

Access to Justice Commission  
Minutes  
February 10, 2009

The Access to Justice Commission met by conference call on February 10, 2009. In attendance were Justice Jim Burke, Justice Marilyn Kite, Judge Wes Roberts, Judge Tim Day, Gen Tuma, Rick Lavery, Denise Burke, Sleeter Dover, Leigh Anne Manlove, Dona Playton, Amanda Roberts, Dan Fleck, and Ronda Munger.

**Bylaws**

Justice Burke opened the meeting by thanking the bylaws subcommittee for their work on the draft of the bylaws. Rick Lavery spent a considerable amount of time going over the draft bylaws and highlighted some of the sections and thinking of the subcommittee. There were several suggestions made for changes. The following are some of the areas discussed: it was requested that language be added to make clear whether individuals that filled the end of a partial term were treated as if they had served an entire term; there was some discussion regarding whether or not it was necessary to have a section devoted to the removal of a member; whether or not the annual meeting should be in January, or another month that has better travel weather; it was suggested that the mission statement was too bold; discussion on whether or not the person on the Joint Judiciary would have to declare a conflict if we were requesting state funds; and the Commission also discussed the need to change the name of the Tribal Court in Article II, section 2. Ronda Munger requested the Commission submit changes to her by email, and she will then compile them into one document for distribution at the meeting on February 27th.

**Initial Face-to-Face Meeting of the Commission**

Justice Burke led a discussion regarding the agenda for the meeting on February 27th. He detailed his conversations with Bob Echols and Meredith McBurney. Bob and Meredith believe a substantial amount of the meeting on the 27th may need to be focused on getting a permanent provider in Wyoming. The Commission discussed whether it would be better to help provide one viable candidate, or whether it should spend its energies finding more entities willing to apply for the grant funds. The Commission also discussed whether or not it would be possible to slow down the federal granting process, or whether or not the LSC grant has to be for three years. Justice Kite suggested the Commission should focus its energies on getting a viable permanent provider with a strong Board for oversight. She also suggested an incremental approach to the problem - meaning the Commission may have to take small steps to first get a legal services provider in place and then focus on getting additional funding. Rick Lavery suggested assessing what we have now, figuring out what we are missing and what is lacking, and then providing solutions to make up the difference. Justice Burke reminded the Commission that there is an immediate need to find a solution to the civil legal services question for Wyoming - in light of the fact that there was a substantial unmet legal need prior to the collapse of WLS, the situation is even more dire now. He also reminded the Commission that in the end, the goals of the Commission are two fold: 1) provide civil legal services for the poor; and 2) under the guidance of Rule 1, WRCivP look to determine if changes in business practices could improve access for the poor. Justice Burke raised questions regarding many aspects of the Commission structure: can it hire

an executive director; will it ever receive funds as an entity and make grants; can grant funds be used to pay an executive director. These questions and many more issues will be discussed at the next meeting.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Access to Justice Commission (AJC) will be an in-person meeting, February 27, 2009, at the Wyoming Supreme Court Building, Room 237, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.