programs that are already working on these issues. Additionally, in-house social workers and case managers could reshape the court as a way for defendants to access services, rather than create additional barriers through punishment.

**ETHAN C. LERMAN:**

The two things we need in Municipal Court are increased access to mental health therapy and increased access to substance abuse treatment. If we had more resources in these two areas, we would go a long way to solving our high case loads and recidivism issues.



 **FORWARD MONTANA**