



Wayne Robey, Clerk
Circuit Court for Howard County
Chair
(410) 313-2160

Conference of Circuit Court Clerks

Maryland Judicial Center 580 Taylor Ave.
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Susan Braniecki, Clerk
Circuit Court for Worcester County
Vice-Chair
(410) 632-5500

MINUTES

A meeting of the Conference of Circuit Court Clerks was held January 26, 2016, at the Judiciary Education and Conference Center in Annapolis, Maryland

Members Present

Hon. Wayne A. Robey, Chair
Circuit Court for Howard County

Hon. Susan Braniecki, Vice-Chair, Clerk, Circuit Court for Worcester County
Hon. Dennis J. Weaver, Clerk, Circuit Court for Washington County
Hon. Mark Bowen, Clerk, Circuit Court for Wicomico County
Hon. Sandra Dalton, Clerk, Circuit Court for Frederick County
Hon. Robert Duckworth, Clerk, Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County
Hon. Sharon Hancock, Clerk, Circuit Court for Charles County
Hon. Dawne Lindsey, Clerk, Circuit Court for Allegany County
Judy Lohman, District Administrative Clerk, Montgomery County
Hon. Scott MacGlashan, Clerk, Circuit Court for Queen Anne's County
Hon. Barbara Meiklejohn, Clerk, Circuit Court for Montgomery County
Hon. Timothy Miller, Clerk, Circuit Court for Garrett County
Hon. Donald Sealing, Clerk, Circuit Court for Carroll County
Timothy Sheridan, Administrator, Circuit Court for Baltimore County
Hon. Mary Ann Shortall, Clerk, Circuit Court for Talbot County
Hon. Amy Craig, Clerk, Circuit Court for Dorchester County
Pamela Harris, State Court Administrator

Also Present:

Faye Matthews, Deputy State Court Administrator
Melinda Jensen, Assistant Administrator for Operations, Administrative Office of the Courts
Lee Robinson, Director, Judiciary Human Resources, Administrative Office of the Courts
Andrew Beck, Project Director, CONNECT Project, Metaformers, Inc.
Marti Robinson, Payroll Manager, Judiciary Department of Budget and Finance
Eliana Pangelinan, Staff, Administrative Office of the Courts

A meeting of the Conference of Circuit Court Clerks was held at the Judiciary Education and Conference Center, beginning 12:06 pm. The Honorable Wayne Robey, Chair, made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2015 meeting. The motion was seconded by Dennis Weaver and unanimously approved.

1. CONNECT

Lee Robinson, Mindy Jensen, Andrew Beck, and Marti Robinson were present to give an update and answer questions regarding CONNECT. They indicated that CONNECT is functioning well and as of Conference meeting, 364 cases have been resolved and closed, while 36 cases remain open and unresolved. The “War Room” is monitored by a live person, and so far every 3 calls are directed to voicemail. Employees are able to complete their timesheets from home, if necessary. If an employee does not have internet access at his/her home, a manager or a “Super User” can complete and submit the employee’s timesheets on his/her behalf. However, the employee will have the option to revise the timesheet previously submitted by accessing CONNECT and locating the timesheet to be revised, making the correction and resubmitting for approval by a manager.

Marti Robinson expressed concerns that the Human Resources department is experiencing the same issues in CONNECT as when timesheets were in paper format. For example, the department is noticing entries that an employee worked a 5 hour day without accounting for the remaining 3 hours of the workday. Employees need to be paid for hours worked whether it is overtime, leave used, or regular pay. It is important that timesheets are submitted to managers for approval by noon on Tuesdays and that managers submit it to payroll by 8 am on Wednesdays. This is because Human Resources must be finished entering time for each employee of the Judiciary by 3 pm on Thursdays. Any incorrect timesheets will be sent back to the manager for the employee to correct and resubmit. In fact, the department is sending back no less than 500 timesheets for corrections. For this reason, managers need to verify that 80 hours are accounted for on timesheets. Since employees are able to access and change a submitted timesheet, a discussion to set a cutoff time for all timesheets to be finalized is taking place. If a manager is unsure about a timesheet being reported, a report can be generated through the time and labor dashboard. The time and labor dashboard shows the hours reported, hours to be worked, and if the employee’s time sheet has been reported.

Managers need to become familiar with the electronic format of this new timesheet. For instance, checking the employee’s leave balance and setting a work schedule. All work schedules are set to a default workday of 8 am to 4:30 pm. This can be changed, if necessary. Instructions are found in the UPK in the CONNECT system. Managers are to contact the help desk to have a schedule created if he/she is unable to use one of the pre-set schedules.

Requests for customizations in CONNECT are being reviewed. What works for one person will not work for another; each court has its own way of conducting day-to-day operations. As a result, there is an advisory group looking into customization requests. Some examples of customization requests include: departmental managers handling human resources where a clerk and chief deputy clerk are not involved and would like to be, managers processing retirement paperwork where human resources is no longer able to access this, applying for FMLA extensions, and granting security to one person and not to every person across the Judiciary in that position. Sometimes customizations cannot be done. The solution may be to adjust ones practices to comport with what the system is providing. A point was raised where clerks do not have access to their managers or supervisors information. It was questioned that if access is granted pursuant to the organizational flow chart, then why do clerks not have access to everything within their

departments? This is being looked into so that clerks are able to access all information.

CONNECT is set up to have two levels of approvals; one person to enter the information and the other to approve it. Based on this, a comment was made as to the amount of notifications to be received; multiple emails when leave is submitted for approval, two emails for a time sheet submitted, and information received as to what the employees contribute to the leave bank. Additionally, it was mentioned that employees use this new electronic timesheet as a go-around from the chain of command. The employee believes that an entry of an absence prior to the projected date suffices as notification. The CONNECT team noted that the system is not set up to eliminate human interaction, but to make everyone's role easier, emphasizing the importance of communicating with one another and not distancing oneself from employees.

The Conference was advised to continue to contact the help desk with any issues with CONNECT or if there are any comments. If a request is not answered right away, it is because it is being looked into. Every request and information that is received from CONNECT users is subject to a serious discussion. Another CONNECT training session will be scheduled.

2. Committee updates

❖ Judicial Council

- There is a new Communication Protocols that sets forth the standards and expectations when communicating internally or externally. For instance, these protocols highlights judiciary branding and easy recognition of judiciary emails.
- DCM guides for both Circuit and District Courts are being drafted, please be available to contribute any input if asked.
- MDEC has received an abundance of attorney participation and has received high feedback.
- A new workgroup has been formed, Workgroup on the State of the Court Reports, that will review the annual reports submitted by trial courts. The workgroup will prepare recommendations based on issues and trends contained in the reports and include the future of Maryland's trial courts over the next five years.
- Sharon Hancock and other members of the Council whose terms have ended were presented with a plaque in recognition of their contributions to the work of the Council.
- The legislative package included a request for the need of 31 additional judgeships in Maryland trial courts. Also, included was a draft bill entitled Juvenile Causes – Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement – Age of Child. The legislation will bring Maryland into compliance with federal law.

❖ Court Access and Community Relations Committee

- No update

❖ Court Operations Committee

- No update

❖ Education Committee

- No update

❖ Technology Committee:

- Scott MacGlashan and Pamela Harris presented information regarding legislation on Case Search. Every clerk should have access to the Secure Case Search system. Law enforcement, legislators, advocates, and State's Attorneys are eligible for access provided that the appropriate forms are completed; JIS maintains a record of who has access. Secure Case Search does not contain adoption, CINA, and most juvenile case information nor does it contain images of documents.
- Registered users of MDEC are able to access their cases to include images of documents; JIS will provide log-in information. To gain access, attorneys must complete an application. A self-represented litigant must present some form of identification at the court along with a complete application. Although it may be an audit issue to retain a driver's license copy, it is MDEC policy to submit a copy along with the application. It was noted that if this is an area of concern, the driver's license and application can be submitted directly to JIS, in which case the court will not retain a copy of the applicant's driver's license for court records. If MDEC is available at the time of filing a case, all parties need to be made aware of this service.
- Donald Sealing presented information regarding Senate Bill 171 – Guardianship of a Minor or Disable Person – Criminal History Records Check. A concern arose that courts will incur the expense of background checks and finger printing. Because of this, clerks will have to request funds from the prospective guardian. Any questions regarding this bill should be directed to Kelley O'Connor, Director of Government Relations.
- ❖ Specialty Courts and Dockets Committee:
 - No update
- ❖ Conference of Circuit Court Administrators
 - The January 25, 2016 meeting was canceled due to the Judiciary being closed because of the snow storm. The next meeting is scheduled for March 29, 2016.
- ❖ Conference of Circuit Court Judges
 - The January 25, 2016 meeting was canceled due to the Judiciary being closed because of the snow storm. The next meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2016.
- ❖ Land Record Oversight Committee
 - No update
- ❖ Rules Committee
 - A new rule took effect January 1, 2016 which resulted in revised forms for judiciary accounting when a guardian of a person or minor, whether a healthy or an orphaned minor, is involved. Also, new forms are available for the transfer of structured settlements. Because of this, a hearing must be held within 45 days from the date of filing. Please ensure that the assignment office is made aware of this.

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There being no further business before the Conference, Mr. Robey adjourned the meeting at 2:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eliana Pangelinan, Staff