

**Justice Action Group
JAG Executive Committee**

September 19, 2022 – 2:00 p.m. via Zoom

MINUTES

Participants: Mead, J., Wolf, J., Susan Faunce, Sue Roche, Michelle Draeger, and Charlie Dingman

I. Approval of Minutes from May 17, 2022. No corrections/additions noted. Made part of our JAG permanent record.

II. Report from Chair – J. Mead:

a. Civil Process Stakeholders Working Group: Justice Mead reported that the Chief is putting together a civil process stakeholders working group to discuss moving civil cases along. Justice Horton has been working with a group trying to move civil jury trials along. There is an open spot for a JAG member. Liz Stout has volunteered. Justice Mead indicated that if anyone wants to volunteer, please let him know. If no one volunteers he will go ahead and list Liz as the person. Justice Mead commented about not having enough staff/money to keep courts open and moving cases every single day. He mentioned the judicial settlement conferences that the SJC and trial court judges are doing. It is helping but will not solve the problem by itself.

b. Access to Justice Day at the Legislature: March 29, 2023: Charlie to report on this momentarily.

c. New Directions for JAG: (1) Should JAG seek funding for independent ATJ initiatives; and (2) Should JAG lobby for the creation of a conventional ATJ Commission with wide membership from all branches of government, the legal profession, private industry, and the civil legal services providers? Continuing conversations: Justice Mead plans to keep this on the agenda to continue to talk about it. We need buy-in and funding from a wide variety of people, the governor's office, providers, private industry, courts, etc. We mostly need funding.

d. JAG participation in NLS Pro Bono Fair: Justice Mead and Magistrate Wolf will attend and speak to participants.

III. Vice Chair's Report and Pro Bono Committee Report – J. Wolf: Judge Wolf reported that there are a couple of initiatives under way. One on September 21st is a subset of the pro bono committee which will be hosting a firm round table on pro bono work from 12-1:30. The target audience will be mid-sized firms. If it is successful, they will follow up with some brown bag lunches. Rural Access to Justice Summit is Oct. 29th, 8:30 to 12:00.

IV. ACP Chair's Report – Victoria Powers: Victoria was unable to join us. Sue Roche reported on her behalf and inquired about the executive committee's response to the providers' memo on the "new directions for JAG" topic. Justice Mead, speaking on behalf of the EC, confirmed that it was an excellent analysis and certainly supported the "continuing conversation" that he mentioned previously. If we are to undertake a major effort to create a new ATJ organization—a conventional commission—we would need buy-in (and funding) from a wide range of supporters both inside and outside of government. We would need a comprehensive plan before moving forward.

Justice Mead suggested that the next step, if the providers are in favor of moving forward, would be a "planning for the planning" effort that would create the template for a working group that would create the actual initiative process. Perhaps the first step would be for the providers (if they are in favor of moving forward) to present the question to the full Board at the next meeting.

V. Justice Systems Committee Report (No July meeting/next meeting Sept. 28th) – **Jaye Martin:** No report this month. Justice Mead commended this committee for its continuing excellent work and communications at the micro level.

VI. Legislative Committee Report – Charlie Dingman: ATJ Day is set for 3/29/23. Charlie believes that we will be following the pattern they have followed in the past. He noted that the current date is on a Wednesday when the Legislature is not meeting which may result in fewer legislators

being present in the Hall of Flags. he will check. He will check to see if a Tuesday or Thursday might be still available.

Charlie indicated providers have been asking when the general funds will they start to flow. Charlie has spoken to appropriations staff and all they know is that the same percentages will be used.

VII. Executive Committee Organization Updates:

- Courts: Justice Mead indicated there is not much to report other than a bunch of retirements and more on the horizon. The Governor will be making nominations as time permits.
- VLP: Liz unavailable to report. Justice Mead referenced the PFA Panel Presentation held in Bangor on September 12th. He said it was well attended but not what they had hoped for.
- MJF: Michelle reported on a number of ongoing initiatives and activity at the Foundation. First, she reported that MJF has moved to 124 State Street in Augusta, within the Maine State Bar Association offices. On Friday, Sept. 23, the MJF Board will be considering recommendations from its Grants Committee with respect to applications for ESO Endowment Grants (for civil legal services to be provided in Hancock and Washington counties). Grant announcements are expected the week of September 26. MJF also recently awarded the second round of grants to seven organizations from the Racial Justice Fund. Information about these grants can be found at www.justicemaine.org. There are a few upcoming events sponsored by the Foundation. The first is the Peter DeTroy Awards Ceremony honoring Deirdre Smith on October 12 at O'Maine Studios on Danforth Street in Portland from 3:30-5:00 p.m. Governor Janet Mills will be presenting the award to Deirdre. The second upcoming event, a Bar Fellows Speaker series event, featuring Bill Cotter, former President and Professor of Constitutional Law at Colby College. The event will be held via Zoom on October 19 at 11:30 a.m. Mr. Cotter will be discussing two noteworthy Supreme Court decisions – *Dobbs v. Jackson* and *Kennedy v. Bremerton* (the football coach kneeling case) – and the new conservative supermajority on the Court. Stay tuned

regarding the scheduling of the Coffin Fellowship Appreciation event in November. It is expected that the event will be live and a luncheon in Portland as appreciation for the many Portland law firms who sponsor the Coffin Fellowship.

- MSBA/Lawyers in Libraries: No representative present.
- MTLA: Susan Faunce reported. The MTLA Board had its first in-person gathering last week. MTLA will have its first in person CLE since the pandemic on September 30, 2022. Professor Jenny Wriggins will present on Tort Litigation, Race and Racism. MTLA is planning its legislative agenda following elections and will continue to support the judiciary in any requests to maintain a fully functioning judiciary. MTLA will likely be planning a College of Trial Advocacy in the Spring of 2023.

VIII: Other Business: None

IX: 2022 JAG Executive Committee and Board meeting dates:

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

Dec. 20, 2022 – 3:00

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

Nov. 14, 2022 – 2:00

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.