

Board of Judicial Policy and Administration
Conference Call of 03/27/01
7:00 am

A conference call with the Board of Judicial Policy and Administration was held at 7:00 am on March 27, 2001. Chief Justice Larry Lehman, Justice William Hill, Judge Gary Hartman, Judge Jeffrey Donnell, Judge Rob Denhardt, Judge Wade Waldrip, Judge Scott Cole, and Judge Frank Zebre were present on the call. Absent: Judge Bart Voigt. Holly Hansen, Ronda Munger, and Linda Burke also attended by phone.

Holly Hansen described the individuals invited to the April Board meeting, including: the Natrona and Sweetwater County Commissioner Chairmen, the County Commissioners from the seven Justice of the Peace counties, the seven Justices of the Peace, the District Judges from Sweetwater and Natrona counties, the legislators from Fremont County, and other legislators, including the Chairmen of the Joint Interim Appropriations and Judiciary Committees. The Chief suggested inviting the county attorneys from the Justice of the Peace counties, and Holly Hansen committed to inviting them also. Holly volunteered to follow up with all of the invitations by providing the agenda, time, and location to those invited.

Holly Hansen explained that she contacted the National Center of State Courts library to obtain materials to help the Board develop criteria for judges.

The Board discussed the timeframes for beginning the nominating process for a District Judge vacancy if one arises after the announcement of the new Supreme Court Justice, the Laramie County District Court Judge, and the Circuit Judges in Cheyenne And Casper. Judge Zebre moved that the Board approve a resolution to declare the above vacancies as follows: the District Judge vacancy resulting from the Supreme Court Justice announcement immediately after the Justice announcement, the Laramie County District Court Judge vacancy in mid-April, and the Circuit Court Judge vacancies later in April. Judge Donnell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Board agreed to prepared to discuss the new magistrate statutes at the April Board meeting. Holly Hansen summarized the Board's need to make three decisions at the upcoming meeting: (1) Define magistrate duties; (2) Decide how much judicial time will be allocated to each Justice of the Peace county; and (3) Agree on magistrate salary levels. Judge Waldrip warned that the statute's requirement that a lay magistrate needs to be full time may pose a problem for counties that cannot support a full time magistrate. He also mentioned the laundry list of authority passing to the circuit court because of the limitations of the magistrate duties.

Holly Hansen explained the Weighted Case Load Study was in the process of being updated and the results would be reported at the April Board meeting. She will also present the salary and benefit statistics being gathered about the current Justices of the Peace.

The Board agreed that the best strategy to determine the decrease in workload to the district courts and the increase to circuit courts when counties decide to opt into the circuit court system would be to contact the various district court clerks. Ronda Munger reported that she already spoke to Susan Artery from the Platte County District Court about this matter and the clerk estimated a 20% decrease in workload to her district court if it opted into the circuit court system. Holly Hansen volunteered to contact the district court clerks and to report the results to the Board in April.

The Board discussed travel time between courts and Holly Hansen offered to prepare a chart with the mileages between the courts in question.

The Board agreed to think about how to present its recommendations to the various Justice of the Peace counties. The ideas of preparing a report or communicating individually with the counties were suggested.

The Board further decided to refer Shauna Wilson of Northwest Bail Bonds, Inc. to the Criminal Rules Committee in care of Judge David Park. Holly Hansen will refer Ms. Wilson to Judge Park.

The Agenda was corrected to indicate dinner at Svilar's on the evening of Wednesday, April 18, 2001, at 6:30 pm. Members of the Board agreed to contribute \$5 or so for the cost of donuts each morning, and each member will be responsible to pay for his or her own dinner.

The Chief volunteered to send a copy of the Eric Alden letter to each of the Board members.

Holly Hansen reported on her meeting with Rodger McDaniel and the discussion concerning drug courts. She indicated there may be technical assistance money available to sponsor sessions focusing on drug courts. Chief Justice Lehman received a letter from Diane Galloway about a drug court panel and her request to have a Board designee participate on the panel. Rob Denhardt and Frank Zebre offered to serve on the panel.

Judges Hartman, Donnell, Denhardt, Waldrip, and Zebre remained on the conference call to discuss the scenarios for the Domestic Violence Training scheduled in June. They agreed that Scenarios #2 (Civil Protection) and #4 (Custody) would be the ones to act. Scenario #3 (Sentencing) will be the one to discuss.