

LOUISIANA COURT ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION
SPRING CONFERENCE MEETING

MINUTES

THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2001

A meeting of the Louisiana Court Administrators Association was held on this date in the Ashland Room of the Hilton Hotel in Lafayette, Louisiana. The meeting was called to order by Ms. Suzanne Stinson, Vice President, at approximately 12:00 p.m.

Those members in attendance were:

Julie B. Andrew
Hope LaFleur Belgard
Sandra Bishop
Sara Brumfield
Ronald L. Bullion
Donna Carter
Gwen Dufresne
Rose Marie DiVincenti
Melissa Easley
Millie C. Ezernack
Anthony J. Gagliano
Cynthia R. Gaudin, Secretary
Scott Griffith
Virginia Hester
Peggy G. Hoover
Scott Kadar
Tina LeMaire
Delora Lovejoy
Lynn Maloy
Anna Paxton
Carol Powell-Lexing
Diana Pratt-Wyatt
Stephanie Richardson
Milton R. "Mickey" Skyring
Carla Smith
Suzanne H. Stinson, Vice President
Elizabeth "Liz" Stogner
Ronnie Stritzinger
Robert G. Tyler, Jr.
Thomas N. Williams
Bobby L. Wilson

Guests attending were:

Kenneth Burrell
Christine L. Crow
Katherine "Kay" Franks
Mervin "Butch" Gourgues
Marilyn Y. Smith

Vice President Stinson called on Scott Kadar to give the invocation.

Vice President Stinson asked the members to review the minutes for approval. On motion of Bobby Wilson, seconded by Hope Belgard, the minutes were approved as written.

The next order of business was the Treasurer's Report. Bob Tyler moved that the Treasurer's Report be amended to show an anticipated "reimbursement" to the Judicial College of \$100.00 for purchase of the coffee rather than an anticipated "donation" to the Judicial College of \$100.00 for purchase of the coffee; Diana Pratt-Wyatt seconded. The Treasurer's Report was approved as amended.

Vice President Stinson then proceeded to welcome two new members to the association, Hope Belgard and Jo Bruce. Hope was presented with a Certificate of Membership and, as Jo was not present, Cindy Gaudin was asked to forward Jo's certificate to her.

Vice President Stinson then moved to Old Business on the agenda and called on Anna Paxton to give the Continuing Education Committee report.

Anna Paxton advised that she and Bob Tyler had met and decided that the Fall Conference was probably the best time for an actual day of training. She stated that they had compiled a long list of possible topics and requested that the members indicate which topics they liked and didn't like. The topics under consideration are: writing performance standards or, a sister function for ADA, a workshop on performance evaluations for individual performance which would include how to conduct a performance appraisal meeting, hiring and firing and everything in between, checking references and how to do it well, communicating expectations, documenting discipline, how to conduct a termination interview; a managers sexual harassment seminar that teaches you the new standards that court cases in the last few years have set in motion; and other personnel matters – fair labor standards, what constitutes personal staff, etc. Also, creative court financing can be a portion of any of those days. Anna asked for feedback quickly to allow for time to prepare.

Vice President Stinson then called on Bob Tyler to give his report on the Spring Conference Program. Bob began by requesting suggestions for next year's conference. He asked everyone to try to think of something that will benefit your court, something

that will get the judges involved and will benefit the judges and court administrators as well.

Anna Paxton asked to be allowed to add to her report. Permission being granted by Vice President Stinson, Anna stated that there is a possibility that the Court Administrators Association could pool their money to buy training tapes, \$700 – \$900 apiece, and have a place to house and share them. She advised that there are many excellent films available and that they had even talked about the possibility of doing a film festival.

Tony Gagliano advised that the Law Library of Louisiana is going through a process of rethinking their mission and have concluded that they want to supply more services to the judiciary by providing some form of electronic distribution of information. He suggested they could be the purchaser of the films and materials we want to see. He stated that he thought that they would be willing to play that role and it would be appropriate at some point for the association to contact the Law Library and encourage that process. He commented that court administrators could also establish distance learning as a vehicle for learning and it might lead to judges participating as well.

Bob Tyler completed his report by thanking Carla Smith for putting him in touch with George Prentiss, the morning program speaker. He commented that suggestions from the members enable the association to put together good programs and encouraged members to keep the suggestions coming.

Vice President Stinson called on Scott Kadar to give his Strategic Planning Commission on ADA Committee report. In addition to giving a verbal report, Scott submitted a written report that is attached hereto and made a part of these minutes. After presenting his report, Scott asked for subcommittee reports as follows: Tina LeMaire, Jury Policy; Kenneth Burrell, guest, ADA Training; and Anna Paxton, Personnel Issues.

Tina began her report by acknowledging the other members of the subcommittee, Stephanie Richardson, Hope Belgard and Suzie Stinson. Tina stated that the group compiled information sources on jury policy, copies of which are available to interested members. Included are excerpts from "Into the Jury Box: A Disability Guide for State Courts" and "The Right to a Full Hearing." Tina stated that their research indicated that our attitude toward jurors has to change and that we need to be able to convey to jurors that they are welcome and that we can accommodate their needs. She said the information provided assists in doing that. Tina stated that also included in the materials provided are copies of juror summonses. The summons should advise the juror that accommodations for his/her special needs are available and identify the person to contact to express these needs.

Ken Burrell advised that his subcommittee developed a very good list of resources to obtain ADA training and funds for improvements to comply with ADA requirements. The list was one of Ken's handouts. Ken also advised that it was very important to get everyone in your court system, including the judges, on the same page in order to effect

compliance. Ken indicated that one of the most important resources on the list is JAN – Job Accommodation Network. They will assist you in accommodating disabled employees. Ken also suggested that a good investment is a medi-chair used to assist in transporting the disabled in an emergency. Ken advised that the most important thing is not whether you get it right or wrong but to be able to show that you have tried to provide the necessary accommodations.

Anna Paxton reported that her subcommittee worked on ADA compliance policy. Anna stated that whether you own your building or not, you must be able to show the Justice Department that you have made a good faith effort by implementing policy or through implementing some of the low cost/no cost accommodations. Anna provided the members with the first draft of model policies. She said they intended to put the policies on discs in Word and Wordperfect so that the members can obtain and customize the policies for their use. Anna requested that members share any policies that may be useful to other courts. She advised that they are going to ask the District Judges Association to send out the model policies and request comments within 30 days.

Scott Kadar suggested to the members that they involve their local agencies, and anybody in the courthouse that may not be in compliance. He said it is good to get your chief judge involved especially to help form a committee and establish contacts. He also said you need to promote training and, lastly, document your progress. This will help establish your good faith effort. Also, continue to meet on a semiannual basis to address any issues that may come up.

Vice President Stinson called on Scott Griffith to give the report of the Adoption and Safe Family Act Committee.

Scott reminded the members that the Judicial Budget and Performance Accountability Act requires that courts submit to annual audits. The ADA audit is the first one. The audit for courts compliance with the Adoption and Safe Family Act is the second one. He advised that the audit is about halfway done. He stated Ed Zimney's, National Center for State Courts report will probably be finished by mid April. Two reports will be generated as a result of his work. One will be a specialized report that will be sent to the chief judge of each jurisdiction audited and will report on his findings specific to that jurisdiction. The other one will be a summary of the findings from all of the jurisdictions and will be submitted to the Supreme Court and made available to the legislature and the public. Scott identified the members of his committee as Bobby Wilson, Melissa Easley, Ted Cox, Donna Carter and Darlene Kaufman. He said the original charge of the committee was to help courts prepare for the audit and to continue to monitor the audit and the progress being made. Scott shared some of the preliminary findings of the audit with the members. He also stated that in Jefferson Parish they had created an informal work group to develop the strategy to become compliant. The work group involved judges, judges' staffs, clerks, caseworkers, folks from OCS, DA's office, parents' attorneys, and folks from the public defenders office. The group meets regularly to revise and tweak strategy. Scott then asked Donna Carter to explain the strategy being used by East Baton Rouge Juvenile Court.

Donna explained that they already had a facilitation team in place due to work on a prior project. The team was reactivated and includes the judges, court administrators, law clerks, OCS representatives, attorneys, the DA and CASA. She stated that they have already been audited and received their report. The team is working on implementing the required improvements and they hope to be in full compliance with ASFA requirements in 6 to 9 months.

Tony Gagliano stated that facilitation teams are a wonderful way to bring together all the parties that can make the expedition of foster care cases work better and improve the whole process by systemically addressing the problems identified.

Scott Griffith closed by recommending that members contact Karen Hallstrom, Supreme Court, for guidance. He also offered handouts to the members and advised that the material identified upcoming training opportunities.

Before proceeding to New Business, Vice President Stinson recognized Tony Gagliano.

Tony advised that as previously stated, as required by the Judicial Budget and Accountability Act, the Judicial Administrator of the Supreme Court each year must file before the Supreme Court and for the people of Louisiana, an annual report on judicial performance. In order to gather information for that report, he will be surveying all courts. Initially, the appellate and districts courts will be surveyed and then later on the city and parish courts will be involved. The courts will be asked what they have been doing to implement their respective strategic plan. That information will be gathered and put in this report court by court and given to the media, legislature and all of the judges. Tony distributed copies of the district court draft questionnaires and asked for feedback as to how to organize the report and what questions should be asked. He also asked for feedback as to the best way to get the judges to complete the questionnaires. Can the administrators play a role in assisting the judges with this task? If not, what are the alternatives?

Tony also stated that the district court judges have identified court technology as a major issue so a questionnaire has been developed to address this issue. Tony asked for feedback as to who should complete the questionnaire, the judges or the court administrators on behalf of the judges. The information gathered will be used to prepare a technology plan so that some systematic effort can be developed to get the money needed to implement the plan.

Vice President Stinson deferred to Dianna Pratt-Wyatt, Chair of the Committee on Court of Appeal and City Court Initiatives.

Dianna recognized Delora Lovejoy, Les Prestridge and Cindy Gaudin as committee members. She advised that the committee had met via telephone conference and determined that there is a need to foster an exchange of information and knowledge

between city courts and the courts of appeal and that this would be the charge of the committee. Diana stated that the committee believes it should try to get all of the clerks of the city courts and courts of appeal involved and a possible way to do that is during the city court clerks mid-year training seminar. Diana also stated that she has recruited Judge Gay Gaskins from her court to act as a liaison on this committee from the appellate end and she has asked the committee members to try to recruit city court judges to do the same. She solicited participation from other members as well.

Vice President Stinson asked Scott Griffith to give the Committee on Juvenile Matter Initiatives report.

Scott stated that the main issue on the agenda of the Juvenile Justice Committee has been ASFA. He stated that Tim Palmatier suggested that the committee look at other issues including the expanded use of CASA and what court administrators can do to expand the role of court appointed special advocates in courts not only in the child needing care context but also in the delinquency context. He asked for participation from other administrators as he and Donna are the only members on the committee. He said he will also be asking judges to participate on the committee.

Vice President Stinson called on Carla Smith, chair of the Exploratory Committee: Annual NACM Meeting.

Carla advised that she has been assisting NACM is making arrangements for the social functions. She said that she needs volunteers and ideas. She stated that she was thinking of preparing grab bags for the expected 400 or 500 delegates and needed items for the bags. She asked that anyone having contacts with businesses or people that show the flavor of Louisiana assist in this regard.

Vice President Stinson advised that the conference was scheduled for July 15-20 and encouraged as many members to attend as possible.

Carla stated that she has asked NACM if they are interested in local involvement on some of the panels but she has not yet received a response.

Diana Pratt-Wyatt reminded the members it has been the policy of the association to pay the expenses of the president to attend the NACM conference and since Tim Palmatier is the current president and lives in New Orleans and will not incur expenses to attend, she moved that the association pay those expenses for the vice president so we can show strong support at the conference. Bob Tyler seconded the motion. Motion carried.

As Bea Tranchina-Parisi, chair of the Membership Committee, was not in attendance, Vice President Stinson deferred her report until the Fall Meeting. And since Tim Palmatier was not able to attend the meeting and had planned to discuss the Louisiana District Judges Association's Court to School Program, Vice President Stinson asked that anyone who could contribute information relative to similar programs in their courts, forward that information to Tim.

Vice President Stinson then called on Chris Andrieu to give his report on CMIS.

Chris advised that 55 clerks of court were presently on line forwarding criminal dispositions and 4 more will be added by July. He said that he and his staff are working closely with Justice Kimball and the Criminal Justice Information Systems Policy Board trying to get the whole integrated package in Louisiana up and moving. They are trying to get all the information to track from the initial point of arrest, through the sheriff, the district attorney and on through to the courts, attach the disposition to it and eventually get it to CMIS and then to state police to put on rap sheets. This will then provide law enforcement with information on what the criminal has done and, just as importantly, gives the information back to the judiciary. Chris stated that they are trying to get two vital pieces of information to flow through the system; the state identification which identifies the individual by fingerprint on the AFIS machine at point of Boykin and the arrest tracking number generated by the AFIS machine.

Chris also advised that they were working on another project with city courts and vendors, Cybertech and PTS Solutions, to develop an automated process to get traffic dispositions to the Supreme Court and then forward them to the Office of Motor Vehicles.

Chris then gave a demonstration of how judges or their designee will access criminal history records, the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Louisiana Protective Order Registry.

After completing the demonstration, Chris informed the group that they were working on a statewide uniform commitment report. The purpose of the report is to minimize errors in reading and interpreting the sentences of the court. The intent is to have it signed by the judge and forward it to the clerk of court for input into their criminal justice case management system for forwarding to Supreme Court and then to the state police.

Having no further business, it was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Vice President Stinson adjourned the meeting at 1:45 p.m.