

CONFERENCE OF CIRCUIT COURT ADMINISTRATORS MEETING

Minutes
November 28, 2017

Conference Members Present:

Timothy Sheridan (Chair)
Doug Hofstedt (Vice-Chair)
Matthew Barrett
Melissa Batie
Sondra Battle
Amy Craig
Michael Howard
Jennifer Keiser
Joy Keller
Lisa Mohink
Lionel Moore
Judy Rupp
Teri Scherer
Deborah Zrioka
Bobbie Warnken

Administrative Office of the Courts:

Lynne Murphy

Deputy Court Administrator Guests:

Richard Abbott
Nancy Faulkner

A meeting of the Conference of Circuit Court Administrators was held on November 28, 2017, at the Judiciary Education & Conference Center, beginning at 10:00 AM. Tim Sheridan began the meeting by welcoming everyone. He then called for approval of the minutes from the September 12, 2017 meeting. Joy Keller moved for their approval. The motion to approve was seconded by Matt Barrett and passed.

COOP PLANS – Mindy Jensen

- Mindy delivered a PowerPoint presentation regarding COOP plans. She began by defining COOP as Continuity of Operations Planning.
- The plans are housed in SharePoint, and are updated by assigned personnel. Employees (POIs) should be updating their own personal information on a regular basis, as a result of name changes, new contact numbers, etc. It is crucial that employees are reachable in the event of an emergency.
- Employee emergency contact information (Insight) will be married with the COOP plans. Employees can be assigned different membership types, as well, including Essential Personnel, Emergency Response Team, and Incident Commander, etc.
- She explained that she understands there are numerous challenges with the plans. One of the issues will hopefully be resolved with the replacement of the current notification system, RAVE. Procurement is working now to find an alternative system, but RAVE will be used until

employees are instructed otherwise. Emergency notifications are also posted on CourtNet and MD Courts. One potential solution being considered is VDI (Virtual Desktop), which allows offsite access to COOP plans.

- Questions/Concerns:
 - Tim Sheridan asked, what should Administrators be working on right now?
 - Mindy recommended maintaining the plans already in place, since it will be several months until the changes unfold (VDI, RAVE replacement, and COOP site). Everything is in flux, mostly because of the RAVE replacement's features being unknown as of right now. Terri Vukovich or Mindy can be contacted as the point person for questions.
 - Doug Hofstedt asked, will Administrators be involved in the development, so they can express their specific needs?
 - Mindy said that yes, they might be able to customize some features for themselves, depending on the capability of the RAVE replacement system.

BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES – Lee Robinson/Jen Boswell/Amy Reed

- The team from HR gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining the ins and outs of interview questions. It is important that the right questions be asked. Some questions are simply inappropriate. Training on interviewing has been rolled out through all courts in Maryland.
- Amy Reed led everyone through a 3-part exercise, including a true/false portion, a logistical presentation, and an activity.
 - Telephone pre-screens have been helpful in determining whether or not to conduct in-person interviews. When screened beforehand, time is saved and a higher quality of candidates can be gathered for the face-to-face interviews.
 - It is recommended that a variety of references be contacted, both superiors and peers. This includes past supervisors, current supervisors, and colleagues.
 - The assessments being used are a valuable part of the hiring process, in addition to the pre-screening and in-person interview.
- Logistics:
 - Discrimination Laws – There are multiple federal laws, but Maryland state law incorporates all of those laws and additional ones.
 - ADA – It is a must to make sure all job descriptions are updated.
 - Multi-Step Interview Process – This process allows for more documentation along the way, and provides more substantiation for the hiring decision. This information serves as a helpful reminder down the road.
 - Each member of the interview panel should take their own notes and submit them when making the decision.
- Questions/Comments:
 - Doug asked whether people can look at candidates' social media sites.
 - Joy Keller, Judy Rupp, Lionel Moore, and Doug Hofstedt all shared their perspectives and advice they had been given. There was no general consensus reached among the Administrators.
 - Amy Reed suggested not looking because it opens the door for having to defend yourself more.

- Lee Robinson commented that there is a risk either way. If you do not look, it could be considered negligent hiring, but if you do, it could be considered discrimination. Candidates do not want to be held responsible for things done in their private lives. He urges Administrators to make decisions that are easily defensible. It is easier to defend it if the information has been presented to you by someone else.
- Lionel asked if it is a good practice for the interview panel to score responses.
 - Amy Reed said that yes, it is. Score individually, then rank, then have a conversation with fellow panel members.
- Joy asked if something can be posted on the website listing best practices.
 - Amy Reed shared that there are tip sheets, which she will send and Lynne will post on the SharePoint site.
- Lisa Mohink inquired as to the best practice for assignments/assessments prior to interviews.
 - Amy advised that the first step should be the pre-screen, followed by the assessment and in-person interview.

ADR DATA COLLECTION – Jonathan Rosenthal/Nick White/Emmett Ward

- Jonathan provided everyone with a folder of reference materials, and delivered a PowerPoint presentation with Nick and Emmett.
- Certain items are highlighted on the Courthouse Equity Strategic Plan. These are items with which ADR can help courts.
- Each court should have someone in the building who can answer ADR questions, but if there is no on-site guru, the ADR office can be called.
 - Alan Weiner is the Court Resources ADR Director.
- The data collection survey includes forms comprised of multiple sheets. The green copy is for the practitioners, the yellow is for the participants, and the blue/purple is for the attorneys.
- While the Executive Summary of the ADR Landscape is in the folder, the full Landscape is available online. It has not been updated since its creation, but the plan is to update it every other year beginning in 2018. Courts will be contacted for updated information, starting with the Court Administrators, who can then delegate to others to provide the requested information. Every 5 years a deeper look will be taken.
- ADDRESS (ADR Evaluation Support System)
 - Takes all information from green, yellow, and blue/purple sheets, and merges with case management systems (MDEC or UCS). This way, all information is in one place.
 - Nick explained that the forms are scannable, and that the system brings two databases together into one reporting tool. Data can also be exported in other programs, such as Excel. There are now pilot sites, and the first group of courts has begun using ADDRESS.
 - Emmett then conducted a demonstration of running reports. He explained that different, special scanners will be issued, which work specifically for these forms. Only one or two employees would need the special scanner, and it will probably be one person with the scanner and multiple people trained to use it.

CONFERENCE OF CIRCUIT COURT LAW LIBRARY DIRECTORS – *Kate Martin*

- Kate distributed a packet to the members, as well as the “Finding Maryland Law” tri-fold pamphlet.
- She shared that the first meeting of the Conference occurred in May of 1998.
- The law library is the beginning, middle, and end of many people’s experiences in courthouses, and serves as a quiet, safe place for the public. Because they are so service-oriented, working closely with Pam Ortiz, Lonni Summers, and the Access to Justice Department is very helpful.
- Librarians at times substitute for other employees, filling in when they are not there. Many libraries are even making the effort to be more like a self-help center.
 - Tim Sheridan shared that, in Baltimore County, there has been some combining of the library and self-help center.
- The librarians would also like to help people with MDEC.
- Currently, only 1/3 of courthouses have librarians. A kiosk system is in the works to allow the remaining 2/3 of courts to access librarians. They are also looking into developing regional libraries.
- Questions/Comments:
 - Tim Sheridan likes that librarians are becoming more of a part of the court staff, and would love to see more of that. He also hopes that more courts will view the library as another self-help center, and believes that disseminating information from the law libraries to local libraries would be beneficial.
 - Melissa Batie is looking for funding to open a library and bring it back to life. How do other small jurisdictions handle their lack of a law library?
 - Tim Sheridan suggests asking Pam Ortiz whether to refer to a person as a librarian or a self-help professional. He will talk to Pam.
 - Jenn Keiser shared that the Howard County Circuit Court utilizes a work station with a home page link to self-help, if there is no person there to assist.
 - Debbie Zrioka said that some resources might need to be housed online, and others on paper. A balance must be struck.

PEOPLE’S LAW LIBRARY DEVELOPMENTS – *Leland Sampson*

- Lee delivered a PowerPoint presentation, in which he explained more of what that People’s Law Library does. He described the gap between criminal and civil resources. The People’s Law Library bridges that gap, providing extensive civil resources.
- The home page has recently been reformatted, and now includes a new self-help chat button and contact info, as well as new menus. The search feature in the legal services directory has also been enhanced to allow for easier, more direct access to information. The clinic calendar allows people to see clinic hours and directions to the clinics.
- Legal Articles: Pages covering sensitive topics, such as domestic violence, have a button labeled “Escape Now” to quickly exit, for users’ protection.
- Given the great need for translation services, a panel will appear on the right if translation is available. It is currently provided in the 4 most commonly-used languages.
- Every article has a citation to its primary source, and there is a wide variety of content in the articles, including everything from child custody to raising chickens.

- Most website traffic comes from Google searches. Since most people have a smart phone, even if they do not own a computer, the People's Law Library site is formatted for use on mobile devices. The "print" option includes all links and "bread crumbs".
- If there is anything missing from the site, Lee asked that Administrators contact him and let him know. He is not sure if the Law Library staff ever conduct field visits to the courts, but suggested that Administrators contact Steve Anderson or Catherine McGuire to inquire.

POLICIES & EMPLOYEE RECEIPT VERIFICATIONS – Doug Hofstedt

- A sample of the Acknowledgement form was distributed. The Word doc was also emailed and posted on SharePoint.

2018 CCCA Vice-Chair – Tim Sheridan

- The Conference unanimously voted and selected Matt Barrett as the next vice-chair.

2018 Committee Vacancies – Tim Sheridan

- There is no word yet on who has been selected for the various committees and subcommittees. The goal is to have a representative on all of them. Tim Sheridan will email Faye Gaskin to find out which vacancies are filled, and which are left.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Tim Miller is Amy Craig's replacement on the Conference of Circuit Court Clerks, and will take her place as their representative at CCCA meetings.
- Matt Barrett shared that the county attorney is looking at a written agreement with RecordXchange for audio recording services. He will send the proposal to Tim Sheridan to share the information.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

❖ JUDICIAL COUNCIL – Tim Sheridan

- The Council met last week. Matt will be sitting on the Council next year.
- Judge Waxman shared a report concerning human trafficking. Maryland moved up from a D to a B on the national score card, based on new laws and procedures to protect people.
- Judge Wells presented on behalf of Court Operations, regarding the Jury Commissioners Manual. Court Administrators should review it to see if anything needs to be changed before it goes before the Council for approval.
- The main recommendation of the Court Technology Committee is that everyone be converted to mdcourts.gov email addresses.
- Chief Judge Morrissey presented regarding the ADR's pervasiveness in the jurisdictions.
- The Education Committee has a new course catalog.

❖ **CONFERENCE OF CIRCUIT JUDGES – *Tim Sheridan***

- A prominent insurance attorney presented, wanting time standards changed. Judges will not be granting his request.
- Safe at Home – Victims of domestic violence can have their address removed from different venues for their protection. The question is how to get the word to a judge not to ask for the address in protective order and custody cases.
- A presentation was given regarding courthouse security. The MSBA attended and shared that they want to avoid lines with a card, or want a universal screening policy. Keith Bageant explained that the majority of people will have to go through security.

❖ **CONFERENCE OF CIRCUIT COURT CLERKS – *Doug Hofstedt***

- All items discussed were clerk-related issues.
- The Joint Conference was discussed, and Plan B ideas will be shared shortly. They are still hoping for early spring.

❖ **COURT TECHNOLOGY – *Matthew Barrett***

- The email retention policy has been under review, in order to establish something internal. They ultimately decided to retain all emails for 12 months, then delete all emails after that time, unless flagged by the user. In order to do these things, everyone needs to be on the same mdcourts.gov system. There is funding to supply the licenses, and there are only 5 counties remaining that need to be converted to the state email system.
- The November meeting was cancelled.

❖ **COURT ACCESS – *Judy Lohman***

- Judy was not in attendance.

❖ **SPECIALTY COURTS & DOCKETS – *Judy Rupp***

- Judy was not there to share.

❖ **ADR – *Tim Sheridan***

- Teri Scherer shared that she took the 40-hour MACRO course, and enjoyed it. It was intense, but worth the time.

❖ **SENIOR JUDGES – *Sondra Battle***

- The last meeting was held on September 26th.
- Lee Robinson and staff presented about retirement.
- Gail Graham replaced Lolli Petrillo in handling senior judge matters.
- The issue of laptops for senior judges was discussed.

❖ **JUDICIAL ASSISTANTS – *Teri Scherer***

- A course is being developed, including producing the modules for the online platform.

- ❖ **COURT OPERATIONS – *Sandy Smith***
 - Sandy was not there to present.
- ❖ **JURY USE – *Sandy Smith***
 - Sandy was not present.
- ❖ **CASE MANAGEMENT – *Tim Sheridan and Jenn Keiser***
 - DCM plans need to be reviewed, but they have not come back yet. Once this has been done, best practices will be developed based on them.
- ❖ **COURTHOUSE EQUITY – *Stephanie Medina***
 - Neither Stephanie nor Judy was in attendance.
- ❖ **FORMS – *VACANT***
 - Still waiting to hear whether or not Nancy Faulkner will have a spot.
- ❖ **COURT REPORTING WORKGROUP – *Teri Scherer***
 - This group has not met in years. Judge Clagett is still the Chair, but has not scheduled any meetings.
- ❖ **RECORDS RETENTION WORKGROUP – *Jenn Keiser***
 - The workgroup has not met.
- ❖ **EDUCATION – *Judy Lohman***
 - Judy was not present to share.
- ❖ **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – *Tim Sheridan***
 - The last meeting was September 20th. New education brochures have been distributed by the Education Committee listing class offerings.
- ❖ **TECHNOLOGY TRAINING – *Doug Hofstedt***
 - At the end of January, Wombat security programs will be sending out tutorials for good security practices. Administrators should encourage their staff to participate.
 - Doug sent everyone the minutes from the last meeting.