

## **WHAT IS A GRAND JURY?**

The Grand Jury is composed of at least 13 and up to 23 citizens who hear testimony and review evidence relating to crimes committed in Hampshire and Franklin Counties. The purpose of the Grand Jury session is to determine whether there is probable cause to formally charge (indict) an individual and bring the case to **Superior Court** (from District Court). Neither the accused person(s) nor the defense counsel will be present at the proceeding, which is closed to the public.

## **THE GRAND JURY PROCESS**

All Grand Jury sessions are held in the Grand Jury Room on the third floor of the County Courthouse. The Assistant District Attorney assigned to the case will call in witnesses individually to give testimony. Once all witnesses have testified, the Grand Jurors will “deliberate” – think about and discuss the evidence they have heard. They may also be advised about points of law that apply to the case. At the end of their deliberation, they will vote on whether to indict the accused. If at least 12 jurors find probable cause that a crime was committed by the accused, the Grand Jury hands down a “true bill” or indictment. The result of the vote may be secret and not made public right away.

Once the indictment is brought against the accused, a Superior Court arraignment is scheduled.