

MINUTES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - YUMA CITY HALL
ONE CITY PLAZA, YUMA, ARIZONA
December 17, 2024
5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

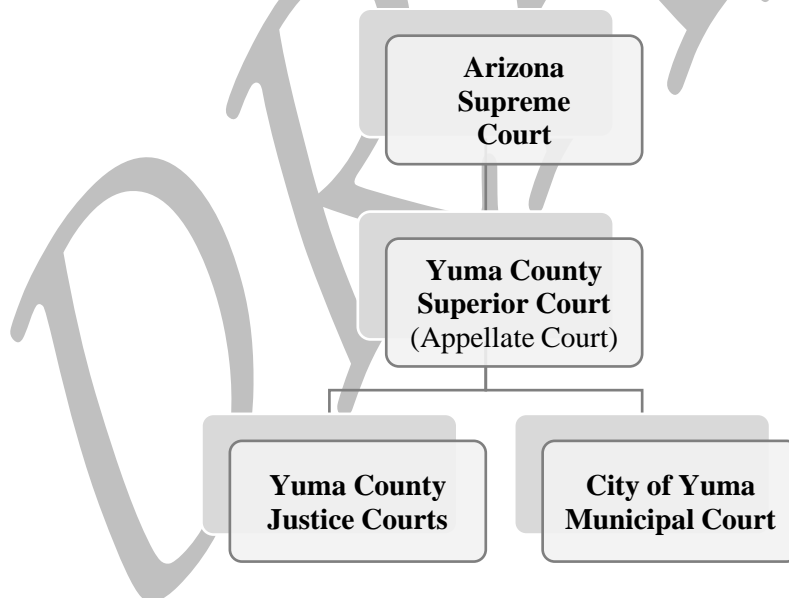
Mayor Nicholls called the Regular City Council Worksession to order at 5:33 p.m.

Councilmembers Present: Morales, Smith, McClendon, Morris, Shoop, Shelton, and Mayor Nicholls
Councilmembers Absent: None
Staffmembers Present: Acting City Administrator, John D. Simonton
Municipal Court Administrator, Del Miller
Director of Planning and Neighborhood Services, Alyssa Linville
Various department heads or their representatives
City Attorney, Richard W. Files
City Clerk, Lynda L. Bushong

I. MUNICIPAL COURT DEPARTMENT UPDATE

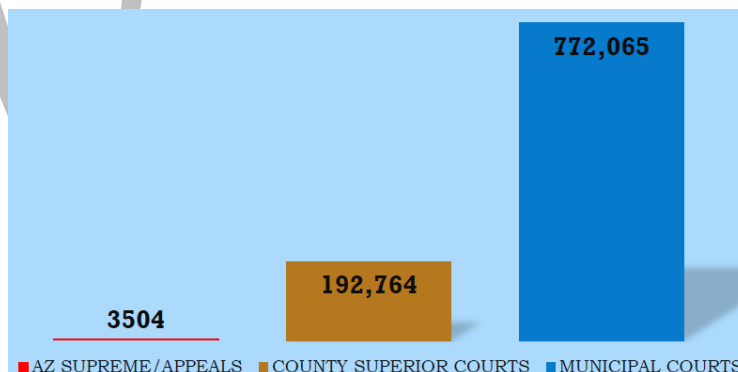
Miller presented an update on the Yuma Municipal Court (YMC) as follows:

- Arizona Integrated Judiciary

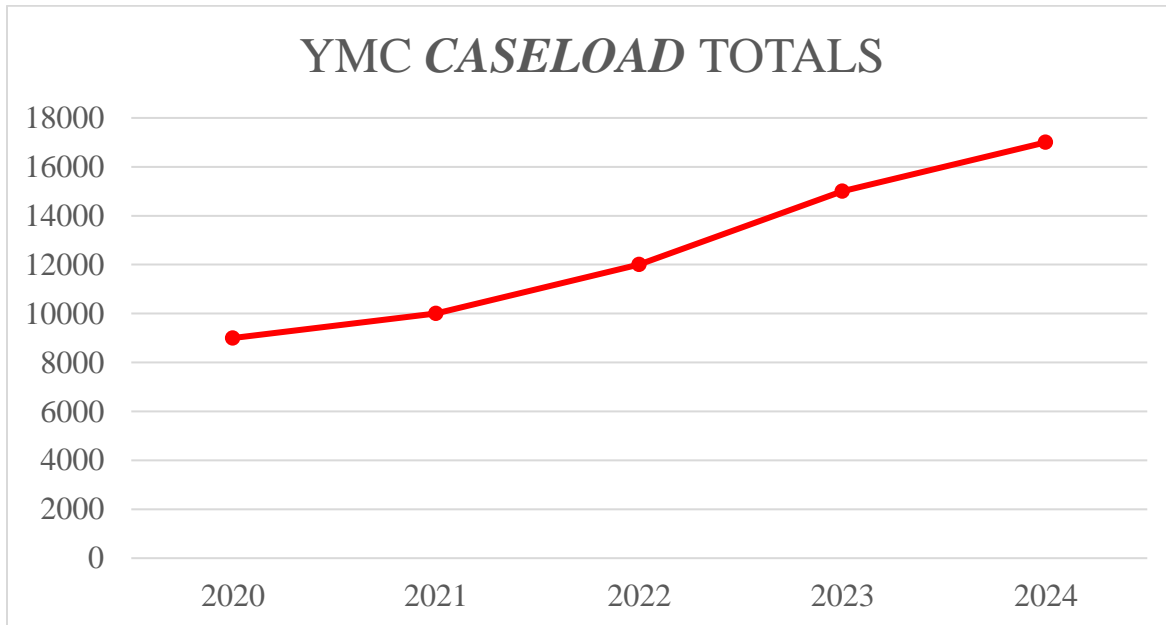


- Current Staffing
 - 34 total personnel consisting of:
 - Elected Judges
 - Full-time employees
 - Part-time employees
 - Pro-Tempore Judges

- Four Judicial Officers
 - Presiding Municipal Judge (Elected)
 - Municipal Judge (Elected)
 - Commissioner Judge (Special Judicial Officer - Appointed)
 - Hearing Officer (Special Judicial Officer - Appointed)
- 26 Staff Members
 - Clerks
 - Marshals
 - Administrative Staff
- Highlighted Duties/Responsibilities
 - Judicial Officers and Administration
 - Motions, hearings, and trials
 - Preside over an average of 600 cases per month
 - Legislative review and updates
 - Procedural and policy development
 - Legal correspondence
 - Manage budget
 - Personnel management and training
 - Court Clerks
 - Process filings
 - Work entire caseload split by divisions
 - Prepare and update case files and dockets
 - Monitor post-adjudication orders
 - Manage cases during court sessions
 - Marshals
 - Provide protective services at designated locations
 - Serve as Bailiff for all sessions
 - Serve 1,500-2,000 court orders and processes in the field annually
 - Detention care, custody, control and transport of YMC defendants
 - Close protection escort for off-site judicial activities
- YMC Total Budget
 - Accounts for less than 1% of total City budget
 - 49% of YMC's operational budget is used to pay for court-appointed council for defendants
- Arizona Courts New Case Filings (2023)
 - County Superior Court caseloads are usually between 70,000 and 90,000, but were inflated due to COVID-related eviction cases



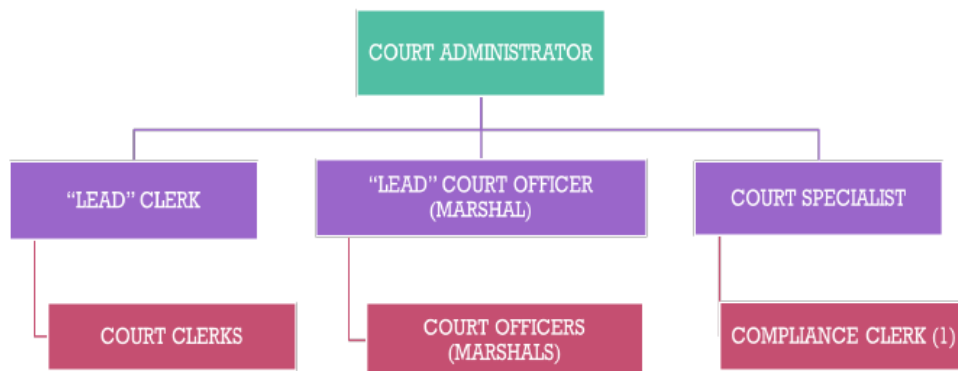
- Trending Caseloads
 - Cases dipped slightly in 2020 to 10,000, down from around 12,000 in 2019, due to COVID
 - The increase in cases is a natural progression based on population increase



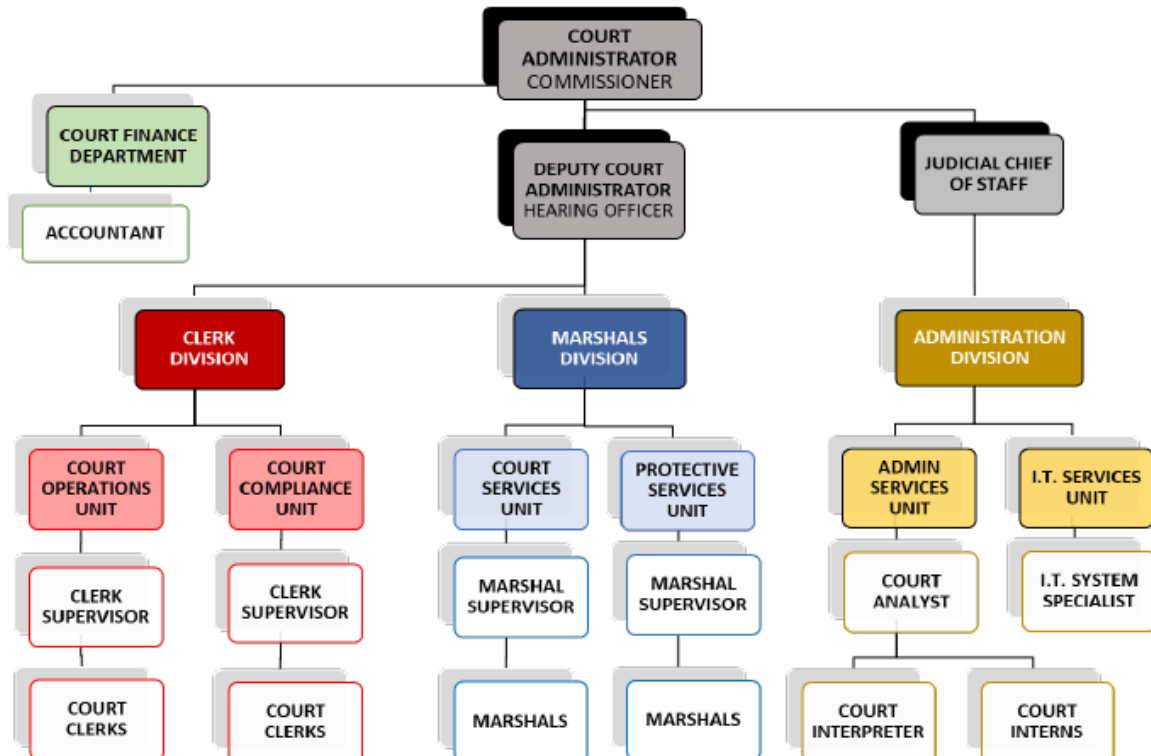
- Common Types of Criminal Cases in Municipal Courts
 - Assault (including Domestic Violence)
 - Threats/Harassment
 - Trespass
 - Illegal Drug Possession
 - Disorderly Conduct
 - Driving Under the Influence (DUI)
 - Other Traffic Related Crimes
 - Theft
 - #1 offense in YMC
- Other Judicial Duties of the Court
 - Issue Orders of Protection
 - Issue Orders Prohibiting Harassment
 - Civil Traffic Hearings
 - Assist neighboring courts in recusal cases
 - Juvenile Traffic Hearings
 - New to Yuma County in 2024
 - Issue Search Warrants
 - Issue Arrest Warrants
- Five-Year Goals and Objectives Set in 2020
 - Re-organization and restructuring
 - Improve safety and security of facility
 - Integrate new technology to better serve the public
 - Eliminate compliance backlog
 - Expand court facility to meet operational needs

- Objective 1: Court Re-Organization - Completed
 - Division of staff based on tasks
 - Targeted training based on assignment
 - Better identify the staffing needs
 - Compartmentalization revealed where more staff was needed
 - Increase proficiency by specialization
 - Improve efficiency
 - Create path for career advancement

2020



2024



- Objective 2: Improved Court Security - Completed
 - Mitigation of vehicle-borne threats
 - Updated entry screening systems
 - Improved closed-circuit television and access control systems
 - Advanced training for Marshals with the assistance of the Yuma Police Department
- Objective 3: Integrate New Technology - Completed
 - Improve web-based court access and expand ability for off-site payment
 - YMC is ranked number four in the state, and number two per capita, for off-site contact and remote access
 - Remote hearings and Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) capabilities
 - Electronic filing capability
- Objective 4: Eliminate Compliance Backlog - Completed
 - Created Compliance Division
 - Data-based evaluation of staffing needs
 - Improved compliance times from 12+ months to 30 days
 - Develop amnesty program for aged and cold cases
- Objective 5: Expansion of Court Facility – In Progress
 - In progress/ongoing
 - Preliminary design of expansion completed
 - Joint project with City Prosecutor's Office
 - Includes needed spaces and third courtroom for hearings
 - Working with City Administration to fund and move forward
 - In the interim, redesigned clerk's area to temporarily accommodate staff and converted multiple rooms to workspaces
- Five-Year Court Goals and Objectives Progress
 - Four of the five objectives have been completed
 - Collaborative effort with City Administration
 - Utilized State grant funding of \$254,000+
- The Future of the Court
 - Expansion of the court
 - 20-year vision to meet both current and future needs
 - Advancing court technology
 - eFiling and eEvidence
 - Access to court
 - Update website to improve ease of access off-site
 - Training for staff
 - Continue to increase training to maintain highest level of capability

Discussion

- Previously a Spanish language interpreter was available on contract; this is now a full-time position which is backed up by other interpreters throughout Yuma County as well as remote interpreters for languages other than Spanish (**Shelton/Miller**)
- Some positions are mandated by the Administrative Office of the Courts to be located in a secure room, so YMC's jury rooms and break room have been converted into offices to meet that requirement; there is only one vacant cubicle, which is currently being used by interns, that new staff could be placed into if needed (**Morales/Miller**)

- The court expansion project was initially included in the Capital Improvement Program using \$5 million in contingency funds; however, due to inflation the final project amount will likely be more (**Morales/Miller**)

II. REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA OF DECEMBER 18, 2024

Motion Consent Agenda Item C.10 – Final Plat: Mariadawnlee Subdivision (approve the final plat of the Mariadawnlee Subdivision, located at the southwest corner of 33rd Drive and 24th Street) (Plng & Nbhd Svcs/Cmtty Plng)

Discussion

- The property owner has struggled for years to develop this site; a number of development options have been presented, and this is the one that met requirements in terms of access (**Morales/Linville**)
- While access to the area is not ideal due to the volume and speed of traffic on 24th Street, it has been agreed upon with the Engineering Department as the best option in this situation (**Morales/Linville**)

Motion Consent Agenda Item C.5 – Contract Award: Professional Design Services for Yuma Police De-escalation and Scenario Facility (award a contract to Pearlman Architects of Arizona, Inc. for an estimated amount of \$425,230.41) (Eng)

Resolution R2024-069 – Grant Application: Arizona State Match Advantage for Rural Transportation (AZ SMART) – Interstate-8 / Avenue 8½ E Traffic Interchange Design Concept Report (DCR) (authorize the City to apply for AZ SMART funds) (Eng)

Resolution R2024-070 – Grant Application: Arizona State Match Advantage for Rural Transportation (AZ SMART) – Hacienda Estates Storm Drain Improvements (authorize the City to apply for AZ SMART funds) (Eng)

Resolution R2024-071 – Grant Application: Arizona State Match Advantage for Rural Transportation (AZ SMART) Fund – 40th Street Construction from Avenue 6E to Fortuna Road (authorize the City to apply for AZ SMART funds) (Eng)

Mayor Nicholls declared a conflict of interest on Motion Consent Agenda Item C.5 and Resolutions R2024-069, R2024-070, and R2024-071, as his firm is currently involved in or may potentially be involved in those projects.

Adoption of Ordinance O2024-040 – Text Amendment: Zoning Amendments (amend Title 15, Chapter 154, Article 3 of the Yuma City Code to address timelines for the review of zoning applications) (Plng & Nbhd Svcs/Cmtty Plng)

Discussion

- The proposed ordinance was drafted based upon new State regulations; City staff may grant an extension at the request of the applicant (**Mayor Nicholls/Linville**)

- Some municipalities do not start the clock on the review of the application until department review and approval takes place, which can significantly lengthen the process without technically violating the State mandated timeline; this is not currently an issue here at the City, but it is something to watch out for in the future (**Mayor Nicholls/Linville**)

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION/ADJOURNMENT

Motion (Morales/Morris): To adjourn the meeting to Executive Session. Voice vote: **adopted** 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Lynda L. Bushong, City Clerk

APPROVED:

Douglas J. Nicholls, Mayor

Approved at the City Council Meeting of:

City Clerk: _____