

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL MEETING
Minutes**

June 22, 2026

Hybrid Meeting (in person and Webex)

**Matheson Courthouse – Council Room
450 S State Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84111**

Honorable Associate Chief Justice Jill Pohlman presiding

Members:

Associate Chief Justice Jill
Pohlman, Chair
Justice Paige Petersen
Hon. Suchada Bazzelle
Hon. Rita Cornish
Hon. Susan Eisenman
Hon. Michael Leavitt
Hon. James Gardner
Hon. Amber Mettler
Hon. Christine Johnson
Hon. Chris Bown
Hon. Brendan McCullagh
Hon. Jon Carpenter
Hon. Michael DiReda
Hon. Angela Fannesbeck
Kristin K. Woods

AOC Staff:

Ron Gordon
Neira Siaperas
Michael Drechsel
Keisa Williams
Nick Stiles
James Peters
Brody Arishita
Daniel Meza Rincon
Shane Bahr

Presenters:

Karl Sweeney
Alisha Johnson
Hon. Clay Stucki
Alex Peterson

Excused:

Chief Justice Matthew
B. Durrant
Hon. David Mortensen,
Vice Chair
Hon. Samuel Chiara

1. WELCOME AND THE APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Associate Chief Justice Jill Pohlman):

Justice Jill Pohlman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked whether there were any questions or corrections to the May 18, 2026, and June 5, 2026, meeting minutes. None were raised.

Motion: Judge Brendan McCullagh moved to approve the May 18, 2026, and June 5, 2026, minutes. Judge Christine Johnson seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

2. CHAIR’S REPORT (Associate Chief Justice Jill Pohlman):

Justice Jill Pohlman announced that Justice Stephen Dent and Justice Jay T. Jorgensen have begun serving on the Utah Supreme Court following their confirmation by the Senate. She noted that two additional vacancies remain to be filled for the positions created during the most recent legislative session.

3. STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR REPORT (Ron Gordon):

Ron Gordon provided an update on facilities and space planning at the Matheson Courthouse. He reported that parking assignments will be reconfigured to accommodate the addition of new judicial officers, with the P3 parking area designated exclusively for judicial officer parking. Judicial officer parking. The changes will also increase parking availability for visiting judicial officers and increase the size of several existing parking stalls.

Mr. Gordon also outlined long-term courthouse space planning efforts prompted by anticipated judicial growth and future operational needs. He explained that options are being evaluated to create additional chambers and courtroom space while preserving flexibility for potential future changes. Preliminary concepts include repurposing existing conference and jury assembly spaces and evaluating opportunities to relocate administrative functions. Mr. Gordon emphasized that all space-planning options under consideration would prioritize solutions that minimize disruption to court operations. Judicial Council members expressed support for continuing the planning process.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Management Committee: Nothing to report.

Budget & Fiscal Management Committee: Judge Rita Cornish reported the work of the committee will be discussed later in the meeting.

Liaison Committee: Judge Brendan McCullagh reported that Senate Bill 270 Ad Hoc Committee has been meeting regularly and they will present an update at the July Judicial Council Meeting.

Policy, Planning, and Technology Committee: Judge James Gardner reported the work of the committee will be discussed later in the meeting.

Bar Commission: Katie Woods provided an update on Utah State Bar initiatives. She reported that the Bar continues to expand its use of text-based customer services, which has successfully improved responsiveness to attorney inquiries and reduced staff workload. Based on the success of that pilot program, the Bar plans to implement text support across additional departments.

5. BUDGET AND GRANTS (Karl Sweeney and Alisha Johnson)

Alisha Johnson presented the financial reports.

FY 2026 One-Time Turnover Savings- Period 11

#	Prior Month Forecast		Actual	Forecasted	Change in Forecast
	Amount @ YE		Amount YTD	Amount @ YE	Amount @ YE
		138,582	138,582	138,582	-
		987,404	1,106,549	1,106,549	119,145
1		130,000	-	65,000	(65,000)
		1,255,987	1,245,131	1,310,131	54,145
		(36,150)	6,137	6,137	42,287
		1,219,837	1,251,269	1,316,269	96,432
2		(200,000)	(199,333)	(200,000)	-
		(200,000)	(199,333)	(200,000)	-
Total Actual/Forecasted Unencumbered Turnover Savings for FY 2026		1,019,837	1,051,935	1,116,269	96,432

FY 2026 Year End Requests and Forecasted Available One-time Funds - Period 11

Forecasted Available One-time Funds			# One-time Spending Plan Requests	Adjusted Requests Amount	Judicial Council Approved Amount
Description	Funding Type	Amount			
Sources of FY 2026 Funds					
* Turnover Savings as of PPE 05/22/2026	Turnover Savings	1,342,609			
Turnover savings estimate for the rest of the year (\$600 x 216 pay hours)	Turnover Savings	129,600			
Total Potential One Time Turnover Savings		1,472,209			
Less: Judicial Council Delegated to State Court Administrator for Discretionary Use		(250,000)			
(a) Total Potential One Time Turnover Savings Less Discretionary Use		1,222,209			
Operational Savings from TCE / AOC Budgets - mid-year forecast					
Expected additional operational savings for balance of fiscal year	Internal Operating Savings	649,910			
Operational Savings from IT Budget - Timing of Contract Renewal Deferred to FY 27	Internal Operating Savings	200,000			
Reserve Balance (Balance from FY 2025 Carryforward)	Judicial Council Reserve	400,000			
Use IT Budget Savings and Operational Savings to Increase Retro YOS Eligibility	Adjustments to CY Operations	700			
		(462,000)			
(b) Total Operational Savings, Reserve, Unclaimed Property and Prior Year Adjustments		788,610			
(c) Total of Turnover Savings & Operational Savings = (a) + (b)		2,010,819			
Uses of FY 2026 Funds					
(d) Carryforward into FY 2027 (Anticipate request to Legislature for \$3,200,000)	FY 2027 Carryforward	(3,010,819)			
Total Potential One Time Savings = (c) less Carryforward (d)		-			
Less: Judicial Council Requests Previously Approved		-			
Less: Judicial Council Current Month Spending Requests		-			
Remaining Forecasted Funds Available for FY 2026 YE Spending Requests, CCCS, etc.		-			

Last reported expected carryforward: \$2,028,891

FY 2027 Carryforward and Ongoing Requests - Period 11, FY 2026



FY 2027 Carryforward and Ongoing Requests - Period 11, FY 2026

6/4/2026

Funding Sources

	One Time	Ongoing
Ongoing Turnover Savings carried over from FY 2025		\$ 138,582
Forecasted YE Ongoing Turnover Savings from FY 2026		\$ 1,177,686
Forecasted Unused Ongoing Investing in Our People Comp Track Increase, FY 2026 (estimated)		\$ 122,800
Subtotal		\$ 1,439,068
Unobligated Fiscal Note Funds - District Court (net)	\$ 94,100	\$ 439,900
Unobligated Fiscal Note Funds - Juvenile Court	\$ (3,600)	\$ 3,600
Unobligated Fiscal Note Funds - Admin	\$ -	\$ 10,900
Legislative ongoing cut - reduce ongoing turnover savings		\$ (185,000)
Wellness Council Portion of Carryforward		
Expected Carryforward Amount from Fiscal Year 2026	\$ 2,010,819	\$ -
Total Available Funding	\$ 2,101,319	\$ 1,708,468
Less: Judicial Council Delegated to State Court Administrator for Discretionary Use		\$ (200,000)
Net Available for Use	\$ 2,101,319	\$ 1,508,468

Ongoing / One Time Requests - Directly from Unobligated Fiscal Note Funds

	Presented		Judicial Council Approved	
	One Time	Ongoing	One Time	Ongoing
1 Education Judicial Assistant Training Support - Lauren Andersen		\$ 34,000		
2 Court Visitor Specialist and Pilot Program Attorney - Shonna Thomas, Keri Sargent	\$ 130,000	\$ 108,250		
3 Sixth District Clerical Training Coordinator - Linda Ekker		\$ 102,000		
4 8th District Additional Judicial Assistant FTE - Russell Pearson		\$ 90,600		
5 Sixth District Clerical Team Manager - Linda Ekker		\$ 112,300		
Subtotal	\$ 130,000	\$ 447,150	\$ -	\$ -

Ongoing Requests

	Presented		Judicial Council Approved	
	One Time	Ongoing	One Time	Ongoing
Prior Approved Ongoing Commitments				
Investing in Our People - Ron Gordon and Neira Siaperas		\$ 370,000		\$ 370,000
8th District Probation Training Coordinator - Russell Pearson		\$ 52,500		\$ 52,500
Juvenile Court IQI Funding Increase - Daniel Meza Rincón		\$ 7,000		\$ 7,000
Ongoing Requests - For Consideration				
1 Two Additional Juvenile Law Clerk Attorneys - Judge Westmoreland, Daniel Meza Rincón		\$ 278,700		
2 5th District Court Case Manager - Cede Stubbs		\$ 14,800		
3 Appellate Court Conference Funds - Lauren Andersen, Nick Stiles		\$ 35,000		
4 Director of Administrative Services- Ron Gordon, Neira Siaperas	\$ 5,000	\$ 190,000		
5 Employee and Judicial Officer Wellness Resources - Tava - Neira Siaperas and Karl Sweeney		\$ 94,600		
Subtotal to Approve and Fund Immediately	\$ 5,000	\$ 1,042,600	\$ -	\$ 429,500
Balance Remaining After Judicial Council Approvals				\$ 1,078,968
Balance Remaining Inclusive of "Presented"		\$ 18,718		

Carryforward One Time Requests

		Presented		Judicial Council Approved	
		One Time	Ongoing	One Time	Ongoing
1	Public Transit Reimbursement Program - Suzette Deans, Karl Sweeney	\$ 61,200			
2	Education Assistance Program - Alisha Johnson	\$ 85,000			
3	HR Applicant Tracking System - Bart Olsen, Jeremy Marsh	\$ 23,700			
4	IT Contract Developers - Brody Arishite	\$ 682,000			
5	IT Network/Systems Maintenance Staff - Todd Eaton/Chris Talbot	\$ 50,000			
6	IT Replacement Inventory - Todd Eaton	\$ 364,000			
7	IT Tech Subject Matter Expert Stipend - Todd Eaton/Taz Hatch	\$ 65,000			
8	Incentive Awards - Bart Olsen, Erin Rheed and Alisha Johnson	\$ 560,000			
9	Contingent Bridge Funding for Protective Order Program Facilitator - Amy Hernandez	\$ 32,500			
10	All Rise Utah Welcome Dinner - Jon Puente	\$ 20,000			
11	Tooele Courtroom Funding - Mark Paradise 3rd District TCE	\$ 1,285,000			
	Defer #11 past FY 2027 carryforward	\$ (1,285,000)			
	Subtotal	\$ 1,943,400	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Balance Remaining After Judicial Council Approvals			\$ 2,101,319	\$ 1,078,968
+	Balance Remaining Inclusive of "Presented"	\$ 22,919	\$ 18,718		

LEGEND

Highlighted items are currently being or have been presented to the BFMC

Highlighted items have been previously presented to the BFMC

Highlighted items have been approved by the BFMC and are on track for being presented to the Judicial Council.

Highlighted items have been previously approved by the Judicial Council.

Highlighted items that are Fiscal Note Funds

* - items have been presented and approved in prior years.

+ - One-time balance remaining is available to go into Judicial Council reserve. Ongoing balance remaining will be included in the beginning balance for ongoing turnover savings.

- Request to Legislature was Not Funded

BFMC approval to submit request to Judicial Council does not imply Judicial Council must approve the recommendation.

If more funds are available than the total of requests received, prioritization is optional.

Funding Requests- Ongoing and 1x Unobligated Fiscal Note (Case Processing)

1. Education Judicial Assistant Training Support

Lauren Anderson an additional \$34,000 annually to support ongoing training for Judicial Assistants through an improved onboarding and ongoing training program.

2. Court Visitor Specialist and Pilot Program Attorney

Shonna Thomas and Keri Sargent requested \$130,000 one-time funds for the Pilot Program Attorney and \$108,250 ongoing funds for the Court Visitor Specialist. This will provide the necessary resources to address the workload experienced by the Court Visitor Program because of an enduring shortage of attorneys to fulfill statutory requirements in guardianship cases.

3. 6th District Clerical Training Coordinator

Linda Ekker requested \$102,000 ongoing funds for a dedicated training coordinator position in the Sixth District. This request was submitted to the Judicial Council for the August 2025 Annual Budget meeting and then included in the requests sent to the Legislature for consideration in their 2026 General Session but not funded.

4. 8th District Additional Judicial Assistant FTE

Russell Pearson requested \$90,600 ongoing case processing funds for an additional Judicial Assistant. The Eighth District currently uses 1.0 FTE Judicial Assistant position that has been funded by the Judicial Council for many years by ARPA/One-time Turnover Savings. The request for ongoing case processing funding is to make this position permanent.

5. 6th District Clerical Team Manager

Linda Ekker requested ongoing case processing funding for a Team Manager position in the Sixth District. This request was submitted to the Judicial Council for the August 2025 Annual Budget meeting but not forwarded to the Legislature to reduce the total number of requests.

Ongoing Funding Requests

1. Two Juvenile Law Clerk Attorneys

Judge Westmoreland and Daniel Meza Rincon on behalf of the Board of Juvenile Court Judges requested \$278,700 ongoing funding for two additional Law Clerk Attorney positions for the Juvenile Court. The Utah Juvenile Court currently has three dedicated law clerks serving 33 judges across the state. The current clerk-to-judge ratio in the juvenile court is 1:11. Funding these positions will improve the clerk-to-judge ratio to 1:6.6 and increase the resources and assistance available to Utah's juvenile court bench.

2. 5th District Court Case Manager

Cade Stubbs requested \$14,4800 ongoing funds for a District Court Case Manager in the Fifth District. The Fifth District Court received an additional judicial officer in the most recent legislative session. Bringing on an additional judge and two additional judicial assistants illuminated the need for an additional case manager to help support both the growing staff and the growing bench.

3. Appellate Court Conference Funds

Lauren Anderson and Nick Stiles requested \$35,000 in ongoing funds to support annual training and conference for the Court of Appeals judges and Supreme Court justices.

4. Director of Administrative Services

Ron Gordon and Neira Siaperas on behalf of the Administrative Office of the Courts requested \$5,000 in one-time funding and \$190,000 in ongoing funding to create a new department director position within the AOC.

5. Employee and Judicial Officer Wellness Resources-Tava

Neira Siaperas and Karl Sweeney requested \$94,600 one-time funding for wellness resources to continue providing court employees, judicial officers, and their dependents with continued access to essential wellness resources through the Tava contract. Judicial officers joined the Judiciary's Tava contract in April 2026 as the Utah Bar discontinued their coverage.

Carryforward into FY 2027 1x Funding Requests

1. Public Transit Reimbursement Program

Suzette Deans and Karl Sweeney requested \$61,200 one-time funds for the FY 2027 public transit partial reimbursement program. This would provide up to 96 Court employees state-wide with an

opportunity to receive 90% reimbursement of the costs paid for utilizing public transit until the carryforward funds are depleted. The program currently averages 96 participants per month.

2. Education Assistance Program Funding

Alisha Johnson requested \$85,000 for education assistance program funding to assist employees who seek further education to perform their jobs more effectively and to enhance their professional development. This request will subsidize education assistance for court employees for FY 2027.

3. HR Applicant Tracking

Bart Olsen and Jeremy Marsh requested \$23,700 one-time funding for an HR Applicant Tracking System. HR requested another year of funding for these solutions to properly protect the Judiciary as an employer and the information security of applicants seeking to fill employment opportunities with the Judiciary.

4. IT Contract Developers

Brody Arishita requested \$682,000 one-time funding for IT contract developers. This request for retaining the current experienced contract developers is critical for the ability to deliver essential development projects for the courts.

5. IT Network/Systems Maintenance Staff

Todd Eaton and Chris Talbot requested \$50,000 one-time funding for IT network/systems maintenance staff. This request establishes a fund for maintenance, repairs, and other non-technical tasks statewide, ensuring IT staff can stay focused on higher-value work. It covers labor, travel, and necessary hardware.

6. IT Replacement Inventory

Todd Eaton requested \$364,000 one-time funding for IT replacement inventory. This request will support the replacement of various equipment, including laptops, scanners, printers, desktop computers for courtrooms, and other peripherals that enhance court staff productivity. This funding allows IT to maintain the established five-year laptop replacement cycle and address the replacement of other essential peripherals as they reach end-of-life or experience failure.

7. IT Tech Subject Matter Expert Stipend

Todd Eaton and Taz Hatch requested \$65,000 one-time funding for IT tech subject matter expert stipends. IT received approval in May 2023 to designate up to 30 court employees as Technical Subject Matter Experts (TSMEs) to support District and Juvenile courts statewide with specialized IT skills. The program has been successful, delivering value to the 25+ sites served by TSMEs and providing crucial support to the Service Desk. TSMEs provide hands-on support as needed and handle a growing number of local tickets each month, reducing the demand at the Service Desk. In

many cases, having local support drastically shortens the time needed to resolve simple IT issues, ensuring faster service for court staff. The stipend is set at \$100 per pay period.

8. Incentive Awards

Bart Olsen, Erin Rhead and Alisha Johnson requested \$560,000 one-time funding for employee incentive awards. The Judiciary has established a program to provide on-the-spot recognition for outstanding service as well as a formal nomination process to reward employees. The incentive can be issued in cash or a gift card.

9. Contingent Bridge Funding for Protective Order Facilitator

Amy Hernandez requested \$32,500 one-time funding for a Protective Order Facilitator. The funding would support the program facilitator's position including the facilitator's personnel, fringe benefits, travel, and other miscellaneous costs for FY 2027.

Motion: Judge Rita Cornish made a motion to approve all funding requests. Judge McCullagh seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously

10. All Rise Dinner and Meet N Greet

Jon Puente requested \$20,000 one-time funds for the All Rise Dinner and Meet N Greet. This dinner introduces primarily first-year law students from all backgrounds to members of the bench and practicing lawyers to build their connections with the local legal community.

Karl Sweeney additionally requested that funding for the All Rise Dinner be contingently approved, from one-time funds to ongoing funding when the money is available.

Motion: Justice Paige Petersen moved to approve transitioning funding for the All Rise program from one-time funding to ongoing funding, contingent upon the availability of funds. Judge McCullagh seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Final JCTST Funding Request for FY 2027

Jim Peters requested approval for funding for the Justice Court Technology, Security and Training Account (JCTST) in the amount of \$1,243,400. During the 2026 General Session, the Legislature used a portion of the fund to offset ongoing general fund reductions to the Judiciary, placing the reserve at risk of depletion. In response, the Judicial Council approved expenditures up to the legislative maximum for FY26, and the Board of Justice Court Judges recommended adopting the same approach for FY27 by approving expenditures totaling the full legislative appropriation of \$1,243,400.

Motion: Judge McCullagh moved to approve funding for the JCTST account in the amount of \$1,243,400. Judge Chris Bown seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Justice for Families Grant GAP (Amy Hernandez and Jordan Murray)

Jordan Murray requested approval to apply for the federal Justice for Families Program grant administered through the Office on Violence Against Women. The proposed three-year grant, totaling approximately \$650,000, would provide continued funding for the Family Safety Facilitation pilot program beyond the expiration of its current grant in Fiscal Year 2027.

Amy Hernandez reported that the pilot program has demonstrated positive outcomes by increasing safety for petitioners, respondents, and their children while receiving favorable feedback from court users. She explained that the grant requires no matching funds from the Judiciary and would not impact the operating budget during the grant period. Ms. Hernandez indicated that additional grant opportunities or state funding would be pursued upon the grant's expiration if continued funding is needed.

Motion: Judge Cornish made a motion to approve the grant application, as presented. Judge McCullagh seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

6. JUDICIAL CONDUCT COMMISSION (Alex Peterson)

Alex Peterson, Executive Director of the Judicial Conduct Commission (JCC), provided the Commission's biannual update. He reported that Commission membership remains stable, with one attorney member appointment anticipated next year due to the upcoming expiration of a current member's term. Mr. Peterson reported that the Commission's caseload continues to increase, with approximately 210 assigned cases projected for the year, resulting in additional personnel demands. He clarified that this figure reflects matters accepted within the Commission's jurisdiction for preliminary investigation rather than all complaints received. During the reporting period, the Commission issued three public disciplinary dispositions and three dismissals with warnings. One additional matter is currently pending before the Utah Supreme Court.

Mr. Peterson discussed an emerging policy issue regarding the intersection of JCC proceedings and attorney discipline administered through the Office of Professional Conduct (OPC). He explained that the Commission will now continue disciplinary proceedings when a judge resigns or retires, resulting in formal Commission action and recommendations to the Supreme Court. He noted that, under the current framework, once the JCC has acted on a matter, the OPC may no longer have jurisdiction to pursue separate attorney discipline arising from the same conduct. Judicial Council members discussed the statutory authority of the JCC, noting that the Commission's jurisdiction is limited to judicial misconduct and does not extend to attorney discipline or misconduct occurring outside an individual's judicial capacity.

Mr. Peterson also provided an update on the Commission's review of its policies, procedures, and security practices following the unauthorized disclosure of confidential investigative materials. He stated that a special committee has been established to evaluate internal policies, administrative rules, and potential statutory changes. Planned operational improvements include implementing encrypted JCC email domains and secure document-sharing systems, strengthening confidentiality protections, expanding annual commissioner training and recertification, and hiring a case manager/privacy

officer to oversee records management and privacy compliance.

He also outlined several proposed administrative rule amendments, including revisions related to commissioner reconsideration requests, ex parte communications, and the placement of confidentiality requirements into administrative rules. Potential statutory amendments under consideration include clarifying the scope of confidential JCC proceedings, strengthening confidentiality provisions, and evaluating additional sanctions for unauthorized disclosures. Mr. Peterson indicated that draft rules and statutory proposals are expected to be presented to the Commission during the summer for further consideration before any legislative discussions.

Council members discussed the importance of maintaining confidence in the judicial disciplinary process and acknowledged that recent events have raised significant concerns regarding confidentiality and public trust. Mr. Peterson expressed appreciation for the support provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts and State Court Administrator during the Commission's recent efforts.

7. BOARD OF JUSTICE COURT JUDGES REPORT (Judge Clay Stucki and Jim Peters)

Judge Clay Stucki presented the biannual report on the Justice Courts. He highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen the court system through strategic consolidation, education, operational improvements, and enhanced small claims practices. He reported that the Board of Justice Court Judges continues to view consolidation as an important long-term strategy. Judge Stucki emphasized the critical role justice courts play in resolving misdemeanor cases before they reach the district courts, noting that eliminating county justice courts would significantly increase district court caseloads and require substantial additional judicial resources.

Judge Stucki reported significant progress in education and training. He described the judicial assistant certification program, expanded Learning Management System courses, webinars, annual conferences, and district-level training as major improvements that have enhanced consistency and professionalism statewide. Jim Peters discussed ongoing outreach to mayors, city councils, county commissioners, and other local officials to improve understanding of the Judiciary's independent role and the responsibilities of justice courts. He noted continued efforts to standardize the title of Judicial Assistant across justice courts to better reflect the complexity of the position and promote consistent classification among local governments.

Judge Stucki discussed improvements to internal control self-assessments and audit compliance. The Board has worked collaboratively with the internal Audit Department to develop a more proactive framework for identifying and correcting deficiencies. Mr. Peters reported that a proposed rule addressing the revised assessment process has been developed in collaboration with stakeholders and will be presented to the Policy and Planning Committee for consideration.

Judge Stucki also highlighted ongoing efforts to improve small claims proceedings through enhancements to Online Dispute Resolution (ODR), updates to the justice court bench book,

improvements to bulk-filing processes, expanded judicial training, and additional support for pro tempore judges.

8. REQUEST TO EXPAND TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION (Jim Peters)

Jim Peters presented a request for the expansion of territorial jurisdiction of the Tremonton Justice Court. Mr. Peters reported that Tremonton City and Garland City approved an interlocal agreement in June 2026. Mr. Peters requested that the Judicial Council approve expanding the territorial jurisdiction of Tremonton City Justice Court to include Garland City.

Motion: Judge Amber Mettler moved to approve the expansion of territorial jurisdiction of Tremonton Justice Court to include Garland City. Judge James Gardner seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

9. JUSTICE COURT CLOSURES (Michael Drechsel)

Michael Drechsel led a discussion regarding justice court closures and the resulting impact on district courts. He reviewed recent developments, including planned court closures, anticipated increases in district court caseloads, and the need for an adequately funded and structured framework before additional responsibilities are shifted to the district courts. Mr. Drechsel also discussed whether expanding the role of district court commissioners could help address anticipated increases in criminal case filings. Judicial Council members expressed concerns that continued Justice Court closures without corresponding funding or structural changes would significantly increase delays in district court proceedings.

Mr. Drechsel reviewed the Council's prior justice court reform recommendations and noted that subsequent developments. Council members reaffirmed their support for the recommendations previously adopted by the Council while recognizing the need to identify practical interim solutions for the upcoming legislative discussions. Members agreed that additional guidance should be developed to address the immediate impacts of justice court closures and to inform the Legislature of the operational consequences if additional resources are not provided.

Motion: Judge Susan Eisenman made a motion for the existing Justice Court Reform ad hoc committee to convene and assist the Assistant State Court Administrator and Judge Gardner to develop supplemental recommendations and potential interim strategies for consideration by the Judicial Council. Justice Petersen seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

10. 2027 JUDICIAL COUNCIL SCHEDULE (Ron Gordon)

The Judicial Council reviewed the proposed 2027 Judicial Council meeting schedule. Ron Gordon led a discussion regarding the practice of scheduling the March Judicial Council meeting in conjunction with the Utah State Bar Spring Convention in St. George. He reviewed past in person attendance by Judicial Council members at the convention. Judicial Council members agreed to keep the meeting in St. George and to encourage participation from members in person.

Motion: Judge Michael Direda made a motion to approve the 2027 Judicial Council schedule as recommended with the amendment for scheduling the July meeting on July 19, 2027. Justice Petersen seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

11. **RULES FOR FINAL APPROVAL** (Keisa Williams)

Keisa Williams presented recommended amendments to CJA Rules 4-906 and 4-906.03. Ms. Williams recommended that the rules be approved on an expedited basis with a June 22, 2026, effective date, followed by a 45-day public comment period.

Motion: Judge Christine Johnson moved to approve CJA Rules 4-906 and 4-906.03 on an expedited basis as recommended, with a June 22, 2026, effective date followed by a 45-day public comment period. Judge Mettler seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

12. **CONSENT CALENDAR** (Associate Chief Justice Jill Pohlman)

Motion: Judge Johnson moved to approve the items on the consent calendar. Judge Mettler seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

13. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion: Judge Cornish made a motion to move into executive session for the purpose of discussing the collective bargaining or litigation. Judge Gardner seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Justice Pohlman and Justice Petersen recused themselves and left the meeting prior to the executive session.

An executive session was held.

14. **ADJOURN** (Associate Chief Justice Jill Pohlman)

The meeting was adjourned.