

Board of Judicial Policy and Administration
Minutes
June 5, 2013

The Board of Judicial Policy and Administration met in Cheyenne on June 5, 2013. In attendance in person were Judge Tom Campbell, Judge John Perry, Joann Odendahl, Carol Thompson, and Becky Craig. Those in attendance by video conference were Judge Jeff Donnell, Judge Robert Castor, Judge Curt Haws, and Judge Wes Roberts. Chief Justice Marilyn Kite, Justice Jim Burke, Justice Michael Davis, and Ronda Munger participated by teleconference.

Old Business

Chief Justice Kite welcomed Judge Perry back to the BJPA, and noted that Judge Campbell and Judge Castor were re-elected by their conferences to the Board for another term.

Circuit Judge Retirement Age

Discussion was held about the need for a uniform retirement age to be established for the judiciary. The Board will look at the actuarial impact that various ages might have towards making a determination and will discuss this again at its December meeting.

Satellite Courts

Chief Justice Kite reported that she and Joann Odendahl traveled around the state and met with the local governments and the Circuit Judges in Fremont, Big Horn and Park Counties to discuss ways to improve the operating efficiencies of the courts. She explained to the Board that in Powell it was determined that the court will be closed two days a week; in Dubois the court will be open only one day a month, and arrangements will be made for video conferencing and for transporting the citations back and forth as necessary; and in the Fifth Judicial District the District Court Judges have agreed to the installation of recording equipment in the courtrooms, which will enable the Circuit Court Judges to use those facilities.

Joint Judiciary Meeting

Chief Justice Kite advised that the Joint Judiciary Interim Committee will be meeting in Riverton on June 27-28 and in Lusk on July 18-19. Two of the items on their agenda are jury pool selection and court reporters. Discussion was held about real-time reporting and the possibility of providing incentives for court reporters who are willing to undergo the time and expense of learning how to do this type of reporting. This topic will be discussed by the District Court Judges at their meeting in July.

Uniform Bar Examination/Wyoming State Bar

Chief Justice Kite commented that the recent administration of the bar exam went very well, and that the Board of Law Examiners was very pleased with the changes. She expressed her belief that great progress has been made in the development of a professional, consistent, and dependable bar exam.

Rule 1 Initiative

Chief Justice Kite reported that the Rule 1 Committee met on June 4th to rejuvenate the discussion of how civil litigation can proceed through the judicial system more quickly and economically. She informed the Board that the group met in Denver and had a broad ranging discussion with the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System. The Committee received a great deal of information on national initiatives, on handling domestic relations cases more efficiently, and on changes that could be made to the Rules of Civil Procedures that would encourage more effective dealings with civil cases. The Committee hopes to have a proposal for the judges and the State Bar to consider by this fall.

Wyoming Professional Assistance Program Contract

Joann reviewed the WPAP contract with the Board and noted that it has been in existence since 2007. This program provides all Wyoming judges with assistance if they are affected by a substance abuse problem. Judges can go through the program voluntarily, or can be directed by the Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics to complete the program. Joann recommended that the contract be extended from July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014 at a yearly fee of \$1,375.00. Further information will be distributed to the judges that will detail the services that this program provides. Judge Perry moved and Judge Campbell seconded a motion that the WPAP contract be extended for one year. Motion carried unanimously. Discussion was held about the need for each judicial conference to intervene at an early stage when a problem is brought to their attention. Chief Justice Kite recommended that the judicial conferences notify the BJPA of cases of this nature that they are dealing with, and that the Board should then take the responsibility for follow-up. She asked that the task of follow-up be memorialized as being a responsibility of the Board of Judicial Policy and Administration.

Legislative Planning

Chief Justice Kite asked that the members on the Board go back to their respective judicial conferences and ask for the judges' support of a unified effort to invite their area legislators to come into their courts to meet the personnel and to observe how their courts operate. If the conferences feel that this is a worthwhile idea, the Board will proceed with the organizational effort and publicity to initiate such a plan.

Judicial Council Meeting

Discussion was held about the idea of each member of the Board being responsible for giving a 10 minute presentation at the Judicial Conference in September on a problem that they have encountered on the job, and how they have resolved the difficulty. Other program topics that were suggested were advanced evidence and ethics. Ronda will contact the National Judicial College about presentations on these matters.

New Business

Miscellaneous

Discussion was held about moving up the time of the September 10th BJPA meeting from 3:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The dates for the 2014 BJPA Meetings were announced: March 12th, June 4th, September 9th, and December 3rd.

Meeting was adjourned.

Schedule of Future Meetings:

September 10, 2013 (Gillette) – New Date

December 18, 2013 (videoconference) – New Date

March 12, 2014 (videoconference)

June 4, 2014 (videoconference)

September 9, 2014 (State Bar/Judicial Council Meeting)

December 3, 2014 (videoconference)

Approved by email on August 15, 2013

The Board of Judicial Policy and Administration's meetings are not open to the public unless the Board, in its discretion, determines that a particular meeting or agenda item should be open to the public. The Board will disclose what is discussed at the meetings at its discretion.