

**Justice Action Group Board of Directors Meeting
June 20, 2023 — 3:00 p.m.
Feeney Conference Room-Cumberland County Courthouse**

Present: Justice Mead, Mag. Judge Wolf, Judge Darvin, Michelle Draeger, Charlie Dingman, Judith Fletcher-Woodbury, Thomas Fritzsche, Christian Lewis, Arnie MacDonald, Robyn Merrill, Christopher Northrop, Atlee Reilly, and Liz Stout
Via Telephone: Stacy Stitham

MINUTES

I. CONSENT AGENDA

(These will be considered based on written materials distributed with the Agenda.)

- A. Welcomes and introductions
- B. Reports from providers: Justice Mead commented—once again—that the providers continue to deliver extraordinary services with limited resources. The reports provide an excellent opportunity to exchange updates on current circumstances.

Liz Stout asked if there were particular elements that should be included in the reports to maximize their helpfulness. After discussion it was informally agreed that the following categories would be particularly helpful:

- (a) Active initiatives
- (b) “Numbers” e.g., clients served, cases resolved, etc.
- (c) Challenges to providers’ missions
- (d) Highlights, e.g., particular accomplishments, events
- (e) End of year summaries (annual reports?)

ACTION ITEM: It was agreed that the providers, perhaps through the ACP group, would review and refine the elements to be included in the provider reports and promulgate a template for the periodic reports to the Justice Action Group.

- C. Approval of minutes: JAG Board, January 4, 2023 meeting: No additions or corrections having been noted, the Minutes are accepted and made a part of the permanent JAG record.

II. WORKING AGENDA

A. Report from the Chair (*J. Mead*)

- i. Inventory review/updates: Justice Mead asked the providers to let Cindy know if any aspects of the initiative inventory need updating. [NOTE: The reporting template (item I(B), above, will be added to the ACP column in the inventory.]
- ii. Rural Access to Justice Task Force (MSBA): Justice Mead briefly discussed the Rural Access to Justice Task Force that has recently been initiated by the MSBA. The task force convenes a group of individuals and organizations with a wide variety of experience and insights for the purpose of exploring new approaches and explores the prospects of sharing resources for expanding access to judicial resources (both civil and criminal) in remote underserved areas of the state.
- iii. Access to Justice Tax Credit (36 M.R.S. § 5219-YY): Justice Mead commented that the ATJ tax credit program is off to a terrific start and is now into its second round of applications. The MJF is administering the program on behalf of the SJC. It is one of several initiatives to encourage attorneys to practice in underserved areas. The VLP is assisting in CLE efforts.
- iv. Katahdin Counsel report/Bar Registration optional online reporting: Bar registration has been delayed until later in July. Pro bono figures should be available shortly after the registration period closes.
- v. Update on Odyssey Case Management System and e-filing: Progress continues after the Barry Dunn review and new governance models have been implemented. It is anticipated that the Odyssey system will be rolled out to Lewiston and Auburn courts in October 2023. The Rules for Electronic Court Systems are being reviewed for consistency with other court rules and court practices. Any proposed new rules and changes will be posted for comment by the public (including civil legal services providers) before any new rules are promulgated.

- B. Report from the Vice Chair/Pro Bono Committee (*Magistrate Judge Wolf*): Judge Wolf reported the Pro Bono Committee continues to present pro bono roundtables that often occur in the context of social gatherings. The committee is particularly interested in engaging with attorneys serving in corporate and non-governmental organizations.

The committee continues to follow the prospect of CLE credits being awarded for pro bono work.

- C. ACP: (*Counsel position currently vacant*): The ACP continues to meet monthly to discuss matters of mutual concern. The members recently completed semi-annual reviews of their referral processes. They are working to coordinate office hours to facilitate in-person intakes for off-hours referrals. The providers are sharing CLE and other training opportunities and resources.
- D. Legislative Committee (*C. Dingman*): Charlie reported on recent legislative activities. The JAG legislative committee and the providers have been working tirelessly to communicate and educate legislators on the importance of civil access to justice. We should be hearing shortly on the final appropriations decisions.
- E. MSBA (*Stacy Stitham or designee*): Stacy confirmed that the MSBA Rural Access Task Force, which is chaired by Zachary McNally, is up and running, and deferred to Justice Mead's earlier comments. The task force, and the MSBA's commitment to rural access to justice, will be part of discussions at the Summer Meeting.
- F. MTLA (*Christian Lewis*): Chris reported that the MTLA is committed to rural access to justice, and welcomes the involvement of MTLA members who are available to offer their experience and insights on possible initiatives.
- G. MJF (*Judith Fletcher Woodbury*): Judy reported that Michelle and the folks at MJF have done a terrific job in identifying five new attorneys who qualify to take advantage of the access to justice tax

credit. Judy reminded the group that the Maine Revenue Services has confirmed that previously certified individuals can recertify for the credit for up to five subsequent years. We should have some excellent data on the efficacy of the project when the review is conducted in 2027.

The Campaign for Justice is on target and a little bit ahead of this time last year. IOLTA income is robust and climbing.

The Maine Justice Foundation has recently concluded the LGBTQ fund grant process selections and grants will be announced soon.

H. Open discussion/ New Business: None

I. **Future Meetings of the JAG Board:**

Dec. 12, 2023 – 3:00 – Portland – Feeney Conference Room

Future Meetings of the JAG Executive Committee:

Sept. 18, 2023 – 2:00 – Augusta – SJC Conf. Room

Nov. 13, 2023 – 2:00 – Augusta – SJC Conf. Room

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.