

MUNICIPAL COURT

INTRODUCTION

The Municipal Court of the City of Morgantown is the judicial branch of the Municipal Government of the City of Morgantown. It is authorized and provided for by West Virginia law and was created by ordinance promulgated by the Morgantown City Council. It serves the public independently of the legislative and executive branches of City government. The Morgantown Municipal Court Judge is an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of West Virginia and is appointed by City Council. The Judge is neutral and detached, thus affording people that come before the Court a fair and impartial hearing on the merits of their case. All persons are accorded access to the Court.

PROGRAMS / SERVICES

Municipal Court processes traffic and parking citations, criminal citations, misdemeanor arrests, and building, housing, and fire code violations committed within the City of Morgantown.

The Municipal Court schedule is as follows:

	<u>Beginning at:</u>
First Monday of each month	3:00 P.M.
Each Tuesday	8:00 A.M.
Each Thursday	2:00 P.M.
Second Thursday of each month	5:00 P.M.
Jury Trials	Scheduled as Needed
Plea Day:	
Second Wednesday of each month	8:30 A.M.

Every citation issued by the Morgantown Police Department is assigned a court date at the time it is issued. In some cases, the citation may be paid prior to the court date. In all cases, the citation may be contested before the Court. Dates are assigned to police officers according to their work schedule. Every person arrested during the previous month is required to appear on Plea Day. On Plea Day, persons who plead not guilty are scheduled hearings, and those pleading guilty are sentenced that day.

Municipal Court is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, and tours can be arranged by calling the Court Clerk at 284-7498.

RESOURCES

The Court offices are located on the first floor of the City Of Morgantown's Public Safety Building at 300 Spruce St. Morgantown WV 26505.

Court personnel consists of a part-time Municipal Court Judge, one substitute judge, full-time court clerk/supervisor, full-time payment clerk, full-time data entry clerk, and two part-time deputy municipal court clerks. The Assistant City Attorney serves as City Prosecutor and works closely with the Court staff.

The current computer system and software was originally installed in May 1998, but was upgraded in the past year. Hardware consists of an IBM X Series 232 Server and four workstations, a dot matrix printer, laser printer, and an ink jet printer. The Court also installed an upgrade of the system software in the past year. It has been a great improvement over the previous version. Staff has found it to be more user friendly and much more efficient.

The court utilizes Justice Systems, Inc.'s "FullCourt" software and contracts with Justice Systems, Inc. for its annual maintenance and support. This system permits Court staff to perform all case management functions from initial entry, scheduling, and case status updating, to collections, disbursements of monies, and case dispositions. The Municipal Court now has Internet access, and may soon be taking payments via the Internet.

REVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR

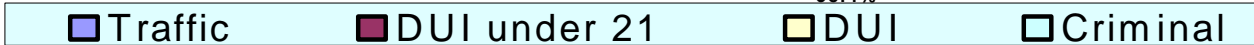
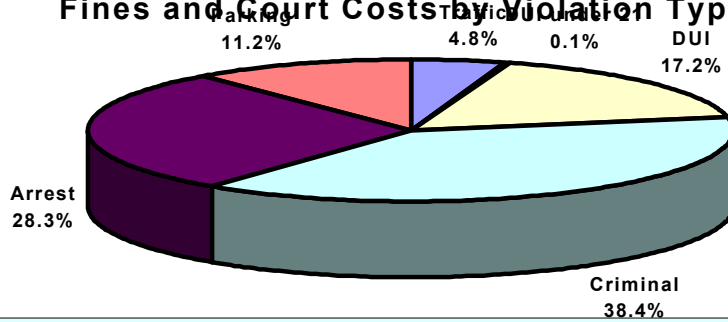
This has been a very busy year for the Municipal Court. The Court has been implementing a new sentencing option for the large volume of "Underage Possession" citations. City Police this year have cited 332 underage drinkers. The Judge and the Court Clerk have been working closely with Morgantown Area Youth Services to make this program a success. Every person who pleads guilty or no contest to the violation of "Underage Possession" are required to complete six hours of community service and a six-hour alcohol awareness class. The program seems to be working out well. The Court has been working hard to help eliminate or reduce the number of students who are repeat offenders of this ordinance.

The Municipal Court has been working hard to improve our collections of outstanding parking fines. Seriously delinquent parking fines have been sent to an outside collection agency. Court staff is in the beginning stages of this process, but anticipate a substantial increase in collections in the coming year. We have also contracted for the services of a West Virginia University student intern for 15-20 hours per week to assist with this process.

The numbers and types of cases that have been processed by Municipal Court from July 1, 2000 through June 30, 2002, are as follows:

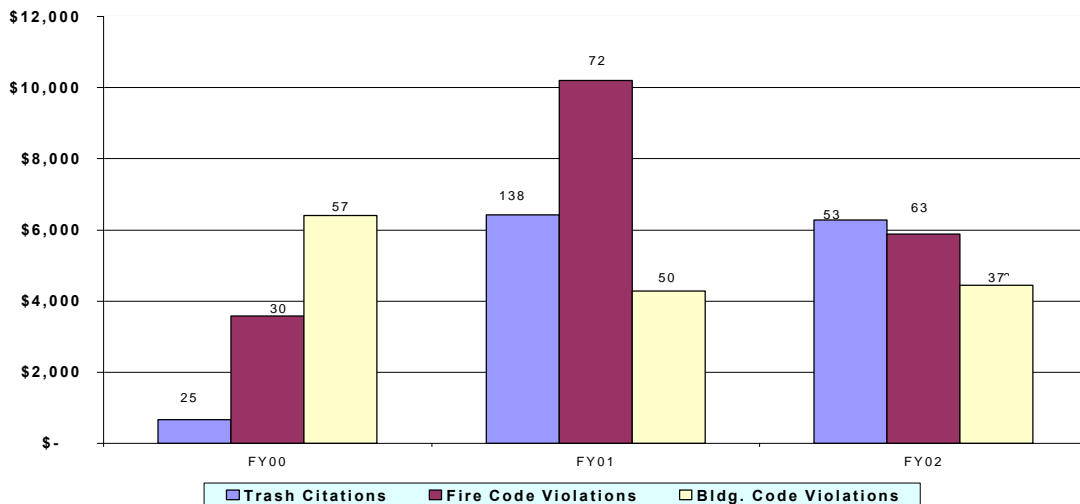
	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>
Traffic	3,461	3,124
DUI	137	144
DUI Under 21	23	4
Criminal	1,051	808
Arrest	612	613
Parking	<u>13,152</u>	<u>11,277</u>
Total	18,436	15,970

**Municipal Court - FY02
Fines and Court Costs by Violation Type**

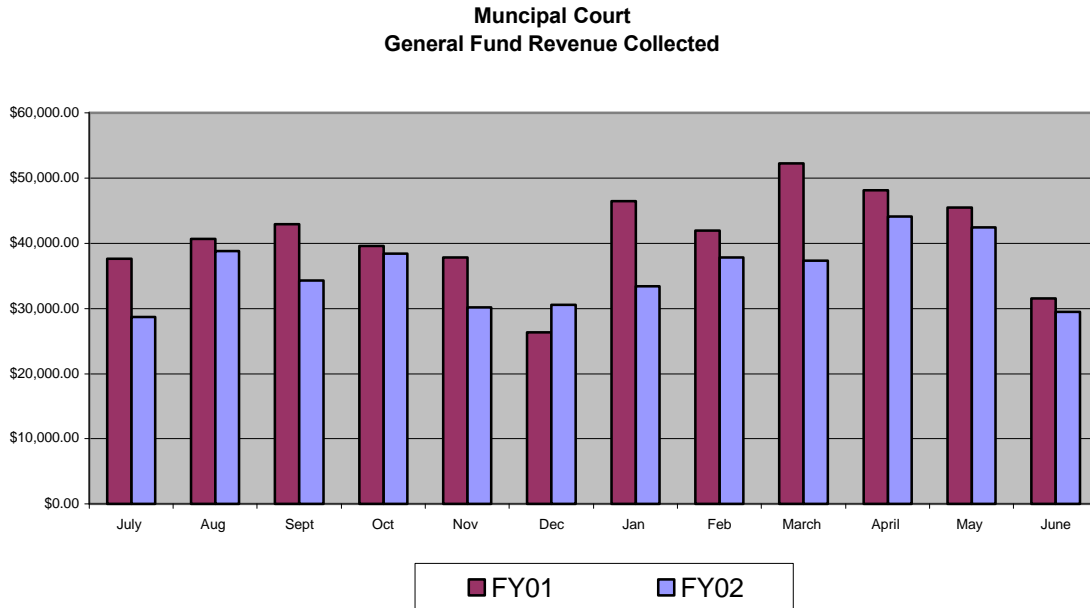


Included in the “Criminal” category are violations of fire codes, housing codes, and trash and litter codes. The following chart depicts both the dollar amount of the fines and costs assessed on those violations and the number of citations issued:

**Municipal Court
Comparison of Selected Criminal Violations**



All Court collections, after remitting the various required fees to the State, are paid over to the City's General Fund. The following chart depicts this revenue for the last two fiscal years:



FORECAST FOR THE COMING YEAR

The court has a busy year ahead. Plans are in place to fully utilize the Data Ticket Agency to help with the large volume of delinquent parking fines. Court staff plans to continue improving on its efforts to help curb the underage drinking problem. The Judge is very supportive of this program and certainly does not mind taking the extra time and effort to help make a difference. The Court is also working with the officer in charge of litter control by ordering community service for second and third offenders of the Litter Free Premises Ordinance. The Municipal Court plans to continue to provide the citizens of the City of Morgantown with the best public service possible. The staff of Municipal Court strives to insure that, although receiving a ticket may not be a pleasant experience, each person will be treated fairly and justly in the Morgantown Municipal Court system.