

DISTRICT JUDGES' CONFERENCE
December 13 and 14, 2007
Casper, Wyoming

Minutes

A meeting of the District Judges' Conference was held on December 13 and 14, 2007, in Casper. The following judges attended: Donnell, Waldrip, Sanderson, James, Fenn, Hartman, Cranfill, Price, Perry, Deegan, Sullins, Park, Skavdahl, Brooks and Young.

Judge Sanderson chaired the meeting which began at 1:15 p.m. on December 13, 2007.

The following occurred:

1. Approval of Minutes. Judge Waldrip moved to approve the minutes from the September 11, 2007 meeting in Jackson. The motion was seconded by Judge Donnell and passed.

2. Legislative Issues. There was a general discussion about the role of district judges regarding legislative issues, including the difference between educating legislators and taking a position on policy matters. There was a general consensus that it is important for district judges to present a united front whenever possible and to utilize the Board of Judicial Policy and Administration.

3. Retirement and Salary Bills. Judges Donnell and Waldrip led a discussion about the retirement and salary bills. After discussing the history of the legislation and the merits of different versions of the bills, there was a discussion about hiring a lobbyist. Judge Skavdahl moved that the district judges not hire a lobbyist for the coming legislative session. The motion was seconded by Judge Brooks and passed.

4. Court Reporters. Judge Sanderson reported that court reporters may be attempting the change their status as "at will" employees under W.S. § 5-3-402. Judge Donnell advised that the BJPA recommendation is to repeal the "for cause" provision.

5. Juvenile Code. Judge Sanderson led a discussion about provisions in the juvenile code regarding jury trials and the 60/90 day speedy trial rule. Judge Waldrip moved to support an effort to eliminate jury trials in juvenile cases. The motion was seconded by Judge Sullins and unanimously passed. There was a general consensus that speedy disposition time limits in juvenile cases should be expanded and that the language "as justice requires" should be added to the appropriate statutes.

6. General Discussion. There followed a general discussion about issues including the creation of a juvenile and family court, use of court commissioners, the Children's Justice Project, change of name statutes, increased sentences in DUI cases, sexual intrusion definitions, putting the GAL program under the direction of the Public Defender's office, submitting district court budgets through the Supreme Court, wireless computer capability, mental health treatment for juveniles, Title 25 actions and State Hospital issues. A committee consisting of Judges Sanderson, Fenn and Young was established to explore possible legislation to expand the authority of court commissioners.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8:30 a.m. on December 14, 2007.

7. Legislative Discussion. Senator Ross and Representative Buchanan met with the Conference. There was a discussion about modernization of court procedures and changing the length of parole to give inmates incentives to take advantage of rehabilitative programs and enhance their chances of success on parole. Juvenile justice issues such as diversion, early intervention, single point of entry and community juvenile service boards were discussed as possible improvements to the current system, with the ultimate goal being to define a continuum of services within each community. Other general juvenile issues discussed were consistency, measuring outcomes and the need to accommodate local differences.

The availability of jury trials in juvenile cases and the 60/90 day rule were discussed and it was noted that DFS cannot show that the 60/90 day requirement is a predicate to federal funding. A suggestion was made to have those time limits start on the date of initial appearance rather than date of filing. This would insure timeliness and also be consistent with time computation in criminal cases.

Judge Sanderson initiated a discussion about mental health issues and the lack of local services. He expressed an interest in using resources in Utah.

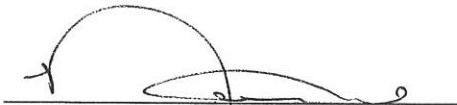
There was a general discussion about court security, judicial retirement and an additional district judge in Sublette County.

8. Meeting with Governor Freudenthal. The Governor initiated a discussion about family courts and problem-solving courts and noted that there is no consensus about those issues and many other issues involving juvenile justice. Judge Hartman reported about his family court in Basin and noted that he wants to expand it to Washakie and Hot Springs counties. The judges

reviewed the resolution of district judges regarding problem-solving courts adopted approximately two years ago. Judge Young moved that the resolution be reaffirmed. The motion was seconded by Judge Perry and passed.

9. General Discussion. Judge Sanderson led the group in a discussion regarding the weighted caseload study and Judge Fenn addressed juvenile justice tracking issues such as monetary allocations, time of filing the predisposition report and identification of and notice to other family members. The group discussed options for the April, 2008 meeting with Fremont County being identified as a possible location.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nena James', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping arch at the beginning and a long, horizontal tail that ends in a small loop.

Nena James
Secretary/Treasurer