

**Justice Action Group
JAG Executive Committee**

November 14, 2022 – 2:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

MINUTES

Participants: Mead, J., Sue Roche, Molly Butler Brown, and Charlie Dingman

By telephone: Judge Wolf

- I. Approval of Minutes** from September 19, 2022. No additions or corrections noted. They will be made a part of the JAG permanent record.

No updates noted for the inventory.

II. Report from Chair – J. Mead:

a. Civil Process Stakeholders Working Group: Justice Mead reported the Charter for this recently constituted group, which includes representation of the civil legal services providers, was approved on October 13th. The group is moving forward with brainstorming ideas to assist in moving the civil case backlog forward. Chairs are Liz Stout and Eric Wycoff of Pierce Atwood, and Justice Horton will serve as Liaison to the SJC.

b. Access to Justice Day at the Legislature: March 29, 2023: Early planning will be starting soon (see below).

c. New Directions for JAG: The providers have produced an excellent evaluation and report. The consensus is that the time is not right for a major ATJ Commission initiative, but the topic will continue to be a subject of conversation and consideration.

d. JAG participation in NLS Pro Bono Fair: See Magistrate Judge Wolf's report below.

e. JAG website/contributions welcome: Justice Mead invited JAG members to share events or news from their organizations as we reinvigorate the JAG website.

f. Review membership of Executive Committee and Board: Justice Mead will review and update the memberships lists of the Board and Executive Committee.

g. Disability Rights Maine (DRM)/JAG membership: The Executive Committee members enthusiastically endorsed the addition of Disability Rights Maine to the membership of the Justice Action Group. A formal vote will be taken at the next Board meeting. DRM will be invited to attend that meeting.

h. Navigator program: Krystal Williams of the Alpha Group has assembled a group to look into the prospect of a court navigators' program to operate under the auspices of the AmeriCorps program to serve the Maine courts. We will be watching with great interest.

III. Vice Chair's Report and Pro Bono Committee Report – J. Wolf: Judge Wolf reported they have had a very busy Fall. Priority for 2022-2023 remains rural access to justice. In September 2022, a sub-group of the Pro Bono Committee held a Zoom law firm roundtable with a focus on mid-size firms. Every invitee attended and some firms sent more than one representative. The pro bono committee has come up with an action plan as a result of this round table. The MSBA Young Lawyers Committee hosted the annual Pro Bono Fair at Verrill on October 12th and it was a great success. All legal services providers were present. There was a large crowd of young lawyers and also lawyers nearing retirement who are excited about getting involved with pro bono work. In addition, not specific to JAG, on Oct. 4th the federal court sponsored a Federal POWER Act program to increase awareness and pro bono assistance for domestic violence victims. There were 125 participants by Zoom and the speaker panel included a domestic violence survivor/survivor advocate, representatives from two domestic violence projects, and the U.S. Attorney. The Rural Access to Justice Summit was held on Oct. 26th with 125 participants by Zoom. The summit included a judges' panel, a rural practitioners' panel, and resources panel. Participation by the audience was robust and went smoothly over Zoom. Next pro bono meeting is Dec. 13th and will address ideas and an action plan flowing from the Rural Access to Justice Summit. Judge Wolf commented that rural access to justice is a large challenge that likely requires a separate committee or subcommittee at the helm with members from all stakeholder groups and entities. She will speak with Justice Mead about that.

- IV. ACP Chair's Report – Victoria Powers:** Victoria will be stepping down as Chair and the ACP is undertaking a search for her replacement.
- V. Justice Systems Committee Report (9/28/22 minutes attached) – Jaye Martin:** This committee continues to do excellent work as a direct-line communications hub between the providers and the courts. Their most recent report was circulated with the EC meeting materials.
- VI. Legislative Committee Report – Charlie Dingman:** Charlie reported that the 2023 ATJ Day at the Legislature is confirmed as March 29th. The Legislative Committee will begin planning for that event in the near future. The committee will continue to explore the climate at the Legislature and consider strategies to encourage funding for civil legal services. The presence of a coordinator for legislative initiatives proved essential during the last session, and the providers have agreed to continue to support such a position.
- VII. Executive Committee Organization Updates:**
- **Maine Judicial Branch:** Justice Mead reported that the shortage of attorneys for MCLIS and protective custody cases continues to be an item of great focus for the JB. The Chief Justice recently released a statement underscoring the severity of the situation.
 - **Volunteer Lawyers Project:** See Liz Stout's Report regarding the many initiatives that the VLP is undertaking.
 - **Maine Justice Foundation:** The MJF reports rising interest rates have helped IOLTA. Campaign for Justice has accomplished \$493,000 to date which places them ahead of their goal.
 - **Maine State Bar Association/Lawyers in Libraries:** No report.
 - **Maine Trial Lawyers Association:** No report.
 - **Pine Tree Legal Assistance:** No report.
 - **Law School/Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic:** Molly reported about the rural justice clinic which is anticipated to get under way on Jan. 17th. Two students will go up to Fort Kent. The clinic will be on campus at the University of Maine at Fort Kent, the students will also be living on campus and will be provided meal plans there. They hope to incorporate the students into the community and introduce them to the legal network there. Students will be doing criminal lawyer of the day work, family law clinics, some criminal and family law full

representation and some protective custody work. They will be flexible to adjust to the needs of the community. They are hoping that students will get excited about working in rural areas. CLAC is also hoping that their presence will spark interest among the undergraduates in going to law school. They will be paying two interns per semester to work in the Clinic and put on regular presentations at UMFK. Justice Mead commented that the upfront and personal mentoring will be terrific for this program.

- Legal Services for the Elderly: No report
- Maine Equal Justice: No report.
- Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project: Sue reported on ILAP workshops for people to be able to file their own asylum applications. The need is currently beyond what ILAP can handle.

VIII: Other Business: None

IX: 2022 JAG Executive Committee and Board meeting dates:

JAG Board (Feeney Conference Room – Cumberland County Courthouse, Portland):

The Dec. 20, 2022 Board meeting is cancelled. It has been rescheduled for January 4, 2023.

Other 2023 date are as follows: June 20th and December 12th.

Executive Committee meeting dates (SJC Conf. Room – Capital Judicial Center, Augusta):

2023 dates are as follows:

No meeting in January.

March 13th

May 15th

Sept. 18th

Nov. 13th

Meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.