

**Justice Action Group
JAG Executive Committee**

November 16, 2020

2:00 PM

MINUTES

Present via Zoom: ACJ Mead, Judge Rich, Charlie Dingman, Jaye Martin, Michelle Draeger, and Liz Stout.

By telephone: Jamie Kilbreth

I. Approval of Minutes from the September 21, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting.

II. Report from the Chair – J. Mead

- a. Checking in—how are we all doing? Justice Mead hopes everyone is doing well.
- b. Inventory updates: No changes made.
- c. Update on reporting pro bono hours with annual attorney registration: Justice Mead discussed the issues we're having with reporting pro bono hours on the Bar registration cards. He is reviewing the current questions on the registration form to make it clearer regarding the conditions for KC status and to specify an exact number of hours.
- d. Pro bono criminal representation to be included in Katahdin Counsel recognition: Justice Mead referred to an email from Stephen Schwartz. He is going to write back to Mr. Schwartz to say he doesn't think it's something we can bring in right now. Liz suggested having a separate category for people doing free criminal work. Justice Mead pointed out that the KC program was created exclusively for civil pro bono recognition and changing that would require some substantial review at the SJC. He suggested that any such discussions should probably wait until the Legislature concludes its review of the Maine Criminal Indigent Legal Services that is currently underway. He asked Judge Rich to add this to his pro bono committee agenda to be discussed.
- e. Status of new case management system and e-filing: As of today CMS has gone live in Bangor for limited case types and the Business and Consumer Docket. E-filing will go live on November 30th.
- f. Future projects for JAG: Justice Mead said at the time COVID hit we were looking for other initiatives JAG could undertake beyond being a communication and think tank hub. Any major initiatives will probably need to await the end of the COVID siege.
- g. ATJ Day 2021 at the Legislature (March 31st or June 10th): Charlie discussed the two dates that are set aside, but indicated we don't know yet how the Legislature is going to be structured in order to be able to have an ATJ Day. He thinks it may just be Justice Mead's address to the judiciary committee.

- h. Review Board and Exec. Committee rosters: Justice Mead thinks we're up to date in regard to the individuals who represent these rosters.

III./IV. Vice-Chair's Report/Pro Bono Committee Report – Judge Rich: Rich reported on the membership which now includes Liz Stout and Beth Richardson. Beth has agreed to become co-chair. Beth is well versed in the issues the committee has been dealing with. Last meeting was October 26. Julia Sheridan has been a highly contributing member to the group. Judge Rich thinks Julia is going to be succeeded by somebody else from her office, but he doesn't have a name yet. Next meeting is set for Dec. 7th before the December board meeting. Either Judge Rich, Beth or Liz will report at the Board meeting. The committee is going to look at why the numbers of KC are not up because he felt we'd get many more with the bar registration cards. They will review Stephen Schwartz's proposal that pro bono work in criminal cases be considered for KC status. The committee had questions regarding fees for emeritus counsel status. Judge Rich confirmed that the committee continues to have great enthusiasm for their mission and meetings are always well attended.

V. Legislative Committee Report – Charlie Dingman: The committee has been very busy for the last few months addressing a variety of funding issues and possibilities with the active support of Justice Mead. They are grateful for that. Efforts have included a letter to the Governor asking for funding for relief related to COVID challenges for civil legal services. Everyone has recognized that the language of LD214 resulted in a result that is not consistent with everyone's expectations and needs to be fixed as soon as possible. A corrective bill has been drafted and submitted and Justice Mead has written a letter confirming the position of the Judicial Branch. Charlie said they're starting to think about next steps for advocating for broader civil legal services funding. Providers are doing a tremendous amount of work.

VI. ACP Chair's Report – Jamie Kilbreth: Jamie reported that the providers are working in close coordination as they face challenges created by the COVID crisis. Much focus has been directed to the funding shortfall and the ACP confirms and endorses the Legislative Committee Report.

VII. Justice Systems Subcommittee Report – See Justice Systems Committee Meeting Minutes of Oct. 15th. (Attached): Justice Mead commended the Justice Systems Committee for its work. The Minutes from its last meeting confirm that the committee is doing exactly what the Board anticipated when it created the subcommittee. Robust and productive communication is taking place between the "people on the ground" in both the Judicial Branch and the civil legal services organizations. Jaye reported the group is meeting quarterly. She said everyone attending has indicated they are getting something out of the meetings to take back with them. Justice Mead agrees that this committee has really solidified into exactly what he'd hoped it would be. He reaffirmed the commitment of the Judicial Branch to the effort and will be sure to advise the JB representatives that their participation and contribution to the subcommittee are valued aspects of their job descriptions.

VIII. Executive Committee Organization Updates:

- Courts: Justice Mead reported that the courts have been intensely focused on modifying procedures and approaches to maximize access to the courts while still protecting the safety and security of the public and court personnel. The current restrictions, even with a substantial number of matters being addressed via video remote proceedings, result in the court being unable to schedule more than priority cases at present.
- ACP: Reported earlier.
- VLP: Justice Mead inquired how VLP is doing. Liz said they are making progress. They are moving forward with their clinics being remote. Those sessions are running two days per week and expect to go to three days per week in December. She said a couple thousand people get served by these clinics. Some clinics such as small claims are hoping to restart perhaps in January. Homeless clinic starts at the end of the month. Trying to find pro bono attorneys to take on cases is becoming a challenge. She mentioned the Mead Fellowship program is moving forward.
- MJF: Michele reported on the Campaign for Justice. She said it was going surprisingly well. They're surpassing the 2018 and 2019 amounts. She thinks they'll meet their revised goal of \$614,000. They may even meet their original goal of \$630,000. IOLTA is seemingly stabilized for the time being. They're not currently losing funds. They're gaining a little bit. She's hoping they can build in a little bit of a cushion. The Racial Justice Fund they are currently in the middle of developing a Phase II fund raising plan. They're at about \$275,000 for it. They have paused to develop a plan in Phase II. They're hoping to get out an RFP in early 2021. They'll be providing grants between \$2,500 and \$10,000 to organizations who present proposals to get their organization to analyze implicit bias/systemic racial bias in their organizations. She reported on the Coffin Fellow applications and process this year. MJF is finishing out their audit too.
 - MSBA/Lawyers in Libraries: Not present to report.
 - MTLA: Not present to report.

IX. Other Business:

X. Proposed 2020 JAG Executive Committee and Board meeting dates.

JAG Board: (Will be held via Zoom)

December 21 – 3:00

Executive Committee:

TBD for 2021