

2/14/00

DISTRICT COURT DIVISION

WYOMING JUDICIAL COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING, FEBRUARY 14, 2000

The District Court Division of the Wyoming Judicial Council met at Little America, in Cheyenne, during the afternoon of February 14, 2000. Present were Judges Grant, Kalokathis, Donnell, Stebner, Ryckman, Brackley, Hartman, Price, O'Brien, Park, Kautz, Voigt, Guthrie and Rogers. Judges Troughton and Patrick made no appearance. Judge Sullins appeared to stay only long enough to eat lunch.

Tara Ackerman, from the State Attorney General's Office, explained the Juvenile Court Improvement Project. Questionnaires will be sent out for each county in the next few weeks. This survey just covers abuse/neglect cases, not CHINS or delinquency. The project is funded by a federal grant to the Wyoming Supreme Court.

Holly Hansen reviewed the JAC's recommended budget cuts. Basically, as now proposed, you will lose whatever you sought in your Expanded/Exception Budget, plus 10% out of the 200 series. The Westlaw contract is at risk. Judge Kautz will talk to Westlaw representatives to get up-to-date information

Terry Rogers reported on the Bench/Bar Committee's work with Rule 904. The Committee will recommend to the Supreme Court that the Rule be amended to provide for a three-working-day notice period.

Judge Kautz raised the issue of court reporter fees. Judge Park indicated that the previous judges and court reporters in Casper had been charging more than the statutory fee. He and Judge Sullins have put an end to it. One issue is how much to pay free lancers who replace vacationing official reporters. Jeff Donnell and Terry Rogers volunteered to meet with the court reporter's organization to come up with some solutions.

Dave Park discussed a problem that has arisen in Casper because of the conflict between Rule 46.1(f) and Rule 46.4(b), W.R.C.P., as to when, or if, a bond must be forfeited upon violation of a bond condition. The matter will be referred to the permanent rules advisory committee.

Upon Nick Kalokathis' motion, the judges voted to attempt to standardize both the forms and the courts' attitudes toward pro se divorces, both with and without children. Forms were passed out to the judges for study and implementation, after discussion with the local bars.

Keith Kautz announced that he had been approached by Holly Hansen about the possibility of presenting to the judges at this meeting new personnel policies for the district courts. Those proposed policies will soon be arriving in the mail. Dave Park stated that, to the best of his knowledge, these policies will simply state that employees are "at will." A debate ensued as to whether the Supreme Court could, or should, make rules for the district courts.

Ken Stebner raised the question of whether we should be reimbursed by the State for the annual dues we pay to this organization. Some judges are "vouchering" the dues, while others are not. Since some have already vouchered this year's payment, it was agreed that, in the future, these fees would be paid privately, and not vouchered back to the State.

At Hunter Patrick's request, Judge Kautz asked that Hunter be selected once again to serve on the Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics. He was selected unanimously to remain at that post for another period. (Note: after the meeting, Hunter informed Keith that, typically, the district judge serves two terms on this commission, and that selection is on the basis of seniority. Nick Kalokathis was next in line, but stepped aside for Hunter to serve, so that both Nick and Ed Grant would not be on the commission at the same time.)

DATED February 23, 2000


Barton R. Voigt