



DMCJA Board of Governors Meeting
FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 2023
12:30 PM – 3:30 PM
VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present:

Judge Jeffrey Smith, Chair
Judge Anita Crawford-Willis
Commissioner Patrick Eason
Judge Michael Frans
Judge Michelle Gehlsen
Judge Angelle Gerl
Judge Jessica Giner
Judge Jeffrey D. Goodwin
Judge Carolyn M. Jewett
Judge Rick Leo
Judge Catherine McDowall
Judge Lloyd Oaks
Judge Whitney Rivera
Judge Karl Williams
Judge Rebecca Robertson, BJA Representative

Members Absent:

Judge Tam Bui, BJA Representative
Judge John H. Hart, BJA Representative
Judge Mary Logan, BJA Representative

Guests:

Judge Kristin Ferrera, SCJA Representative
Judge Jenifer Howson, Therapeutic Courts Co-Chair
Judge Rhonda Laumann, Conference Planning Chair
Judge Kevin Ringus, Legislative Co-Chair
Ellen Attebery, DMCMA Representative
Jennifer Crossen, MPA Representative

AOC Staff:

Stephanie Oyler, Primary DMCJA Staff
Antoinette Bonsignore, DMCJA Policy Analyst
Tracy Dugas, Court Program Specialist
Brenden Higashi, PhD., DMCJA Policy Analyst
Natasha Johnson, Legal Services Senior Analyst
Dexter Mejia, Associate Director, Court Services Div.

CALL TO ORDER

Judge Jeffrey Smith, District and Municipal Court Judges' Association (DMCJA) President, noted a quorum was present and called the DMCJA Board of Governors (Board) meeting to order at 12:35

PRESENTATION

GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Minutes

The minutes from the June 4, 2023 meeting were previously distributed to the members. There was no July 2023 meeting. Judge Smith asked if there were any changes that needed to be made to the minutes. There being no changes, the minutes were approved by consensus.

B. Treasurer Report for June and July 2023

Treasurer Judge Jeffrey Goodwin presented the treasurer report and noted that there may be a small budget surplus that could allow the Board to reallocate a few line items slightly. The Reserves Committee will meet soon to draft recommendations for consideration by the Board. Discussion ensued about the confusing nature of DMCJA's dues requirements for part time judges.

C. Special Fund Report for June and July 2023

Special Fund Custodian Judge Anita Crawford-Willis was not present. Judge Williams noted that there are still 4 individuals who did not pay Special Fund dues this year and requested that the Board discuss at an upcoming meeting additional requirements or penalties for those who don't pay.

LIAISON REPORTS

A. Superior Court Judges' Association (SCJA)

SCJA President-Elect Kristin Ferrera introduced herself and reported that SCJA didn't have a Board meeting this month. Judge Ferrera is from Chelan Superior Court, and participates on the Education and Rural Courts Committees for SCJA.

B. District and Municipal Court Management Association (DMCMA)

DMCMA Past-President Ellen Attebery was present for Trish Kinlow. Ellen reported that DMCMA Education Committee is currently drafting a survey to determine what kinds of education clerical and line staff would like to see, and how best to support DMCMA members. Ellen also reported that DMCMA is upgrading their website to have more information, forms, an events calendar, and a policies and procedures manual. Judge Smith noted that Trish Kinlow recently reached out to him to suggest that DMCJA, DMCMA, and MPA hold a joint summit and that more information will be forthcoming.

C. Misdemeanant Probation Association (MPA)

Representative Jennifer Crossen reported that MPA and DMCMA collaborated last year on the Highways to Hedges program, which they want to expand to include DMCJA. Jennifer reported that MPA's annual conference was held in April, with over 100 participants, the largest number of probation participants in a long time. MPA recently held elections, and the new President is Lindsey Bunten, with Omar Gomez as Vice President. MPA Academy will be held September 11 to September 22 this year, and will be all in-person. Jennifer also mentioned that MPA has a support program for probation departments called Building Bridges, where officers can come out to other courts to help. Finally, Jennifer mentioned that there will be a probation conference held in Seattle in February, where staff can receive information about how to be better case managers. Judge Howson responded that she attended the MPA conference this year, and the programming was excellent.

D. Washington State Association for Justice (WSAJ)

Representative Mark O'Halloran was not present.

E. Washington State Bar Association (WSBA)

Representative Gov. Erik Kaeding was not present.

F. Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

State Court Administrator Dawn Marie Rubio was not present.

G. Board for Judicial Administration (BJA)

Representative Judge Rebecca Robertson reported that there was nothing to report. Judge Smith noted that the next BJA meeting will be held on September 15th in-person at the AOC SeaTac facility.

H. Judicial Information System (JIS)

Dexter Mejia, AOC Associate Director of the Court Services Division, reported that Dirk's replacement upon his upcoming retirement, Judge Scott Ahlf, has transitioned to working at AOC. Dexter provided an overview of the status of the CLJ-CMS project, noting that pilot courts will be going live in about 10 weeks and that training will be provided in-person. More details are available in the report from Dexter in the meeting packet.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Bylaws Committee

Judge Kristian Hedine was not present.

B. Diversity Committee

Judge Willie Gregory was not present.

C. DOL Liaison Committee

Judge Angelle Gerl reported that in addition to the minutes available in the meeting packet, there was also a July meeting of the committee. Judge Gerl reminded the Board that the committee was attempting to address an issue with death records being available in JIS but they have found that the issue is more complicated than they anticipated. There will be a presentation from the National Safety Council at the next meeting on September 11. Judge Howson reported that the Relicensing Subcommittee sent out a survey, and they are in the process of putting together a template for courts to utilize.

D. Education Committee

Judge John H. Hart submitted a brief written update to Judge Smith. The committee recently held their first meeting of the year, and the general theme will be Open to Change. The committee hopes to grow the mentorship program, and draft a year long education plan based on an intentional curriculum.

E. Judicial Assistance Services Program (JASP)

Judge Mary Logan sent a brief update to Judge Smith, and he will be meeting with her soon to discuss an expansion of the work of JASP.

F. Legislative Committee

Judge Kevin Ringus provided a Legislative Committee update under Discussion Item B.

G. Public Outreach Committee

Judge Michelle K. Gehlsen reported that the second annual You've Been Served: A Courthouse Dialogue event will be held on September 27 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., where state legislators and local executives are invited to select courthouses. Next week, Melissa Johnson will send out a packet to explain what to expect and a timeline of events, and two preparation meetings for participants are scheduled for September 12 at 12:00 p.m. and September 21 from 8:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. Judge Gehlsen noted that the committee hopes to expand the event even more next year, including a toolkit for other courts to host a similar event on their own schedule.

H. Rules Committee

Judge Catherine McDowall was not present.

I. Therapeutic Courts Committee

Judge Jenifer Howson reported that Tessa Clements from the AOC Behavioral Health team will be joining an upcoming committee meeting to provide more information about the therapeutic court funding agreements and deliverables. Judge Smith remarked that courts with therapeutic programs should try to attend the NADCP conference next year, as his court found it to be invaluable and they have already implemented several suggestions from the conference into their best practices.

ACTION

A. Ratification of Appointment to Board: Position 2, Judge Michelle K. Gehlsen

The Board moved, seconded, and passed a vote (M/S/P) to ratify the appointment of Michelle K. Gehlsen to Board Position 2 for the remainder of the current term through June 2025.

B. Co-Sponsorship w/SCJA Fall Conference Judges of Color Reception and Karaoke

M/S/P to contribute \$500 from the DMCJA Education Committee budget to support the Judges of Color Reception at Fall Judicial Conference.

M/S/P to contribute \$300 from the Board Meeting Expense line item, towards a social event at Fall Judicial Conference per the request of SCJA.

DISCUSSION

A. President Appointment to Board: Position 2 – Full-Time District Court - remainder of current term through June 2025 – Judge Michelle K. Gehlsen

Judge Smith explained that the DMCJA Bylaws require the President to appoint members to any mid-term vacancies on the Board and that he has chosen to re-appoint Judge Michelle Gehlsen to the remaining term for Board Position 2. Judge Smith requested the Board to ratify this appointment.

M/S/P to move this item to Action today.

B. Memo from Legislative Committee re: Proposals for 2023-2024 Legislative Session

Judge Ringus requested that Board members review the memo from the Legislative Committee available in the meeting packet, which references a proposal from Judge Finkle regarding language and incompetency. Judge Ringus noted that the 2024 legislative session will be a short session, meaning legislators would prefer to address technical fixes versus big policy changes. The Legislative Committee has been working to establish which groups would support or oppose a proposal to change the language around incompetency and have reached out to SCJA, NAMI, and Disability Rights Washington but have not yet gotten a response. Judge Ringus remarked that Senator Dhingra opened the door for this proposal during the last legislative session, with some proposals regarding mental and behavioral health, and that she expressed an interest in seeing this proposal from DMCJA move forward in 2024.

Judge Ringus requested that the Board provide some feedback on this proposal, and that he anticipates that at the October Board meeting the Legislative Committee will request a vote to put forth an official proposal. Judge Rivera noted that Natasha Johnson, Legal Analyst from AOC and Co-Staff of the Legislative Committee, has done some research on terms in other states. The Committee did request that this proposal be put forth by the BJA as it impacts all court levels, but Brittany Gregory did not feel that she had the capacity this year. Judge Ringus noted that the You've Been Served event will provide an opportunity to receive more feedback from legislators on this proposal prior to requesting an official vote from the Board and that the committee wants to make sure that advocacy groups are on board before officially requesting approval to move forward.

Judge Williams remarked that these terms are antiquated and prejudicial with how we approach individuals who may be affected with mental illness, and that words matter. Judge Jewett responded that she agrees with Judge Williams, and that the term competent has a common language meaning and a legal meaning which can be confusing.

C. Rules Committee Proposed Amendment to CRLJ 41

Judge Goodwin provided a brief overview of the three proposals from the DMCJA Rules Committee (Discussion Items C, D, E), available in the packet today. Antoinette Bonsignore confirmed that proposals are due to the Washington State Supreme Court Rules Committee by October 15. This item will be moved to Action on the next meeting agenda.

D. Rules Committee Proposed Amendment to IRLJ 2.6

This item was discussed under Item C.

E. Rules Committee Proposed Amendment to CRLJ 56

This item was discussed under Item C.

F. Co-Sponsorship w/SCJA Fall Conference Judges of Color Reception

Judge Smith introduced this item and explained that there will be a Judges of Color Reception at the Fall Judicial Conference and that Judge Chung has asked DMCJA to co-sponsor this event at a cost of \$500. Judge Chung also requested that DMCJA contribute to a karaoke event at a cost of \$800.

M/S/P to move this item to Action today.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Judge Smith brought the following informational item to the Board's attention.

- A. Statewide Juror Summons Demographic Survey Project [Final Report](#)
- B. BJA Accepting Nominations for the 2023 Washington Courts [Innovating Justice Award](#)

OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Attendee Information Sharing
- B. The next DMCJA Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 20, 2023 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Tulalip Resort Casino

The meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.