

Minutes
Conference Call, December 18, 2002, Noon
Board of Judicial Policy and Administration

The Board of Judicial Policy and Administration met by conference call on December 18, 2002. Chief Justice William Hill, Justices Larry Lehman and Bart Voigt, Judges Ed Grant, Keith Kautz, Jim Burke, Mike Huber, Rob Denhardt, and Wade Waldrip attended. Judge David Park, Holly Hansen, and Linda Burke also attended.

Justice Hill explained that the purpose of the call was to consult with Judges Park and Sullins about the approach and timing of appointing the third judge in Natrona County. Judge Park advised the Board that Judge Sullins was unable to attend the call.

Justice Hill reported that the Board was considering: (1) meeting with the new county commissioners at the Commissioners' next meeting before appointing the third judge; (2) inviting the commissioners to the Board's March meeting in Casper before appointing the third judge; or (3) appointing the new judge immediately.

Judge Park told the Board that a meeting with the architect was scheduled on Friday, December 20, 2002, and he hoped to learn more at that time. He further explained that the city wanted to add facilities and wanted to keep the courthouse downtown. A capital facilities bond or tax had been mentioned as a means to fund new facilities.

When asked about his docket, Judge Park explained that he was currently setting trials for March, 2004, and persons requesting divorces would only be allowed four hours of the court's time. The Judge spoke of one divorce taking over eight months and being comprised of four or five sessions of four hours each. Judge Park and Judge Sullins were considering giving divorces more time, but if they did, they would have to push back the civil docket.

The Board discussed the advantages and disadvantages of waiting for facilities to appoint the third judge compared with appointing the judge without facilities. Other ideas mentioned were using other courtrooms or rooms in the city for district court proceedings, trying to schedule three judges among one and a half courtrooms, rotating the judges schedule out of the courtroom every three weeks for performing pretrial conferences, scheduling conferences, working on decision letters, and other activities that could be performed in chambers.

Justice Lehman moved and Judge Waldrip seconded a motion to authorize the Board to contact the Natrona County Commissioners to arrange having representatives from the Board appear on the Commissioners' agenda for a meeting as early in 2003 as could be arranged. Motion carried unanimously. The Board decided that Justice Lehman, and Judges Kautz and Burke would represent the Board at the Commissioners' meeting. Justice Hill volunteered to write a letter to the Commissioners to ascertain their meeting schedule.

The Board adjourned its meeting at 12:40 pm.