

Wyoming District Judges Conference

Business Meeting

September 14, 2022

The Fall 2022 meeting of the District Judges Conference was held on September 14, 2022 at the Best Western Downtown Hotel in Casper, Wyoming. The meeting occurred in person and via the TEAMS platform. Present in person at the meeting were Judges Catherine Wilking, Josh Eames, Misha Westby, Rick Lavery, Dawnessa Snyder, Jason Conder, Tom Campbell, Suzannah Robinson, Joe Bluemel, Catherine Rogers, Dan Forgey, Scott Peasley, Peter Froelicher, Kerri Johnson, Melissa Owens, Darci Phillips, Stu Healy, Steve Sharpe, Bobbi Overfield, Matt Castano, and Mike Causey, as well as retired judges Tim Day and Nick Deegan. Present at the meeting via TEAMS was Judge James Kaste. Absent were Judges Marv Tyler and Bill Simpson.

Chairman Lavery called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Minutes of the April 29, 2022 were presented and reviewed. Judge Snyder moved to accept and Judge Froelicher seconded. The Conference approved the minutes.

Old Business

Court Reporter freelancing: This concern remained tabled at the recommendation of the Court Reporter committee.

Hay Study: While this committee had no activity to report, the Conference elected to allow the committee to remain intact as the Chief has advised the committee that additional activity should be anticipated in the near future.

JB: Judge Conder provided an explanation of the JB for the newer judges. Judge Wilking also provided a description of the background of the BJPA and the creation of the JB; announced the anticipated recommendation to change of the name of the BJPA to the Wyoming Judicial Council (WJC); and described the recommendation that an Executive Committee of the WJC be formed to relieve the Conference chairs of some of the responsibilities associated with administrative functions. Judge Wilking also shared her understanding that there likely will be a push by Court Administration to add positions to its operations in an effort to offer additional services to the branch.

Court Reporter Committee: Judge Snyder announced that the Court Reporters seek a pay increase. The Court Reporters proposed a 4-tier compensation structure based on experience/credentials but the judges who serve on this Committee rejected that proposal. The Court Reporters also seek an increase of 60 cents in their page rate as the last page rate increase occurred approximately 20 years ago. Judge Peasley moved that the Conference voice support for the Court Reporters' efforts to seek the page rate increase of 60 cents and further seek the assistance of the BJPA and/or the Supreme Court if the Court Reporters believe they need assistance in that endeavor. Judge Bluemel seconded this motion and it unanimously passed.

Legislative Liaison Committee: This committee did not have a substantive report but Judge Rogers confirmed that the committee continues to meet and attend legislative events on behalf of the Conference as necessary.

Docket Review Committee: Judge Lavery reminded those present that the first reporting period is scheduled to end 12/31/22. Members present discussed the reporting process but no action was taken.

Children's Justice Project: Judge Snyder solicited input on CJP recommendations for state statutory amendments to be discussed by the committee at its December 2022 meeting. No action was taken on this issue.

Election of Officers: Judge Campbell nominated Judge Forgey to serve as Chairman of the Conference, Judge Rogers to serve as Vice Chair of the Conference and Judge Bluemel to serve as Secretary/Treasurer of the Conference. Judge Snyder seconded the motion, which then unanimously passed. Judge Bluemel then reminded all members present that 2022/23 dues should be paid to him.

Treasurer's Report: Judge Rogers announced to those present that, due to some inaccuracies and omissions in past Treasurer's Reports, she was compelled to generate numerous revised reports for the Conference's consideration and earlier that afternoon had emailed those revised reports, as well as an original report for this 9/14/22 meeting, to all members of the Conference. Judge Bluemel moved that the revised reports as well as the original 9/14/22 reports be approved by the Conference; Judge Snyder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Banking Resolution: Judge Forgey presented a banking resolution to support the signature card transition for the newly elected officers. Judge Snyder moved for approval of the banking resolution. Judge Owens seconded the motion, which then passed unanimously.

Old Business

Private Road Rules: The Conference declined to adopt private road rules.

Judge Wilking announced that the Wyoming Supreme Court will seek funding from the Legislature to enable it to create 4 new positions in 2024.

Worker's Compensation Appeals: Members present discussed the futility of the current appellate structure but agreed not to pursue change at this time.

Full Court Enterprise calendaring: Members present addressed whether our JAs should undertake calendaring within the Full Court Enterprise program as it is believed that the Supreme Court would like to see this feature of Full Court Enterprise utilized. Judge Wilking moved that Conference members not instruct their JAs to address the calendaring feature of Full Court Enterprise at this time. Judge Healy seconded the motion, which unanimously passed.

Committee Assignments: Judge Lavery announced that a committee assignment roster was distributed to all Conference members by email.


Good of the Order

Members present then addressed the Good of the Order

Adjournment

Judge Campbell then moved to adjourn the meeting, Judge Snyder seconded the motion and members present unanimously approved the motion.

Submitted this 9 day of December, 2022.


Catherine R. Rogers
Secretary/Treasurer