

District Court Judge's Conference Business Meeting
Meeting Minutes
April 24, 2026

Present:

The meeting was called to order, and roll call was taken. The meeting was chaired by Judge Snyder, attended by Judges Castano, Conder, Owens, Rogers, Phillips, Westby, Stith, McGrady, McKay, Robinson, Froelicher, Peasley, Eames, Bluemel, Kaste, and Overfield, all in person. Judges Simpson, Cooley, Healy, Johnson, Wilking, Hibben, and Causey appeared virtually.

The conference proceeded to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2025 meeting and the treasurer's financial report.

Old Business:

A new committee to address appellate exhibits, the Uniform Rules of District Court Rule 903, and the Wyoming Rules of Appellate Procedure Rule 3.01-3.05 was created. The consensus of the conference was that we would not attempt to modify those rules at this point in time.

The conference discussed committee assignments and openings. Discussion was had to replace certain judges on certain committees. Judge Owens will take over for Judge Froelicher on the HR Committee. Judge Hibben and Westby will both stay on the Forms Committee. Judge Castano will remain on the Behavioral Health Committee. Judge McKay will remain on the Education Committee. Judge Eames will step down as chair of the CJP Committee but will stay on the committee. Judge Eames will stay on the E-filing Committee. Judge Eames will step down from the Technology Committee and Judge Castano will join. Judge Conder will remain on the Legislative Relations Committee. Judge Kirven will remain on the Education Committee. Judge Overfield will remain on the Access to Justice Committee.

Judge Robinson was elected to replace Judge Bluemel on the Wyoming Judicial Council and will serve on the Executive Committee after the annual meeting in September.

Discussion was held and reminders were given regarding the policy of using the services of retired judges. The process requires an initial request to the Executive Committee. At this point there are no specific policies in place for the types of cases to be assigned to retired judges.

The Uniform Rules of District Courts Rule 102 and the conference's proposal to modify the rule was previously voted on but has not been done. An update was given that the process is moving forward and it should be changed soon.

The final topic under old business was concerns of need for assistance in the First Judicial District. Judges from the First Judicial District were asked to present their ideas about how the conference could help them address this greater case load. One specific issue identified was the number of

administrative appeals filed in the First Judicial District. There had been prior discussions about having administrative appeals go directly to the Supreme Court. Prior efforts to pursue that avenue have not been well received and were not followed up on. Other suggestions were to assign state-wide administrative appeals or cases that have state-wide effect to other judges throughout the State. Another suggestion was that every fifth administrative appeal or case would possibly go to another judge in the State on assignment. Overall, the First Judicial District agreed that they have not had issues getting other judges to help but were hoping to have a system that was a little more organized. No further action was taken on that topic.

New Business:

The Employee Compensation/HR Committee through Judge Robinson and Judge Froelicher reported on funds allocated to increase employee compensation and how that should be done. There were two suggestions, the first being to push up the percentage of compensation across the longevity of employees. Those would be broken out based on years of service. For 5 to 9 years of service there would be a 2% increase. For 10 to 14 years of service there would be a 4% increase. And for over 15 years of service there would be a 6% increase. Overall, the committee recommended this suggestion. At a minimum, all employees would get a raise of \$3,000. The conference consensus was to proceed with suggestion two if funds were allocated.

The conference also discussed Court Reporter payments for transcripts being included in their retirement benefits. Information from the Wyoming Retirement System indicated that could be a possibility. However, the State Auditor's Office said there could be an IRS issue. The overall consensus of the conference was to get an opinion from the Attorney General's Office to find out if that was a possibility. The conference designated the Court Reporter Committee to look into and further review the issue. Further discussion was held regarding whether or not this would include all transcripts that Court Reporters were compensated for, or only those that were mandatory under the statute.

Judge McGrady is working on the Audit Committee to address what to do with the discontinuation of the penny, and suggestions that finances through the legal branch be rounded up to the nearest five cents. The recommendation was that no action would be taken on the issue at this time.

Discussion was held about a communication plan or policy for high-profile cases. Judge McGrady reported on issues related to courtroom capacities and media policies. At this time, the conference has no specific policy to address this situation.

A brief report was given on Court-Appointed Counsel in juvenile courts, specifically discussing a memo submitted by Supreme Court Law Clerk Nathan Yancheck. No further action was taken.

Judge Eames reported on upcoming change to court technology and further discussed the Judicial Branch's plan to prioritize money for court technology. Requests have been made to the legislature to look at the topic of court technology to potentially obtain more funds. At this point, the Judicial Branch does not intend to change the policy, but policies may have to be changed if additional

funds are not allocated for technological resources. It was specifically discussed that the hubs primarily purchased during the COVID pandemic will be phased out in the next two years or so, as the current technology will no longer work. Discussions were held that they may be replaced with cameras. It was reported that they are doing a pilot test of cameras versus hubs in Sweetwater County.

The last topic of new business was seeking approval for the court financial administrator to reallocate funds to help cover branch-wide needs and to preserve JSA funds. Judge Kaste moved for the conference to approve this request, and it was approved.

The conference proceeded to hear committee reports and the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is set for September 16, 2026, in Casper, Wyoming.

So approved, signed and submitted.

District Court Judge's Conference Secretary/Treasurer

Bobbi Overfield