

# JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA

General Session

Friday, April 17, 2026

10 a.m. – 12 p.m.



Nathan Deal Judicial Center  
Atlanta, GA



# Judicial Council of Georgia

## Administrative Office of the Courts

**Chief Justice Nels S.D. Peterson**  
*Chair*

**Cynthia H. Clanton**  
*Director*

### Memorandum

Date: April 13, 2026

To: Judicial Council Members

From: Standing Committee on Budget  
Justice Charlie Bethel, Chair

RE: Judicial Council Budget and Financial Report

This report will provide an update on FY26 Year-To-Date, the Amended FY26 and the FY27 budget requests, as well as an overview of the next steps for the Amended FY27 and FY28 budget cycles.

### **Fiscal Year 2026**

The Judicial Council received \$26,582,559 in State Appropriations for FY2026 (HB 973). The attached Financial Report highlights the Judicial Council's expenditures and remaining balances as of April 1, 2026.

### **Amended Fiscal Year 2026**

The Judicial Council: Section 6 of the Appropriations Bill (HB 973) was amended as follows:

#### **Judicial Council - Administrative Office of the Courts:**

*Reduce funds for personal services based on the actual start date of a new position* (\$27,150)

#### **Council of Accountability Court Judges**

*Reduce funds for personal services based on the actual start date of new positions* (\$66,302)

#### **Judicial Qualifications Commission**

##### **Georgia State-wide Business Court**

*Increase funds for one-time costs for leave payouts* \$0

*Increase funds to align salaries per O.C.G.A. 15-5A-11* \$2,187

##### **Georgia Tax Court**

*Increase funds for personal services for the Tax Court Judge effective April 1, 2026 per HB 392 (2025 Session)* \$91,560

*Increase funds for operations* \$22,000

<i>Increase funds for contracts</i>	\$60,000
<i>Increase funds for start-up costs</i>	\$100,000

The Judicial Council submitted a flat budget request for the FY26 Amended Budget. The only changes were one-time reductions as well as state-wide spreads, including a \$2,000 one-time supplement for qualifying full-time state employees. As of April 1, 2026, the Georgia Tax Court is a part of the Section 6 Budget and attached to the Administrative Office of the Courts for administrative purposes.

The Judicial Council's amended state funded budget is \$26,582,559.

### **Fiscal Year 2027**

The Judicial Council received several enhancements to its budget in the FY2027 General Budget (HB 974). The final version of the bill will provide funds to try to maintain current staffing levels for the GA CMS project. Additional staffing support was provided throughout Section 6 of the Budget. In addition, the General Assembly funded the first full year of operations for the Georgia Tax Court.

#### **Judicial Council - Administrative Office of the Courts:**

<i>Increase funds to annualize FY2026 recruitment and retention initiatives effective January 1, 2026</i>	\$100,000
<i>Increase funds for continuity for the Georgia Case Management System project</i>	\$391,100
<i>Increase funds for Civil Legal Services for families of indigent patients</i>	\$ -
<i>Increase funds to contract with Council of Superior Court Judges, the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council, and the Georgia Public Defender Council for the express purpose of speedy adjudication of individuals held in county jails charged with crimes specifically related to state prison contraband</i>	\$1,000,000
<i>Study and report on alternative caseload formula in collaboration with the Administrative Office of the Courts, House Budget and Research Office, and Senate Budget and Evaluation Office and prepare to move to a new formula for determining additional judgeships that does not automatically lead to the creation of new judgeships each year, beginning in FY2028 (S:YES)</i>	\$ -

#### **Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution:**

<i>Increase funds to support the Schedule Alternative Dispute Resolution case management system</i>	\$39,000
<i>Increase funds for one program coordinator</i>	\$125,711

#### **Institute of Continuing Judicial Education:**

<i>Increase funds for one accounting paraprofessional position</i>	\$63,228
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#### **Judicial Qualifications Commission:**

<i>Increase funds for personnel for a second full-time investigator position</i>	\$134,092
<i>Increase funds for security partnerships</i>	\$50,000
<i>Increase funds to support growing operational costs, including litigation before the Judicial Qualification Commission's Hearing Panel (S:YES; Utilize existing funds (\$50,000) and increase funds to support growing operations costs, including litigation before the Judicial Qualification Commission's Hearing panel (Total \$75,000))</i>	\$25,000
<i>Increase funds for personnel for a fourth full-time attorney position position)</i>	\$167,614

#### **Resource Center:**

<i>Increase funds to offset reductions in other funding sources</i>	\$-
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**Georgia State-wide Business Court:**

<i>Increase funds to increase judge salary to the maximum authorized salary per O.C.G.A. 45-7-4 (HB 86 (2025 Session)), which includes the annualized increase (\$22,271) consistent with appropriations effective January 1, 2026, and the annual increase (\$19,168) in authorized salary (H:Increase funds to annualize judge salary effective January 1, 2026)</i>	\$22,271
<i>Increase funds to align salaries per O.C.G.A. 15-5A-11</i>	\$8,747
<i>Increase funds to annualize FY 2026 recruitment and retention initiatives effective January 1, 2026</i>	\$30,386

**Georgia Tax Court:**

<i>Increase funds for judge salary at the maximum authorized salary per O.C.G.A. 45-7-4 (HB 86 (2025 Session))(H:Increase funds for judge salary to mirror the Statewide Business Court judge salary effective January 1, 2026)</i>	\$346,517
<i>Increase funds for personal services for a staff attorney position</i>	\$217,899
<i>Increase funds for one court administrator</i>	\$95,054
<i>Increase funds for operating expenses</i>	\$45,000
<i>Increase funds for software maintenance and equipment</i>	\$15,000
<i>Increase funds for contracts</i>	\$82,000

Not including the new appropriation for the Georgia Tax Court, the approved enhancement requests represent a \$1,848,199 increase in the Judicial Council’s operating budget. The total funding for Section 6 in the FY27 General Budget is \$28,918,289.

**Next Steps: Amended Fiscal Year 2027 and Fiscal Year 2028**

The Standing Committee on Budget is currently working on a timeline for this year’s white paper process. Committee staff will be sharing additional details as soon as possible.

**Attachments:**

- Fiscal Year 2026 Budget and Financial Report as of April 1, 2026
- Amended Fiscal Year 2026 and Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Comparison Report

**Fiscal Year 2026 - Judicial Council Operations**

**April 1, 2026**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>FY 2026 Budget</b>	<b>YTD Expenditures</b>	<b>Remaining</b>	<b>Budget Spent</b>
<b>Administrative Office of The Courts</b>		<b>\$ 10,863,335</b>	<b>\$ 7,714,414</b>	<b>\$ 3,144,615</b>	<b>71%</b>
Legal Services for Domestic Violence	103	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 2,910,000	\$ 90,000	97%
Georgia Council of Court Administrators	141	\$ 16,389	\$ -	\$ 16,389	0%
Council of Municipal Court Judges	142	\$ 32,870	\$ 14,879	\$ 17,991	45%
Child Support Collaborative	174	\$ 139,554	\$ 83,796	\$ 55,758	60%
Council of Magistrate Court Judges	204	\$ 231,572	\$ 164,102	\$ 67,470	71%
Council of Probate Court Judges	205	\$ 215,464	\$ 224,532	\$ (9,068)	104%
Council of State Court Judges	206	\$ 288,623	\$ 214,401	\$ 74,222	74%
Council of State Court Judges Ret.	207	\$ 2,588,814	\$ 78,240	\$ 2,510,574	3%
Legal Services for Kinship Care Families	1103	\$ 750,000	\$ 727,500	\$ 22,500	97%
Legal Svc for MLP	1203	\$ 409,500	\$ 273,607	\$ 135,893	67%
<b>Other Judicial Council Subprograms</b>		<b>\$ 7,672,786</b>	<b>\$ 4,691,057</b>	<b>\$ 2,981,729</b>	<b>61%</b>
Accountability Court Council	195	\$ 1,196,574	\$ 636,480	\$ 560,094	53%
CACJ-Peer Review Process	199	\$ 74,374	\$ 27,939	\$ 46,435	38%
GA Office of Dispute Resolution	104	\$ 2,840	\$ -	\$ 2,840	0%
Inst of Continuing Jud Ed Administration	301	\$ 861,820	\$ 473,777	\$ 388,043	55%
Judicial Qualifications Commission	400	\$ 1,603,033	\$ 1,117,908	\$ 485,125	70%
State-wide Business Court	14207	\$ 2,005,712	\$ 1,361,163	\$ 644,549	68%
Resource Center	500	\$ 900,000	\$ 900,000	\$ -	100%
PAQC	550	\$ 1,128,525	\$ 675,266	\$ 453,259	60%
Georgia Tax Court	15207	\$ 273,560	\$ -	\$ 273,560	0%
<b>Separate Judicial Council Programs</b>		<b>\$ 8,046,438</b>	<b>\$ 5,192,532</b>	<b>\$ 2,853,906</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>TOTAL JUDICIAL COUNCIL</b>		<b>\$ 26,582,559</b>	<b>\$ 17,598,002</b>	<b>\$ 8,980,251</b>	<b>66%</b>

## Amended FY 2026 - Budget Comparison

### Judicial Council Standing Committee on Budget Report

Judicial Council Program & Subprograms	FY 2026 Budget	AFY26 Enhancement Requests	AFY 2026 Budget	% Change
Administrative Office of the Courts	\$ 10,802,171		\$ 10,860,335	0.54%
<i>Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$2,000 to full-time, regular state employees</i>		\$ 131,763		
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264% effective May 1, 2026</i>		\$ (46,449)		
<i>Reduce funds for personnel based on the actual start date of new positions</i>		\$ (27,150)		
Legal Services for Victims of Domestic Violence	\$ 3,000,000		\$ 3,000,000	
Legal Services for Families of Indigent Patients	\$ 409,500		\$ 409,500	
Legal Services for Kinship Care Families	\$ 750,000		\$ 750,000	
GA Council of Court Administrators	\$ 16,389		\$ 16,389	
Council of Municipal Court Judges	\$ 32,870		\$ 32,870	
Child Support Collaborative	\$ 141,841		\$ 142,554	
<i>Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$2,000 to full-time, regular state employees</i>		\$ 1,723		
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264% effective May 1, 2026</i>		\$ (1,010)		
Council of Magistrate Court Judges	\$ 231,181		\$ 231,572	
<i>Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$2,000 to full-time, regular state employees</i>		\$ 2,153		
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264% effective May 1, 2026</i>		\$ (1,762)		
Council of Probate Court Judges	\$ 215,464		\$ 215,464	
Council of State Court Judges	\$ 2,877,383		\$ 2,877,437	
<i>Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$2,000 to full-time, regular state employees</i>		\$ 2,153		
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264% effective May 1, 2026</i>		\$ (2,099)		
<b>Judicial Council Programs and Subprograms Total</b>	<b>\$ 18,476,799</b>	<b>\$ 59,322</b>	<b>\$ 18,536,121</b>	<b>0.32%</b>
<b>Other Programs</b>				
Accountability Courts	\$ 1,325,892		\$ 1,270,948	-4.14%
<i>Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$2,000 to full-time, regular state employees</i>		\$ 17,224		
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264% effective May 1, 2026</i>		\$ (5,866)		
<i>Reduce funds for personnel based on the actual start date of new positions</i>		\$ (66,302)		
Office of Dispute Resolution	\$ -		\$ 2,840	
<i>Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$2,000 to full-time, regular state employees</i>		\$ 4,306		
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264% effective May 1, 2026</i>		\$ (1,466)		
Inst of Continuing Jud Ed Operations	\$ 844,596		\$ 861,820	2.04%
<i>Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$2,000 to full-time, regular state employees</i>		\$ 17,224		

Judicial Qualifications Commission	\$ 1,593,094		\$ 1,603,033	0.62%
<i>Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$2,000 to full-time, regular state employees</i>		\$ 15,071		
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264% effective May 1, 2026</i>		\$ (5,132)		
Resource Center	\$ 900,000		\$ 900,000	
State-wide Business Court	\$ 1,997,160		\$ 2,005,712	0.43%
<i>Increase funds to align salaries per O.C.G.A. 15-5A-11</i>		\$ 2,187		
<i>Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$2,000 to full-time, regular state employees</i>		\$ 10,765		
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264% effective May 1, 2026</i>		\$ (4,400)		
Prosecuting Attorneys Qualifications Commission	\$ 1,125,000		\$ 1,128,525	0.31%
<i>Increase funds to provide a one-time salary supplement of \$2,000 to full-time, regular state employees</i>		\$ 6,459		
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from</i>		\$ (2,934)		
Georgia Tax Court			\$ 273,560	
<i>Increase funds for personnel for the Georgia Tax Court Judge effective April 1, 2026 per HB392 (2025 Legislative Session)</i>		\$ 91,560		
<i>Increase funds for operations</i>		\$ 22,000		
<i>Increase funds for contracts</i>		\$ 60,000		
<i>Increase funds for start-up costs</i>		\$ 100,000		
<b>Other Programs Total</b>	<b>\$ 7,785,742</b>	<b>\$ 260,696</b>	<b>\$ 8,046,438</b>	<b>3.35%</b>
<b>Judicial Council Totals</b>	<b>\$ 26,262,541</b>	<b>\$ 320,018</b>	<b>\$ 26,582,559</b>	<b>1.22%</b>

## FY 2027 - Budget Comparison

### Judicial Council Standing Committee on Budget Report

Judicial Council Program & Subprograms	FY 2026 Budget	FY27 Enhancement	FY 2027 Budget	% Change
Administrative Office of the Courts	\$ 10,802,171		\$ 12,090,935	11.93%
<i>Increase funds for personnel for continuity of the GA CMS project</i>		\$ 391,100		
<i>Increase funds to annualize recruitment and retention initiatives</i>		\$ 100,000		
<i>Reflect an adjustment in telecommunications and infrastructure rates for the Georgia Technology Authority</i>		\$ (536)		
<i>Reflect an adjustment to agency premiums for Department of Administrative Services administered insurance program</i>		\$ (484)		
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264%</i>		\$ (329,997)		
<i>Reflect an adjustment for GA@Work billings to meet projected expenditures</i>		\$ 6,192		
<i>Increase funds to reflect an additional 2.92% increase in the employer contribution for the Employees' Retirement System</i>		\$ 122,489		
<i>Increase funds to contract with the Council of Superior Court Judges, the Prosecuting Attorneys' Council, and the Georgia Public Defender Council for the express purpose of speedy adjudication of individuals held in county jails charged with crimes specifically related to state prison contraband</i>		\$ 1,000,000		
<i>Study and report an alternative caseload formula in collaboration with the Administrative Office of the Courts, the House Budget and Research Office, and the Senate Budget and Evaluation Office and prepare to move to a new formula for determining additional judgeships that does not automatically lead to the creation of new judgeships each year, beginning in FY 2028</i>		\$ -		
Legal Services for Victims of Domestic Violence	\$ 3,000,000		\$ 3,000,000	
Legal Services for Families of Indigent Patients	\$ 409,500		\$ 409,500	0.00%
<i>Increase funds for Civil Legal Services for families of Indigent Patients.</i>		\$ -		
Legal Services for Kinship Care Families	\$ 750,000		\$ 750,000	
GA Council of Court Administrators	\$ 16,389		\$ 16,389	
Council of Municipal Court Judges	\$ 32,870		\$ 32,870	
Child Support Collaborative	\$ 141,841		\$ 137,900	-2.78%
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264%</i>		\$ (3,941)		
Council of Magistrate Court Judges	\$ 231,181		\$ 224,100	-3.06%
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264%</i>		\$ (7,081)		

Council of Probate Court Judges	\$ 215,464		\$ 215,464	
Council of State Court Judges	\$ 2,877,383		\$ 2,868,948	-0.29%
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264%</i>		\$ (8,435)		
<b>Judicial Council Programs and Subprograms Total</b>	<b>\$ 18,476,799</b>	<b>\$ 1,269,307</b>	<b>\$ 19,746,106</b>	<b>6.87%</b>
<b>Other Programs</b>				
Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution	\$ -		\$ 164,711	
<i>Increase funds to support the Schedule ADR case management system</i>		\$ 39,000		
<i>Increase funds for one program coordinator</i>		\$ 125,711		
Accountability Courts	\$ 1,325,892		\$ 1,298,689	-2.05%
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264</i>		\$ (46,118)		
<i>Increase funds to reflect an additional 2.92% increase in the employer contribution for the Employees' Retirement System</i>		\$ 18,915		
Inst of Continuing Jud Ed Operations	\$ 844,596		\$ 907,824	7.49%
<i>Increase funds for one accounting paraprofessional position</i>		\$ 63,228		
Judicial Qualifications Commission	\$ 1,593,094		\$ 1,951,630	22.51%
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264</i>		\$ (40,041)		
<i>Increase funds to reflect an additional 2.92% increase in the employer contribution for the Employees' Retirement System</i>		\$ 21,871		
<i>Increase funds for personnel for a second full-time investigator position</i>		\$ 134,092		
<i>Increase funds for security partnerships</i>		\$ 50,000		
<i>Utilize existing funds (\$50,000) and increase funds to support growing operations costs, including litigation before the Judicial Qualification Commission's Hearing Panel</i>		\$ 25,000		
<i>Increase funds for personnel for a fourth full-time attorney position</i>		\$ 167,614		
Resource Center	\$ 900,000		\$ 900,000	
<i>Increase funds to offset reductions in other funding sources</i>		\$ -		
State-wide Business Court	\$ 1,997,160		\$ 2,030,497	1.67%
<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264</i>		\$ (56,385)		
<i>Increase funds to reflect an additional 2.92% increase in the employer contribution for the Employees' Retirement System</i>		\$ 28,318		
<i>Increase funds to annualize judge salary effective January 1, 2026</i>		\$ 22,271		
<i>Increase funds to align salaries per O.C.G.A. 15-5A-11</i>		\$ 8,747		
<i>Increase funds to annualize FY 2026 recruitment and retention initiatives effective January 1, 2026</i>		\$ 30,386		
Prosecuting Attorneys Qualifications Commission	\$ 1,125,000		\$ 1,111,283	-1.22%

<i>Reduce funds to reflect a reduction in the employer contribution rate for the State Health Benefit Plan from 29.454% to 20.264</i>		\$ (24,506)		
<i>Increase funds to reflect an additional 2.92% increase in the employer contribution for the Employees' Retirement System</i>		\$ 10,789		
<i>Georgia Tax Court</i>	\$ -		\$ 807,549	
<i>Increase funds to reflect an additional 2.92% increase in the employer contribution for the Employees' Retirement System</i>		\$ 6,079		
<i>Increase funds for judge salary to mirror the Statewide Business Court judge salary effective January 1, 2026</i>		\$ 346,517		
<i>Increase funds for personal services for a staff attorney position</i>		\$ 217,899		
<i>Increase funds for one court administrator</i>		\$ 95,054		
<i>Increase funds for operating expenses</i>		\$ 45,000		
<i>Increase funds for software maintenance and equipment</i>		\$ 15,000		
<i>Increase funds for contracts</i>		\$ 82,000		
<b>Other Programs Total</b>	<b>\$ 7,785,742</b>	<b>\$ 1,386,441</b>	<b>\$ 9,172,183</b>	<b>17.81%</b>
<b>Judicial Council Totals</b>	<b>\$ 26,262,541</b>	<b>\$ 2,655,748</b>	<b>\$ 28,918,289</b>	<b>10.11%</b>



## SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

**FILED**  
**Administrative Minutes**  
**February 26, 2026**

**Thérèse S. Barnes**  
**Clerk/Court Executive**  
**SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA**

The Honorable Supreme Court met pursuant to adjournment.

The following order was passed:

### **IN RE: JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA.**

It is hereby ordered that, effective April 1, 2026, the Chief Court Judge of the Georgia Tax Court shall be added as a member of all Standing and Ad Hoc Committees of the Judicial Council of Georgia.

The Chief Court Judge may appoint a designee to serve as his or her representative on these committees. Such designee may be heard and shall be entitled to vote and considered part of the quorum for the meeting.

**SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA**  
Clerk's Office, Atlanta

I certify that the above is a true extract from the minutes of the Supreme Court of Georgia.

Witness my signature and the seal of said court hereto affixed the day and year last above written.

 , Clerk



## SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

**FILED**  
Administrative Minutes  
February 26, 2026

Thérèse S. Barnes  
Clerk/Court Executive  
SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

The Honorable Supreme Court met pursuant to adjournment.

The following order was passed:

### **IN RE: JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA.**

Pursuant to OCGA § 15-5-20 (b), the voting membership of the Judicial Council of Georgia is hereby expanded to include the Chief Court Judge of the Georgia Tax Court, as provided in Ga. Const. Art. VI, Sec. III, Par. III, effective April 1, 2026, as follows:

- Chief Justice of the Supreme Court,
- Presiding Justice of the Supreme Court,
- Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals,
- Vice-Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals,
- Judge of the Georgia State-wide Business Court,
- Chief Court Judge of the Georgia Tax Court,
- President and President-Elect of the Council of Superior Court Judges,
- Ten administrative district judges selected as provided by OCGA § 15-5-4,
- President and President-Elect of the Council of State Court Judges,
- President and President-Elect of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges,
- President and President-Elect of the Council of Probate Court Judges,
- President and President Elect of the Council of Magistrate

Court Judges, and

- President and President-Elect of the Council of Municipal Court Judges.

Members of the Judicial Council of Georgia shall serve while holding their respective offices specified above. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall serve as Chair and the presiding officer of the Council. In the absence of the Chief Justice, the Presiding Justice of the Supreme Court or other designee shall preside. All members shall be entitled to vote in accordance with Judicial Council Bylaws.

The Judicial Council of Georgia shall also have the following non-voting member:

- President of the State Bar of Georgia or his or her designee.

**SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA**  
Clerk's Office, Atlanta

I certify that the above is a true extract from the minutes of the Supreme Court of Georgia.

Witness my signature and the seal of said court hereto affixed the day and year last above written.

 , Clerk