

**BJA Court Security Committee
November 7, 2008 Phone Conference
Meeting Minutes Draft**

Members present: Judge Steve Gonzalez, Co-chair; Judge Janis Whitener-Moberg, Co-chair; Judge Paula Casey; Judge Elizabeth Cordi-Bejarano; Ms. Suzanne Elsner; Justice Mary Fairhurst; Ms. Sonya Kraski; Ms. Fona Sugg.

Staff present: Mr. Rick Coplen; Ms. Karen Castillo

Call to Order

Judge Gonzalez called the meeting to order.

Introductions

Members present on the conference call identified themselves.

Welcome to new members

Judge Gonzalez introduced Judge Elizabeth Cordi-Bejarano, SeaTac Municipal Court, and Ms. Sonya Kraski, Snohomish County Clerk, and welcomed them both to the Committee. Each provided a brief summary of their experience with the courts.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 19, 2008 meeting were approved by consensus.

Recommendations

Mr. Coplen was asked to discuss the recommendations. He noted that a new chair is needed for the CSIRC.

Judge Whitener-Moberg said she would be willing to chair the CSIRC, but expressed concerns about her schedule. Mr. Coplen said that none of the meetings of the CSIRC will be in-person meetings. Judge Gonzalez did note, however, that, once the Incident Response Plan is developed, there will be some outreach required.

Judge Whitener-Moberg also suggested that perhaps someone on the west side of the state would be more suitable. Mr. Coplen responded that AOC staff will be available to assist, and Judge Gonzalez said that he would be more than happy to serve as one of the contact people.

Judge Gonzalez moved that the committee accept Judge Whitener-Moberg's offer to serve as Chair of the CSIRC, with a promise from the CSC of ample assistance. The members agreed by consensus.

Judge Whitener-Moberg reiterated that she does think a west side representative is needed. Judge Gonzalez responded that Judge Ramsdell had volunteered. He also said that he would like to be a member of the CSIRC, if the chair agrees. Judge Whitener-Moberg was in agreement with having Judge Gonzalez serve on the CSIRC.

Crisis Communications Plan

Mr. Coplen noted one change on page 2 under Crisis Team Notification. "Local Law Enforcement" was added as "d" on the list, with the remaining items adjusted to reflect that change. He added that this list is not prioritized according to who should be contacted first.

Judge Whitener-Moberg suggested that email addresses be provided, along with phone numbers for all the media contacts. She asked whether Wendy Ferrell has a list that we should use or if there is one email message sent to all media. Mr. Coplen replied that Ms. Ferrell's contact information is listed, and she has the capability of sending it out to all the media.

Judge Whitener-Moberg said she thinks we should list all the email addresses, and also suggested that NW Cable News be included. There was discussion about email addresses and it was decided that all email addresses would be included on the list, and blank lines included for local information. It was also suggested that email links to the administrators and presiding judges be provided.

Current Incident Report

The Committee reviewed the current Courthouse Incident Report. Judge Gonzalez informed the committee that at the Norm Maleng Justice Center there were three threats all in the same day. He said that the evacuation plans went very smoothly, but one glitch was that judges were taken out in the public area, which was not supposed to happen because they have a secure facility where judges should have been taken. He also remarked that the response by local police was very well coordinated.

Justice Fairhurst asked if the number of incidents in Pierce County Family Court had increased, noting that they seem to have a lot of incidents in that area. There was discussion about the fact that none of the courthouses are set up to keep the opposing parties separate from each other.

Justice Fairhurst expressed concern about the handling of the argument that took place in the hallway outside the courtroom in Pierce County, noting that court security simply told the people to move the discussion down the hallway, rather than really intervening.

Justice Gonzalez suggested that the Committee give Pierce County some feedback on that.

It was decided that Ms. Sugg would talk with the Court Administrator at Pierce County to communicate the concerns of the Court Security Committee and to perhaps have a discussion about the handling of such incidents.

Plan 2009 Action Items

1) *Finish Crisis Communication Plan.*

2) *Create Security Checklist.*

Judge Gonzalez reported that he is chairing the security committee for the King County Superior Court and that they are completing their security checklist, which includes several attachments. He said that it should be finalized in a month and that he'd like to present it to

the committee as a model from which the committee might create a document for broader use across the state. He said he will send it to everyone once it is finished.

3) Research other state models for legislation to protect judges' private information.

Judge Gonzalez said that the AOC in California has developed a series of programs to protect judges; they scrub the internet to see where judges' information might be available and then they clear it out. He suggested that the committee research the California model and consider whether it would be something to pursue in Washington State. He added that, in CA, judges are also allowed to register their vehicles with their court address and to use the court address for their drivers' licenses as well. He suggested that the committee consider exploring a legislative agenda (for 2010) to protect judges' private information, noting that most attacks on judges occur outside of the courthouse. Mr. Coplen commented that, if the statute were written correctly, the judges would be able to opt out. There was additional discussion and the general consensus was that it is a good idea to look at such models from other states. Mr. Coplen will contact his counterpart in California to pursue this further.

The main focus of the committee remains protecting the public to promote access to justice.

4) Pursue Security Screening Funding.

Judge Casey commented that funding for weapons screening programs is threatened throughout the state. She added that in Thurston County, the District Court may have weapons screening removed because of budget problems.

Discussion followed. It was decided to include security screening funding on the list of 2009 Action Items.

5) Develop recommendations for qualifications and training of security personnel.

Judge Cordi-Bejarano asked if there is standard training available for security personnel, to which Judge Gonzalez replied that there is none at this time, but that the King County Sheriff is working on putting that together.

After further discussion about an incident that took place in Judge Cordi-Bejarano's courthouse, Judge Gonzalez suggested that the committee consider making a recommendation on standards regarding qualification and training for security personnel – especially for those who aren't members of onsite law enforcement.

Develop 2009 Meeting Schedule

There was a review of the proposed 2009 Meeting Schedule. It was decided that the committee will hold three in-person meetings and six teleconferences. The consensus was that the first meeting in 2009 should be held in February rather than January. Most agreed that Wednesday or Thursday would be acceptable days of the week for the in-person meetings. Ms. Castillo said she will re-work the meeting schedule and provide a list to the members of optional dates and times for the meetings and teleconferences.

Judge Gonzalez asked the members if they are agreeable to changing the teleconference times for next year to 12:15 PM – 1:15 PM. There was general agreement that a start time of 12:15 PM will work better for everyone. It was also decided that the start time for the December 12 teleconference will be changed to 12:15 PM.

Other Business

Mr. Coplen commented that he continues to work on federal grants, so there is still an opportunity for grant funds from the federal government. There are published rules on how to access state security funding and how to apply for it. Security assessments are among the items for which the grant is intended.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Court Security Committee will be a teleconference on Friday, December 12, 2008 from 12:15 PM to 1:15 PM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Castillo
Administrative Assistant
AOC