



JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION

124 East Washington Street, P.O. Box 250, Charles Town, WV 25414

Phone: (304) 728-3284 **Fax:** (304) 725-7916

Web: www.jeffersoncountywv.org

SPECIAL JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSION

Friday, October 24, 2025

9:00 a.m.

County Commission Meeting Room

393 N. Lawrence Street, Charles Town, WV—please use East Entrance

Zoom Broadcast (live):

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86912316016?pwd=xvK3hml1YfMCgHAGtmb69QYPL9VOhZ.1>

Meeting ID: 869 1231 6016

Passcode: 063162

Public comments will be accepted in person or via email- info@jeffersoncountywv.org

I. Call to Order

II. Prayer – Moment of silence

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Special Session

1. Interviews of applicants and appointment for the Jefferson County Prosecutor vacancy

V. Adjourn



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PRESIDENT

Pasha Majdi

VICE PRESIDENT

Mike Mood

COMMISSIONER

Jack Hefestay

COMMISSIONER

Cara Keys

COMMISSIONER

Steve Stolipher

To: Commissioner Pasha Majdi
Commissioner Steve Stolipher
Commissioner Mike Mood
Commissioner Cara Keys
Commissioner Jack Hefestay

From: Edwina Benites-LM, county administrator

Re: Overview of prosecuting attorney applicants and process

On October 8, 2025, Matt Harvey resigned as Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney following his confirmation by the United States Senate as U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of West Virginia.

In anticipation of this transition, the Jefferson County Commission had proactively appointed Steve Groh to serve as Interim Prosecuting Attorney, effective upon Mr. Harvey's resignation. Mr. Groh has been serving in this capacity since October 8, 2025.

The Commission has until November 7, 2025, to make a permanent appointment to the position of Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney. In accordance with state law, the appointee must be of the same political party as the departing elected official and must have been a registered member of that party for at least one year prior to the vacancy.

The individual appointed to fill the vacancy will serve until the next general election in November 2026. The candidate elected at that time will complete the remainder of the unexpired term, ending in January 2029.

To be eligible to serve as a prosecuting attorney in the State of West Virginia, an individual must be a citizen entitled to vote and a duly licensed attorney in good standing with the West Virginia State Bar.

Matt Harvey's political affiliation on October 8, 2025: Republican¹

Summary of applicants:

Name	Registered to vote in Jefferson County	Party Affiliation	Party Affiliation on October 8, 2024	Confirmed good standing the WV Bar
Adam Ward	Yes ²	Republican ³	Republican ⁴	Yes ⁵

¹ Confirmed with the Jefferson County Clerk's office on October 22, 2025.

² Confirmed with the Jefferson County Clerk's office on October 22, 2025.

³ Confirmed with the Jefferson County Clerk's office on October 22, 2025.

⁴ Confirmed with the Jefferson County Clerk's office on October 22, 2025.

⁵ Confirmed with the West Virginia State Bar website on October 22, 2025- <https://wvbar.org/>

Adam J. Ward

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

October 13, 2025

The Honorable Pasha Majdi, President, Jefferson County Commission
The Honorable Mike Mood, Commissioner
The Honorable Cara Keys, Commissioner
The Honorable Steve Stolipher, Commissioner
The Honorable Jack Hefestay, Commissioner

To the Honorable Commissioners of Jefferson County:

I respectfully state my interest in becoming the Prosecuting Attorney for Jefferson County. I am currently a Senior Assistant Prosecuting Attorney in the office. Over most of the past seven years, my role has focused on handling the most serious crimes in our community. In addition, I have taken on other roles and responsibilities to support former Prosecuting Attorney Harvey and the entire office. Of late, I have contributed through publicly representing the office and participating in the decision-making process.

Before returning to the area, I served as the Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney for Louisa County where I supervised all of the attorneys and staff in that office. That role also required that I act as liaison with other branches of county government and our judges. I learned about the need for diplomacy in handling difficult situations and how to engage with officials on issues ranging from the budget to addressing concerns regarding employees. In addition to my criminal law experience, I have handled civil matters dating back to my time as a law clerk.

I believe my background in leadership and my experience with both civil and criminal law position me to contribute immediately as Prosecuting Attorney. If given the opportunity, I strongly believe my work ethic, determination, and skills would benefit the citizens of Jefferson County. Upon receiving the appointment, I would run a spirited campaign to retain the seat in 2026 and 2028.

Enclosed you will find my resume. I am happy to provide references ranging from former employers to colleagues to those who served under my leadership, if needed.

Respectfully submitted,



Adam J. Ward, W.Va. State Bar No. 13485

ADAM J. WARD

EDUCATION

University of Richmond School of Law Richmond, VA
Juris Doctor, *magna cum laude* May 5, 2012
GPA: 3.61 Rank: 16/149
Honors: Moot Court Board, CALI Award for Excellence in Advanced Trial Advocacy

Campbell University, Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law Raleigh, NC
Attended as a 1st Year Student 2009-2010

Shenandoah University, Harry F. Byrd Jr. School of Business Winchester, VA
Bachelor of Business Administration, *cum laude* May 13, 2006
Honors: Dean's Award, 2006; Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Senior, 2006
Activities: President, Byrd School of Business Student Advisory Board

EXPERIENCE

City of Ranson, WV Municipal Prosecutor's Office Ranson, WV
Municipal Prosecutor 07/2025 – current

- Prosecute traffic and other misdemeanor offenses

Jefferson County, WV Prosecuting Attorney's Office Charles Town, WV
Senior Assistant Prosecuting Attorney 01/2024 – current

- Represent the State in all types of felony matters in Magistrate and Circuit Courts
- Prepare and present evidence in jury trials for serious crimes such as child abuse causing death, sexual assault, and murder
- Handle *habeas corpus* matters given my background with civil law
- Manage staff and coordinate with other attorneys

Skinner Accident and Injury Lawyers Charles Town, WV
Associate Attorney 08/2023 – 01/2024

- Oversee all aspects of civil litigation, to include:
 - Research and Writing
 - Client Counseling
 - Court Hearings and Depositions
- Accept appointments for criminal and *habeas corpus* cases

United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of West Virginia Martinsburg, WV
Special Assistant United States Attorney 11/2022 – 08/2023

- Prosecute offenses in U.S. District Court
- Coordinate a domestic violence task force involving law enforcement, treatment providers, and advocates

City of Charles Town, WV Municipal Prosecutor's Office Charles Town, WV
Municipal Prosecutor/Attorney 10/2021 – 08/2023

- Prosecute traffic and other misdemeanor offenses
- Provide legal advice to the police department and other city officials

ADAM J. WARD

Jefferson County, WV Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Charles Town, WV

Assistant Prosecuting Attorney

12/2018 – 08/2023

- Prosecute felonies and misdemeanors in Magistrate Court
- Prosecute felony cases in Circuit Court
- Prepare and present evidence in jury trials for serious crimes such as murders, sexual assaults, and arsons

Ward Legal Group, PLLC

Winchester, VA

Principal

07/2018 – 12/2018

- Handle criminal and traffic defense in Virginia courts
- Act as local counsel for Richmond, VA civil firm, handling matters in northern and western Virginia

Louisa County Commonwealth's Attorney's Office

Louisa, VA

Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney

01/2015 – 03/2018

- Prepare and try numerous major bench and jury trials for serious offenses up to, and including, murder
- Manage the office attorneys regarding case assignments, strategic goals, and office policies
- Counsel attorneys who had issues regarding courtroom performance or conduct, difficulty working with other members of the office, or problems with the local defense bar
- Manage office staff with regard to job-related assignments and human resource related matters
- Address any personnel or other court related issues with the local judges

Louisa County Commonwealth's Attorney's Office

Louisa, VA

Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney

11/2012 – 01/2015

- Run both General District (misdemeanor) and Circuit (felony) dockets
- Prepare and try numerous jury trials both as first and second chair
- Manage internship program for the office

Twelfth Judicial Circuit of Virginia, Judge Harold W. Burgess

Chesterfield, VA

Judicial Clerk

8/2012-11/2012

- Draft letter opinions and orders for both civil and criminal cases
- Review pleadings and provided analysis to assist Judge Burgess
- Manage the flow of legal filings in civil matters

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS/SKILLS

- Licensed attorney in the State of West Virginia (10/2018- currently active) and Commonwealth of Virginia (10/2012- currently listed as Associate status meaning inactive)
- Admitted to the bar in numerous Federal Courts: Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, Northern District of West Virginia, Southern District of West Virginia, Western District of Virginia, and Eastern District of Virginia (joined each bar in 2018)
- Graduate of Trial Advocacy program (2013- Commonwealth's Attorney's Services Council)
- Graduate of National District Attorneys' Association Executive [Leadership] Program (2015)
- Graduate of Gangbusters (2016- Commonwealth's Attorney's Services Council)
- Graduate of Prosecuting Homicide Cases and Prosecuting Capital Cases (2016- Commonwealth's Attorneys Services Council)
- Graduate of Leadership Jefferson Class 14 (2019-2020)
- Completed Computer Forensics for Prosecutors course (July 23-28, 2017) at the National Computer Forensics Institute in Hoover, Alabama

Edwina Benites

From: Spencer Fraser
Sent: Monday, October 20, 2025 12:24 PM
To: Edwina Benites
Cc: Gabriel Areizaga
Subject: Ticket
Attachments: 1.png; 2.png; 3.png

Eddie, did not see anything in our filters that matches what you were looking for. All of the blocked stuff was obviously spam. I did not see any related e-mails stuck in the quarantine filters either.

Spencer Fraser

Level 2 IT Technician for Jefferson County

116 E Washington Street

Charles Town, WV 25414

Sfraser@jeffersoncountywv.org

(304) 728-5603 extension 1051 (Office)

Edwina Benites

From: Nathan Cochran
Sent: Friday, October 10, 2025 5:23 PM
To: Edwina Benites
Subject: Appointment of Prosecutor

Eddie:

You requested some general information about the appointment of a prosecuting attorney. W. Va. Code § 3-10-8 states in relevant part:

- (a) Any **vacancy occurring in the office of prosecuting attorney**, sheriff, assessor, or county surveyor **shall be filled** by the county commission **within 30 days** of the vacancy **by appointment of a person of the same political party** with which the person holding the office immediately preceding the vacancy was affiliated at the time of the previous election for the office. The appointee **must have been a member of that political party for at least one year** prior to the occurrence of the vacancy. The appointed person shall hold the office for the period stated by section one of this article.
- (b) Notwithstanding any code provision to the contrary, a county commission may appoint a temporary successor to the office of prosecuting attorney, sheriff, assessor or county surveyor until the requirements of this section have been met. The temporary successor may serve no more than 30 days from the date of the vacancy.

W. Va. Code § 3-10-8

To serve as a County Prosecuting Attorney in West Virginia, a person must meet several constitutional, statutory, and procedural requirements. The candidate **must be a duly licensed attorney in West Virginia** at the time of filing for office, be a citizen entitled to vote, file appropriate candidacy attorney paperwork during prescribed periods, and take a constitutional oath before assuming office.

While West Virginia Code § 3-10-8 doesn't explicitly state a professional qualification requirement, West Virginia Code § 7-4-1a establishes the fundamental professional qualification for prosecuting attorney candidates, which include that person shall be a duly licensed attorney in the State of West Virginia at the time of his or her filing for office. This statutory requirement became effective July 9, 2021, codifying what had previously been established through judicial precedent.

The timing requirement is particularly significant - the license must be held at the time of his or her filing for office, meaning candidates must be licensed attorneys before filing their candidacy papers, not merely before taking office. I believe these requirements would extend to the appointment of a prosecutor as well.

The West Virginia Constitution establishes fundamental eligibility requirements for all county officers, including prosecuting attorneys. Article IV, Section 4 provides that no person, except citizens entitled to vote, shall be elected or appointed to any state, county or municipal office. This constitutional requirement creates a citizenship standard that **candidates must be citizens entitled to vote**, which incorporates the general voting eligibility requirements under West Virginia law.

Before assuming office, prosecuting attorneys must take the constitutional oath required of all public officers. West Virginia Constitution, Article IV, Section 5 mandates that every person elected or appointed to any office, before proceeding to exercise the authority, or discharge the duties thereof, shall make oath or affirmation that he will support the constitution of the United States and the constitution of this state, and that he will faithfully discharge the duties of his said office to the best of his skill and judgment.

Hope this helps. Please let me know if you need anything else.

Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
Nathan P. Cochran, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney
124 East Washington Street
Charles Town, West Virginia 25414
304.728.3318

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