

**Utah Judicial Council's Standing Committee on  
Resources for Self-Represented Parties Meeting Minutes**

Matheson Courthouse  
Judge Lawrence Courtroom, W37  
February 28, 2019  
12:30 PM – 2 PM

Members	In attendance	Excused	Via phone conference
Judge Suchada Bazzelle		X	
Sue Crismon	X		
Monica Fjeldsted			X
Leslie Francis	X		X
Nicole Gray			X
Susan Griffith		X	
Carl Hernandez		X	
Judge Catherine Hoskins		X	
Jacob Kent			X
Judge Barry Lawrence - Chair	X		
Shawn Newell		X	
Nathanael Player	X		
Judge Brook Sessions	X		
Charles Stormont	X		
Peter Strand			X
Virginia Sudbury	X		
Judge Doug Thomas		X	
Janet Thorpe			X
Jessica Van Buren	X		
Guests	In attendance	Excused	Via phone conference
Nick Stiles (ex officio)	X		
Amy Sorenson (ex officio)		X	
Kara Mann (ex officio)	X		
Amy Hernandez (ex officio)		X	
Heidi Anderson	X		
Jymn Edwards	X		
Ryan Steffensen	X		
Staff	In attendance	Excused	Via phone conference
Minhvan Brimhall	X		
Nancy Sylvester	X		

(1) Welcome and approval of minutes

Judge Lawrence welcomed the committee members and guests to the meeting and asked if there were any concerns with the minutes from the last meeting. Nancy Sylvester noted that a few people were left off the attendance list and she will make the correction prior to posting the minutes to the web. With no additional concerns, Judge Sessions move to approve the minutes. Nathanael Player seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

(2) Introduction of new members

Judge Lawrence welcomed new member Janet Thorpe (Washington County Justice Court Clerk) to the committee.

(3) Update from the Utah State Bar's Access to Justice Commission

Nick Stiles reported that the Access to Justice Commission is coming along. The group is working on getting their footing in the right places. They have received a grant from the Bar Foundation that will assist in being able to move the work forward. They still need additional funding and are waiting to find out if they will be able to hire staff to help with future projects.

(4) Exploring the possibility of a remote access pilot program (3<sup>rd</sup> District attorneys assisting litigants at a rural courthouse)

Judge Lawrence welcomed Court IT Director, Heidi Anderson, and her team to the meeting. Judge Lawrence reminded the committee of previous discussions surrounding remote access in rural areas. Judge Lawrence envisions a set up where judges and lawyers in the Salt Lake area would be available via video conferencing to those located in rural locations. Clients would be able to speak with a lawyer prior to the hearing. The court would create a calendar accessible to the public indicating hearing date and time and name of judge and lawyer available on that day.

Heidi and her team are aware of the requests and the concerns surrounding the pilot project. The request is not unusual and though it may have some challenges, it is a doable project. Heidi and her team will look at the fundamentals in setting up such a project and will come back at another meeting date to report their findings. There are currently several courtroom and courthouse conference rooms that are being remodeled or upgraded that her team is involved in. They will need to look at the costs of a remote set-up and identify locations willing to participate in the pilot project. Judge Lawrence will speak with Judge Peterson in Vernal to see if he would be willing to participate.

Judge Lawrence invited Heidi and her team to the May 3 meeting to report.

(5) Discussion on self-represented issues and upcoming judicial education conferences (dressing for court, childcare, and cell phone use)

Judge Lawrence said he is hearing that patrons are being turned away from courtrooms based on their appearance. Bailiffs are prohibiting patrons from entering the courtroom if they are deemed to be dressed inappropriately (i.e. in a tank top, shorts, clothing appearing to be unclean). Some are also being turned away for bringing children to court

hearings. The committee noted that judges should make the determination whether someone should be allowed to appear in court based on their appearance, not the bailiff. Judge Lawrence has spoken with Amy Hernandez regarding the issue and had asked Ms. Hernandez to create a proposal to address the concern. Judge Lawrence brought this issue up at the last Board of District Court Judges Conference and has also spoken with Brent Johnson. He has asked Mr. Johnson to look at the current policy and consider rewriting it. Judge Lawrence does not want any patron to feel they are not welcomed in a courtroom based on whether they are properly dressed or not. Judge Lawrence and Judge Sessions will be meeting with district court and justice court judges at the Spring conference about the issues discussed.

Ms. Hernandez is looking at creating an MOU with local charitable organizations such as Deseret Industries or a shelter or the Women's/Junior League to make clothing available to those who are not able to afford clothing appropriate for court appearances.

The committee then briefly discussed the court's navigator program. The program would invite first year law students to the courthouse where they would help educate school age students on being a lawyer or a judge. Having children become familiar with the courts will help them bridge the gap between classroom learning and the courthouse.

(6) Subcommittee updates

a. Education:

Judge Lawrence and Judge Sessions will present to the district and justice courts at their spring conferences on the dress code, cell phones, and childcare issues.

b. Outreach:

The outreach subcommittee is working on getting out a new simplified handout on court resources to places across the state, including barbershops, etc. They are also going to be doing a media tour. They have added Elizabeth Bevington from the Self Help Center to their committee.

c. Rural Services:

A pro se family law calendar is starting up in Logan.

d. Self-Help Center/Non-lawyer Assistance/Court Updates Subcommittee

The courts are waiting to see what's happening with the increased funding request for the Self-Help Center.

Ms. Van Buren reported that the Forms Committee is currently reviewing several forms from the Family Law section. The Committee has primarily been focused on getting LPP forms out as quickly as possible as the first group of LPP's will be sworn in later this year. The family law and debt collection forms are near completion. The group is also working on military family and parenting forms, focusing on when at least one member of the family is out for deployment. They

are working on temporary orders due to deployment, parenting forms for military families, and genetic forms.

(7) New projects from the Supreme Court: FAQ videos; committee name change

Mr. Player, Judge Lawrence, and Ms. Sylvester will meet with the Supreme Court in a couple weeks on the creation of How-to videos on service, for example. They will be discussing cost and potentially finding volunteers to do video editing. More details will be forthcoming. This will be a partnership with this committee, the Civil Rules Committee, and others. This project came about because the Civil Rules Committee is in the process of updating its advisory committee notes and the Committee went to the Court for guidance. Recommendations had ranged from putting practice guides in the notes to removing them completely.

Ms. Sylvester reported that the Supreme Court does not like the committee's current name since it is not accurate (self-represented indicates a litigant's conscious choice to proceed on their own, which is not the case most of the time) and asked the committee to look at changing the committee's name. Ms. Sylvester will research names for this committee and provide them at the next meeting.

(8) Other potential projects: articles on access to justice issues and the ways they are being addressed across the U.S.

These matters were deferred since the committee appeared to have sufficient projects to address at this time.

(9) Other Business: discussion on vice chair

This item was not discussed during the meeting.

(10) Adjourn:

With no additional items to report, the meeting adjourned at 1:55 pm. The next meeting will be held on May 3, 2019 at the Utah State Bar.