

Wyoming Court Security Commission

Minutes

May 22, 2019

The Wyoming Court Security Commission met on May 22, 2019. Wyoming Court Security Commission members in attendance via personal appearance, video or phone were: Deputy Director Leland Christensen, Justice Keith Kautz, Judge Marv Tyler, Judge Wes Roberts, Representative Jared Olsen, Commissioner Mike Colling, Director Steve Woodson, County Attorney Daniel Erramouspe, and Sheriff Scott Matheny. Supreme Court personnel Ronda Munger, Joe Hartigan and Becky Craig also attended.

Call to Order – Deputy Director Christensen, Chairman

Leland Christensen, Deputy Director of the Office of Homeland Security, opened the meeting. He welcomed and thanked the members for attending.

Wyoming Court Security Commission Chairman

Deputy Director Christensen gave a brief history of the people who have held the position of chairman of the Wyoming Court Security Commission. He pointed out that the staffing for the commission in the past has rotated between the Wyoming Office of Homeland Security and the Wyoming Supreme Court according to who is chairing the commission. Wyoming Statute 5-11-101(f) states that “The supreme court shall provide necessary administrative support for the commission.” Deputy Director Christensen commented that due to the challenges that are created when the chairman position is held by someone outside of the supreme court, but the staffing is provided by the supreme court, past chairmen have used their own staff for the sake of convenience. He advised that he reached out and confirmed with the supreme court that they too feel that when the chairman doesn’t work where the staff is located, it becomes unwieldly and cumbersome to effectively carry on the work of the commission. Deputy Director Christensen suggested to the members that the position of chairman be rotated back to the supreme court and that Justice Kautz be appointed to that position. Justice Kautz responded that he would agree to serve as chairman. Justice Kautz commented that there is no clear direction in the statutes as to who chairs the commission or how the designation is made. He has looked more to the historical precedent and the practicality of having the chairman and the staffing in close proximity. Judge Roberts moved, seconded by Commissioner Colling, to appoint Justice Kautz as Chairman of the Wyoming Court Security Commission. The motion passed unanimously. Sheriff Matheny moved, seconded by Commissioner Colling, to appoint Leland Christensen as Vice-Chairman of the Wyoming Court Security Commission. The motion passed unanimously.

Deputy Director Christensen thanked the commission members and said he was honored to have served as chairman—even if only for 15 minutes. He turned the meeting over to Justice Kautz. Justice Kautz expressed his thanks and commented that he will propose to Chief Justice Davis that an order be entered appointing the chairman, vice-chairman and members of the commission.

Approve Minutes of June 26, 2018 Meeting

Justice Kautz addressed the next order of business on the agenda: approval of the minutes from the June 26, 2018 meeting. He asked for comments, additions, corrections or changes. There being none, Judge Tyler moved, seconded by Commissioner Colling, to approve the June 26, 2018 minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

2018 Legislative Appropriation (\$400,000) – Update on Grant Awards + Additional Requests

Ronda Munger delivered a report on the distribution of the Legislature's \$400,000 appropriation that was put into the Supreme Court's budget in 2018. She explained the grant process for the seven (7) counties that were offered and carried through with submission of their applications for the funds: Carbon, Converse, Hot Springs, Lincoln, Sheridan, Uinta and Washakie. Ronda reported that of the \$387,500 that were granted to these counties, the court has paid out just over \$64,000 in reimbursements of expenditures to date. An additional request for reimbursement is expected from Converse County in a few days; they have completed their projects. (Ronda added that even better news is that Carbon County's grant monies served as seed money for a much bigger project. A bond initiative that recently passed in that county for infrastructure improvements (a 6th Penny Tax) will allocate 18 million dollars to consolidating the offices that deal with criminal justice functions into the existing courthouse—thereby creating a justice center—and consolidating the county's administrative offices into the existing Carbon Building.) Once the authorized grant reimbursement requests for the \$400,000 appropriation are processed, there will be a remaining balance of \$12,500.00. Five (5) requests were received after notification was sent to the local court security management committees about the remaining funds being opened up to all the counties. Requests were received from the following counties: Albany \$8,550; Crook \$7,107; Goshen \$9,545; Teton \$5,243; and Washakie \$15,988. Lengthy discussion was held about the grant requests. Judge Tyler moved, seconded by Judge Roberts, that the remaining \$12,500.00 in grant funds be awarded to Washakie County since their request was supported by a courthouse security assessment that was conducted in 2016. The motion passed unanimously. Ronda will prepare the paperwork that will award \$12,500 in funds to Washakie County, and she will notify the county commissioners that they can move forward with their project.

Next Steps:

July 1, 2019 Deadline for Local Court Security Committee Reports

Ronda advised the commission that Joe Hartigan, the Court Security Officer for the Wyoming Supreme Court, will be sending email reminders to each county's local court security management committee to submit their annual report by July 1, 2019.

September 1, 2018 WCSC Annual Report

Ronda reminded the commission members that the Wyoming Court Security Commission's annual report to the Joint Appropriations, the Joint Judiciary, the Governor and the Chief Justice is due September 1, 2019. The report will largely be based on the annual reports of the local court security management committees and will also contain a discussion of the status of the \$400,000 grant monies the legislature provided in 2018.

Action Items

An open conversation was held among the members as to what the commission has done well and what it needs to work on in the future. Lengthy discussion was held about the actions the commission should take in the next year that will bring awareness in the state to the need for courthouse security.

Justice Kautz reviewed the suggestions that were made during this portion of the meeting:

- Move the location of the two (2) meetings per year that the commission is required to hold to various locations around the state;
- Schedule routine site visits across the state and emphasize the importance of consistent activity by each county's local court security management committee;
- Review the standards and consider creating a self-audit standard;
- Explore alternative methods of conducting assessments;
- Investigate options for creating a permanent revenue stream for court security;
- Establish a routine method of sharing the incident reports among the commission members;
- At the August 2019 meeting, review the July 1st Annual Reports, discuss them, and if possible, ascertain if the counties' needs can be prioritized from those reports; if not, include in the report forms the information that will enable the commission to do so; and
- Consider formally appointing the chairman, vice-chairman and members of the Wyoming Court Security Commission by Order of the Supreme Court. Consider creating rules for the commission within the framework of W.S. 5-11-101.

Next Meeting – Justice Keith Kautz, Chairman

The next meeting date will be August 14, 2019, at 10:00 a.m. in Riverton, Wyoming.

Meeting Adjourned

Actions Taken:

1. Justice Kautz was nominated and approved by the members as Chairman of the Wyoming Court Security Commission; Leland Christensen was nominated and approved by the members as Vice-Chairman of the Wyoming Court Security Commission.
2. The commission approved the minutes from its June 26, 2018, meeting.
3. The remaining \$12,500 in court security grant funds were awarded to Washakie County.

Action Items:

1. Justice Kautz will propose to Chief Justice Davis that an order be entered appointing the chairman, vice-chairman and members of this commission, and that operating rules be created for the commission.
2. Ronda will prepare the paperwork that will award the remaining \$12,500 in court security grant funds to Washakie County and will notify the county commissioners that they can move forward with their project.
3. Joe Hartigan, the Court Security Officer for the Wyoming Supreme Court, will email reminders to each county's local court security management committee to submit their annual reports by July 1, 2019.