

CONFERENCE OF CIRCUIT COURT ADMINISTRATORS MEETING

**Minutes
May 31, 2016**

Conference Members Present:

Jennifer Keiser (Chair)

Timothy Sheridan (Vice-Chair)

Matthew Barrett

Sondra Battle

Barbara Domer

Doug Hofstedt

Melissa Johnson

Susan Leary

Stephanie Medina

Cherie Meienschein

Eunice Plank

Judy Rupp

Anne SanGiovanni

Marilyn Saulsbury

Teri Scherer

Roberta Warnken

Deborah Zrioka

Administrative Office of the Courts:

Pamela Harris

Faye Matthews

Lynne Wheeler

Others present:

Connie Hurley for Bobbie Warnken

Judy Lohman

A meeting of the Conference of Circuit Court Administrators was held on May 31, 2016, at the Judiciary Education & Conference Center, beginning at 10:00 AM. Jennifer Keiser began the meeting by welcoming everyone. She called for approval of the minutes from the March 29, 2016 meeting, and received a motion from Marilyn Saulsbury. The motion to approve was seconded by Barbara Domer and passed. Barb introduced her replacement, Judy Lohman, to the Conference members, and each member introduced themselves to Judy.

NEW CONNECT MATRIX UPDATE – *Lee Robinson/Melinda Jensen/Andrew Beck*

- A form is being developed to be completed any time there are updates to the matrix, adding or removing POI's.
- The POI Maintenance Request form is available on the Manager Self-Service tab. This is what is used to add or remove POI's. Legal names must be used for the POI's. Once the forms are submitted, and has gone through the approval process and been routed through the system, an email notification will be sent.
- The main portal will contain links to the matrices.

- People will need to make sure there is at least one name listed in the box as a back-up. Two names would be preferable.
- County and City employees are referred to POI's. It is crucial that this list is accurate, so each Court Administrator will need to monitor closely to make sure it is up to date. Each POI must also have a phone number to be included in the directory.
- INSIGHTS is the new tool on the menu to enable visual reporting.
- Andrew demonstrated for the Conference how to perform a wildcard search, by pressing % and Enter.
- There is not much information in CONNECT for POI's, so as much information as possible would be helpful for all who access it.
- Lee Robinson offered to send HR employees for site visits to lend assistance where needed
- QUESTIONS/CONCERNS:
 - Does everyone have access to the matrix now? The answer was yes.
 - Will the matrix be available without the HR dashboard? Yes.
 - No one has been able to successfully register anyone yet. There are still issues with error messages and routing.
 - Some members do not have links on their CONNECT menus. Andrew said he would talk to the security team, and Mindy said they would address all issues in the next email communication.

HIGH PROFILE TRIALS IN BALTIMORE CITY – *Stephanie Medina*

- Preparation
 - Several meetings were held, to discuss logistics, handling of media advisories, etc. Trial coordination meetings were also held with law enforcement, the mayor's Office of Emergency Management, Baltimore City DOT, and Judge Pierson.
 - CourtSmart equipment and technology were adjusted to ensure that everyone could hear the proceedings.
- Media Advisories
 - The court worked with the Office of Communications and Public Affairs to post the advisories on the website.
- Media
 - A media room had to be defined. This was accomplished in the old canteen area of Courthouse East. This allowed them the space to set up their equipment.
- Security
 - All cameras were outside. They could leave the courtroom to tweet, email, etc., in their designated media area, but could not use cell phones in the courtroom or in the hallway near the courtrooms. They brought their own equipment, including sources of Wi-Fi.
 - Court employees entered the building from one side, while everyone else entered on the other.
 - Restrictions were in place regarding size of bags permitted in the courtroom, as well as inappropriate clothing.
 - Special seating arrangements were made in the courtroom. One seat was provided per media outlet, on a first come-first serve basis. A ticket system was utilized for the first trial, but it was not the most efficient method.

- A sheriff was posted at the media room to ensure that the media did not sneak in people for interviews. All interviews were required to take place outside of the courtroom, in a staged area.
- An advisory from Judge Pierson was sent to employees, in addition to media protocol, outlining employees' liberty to speak and communicate case information.
- Police and Office of Communications & Public Affairs sent intel regarding public demonstrations. Judge Pierson then notified court employees via email. The monument area at Calvert St was blocked off, as well.
- A stronger presence of sheriffs was established mostly on the 2nd floor, but also throughout the entire courthouse.
- Half of the courtroom seating was reserved for the media, and the other half was used for family members, interested parties, and the public. No cell phones were allowed, and there were typically 4 bailiffs/sheriffs to monitor. Two lines were used, and when there were no more seats left, an overflow room was used, which had a TV on which people could watch the trial. People could only leave the courtroom when there was a recess.
- All phone inquiries to judges were funneled through the Communications office at AOC, mostly handled by Angelita Plemmer-Williams and Terri Charles. Judges answered questions indirectly through them.
- Jury
 - An anonymous jury was selected. The selection process took place at Mitchell Courthouse, not in Courthouse East.
 - Lunch was provided for the jurors every day. The lunches were tracked, and the City reimbursed for any other costs.
 - Jury transport was handled by the sheriffs' office. Jurors parked in a different location each day, were picked up and dropped off, and exited through the judges' garage.
- TAKE-AWAYS:
 - It was stressful, but it was a good learning experience. Lessons were learned that can be applied in the future and will make a positive difference. The most challenging part was creating a balance between this and the other everyday tasks of people's jobs.
 - A new relationship was developed with the sheriffs' office. There were still issues, but they did their part working alongside the court during such a stressful time.

CHANGES TO CASE TIME STANDARDS – *Tim Sheridan/Jenn Keiser*

- All requests and/or suggestions are at least considered.
- The only change at circuit courts this year is that foreclosures will be 24 months, with 98% of them most likely being disposed of within 24 months of filing. This will be retroactive, so it will be in effect for this year. It will be listed on a separate line from civil cases.
- There are no changes to appellate courts.
- Two changes will be made at the District Court level:
 - Payable traffic case time standards
 - Rule 3-507: The recommendation to change to 6-month cutoff for lack of service has been referred to the Rules Committee.

JOINT CONFERENCE UPDATES – Jenn Keiser

- Hotel room reservations have been submitted, and the list for dinner at Annie’s is being finalized.
- Presentations have been lined up, to include:
 - Legislative update from AG’s office
 - COOP for Baltimore City fire
 - Team building exercise
 - Mark Bittner from JIS
 - Lou Gieszl with Strategic Plan
 - Pam Ortiz with Access to Justice initiatives
 - Jamie Walter with DCM updates
 - “The Doctor Is In”

OTHER BUSINESS

- State of the Court Reports
 - The committee presented to the Judicial Council with large printed report containing recommendations. It requires further review by the Council.
- Eunice – Transgender bathrooms in courthouses? Has anyone implemented this?
 - Jenn Keiser – Two one-stall bathrooms have been converted to unisex.
 - Anne SanGiovanni – All bathrooms (5 total) have been converted to unisex.
 - Faye Matthews – There is a current employee who underwent the transition and now uses the women’s bathroom with no problems.
- Stephanie – Attorneys with wheelchairs?
 - The design of courtrooms is an issue. There has to be a microphone tied in that will record their voice, but block out other noise.
- Matt – Magistrates’ salaries
 - Tim Sheridan explained that magistrates will be paid 90% of a District Court judges’ salary. An official communication with additional details will be emailed soon, to come from Allen Clark.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

- ❖ **JUDICIAL COUNCIL – Jenn Keiser/Tim Sheridan**
 - The April meeting involved delegations from other countries.
 - The May meeting addressed the State of the Court Reports.
- ❖ **CONFERENCE OF CIRCUIT JUDGES – Jenn Keiser**
 - The Child Support Enforcement Agency is implementing the “Pay Near Me” pilot program soon. They are waiting for approval. A convenience fee of some amount will be charged.
 - The Medical Malpractice Subcommittee’s recommendations were not received well by most judges. They will take those concerns back and work on them more.
- ❖ **CONFERENCE OF CIRCUIT COURT CLERKS – Tim Sheridan**
 - No meeting has occurred since the last CCCA meeting.

- ❖ **COURT TECHNOLOGY – *Matthew Barrett***
 - A special subcommittee of the Rules Committee has been created to address video conferencing. They will most likely begin with civil cases, then move to other case types. The goal is to bring all counties on board with JIS equipment, knowing that Baltimore County is different due to their lack of JIS video conferencing presence.

- ❖ **COURT ACCESS – *Barb Domer***
 - The approved minutes were sent out. A meeting is scheduled for next week, and Judy Lohman will be attending.

- ❖ **SPECIALTY COURTS & DOCKETS – *Judy Rupp***
 - No update.

- ❖ **ADR – *Tim Sheridan***
 - There is a symposium scheduled to take place at University of MD in Baltimore on June 2nd.

- ❖ **RETIRED/RECALLED JUDGES**
 - No update provided.

- ❖ **COURT OPERATIONS – *Sandy Smith***
 - No update provided.

- ❖ **JURY USE – *Anne SanGiovanni***
 - The next meeting is scheduled for September 8th.

- ❖ **CASE MANAGEMENT – *Tim Sheridan and Jenn Keiser***
 - Update was provided as a prior agenda item.

- ❖ **COURT EQUITY – *Stephanie Medina***
 - They met on the day the fire occurred, so she was unable to attend.

- ❖ **FORMS – *Doug Hofstedt***
 - The next mark-up meeting will take place on June 8th.

- ❖ **COURT REPORTING WORKGROUP – *Teri Scherer***
 - Nothing to report.

- ❖ **GRANTS ADVISORY WORKGROUP – *Sondra Battle***
 - They have not yet met.

- ❖ **RECORDS RETENTION WORKGROUP – *Jenn Keiser***
 - They are still working on recommendations for edits to the current retention policy.

- ❖ **EDUCATION**
 - Judy Lohman has been placed on the subcommittee. Melissa Johnson had volunteered, but has not heard anything yet.
 - The May meeting of Technology Training has been canceled. They are looking for a date in June.