

Minutes
Conference Call, April 16, 2002, 7:30 a.m.
Board of Judicial Policy and Administration

The Board of Judicial Policy and Administration met by conference call on April 16, 2002. Chief Justice Larry Lehman, Justice William Hill, Justice Bart Voigt, Judge Ed Grant, Judge Keith Kautz, Judge Jeff Donnell, Judge Rob Denhardt, Judge Frank Zebre, Judge Wade Waldrip, and Judge Scott Cole attended. Holly Hansen and Linda Burke also attended.

1. Approval of March 12, 2002 Minutes.

Judge Grant moved and Judge Waldrip seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2002, Board meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Judicial Salaries

Chief Justice Lehman reported to the Board that the lobbyists, Steve Cranfill and Rodger McDaniel, had been paid the amounts agreed upon for their lobbying services. After a brief discussion of the salary increases for the District Attorneys, Jon Forwood and Kevin Meenan, Judge Grant volunteered to follow up with Jon and Kevin about contributing to the funding of the lobbyists.

3. Judicial Compensation Commission

Chief Justice Lehman advised the Board that he believed that the Joint Judiciary Committee would be open to recommendations from the Board about the creation of a Judicial Compensation Commission. Justice Lehman offered to pull the statutory references regarding similar organizations in other states and have them available for the June meeting.

4. District Court Judge – Natrona County

Judge Kautz reported that he spoke with Nick Murdock in Casper and that the commissioners were meeting about the facilities for the new judge. Judge Kautz volunteered to present the commissioners with a suggested time line for completion of the new facilities. Judge Grant mentioned that he met with the architect, Jane Sullivan, and some of the Natrona County Commissioners and showed them around the Laramie County courthouse and courtrooms. The group expressed interest and asked a number of questions about the Laramie County facilities.

5. Judicial Retirement - Magistrates

The Board having previously heard Judge Cole's report from his conversations with the other Justices of the Peace and Tom Mann's presentation to the Board in February, Judge Donnell moved and Judge Cole seconded a motion to recommend that in counties where there is no sitting circuit court judge,

full time magistrates will participate in the State Retirement system. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Rules for Selection of Magistrates

Judge Cole advised the Board that Judges Shelledy, Jarvis, and Meier contacted him about the process to be used for selection of magistrates. Their concerns included the lack of parameters in the statute for selecting magistrates, how soon the magistrates would be selected, the CJE that would be required, and residence requirements. The Board decided that Judge Cole will work with Holly Hansen and Linda Burke to make recommendations to the Board concerning these issues.

7. Town of Manderson

Holly Hansen explained that she received an inquiry from John Worrall representing the town of Manderson asking that the Circuit Judge handle municipal proceedings. After discussing whether the Board should establish a policy or leave the decision up to individual judges, the Board agreed that Holly Hansen, Judge Denhardt, and Judge Skar would work together to draft policy language.

8. Other Matters

Judge Grant reported that he is writing thank you letters to all of the legislators who voted in support of the judicial raises. Judge Waldrip stated that he had already written his local legislators. Chief Justice Lehman advised the Board that he would send an email out to all of the judges asking them to express their gratitude to their local legislators. In addition, Judge Waldrip thought similar letters to Steve Cranfill, Rodger McDaniel, Phil Nicholas, and Jeff Wasserburger would be appropriate. Judge Grant further suggested thanking Rae Lyn Job, John Schiffer, Phil Nicholas, and his Dad.

Holly Hansen explained that, after a check of the current budgets, Supreme Court and Circuit Court employee paychecks for April, May, and June would cover the increased cost of health insurance for those covered under the State Health Insurance plan. Starting in July, the increased coverage approved by the Legislature will take effect. Holly asked the District Judges how they would prefer to handle their employees' health insurance benefits during this interim period. Judge Kautz volunteered to email the District Judges and find out their preferences.

Holly Hansen then described an inquiry she received from Jack Sundquist, an attorney from the Campbell County Attorney's Office. Sundquist requested clarification of the automation fee to be charged and whether it is to be based on a per/case or per/count basis. According to Judge Denhardt and Judge Grant, the procedure appears to vary from court to court. Justice Voigt suggested that the fee must be paid on a per/count basis to be consistent. Chief Justice Lehman stated he would send the current statutory language out to Board members for their review.

Future Board Meeting Schedule

The Board discussed the Board meeting scheduled during the September Bar Convention in Jackson. Judge Denhardt moved and Judge Grant seconded a motion to reschedule the Board's September 9 and 10, 2002 meeting for Wednesday, September 11, 2002. Motion carried unanimously.

Board Adjourned at 8:25 a.m.