Agenda Court Interpreter Committee

January 25, 2008 12:00 to 1:30 p.m.

Administrative Office of the Courts Scott M. Matheson Courthouse 450 South State Street Judicial Council Room, Suite N31

Recognition of Judge Lynn Davis		Chief Justice Christine Durham
Approval of minutes	Tab 1	Judge Lynn Davis
Scheduling court interpreters		Rosa Oakes
Ethics question	Tab 2	Luther Gaylord
Rule 3-306 amendments	Tab 3	Tim Shea
Case law update		Judge Lynn Davis

Committee Web Page: http://www.utcourts.gov/committees/CourtInterpreter/

Meeting Schedule: Matheson Courthouse, 12:00 to 1:30, Judicial Council Room

March 28, 2008 May 30, 2008 July 25, 2008 September 26, 2008 November 21, 2008

Tab 1

COURT INTERPRETER COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

November16, 2007 Matheson Courthouse Salt Lake City, Utah

Members Present: Hon. Lynn Davis, Chair; Evangelina Burrows; Luther Gaylord; Peggy Gentles; Daryl Hague; Craig Johnson; Deborah Kreeck Mendez; Hon. Karlin Myers; Dinorah Padro; Carolyn Smitherman.

Members Excused: Hon. Frederic M. Oddone; Branden Putnam; Brikena Ribaj.

Guest: Jennifer Storrer; Grant Anderson; Rachel Webb

Staff Present: Rosa Oakes; Marianne O'Brien; Carolyn Carpenter

Welcome & Minutes

Judge Davis welcomed all present. A motion by Craig Johnson to approve the minutes as prepared, was seconded, and carried unanimously.

Recoupment of Interpreter Fees

Judge Davis distributed a copy of an opinion from Brent Johnson on assessing court interpreter fees. At the last committee meeting, there was a motion that Judge Davis send an email to all judges apprising them of Mr. Johnson's opinion. He made a presentation to the Judicial Council a few days ago where considerable time was spent on the interpreter fee issue. The Judicial Council agreed with the first paragraph as it relates to the issue of due process, regardless of the rule that allows costs to be assessed. There was some question about whether this will come back before the Judicial Council for modification of Rule 3-306.

Deborah Kreeck Mendez sent Mr. Johnson's opinion to the criminal defense bar, and several made arguments on the due process issue. The overwhelming response was fees were usually assessed on unrepresented persons. Represented people do not pay for interpreters. Several justice courts were identified as assessing fees only to the unrepresented litigants.

Judge Davis stated that after the presentation to the Judicial Council, Tim Shea emailed him to request that a law clerk be asked to look at the document, focusing primarily on Utah cases, which was done. Based on that, Mr. Shea prepared a modified email that would go to all judges statewide. Judge Davis distributed a copy of that email to the group.

Discussion ensued after the group read the email.

Judge Myers said smaller, rural courts must meet weekly with local government where the budget is discussed. He asked if it is known why interpreter fees are being assessed in justice courts. Is it because the mayor or county commissioners requested the fees be collected? Judge Davis responded he does not know what the directive might be or if economic pressure is being placed on judges either by the municipality or the county government. He asked Judge Myers if he has a sense of how often fees are imposed. Judge Myers responded he imposes them in every case.

Ms. Kreek-Mendez asked if anyone can go to jail for not paying the fee. Judge Myers responded he does not send anyone to jail. Ms. Kreeck-Mendez stated she is aware that in some courts, some people are going to jail for not paying the interpreter fees. Many are not represented, and are non-English speaking and uneducated. Perhaps justice courts should be helped financially to prevent this from impacting people who are unable to pay the fee, or who choose not to use an interpreter because they cannot afford the fee. Some people will pretend they do not need an interpreter when they do, or will go to jail because they do not pay the fee.

Jennifer Storrer added that there is also a risk that people will bring their own interpreter, someone who is not qualified to interpret.

Professor Hague suggested perhaps what this committee should be doing is recommending that the definition of costs no longer include payment of interpreter fees, and then see if a way can be found to help pay the fees.

Judge Davis put forth some options:

1. Rather than send the directive out to judges, send it to the Board of Justice Court Judges for discussion.

2. Make a recommendation to the Policy and Planning Committee regarding application of the rule itself.

3. Disseminate the letter but put the issue back on the agenda for the next committee meeting and have someone from the Justice Court Board attend.

4. Have Tim Shea address it again.

Ms. Kreeck-Mendez suggested it may be smoother if it was sent to the Board of Justice Court Judges for discussion and comments.

Peggy Gentles expressed that though the committee can be sympathetic to the concerns of the localities that are supporting justice courts, it does not change the fact that the fees should not be assessed. The fact that it causes problems for justice courts is understandable, and institutionally, perhaps it needs to be decided this is the cost of having a justice court in a community. It should not go to the Board of Justice Court Judges with the implication that if they feel it is too painful to them, it will not be changed.

Judge Davis reiterated that it is a due process, constitutional issue.

Ms. Gentles stated that if it is clear the judges cannot assess it, judges would not have to engage in conversation with the local funding agencies when there is concern from local governments about why the fees are not being collected.

Judge Davis expressed that justice court judges could tell cities or counties that it is a due process issue and judges who violate it may be subject to civil rights claims. Judge Myers asked if the statute includes allowable interpreter fee assessments, and if so, it cannot be stopped from occurring until that is changed. Judge Davis stated that as a due process issue, it overrides or trumps the language of the state statute.

Ms. Gentles noted the justice courts are in a difficult position if they receive the email saying they may be violating someone's due process rights when there is something in the statute that allows it. The Judicial Council is concerned about it, and perhaps a housekeeping bill would need to be filed to change the statute.

Following discussion, Craig Johnson made a motion to refer the email document to the Board of Justice Court Judges for practicality purposes and feedback, keeping in mind that it is a due process issue and that other avenues will be pursued through the legislature to modify the statute. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Judge Davis will write a cover letter and take it and the email directive to the attention of Rick Schwermer, Brent Johnson, Tim Shea, and to the Board of Justice Court Judges and tell them the committee anticipates that the implementation of it will require the modification of both the rule and the statute. He will get their feedback and go from there. In the meantime, the email directive will not be circulated to the judges.

Judge Myers indicated that in many rural areas, the illegal aliens are a big issue with people. People are going to say why should my tax dollars go to pay for an illegal alien's interpreter fees? The illegal aliens should at least be able to pay that.

Ms. Kreek-Mendez said it is not those that are illegal and being deported that the court must worry about. It is those that have lawful grounds to be in the U.S. and are not going to be deported. Their due process is the issue.

Report to the Judicial Council

Judge Davis reported that he advised the Judicial Council that Judge Myers is now a member of the committee, and then spent considerable time answering questions about the assessment of the court interpreter fee. He encouraged members of the Judicial Council who are active judges to thank court interpreters at the end of hearings and trials.

Rosa Oakes reported the Judicial Council was receptive to the idea of scheduling court interpreters the way it is done in 3rd district with the interpreter coordinator functioning in that role, using Groupwise, CARE, and CORIS. A meeting has been set up with the CARE technology people to get that program ready.

Luther Gaylord asked if in the near future interpreter coordinators in the other districts will be doing the same thing done by the interpreter coordinator in the 3^{rd} district. Ms. Oakes responded that is the goal. Another meeting is scheduled with the TCEs to decide how to set it up.

ASL Committee Member

Judge Davis reported that the Policy and Planning Committee approved the addition of a membership slot on the Court Interpreter Committee for a representative from ASL. Jennifer Storrer was approved by the Policy and Planning Committee to be the ASL representative. The next step is Judicial Council approval.

Distance Interpretation

Ms. Oakes indicated that last year, the Judicial Council asked the committee to research information on remote interpretation to bring interpreters into the courtroom when they are off site. She has conducted research and reported back at the previous committee meeting that nothing suitable has been found. Since then, she found a company called BIAMP and asked that they provide a presentation. Kim Allard, Director of Court Services, was brought in and it was found that the court already has a lot of BIAMP equipment installed, so it can easily be incorporated to allow for remote interpreting in most of the courthouses. Kim Allard is working on the bid to have this installed in two pilot courts in 3rd district at the Tooele and West Jordan courthouses. This will be used for arraignments and pre-trials only, not for trials. Court interpreters will be used. After three months, the judges and clerks will evaluate the program. It will be installed statewide if it works well. Interpreters can phone in from their own phone at home. The program allows simultaneous interpretation. This system is currently being used in Colorado and Florida.

Following discussion where a number of concerns were raised, Judge Davis asked that Ms. Oakes provide a demonstration at the next committee meeting so that the group can see the mechanics of how it works, and then concerns will be addressed. Judge Davis noted there could be constitutional issues involved.

Ms. Kreeck-Mendez raised the issue of possible security concerns in the holding cell with a headset being allowed in. Ms. Oakes stated she will check that out.

Judge Davis agreed that judges will need to understand its limitations and most judges will prefer live interpreters, but with a demonstration, many of the questions raised can be answered. He asked that Ms. Oakes check the possibility of having 8th district as a rural court, participate as part of the pilot, since the judges in 8th district have been utilizing intercom phones for interpretation for a few years now.

Case Law Handout

Judge Davis distributed recent case law cases to the group for their review.

Court Interpreter Brochures

Ms. Oakes distributed draft copies of brochures about how court interpretation works in the courts, written in English and in Spanish, to the group. Interpreter Rachel Webb, pushed for this to be done. Ms. Oakes is requesting feedback from the committee on the brochures.

Ms. Kreeck-Mendez asked that Ms. Oakes send some to the law offices and justice court prosecutors for distribution once they are in final format.

The group suggested they also be made up into Vietnamese and Pacific Island languages.

Rachel Webb said she would like to give a copy to counsel when she meets them and inform them that she will give a copy to her Spanish speaking clients as well.

Ms. Kreeck-Mendez pointed out that there are defendants who are uneducated and cannot read. Clients should be asked if they are able to read, and if they cannot, this should be read to them.

Judge Davis asked the group to read through the brochures before the next meeting on January 25, 2008, so they will be able to give feedback at that time.

Ms. Oakes will email the brochures to committee members.

Other Business

Professor Hague asked to be on the next agenda to obtain suggestions, especially from interpreters as to what kind of tasks they want to have modeled for the approved interpreter training that is being generated for the less common languages. Some suggestions were given by the group, which were noted by Professor Hague. More suggestions could be forthcoming.

The meeting was adjourned.

Tab 2

I had a situation come up in court today, and I was not sure how best to handle it.

There is a defense attorney who skims over the Rule 11 statements when meeting with his clients prior to court. That was the case today, with the defendant for whom I interpreted -- the attorney did not review the document in its entirety, but instead summarized its contents.

When we were in front of the judge for the defendant to enter his guilty plea, the judge first asked the attorney if the Rule 11 statement had been read to his client verbatim. He answered in the affirmative. The judge then asked the defendant if the interpreter had read the Rule 11 statement to him verbatim. The defendant replied "Yes". The judge then asked me if I had read the statement to the defendant verbatim. I answered "No, I simply interpreted what the defense attorney said to the defendant".

The judge then asked me if the defense attorney had read the Rule 11 statement to the defendant verbatim. I knew that he had not, but I was not sure if revealing that information would violate attorney-client privilege. At the same time, I felt pressure to answer the judge's question truthfully.

After a moment's hesitation, I finally answered "I don't think so, Your Honor."

The defense attorney then stated that he had indeed read it verbatim, except for one paragraph regarding a "no contest" plea, which was not relevant to the case at hand.

Even after reflecting on the situation, I don't know if I did the right thing. I felt like I was being taken out of my proper role as an interpreter and made into a witness.

Perhaps I should have simply replied "I don't know how to answer that question." Then, if the judge were to ask me to explain or clarify, I could say something about scope of practice...but what? Any suggestions from the committee?

Tab 3



Administrative Office of the Courts

Chief Justice Christine M. Durham Utah Supreme Court Chair, Utah Judicial Council

MEMORANDUM

Daniel J. Becker State Court Administrator Myron K. March Deputy Court Administrator

To: Court Interpreter Committee From: Tim Shea SR Date: January 22, 2008 Re: Rule 3-306

I have attached the next draft of amendments to Rule 3-306. To save a few lines, I have omitted section (9) on translation of forms, which the committee has already approved. I would like to continue the discussion of sections (10) and (11), which regulate how court employees can be used as interpreters.

If there is time, I would like to discuss sections (6) and (7) on discipline and section (8) on fees and expenses.

Encl: Rule 3-306 (excerpt)

1 Rule 3-306. Court Interpreters.

- 2
- 3 (9)-(6) Removal in individual cases. Any of the following actions shall be good cause

4 for a judge to remove an interpreter in an individual case:

- 5 (9)(A) being unable to interpret adequately, including where the interpreter self-
- 6 reports such inability;
- 7 (9)(B) knowingly and willfully making false interpretation while serving in an official
 8 capacity;
- 9 (9)(C) knowingly and willfully disclosing confidential or privileged information
- 10 obtained while serving in an official capacity;
- 11 (9)(D) failing to follow other standards prescribed by law and the Code of
- 12 Professional Responsibility; and
- 13 (9)(E) failing to appear as scheduled without good cause. The appointing authority
- 14 may remove an interpreter from a legal proceeding for any grounds for which an
- 15 interpreter can be disciplined.
- 16 (10) Removal from certified or approved list. Any of the following actions shall be
- 17 good cause for a court interpreter to be removed from the certified list maintained under
- 18 subsection (4)(A)(iii) or from the approved list maintained under subsection (6)(B)(iii):
- 19 (7) Discipline.
- 20 (7)(A) An interpreter may be disciplined for:
- 21 (10)(A) (7)(A)(i) knowingly and willfully making false interpretation while serving in an
- 22 official capacity;
- 23 (10)(B) (7)(A)(ii) knowingly and willfully disclosing confidential or privileged
- 24 information obtained while serving in an official capacity;
- 25 (10)(C) (7)(A)(iii) knowingly failing to follow other standards prescribed by law, and
- 26 the Code of Professional Responsibility and this rule;
- 27 (7)(A)(iv) failing to pass a background check;
- 28 (7)(A)(v) failing to meet continuing education requirements; and
- 29 (10)(D)(A)(vi) failing to appear as scheduled without good cause.
- 30 (11) Discipline

31 (11)(A) An interpreter may be disciplined for violating the Code of Professional 32 Responsibility. (7)(B) Discipline may include: decertification, suspension, probation or 33 other restrictions on the interpreter's certification or qualification. Discipline by the 34 committee does not preclude independent action by the Administrative Office of the 35 Courts. 36 (7)(B)(i) removal from the legal proceeding; 37 (7)(B)(ii) removal from the roster of certified or approved interpreters; (7)(B)(iii) suspension from the roster of certified or approved interpreters with 38 39 conditions: 40 (7)(B)(iv) prohibition from serving as a conditionally approved interpreter; 41 (7)(B)(v) suspension from serving as a conditionally approved interpreter with conditions; and 42 43 (7)(B)(vi) reprimand. (11)(B)-(7)(C) Any person, including other than a members of the committee, may 44 45 initiate file a complaint in writing with the program manager. Upon receipt of a 46 complaint, the committee shall provide written notice of the allegations If the complaint is not plainly frivolous, the program manager shall mail the complaint to the interpreter. 47 48 Within 20 days after the notice-complaint is mailed, the interpreter shall submit a written 49 response to the complaint program manager. The response shall be sent to the 50 administrative office staff assigned to the committee. 51 (11)(C) Upon receipt of the interpreter's response, staff shall attempt to informally resolve the complaint. Informal resolution may include stipulated discipline or dismissal 52 53 of the complaint if staff determines that the complaint is without merit. The program 54 manager will meet with the complainant and the interpreter to mediate an appropriate 55 resolution. If the complaint is resolved, the interpreter and complainant will sign the stipulated resolution. 56 57 (11)(D)(i) A hearing shall be held on the complaint if informal resolution is 58 unsuccessful, or if the committee otherwise determines that a hearing is necessary. 59 (11)(D)(ii) The hearing shall be held no later than 45 days after notice of the 60 complaint was sent to the interpreter. (7)(D) If the complaint is not resolved, the 61 program manager will sign a statement to that effect, and the committee shall hold a

62 hearing within 45 days after the statement. The committee program manager shall

63 serve mail notice of the date, time and place of the hearing to the interpreter with notice

64 of the date and time of the hearing, via by certified mail, return receipt requested.

65 (11)(D)(iii) The hearing shall be closed to the public. The interpreter may be 66 represented by counsel and shall be permitted to testify, present evidence and 67 comment on the allegations. The committee may ask questions of the interpreter, 68 <u>complainant</u> and witnesses. <u>The committee may rely upon evidence commonly relied</u> 69 <u>upon by reasonably prudent persons in the conduct of their important affairs. Testimony</u> 70 <u>shall be under oath and a A</u> record of the proceedings <u>shall be</u> maintained. The 71 interpreter may obtain a copy of the record upon payment of any required fee.

(11)(E)-(7)(E) The committee shall issue a written decision within 10 days from the
 conclusion of the hearing. The decision shall be supported by written findings and shall
 be served on mailed to the interpreter via first-class mail.

75 (7)(F) If the committee finds that a certified interpreter has violated a provision of the

76 Code of Professional Responsibility, and if the sanction includes suspension or removal

77 from the roster of certified interpreters, the findings and sanction will be reported to the

78 National Center for State Courts Consortium for State Court Interpreter Certification,

79 where they will be available to member states.

80 (11)(F) The interpreter may appeal the committee's decision to the Judicial Council. 81 The interpreter shall file the notice of appeal with the Judicial Council no later than 20 82 days after the committee's decision is mailed to the interpreter. The notice of appeal shall include the interpreter's written objections to the decision. The Judicial Council 83 84 shall review the record of the committee proceedings to determine whether the 85 committee correctly applied procedures and sanctions, and to determine whether the 86 committee abused its discretion. The interpreter and committee members are not 87 entitled to attend the Council meeting at which the proceeding is reviewed.

88 (12) Payment(8) Fees and expenses.

89 (12)(A) Courts of Record.

90 (12)(A) (i) In courts of record, the administrative office shall pay interpreter fees and

91 expenses(8)(A) In courts of record, the administrative office of the courts shall pay

92 interpreter fees and expenses for legal proceedings in the following cases. In courts not

- 93 of record, the government that funds the court shall pay interpreter fees and expenses
- 94 for legal proceedings in the following cases.
- 95 (12)(A)(i)(a) in (8)(A)(i) criminal cases,

96 (12)(A)(i)(b) in (8)(A)(ii) a preliminary inquiry or case filed on behalf of the state
 97 under Title 78, Chapter 3a, Juvenile Courts,

- 98 (12)(A)(i)(c) in (8)(A)(iii) cases filed against the state pursuant to U.R.C.P. 65B(b) or
- 99 65C,
- 100 (12)(A)(i)(d) in(8)(A)(iv) cases filed under Title 30, Chapter 6, Cohabitant Abuse Act,
- 101 (12)(A)(i)(e) in (8)(A)(v) cases filed under Title 77, Chapter 3a, Stalking Injunctions,
- 102 (12)(A)(i)(f) in (8)(A)(vi) cases filed under Title 78, Chapter 3h, Child Protective
- 103 orders, and
- 104 (12)(A)(i)(g) in (8)(A)(vii) other cases in which the court determines that the state
 105 court is obligated to pay for an interpreter's services, and
- 106 (12)(A)(i)(h) for translation of forms pursuant to paragraph (13).
- 107 (12)(A)(ii) In all other civil cases and small claims cases, the party engaging the
 108 services of the interpreter shall pay the interpreter fees and expenses.
- (12)(A)(iii) Fees. (8)(B) In April the Judicial Council shall set the fees to be paid to
 court interpreters for during the following fiscal year by the administrative office of the
 courts or the government that funds the court not of record in legal proceedings and for
 translation of forms. Payment to interpreters of fees and expenses shall be made in
- 113 accordance with the Courts Accounting Manual. This section does not apply to court
- 114 employees acting as interpreters.
- 115 (8)(C) The court may order that the fee and expenses paid to a court interpreter,
- 116 other than to a court employee hired under subsection (10)(A), be assessed against a
- 117 party failing to appear at a hearing of which he or she had notice.
- 118 (12)(A)(iv) Expenses. Mileage for interpreters will be paid at the same rate as state
- 119 employees for each mile necessarily traveled in excess of 25 miles one-way. Per diem
- 120 expenses will be paid at the same rate as state employees.
- 121 (12)(A)(v) Procedure for payment. The administrative office shall pay fees and
 122 expenses of the interpreter upon receipt of a certification of appearance signed by the
- 123 clerk of the court or other authorized person. The certification shall include the name,

address and social security number of the interpreter, the case number, the dates of
 appearance, the language interpreted, and an itemized statement of the amounts to be
 paid.

127 (12)(B) Courts not of record.

(12)(B)(i) In courts not of record, the local government that funds the court not of
 record shall pay interpreter fees and expenses in criminal cases in which the defendant
 is determined to be indigent.

131 (12)(B)(ii) In small claims cases, the party engaging the services of the interpreter
 132 shall pay the interpreter fees and expenses.

133 (12)(B)(iii) Fees. The local government that funds the court not of record shall
134 establish the amount of the interpreter fees.

135 (12)(B)(iv) Expenses. The local government that funds the court not of record shall
 136 establish interpreter expenses, if any, that will be paid.

- (12)(B)(v) Procedure for payment. The local government that funds the court shall
 pay the interpreter upon receipt of a certification of appearance signed by the clerk of
 the court. The certification shall include the name, address and social security number
 of the interpreter, the case number, the dates of appearance, the language interpreted,
 and an itemized statement of the amounts to be paid.
 (9) Translation of court forms.
- 143
- (10) Court employees as interpreters. A court employee may not interpret legal
 proceedings except as follows.

146 (10)(A) A court may hire an employee as an interpreter. The employee will be paid

the wage and benefits of the employee's grade and not the fee established by this rule.
If the language is a language for which certification in Utah is available, the employee

149 <u>must be a certified interpreter. If the language is a language for which certification in</u>

150 <u>Utah is not available, the employee must be an approved interpreter. The employee will</u>

151 <u>not be included on the roster of certified or approved interpreters. The employee must</u>

152 meet the continuing education requirements of an employee, but at least half of the

153 minimum requirement must be in improving interpreting skills. The employee is subject

154	to the discipline process for court personnel, but the grounds for discipline include those
155	listed in this rule.
156	(10)(B) A court may appoint an employee as an interpreter engaged in secondary
157	employment. While interpreting, the employee will be paid the fee and expenses
158	established by this rule, but he or she must comply with the requirements for secondary
159	employment. If the language is a language for which certification in Utah is available,
160	the employee must be a certified interpreter. If the language is a language for which
161	certification in Utah is not available, the employee must be an approved interpreter. The
162	employee may be included on the roster of certified or approved interpreters. The
163	employee must meet the continuing education requirements of an employee, but at
164	least half of the minimum requirement must be in improving interpreting skills. The
165	grounds and process for discipline depend on whether the person is being disciplined
166	as an employee or as an interpreter.
167	(10)(C) A state court employee employed as an interpreter or serving as an
168	interpreter as secondary employment has the rights and responsibilities provided in the
169	Utah state court human resource policies, including the Code of Personal Conduct, and
170	the Court Interpreters' Code of Professional Responsibility also applies. A justice court
171	employee employed as an interpreter or serving as an interpreter as secondary
172	employment has the rights and responsibilities provided in the county or municipal
173	human resource policies, including a code of conduct, and the Court Interpreters' Code
174	of Professional Responsibility also applies.
175	(11) Acts contrary to the Code. No person shall request or direct a court interpreter
176	to act contrary to a code of conduct or the Court Interpreters' Code of Professional

- 177 <u>Responsibility.</u>
- 178