



Judicial Council of Georgia

Court Fee Committee

Minutes of Meeting on December 8, 2004 at 1:30 p.m.
5th Floor Conference Room, Supreme Court of Georgia
Atlanta, Georgia

Members present:

Judge Hugh W. Stone	Chair
Ms. Elizabeth Blackwell	Clerk, Gwinnett County Recorder's Court
Mr. Carlton W. Blair, Jr.	Clerk/Court Administrator
Judge Edward E. Carriere, Jr.	Dekalb County State Court
Ms. Sherri Lanford	Clerk, Probate Court of Bibb County
Judge Robin W. Shearer	/Clerk, Clarke County Juvenile Court
Ms. Carolyn Sullivan,	Clerk, Superior Court of Houston County
Mr. P. Vinson Harris	Associate Director for Administration (AOC)
Mr. Bob Bray	Assistant Director, Court Business and Process

The chair also acknowledged the following guests who attended the meeting:
Director David Ratley, Kevin Tolmich, Steve Nevels, and Greg Arnold of the AOC.

Judge Hugh W. Stone opened the meeting at 1:30 p.m. he introduced himself, welcomed everyone, and asked everyone present to introduce him or herself.

Judge Stone shared Chief Justice Fletcher's input by reading a letter he received. Each committee member had also received a copy of the letter. Judge Stone explained that the committee's objective for today is to search for a mission statement, set goals, and give feedback on the status of court fees to the Judicial Council. Judge Stone asked Mr. Harris for further clarification of why the committee was developed.

Mr. Harris verbalized the background of HB869, which turned into HB1EX. He summarized by saying he is glad there is a Judicial Council committee looking at the court fee issue. The goal is to come up with recommendations to submit to the legislature. In addition, as a result of this court fee committee I am hopeful that you will recommend ways to make the Judicial Branch run smoother overall. Mr. Bray was also asked for his input, he began by reading a poem, he then gave an in-depth overview of court fees, the many significant issues involved and how we got to where we are today. Mr. Bray concluded his input saying it is much more than just about fees, as a group we must determine what the mission will be; if we are not alert, we will be following the parade instead of leading. It was determined that a copy to the committee members would be helpful in determining their focus. A copy of his poem and overview is attached.

New Business: The following issues were discussed:

Mission statement and goals; after the group had a great deal of discussion on how monies is collected and compatibility verses capability of following procedures for the

calculation of these monies per HB 1EX. Judge Stone said that it was time to determine where the committee wants to go, what task should be addressed and what we really need to be concentrating on at this time. He then appointed the following persons to a sub-committee to develop a Mission statement that will support what the court fee committee want to do and how it would be implemented.

The members are Ms. Libby Blackwell, chairperson, Mr. Carlton W. Blair, Jr., Judge Stefani Searcy and Ms. Carolyn Sullivan. Mr. Bray will give the committee some guidance and support.

It was decided that Robert's rules of order would not be followed since the committee is so small, they can simply make a motion and base results on consensus. Meeting minutes will be posted on the web site within 14 days. Mr. Bray will email the email addresses and Judicial Council Court Fee Committee web site information to each member.

Judge Stone felt it would be more efficient to schedule meetings quarterly, the dates are as follows: February 25, 2005, May 26, 2005, August 25, 2005, and December 1, 2005. The February meeting will allow for a travel day for those driving to this meeting in Savannah, Mr. Harris has accepted the responsibility of securing the facilities. Locations for the remainder of the meetings will be determined later.

Judge Stone pointed out that additional subcommittee appointments were not needed until a mission statement has been established and it is determined what needs to be done. Mr. Bray said his staff can assist with field reports, Judge Stone accepted the responsibility for interpretations, and he will be looking at how the Authority is interpreting things. Mr. Bray said the GSCCCA Rules and Regulations need to be examined and their interpretation on court cost need to be analyzed. Ms. Sullivan agreed that there is a need to examine the Rules and Regulations because she was a part of the GSCCCA committee and they were rushed through the process. The AOC was appointed to do research.

Judge Carriere was appointed to report the results of today's court fee meeting to the Judicial Council on Friday, December 10, 2004.

Judge Stone and Mr. Bray will be attending the GSCCCA special meeting on Friday December 10, 2004.

Next meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2005, in Savannah, Georgia, committee members will be notified of facility location and an agenda will be forthcoming.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vi Farness
December 10, 2004

Attachments: Court fee poem
Mr. Bray's Court fee presentation