



DMCJA Board of Governors Meeting
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 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 Jessica Giner
Judge Jeffrey D. Goodwin
Judge Rick Leo
Judge Catherine McDowall
Judge Lloyd Oaks
Judge Whitney Rivera
Judge Karl Williams
Judge Tam Bui, BJA Representative

Members Absent:

Judge Angelle Gerl
Judge Carolyn M. Jewett
Judge Mary Logan, BJA Representative
Judge John H. Hart, BJA Representative
Judge Rebecca Robertson, BJA Representative

Guests:

Judge Kristin Ferrera, SCJA Representative
Judge Jenifer Howson, Therapeutic Courts Committee Co-Chair
Judge Kevin Ringus, Legislative Committee Co-Chair
Judge Wade Samuelson, Rules Committee Co-Chair
Jennifer Crossen, MPA Representative
Melissa Johnson, Lobbyist
LaTricia Kinlow, DMCMA Representative

AOC Staff:

Stephanie Oyler, Primary DMCJA Staff
Antoinette Bonsignore, DMCJA Policy Analyst
Tracy Dugas, DMCJA Staff, via Zoom
Brenden Higashi, PhD., DMCJA Policy Analyst
Natasha Johnson, Legal Services Senior Analyst
Dexter Mejia, Associate Dir., 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 p.m.

PRESENTATION

The Board watched a TED Talk by Caprice Hollins – [What white people can do to move race conversations forward](#) and briefly discussed their impressions. Judge Bui noted that the challenge is how to react when people are saying things that are culturally insensitive. Judge Oaks remarked that he would like to see tools for how to address this issue. Judge Smith responded that the intention behind showing these TED Talks is to begin normalizing having open conversations about race and racism.

GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Minutes

The minutes from the September 20, 2023 meeting were previously distributed to the members. 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 September 2023

Treasurer Judge Jeffrey Goodwin presented the treasurer report.

C. Special Fund Report for September 2023

Special Fund Custodian Judge Anita Crawford-Willis presented the special funds report. Judge Williams provided details about the status of outstanding special funds dues.

LIAISON REPORTS

A. Superior Court Judges' Association (SCJA)

SCJA President-Elect Kristin Ferrera remarked that she really appreciated the TED Talk shown at the beginning of the meeting today, and that one of the tools she would find helpful is getting perspectives from litigants who felt they were well heard in court. Judge Ferrera reported that SCJA will be holding their first Legislative Committee meeting at the beginning of December, and that it would be helpful for her to receive a list of DMCJA legislative priorities so that SCJA can review them and potentially support the DMCJA initiatives. SCJA is currently discussing whether to establish an anti-harassment policy, including what the procedures might be, and a process for complaints and investigations. SCJA's top legislative priorities for 2024 will include juvenile justice, and they have been meeting with stakeholders on this issue. She expects to have more to report after the December meeting.

B. District and Municipal Court Management Association (DMCMA)

DMCMA President Trish Kinlow reported that the CLJ Summit with DMCJA, DMCMA, and MPA is coming up on October 27 and asked those in attendance to register if they have been invited. DMCMA is interested in pursuing a statewide salary survey to provide courts with tools and information for when they need to approach the executive branch for salary discussions. In addition, DMCMA hopes to implement a statewide court continuity of operations plan. Trish reported that DMCMA is currently restructuring their mentorship program, and moving away from regional trainings because most trainings are now offered online. Trish also commented that DMCMA would like for AOC to restructure the Court Staffing Needs report because it is inaccurate, as it does not take all process into account.

C. Misdemeanant Probation Association (MPA)

Representative Jennifer Crossen reported that they recently had 30 graduates from the MPA academy, and she thanked the DMCJA for their support. The national MPA winter training will be held in Seattle in February. She stated that the DMCJA was recently trying to find ways for courts to more impactfully use the funds given in the recent Therapeutic Courts funding. She finds incentives to be very important and hopes that the DMCJA would consider incentives in the next funding package. She requested that DMCJA include MPA in their discussions regarding funding packages concerning Therapeutic Courts.

D. Washington State Association for Justice (WSAJ)

Representative Mark O'Halloran was not present.

E. Washington State Bar Association (WSBA)

Representative Dan Clark was not present. He will be unable to attend until the December meeting.

F. Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC)

State Court Administrator Dawn Marie Rubio was not present.

G. Board for Judicial Administration (BJA)

Representative Bui reported that the Court Education Committee will be encouraging education programs to utilize live streaming to provide access to more individuals. The live streaming that was offered for a portion of the Annual Fall Conference was successful.

H. Judicial Information System (JIS)

Dexter Mejia, AOC Associate Director of the Court Services Division, reported that Pierce County District Court and Fircrest/Ruston Municipal Court have requested a delay in joining the CLJ-CMS pilot project, as they still have some processes they need to finalize with local justice partners. Dexter noted that he has heard requests for more live in-person trainings, but they've been receiving great feedback from the pilot courts about the implementation process. They will be working on a communication and outreach plan to begin sharing lessons learned and adjusting how the project team shares information with the courts, as it was a challenge for pilot courts to fully understand how the new system would work and what would need to be adjusted without seeing the actual program. In addition, Dexter reported that the integration platform project is progressing through the procurement process, with many questions submitted by vendors during the Q&A period that ended last week. The decision was made to grant an extension of the proposal submission deadline to ensure maximum participation from the vendor community, so the deadline for proposals will now be November 3. The top ranked vendors will be notified on December 4, and interviews will be scheduled for mid to late December. The team hopes to announce the apparent successful vendor on January 2. There is not currently a project start date because AOC will need to work with the successful vendor and the pilot system vendor (OCourt) to determine the timeline.

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 was not present.

D. Education Committee

Judge John H. Hart was not present.

E. Judicial Assistance Services Program (JASP)

Judge Mary Logan was not present.

F. Legislative Committee

Judge Kevin Ringus reported that many Legislative Committee members participated in the Public Outreach Committee event, You've Been Served. Melissa Johnson, DMCJA Lobbyist, has been coordinating various meetings with legislators and stakeholders, to discuss the incompetency terms proposal. Judge Ringus thanked Melissa for all of her work on behalf of DMCJA. A brief overview of the work of the committee is also available in the meeting materials today.

G. Public Outreach Committee

Judge Michelle K. Gehlsen reported that the Public Outreach Committee met last week, and that the second annual You've Been Served: A Courthouse Dialogue event was held on September 27. This year there were 13 participating courthouses, most with both district and municipal court judicial officers in attendance, and 24 legislators or their staff in attendance. Judge Gehlsen noted that this has been a very successful event, with some legislators choosing to attend both years. A survey of participants was conducted, with overall very positive comments in response, but participants did express wanting more time for discussion. Melissa Johnson remarked that You've Been Served is a great event to get many legislators together with their constituent judicial officers, and that legislators have enjoyed the in-person collaboration. Judge Gehlsen thanked the judicial officers in this meeting who hosted an event

at their courthouse. In addition, the Public Outreach Committee is working on the Law Day event in May, and will be holding monthly brown bag lunches for courthouses wanting assistance with planning their events. The Committee also manages the DMCJA Facebook page, and Judge Gehlsen asked that those who have Facebook find the DMCJA page and follow it, as all messaging on the page is very positive.

H. Rules Committee

Judge Catherine McDowall reported that the Rules Committee is currently gathering feedback from DMCJA members on any difficulties they are experiencing in implementing the new CrRLJ 7.6. The Committee will be discussing at their next meeting whether it makes more sense to host an open house to help courts interpret the rule, versus continuing to propose changes to the rule that will likely be denied by the Supreme Court Rules Committee. In addition, the Committee is waiting to see the published rules that were submitted by the Remote Proceedings Workgroup, to determine if they will submit comments.

I. Therapeutic Courts Committee

Judge Jenifer Howson reported that her courthouse participated in You've Been Served and it was a wonderful event. Judge Howson shared that Therapeutic Courts Committee recently received a presentation from Tessa Clements, Behavioral Health Supervisor at AOC, on the new therapeutic court funding and they will have an additional discussion about the WATER self-assessment at an upcoming meeting. Judge Howson reported that the Relicensing Subcommittee is currently putting together a template to help judges with their relicensing programs, plus links to resources, and they expect to have a draft prepared in the next few weeks.

ACTION

A. Legislative Committee Proposal as Submitted in Memorandum for 2024 Session

The Board moved, seconded, and passed a vote (M/S/P) to approve the proposal from the Legislative Committee.

B. Renaming the Reserves Committee, Updating Committee Charges and adding the Committee to the DMCJA Bylaws

M/S/P to refer this issue, renaming the Reserves Committee and updating its charges, and adding the Committee to the DMCJA bylaws, to the Bylaws Committee for the drafting of language for consideration at the DMCJA Annual Meeting in Spring, 2024. The memo from Judge Goodwin shall be included in the referral to Bylaws to provide additional background and recommendations.

C. Dues Policy

M/S/P to adopt the Dues Policy as written, including new dues percentage breakdowns, as available in the meeting packet.

DISCUSSION

A. Proposal from Legislative Committee re: Modernizing Competency Language

Judge Ringus provided an overview of the DMCJA legislative proposal process and shared that from all the proposals submitted this year, the Committee has narrowed down the recommendations to one – the incompetency terms proposal from Judge Finkle. The proposal requests that the term “incompetency” is replaced with “inability to proceed” and within the definition of incompetency, the terms “mental disease or defect” be changed to “mental disorder.” The Legislative Committee is now

asking the DMCJA Board to officially approve this proposal so that the committee can begin working with legislators to draft a bill.

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

B. Recommendations from Reserves Committee

Judge Goodwin shared that DMCJA will be moving to an accrual-based accounting system, and that the Reserves Committee is making several recommendations to the Board regarding changes they feel need to be implemented. A memo from Judge Karl Williams, Reserves Committee Chair, and additional documentation is available in the meeting materials today. Judge Goodwin noted that some of the recommendations can be implemented without a vote, but some will require action, including the proposed new dues policy. One item that requires additional research is changing banking institutions, so Judge Goodwin will present more information on the bank options at the next meeting of the Board.

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

INFORMATION ITEMS

Judge Smith brought the following informational items to the Board's attention:

- A. 2024 Judicial Institute Clinic Announcement and Application
- B. DMCJA Webinar – Protection Orders Made Easy
- C. Operation Safe Arrival Intro Letter

OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Attendee Information Sharing
- B. The next DMCJA Board meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 3, 2023 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. via Zoom

The meeting was adjourned at 2:56 p.m.