

Wyoming District Judges Conference
January 21, 2022 Meeting

The Winter meeting of the District Judge's Conference was held on January 21, 2022. The meeting occurred by video via the TEAMS platform. Participating in the meeting were Judges Joseph Bluemel, Thomas Campbell, Michael Causey, Jason Condor, Dan Forgey, Peter Froelicher, Kerri Johnson, Tori Kricken, Richard Lavery, Bobbi Overfield, Melissa Owens, Scott Peasley, Suzannah Robinson, Catherine Rogers, Thomas Rumpke, Steven Sharpe, Dawnessa Snyder, Marvin Tyler and Catherine Wilking. Retired Judges Tim Day and John Perry also appeared.

The Conference presented plaques to both Judge Perry and Judge Day and acknowledged and thanked them for their many years of distinguished service to the Conference and to the judiciary.

The minutes from the September 15, 2021 meeting were presented and reviewed. Judge Campbell moved to accept and approve the minutes. Judge Froelicher seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

The Treasurer's report was also presented and reviewed. Judge Campbell moved to approve the Treasurer's report. Judge Bluemel seconded the motion, and the report was approved.

Old Business:

Hay Study: Judge Froelicher and Judge Johnson advised that they are working with Claire Smith at the Wyoming Supreme Court on obtaining and providing information relevant to judicial salaries. They also advised that they were seeking comparable salary information from judiciaries in surrounding states to present as well. They hoped to be able to present a more complete report to the Conference at the April meeting.

Rule 43.1: Judge Robinson updated the Conference on the work being done on Rule 43.1 (video appearance) by the Criminal Rules Advisory Committee. She noted that she has circulated the proposed rule to the Conference and received feedback. She suggested changes to the draft rule which were discussed by the Conference. Judge Snyder moved for the Conference to support the changes suggested by Judge Robinson. Judge Campbell seconded the motion and the Conference unanimously approved the changes to Rule 43.1 suggested by Judge Robinson. Judge Robinson will add those changes and recirculate the amended rule to the Conference.

Court reporter overtime policy: The court reporter overtime policy was again discussed. Judge Snyder, on behalf of the Court Reporter Standards Subcommittee, reminded everyone that they should submit their overtime policies to the Executive Committee when they are completed.

Rule 903: The Conference also discussed the proposed amendments to Rule 903 of the Uniform Rules of the District Court (dealing with court reporters and custody of evidence). The proposed amendment to Rule 903 has been circulated to all judges for review. Judge Campbell moved to approve the amendments to Rule 903. Judge Bluemel seconded the motion, and the

amendment to the rule was approved. Judge Snyder will forward the amended rule to the Wyoming Supreme Court in accordance with W.S. §5-2-114.

Court reporter certification of transcript backup: A discussion took place regarding the important need for court reporter's to timely back up and preserve their transcription notes. Judge Overfield moved to require that all court reporters "certify" on a monthly basis that they have backed up and preserved their transcription notes. Judge Campbell seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.

Judge time standards and under advisement reporting: Prior to the meeting, Judge Lavery had submitted for discussion suggested changes to Rule 113 of the Rules Governing Organization of the District Court Judge's Conference. The proposed change would require each judge to submit a report of matters under advisement twice annually to the Docket Review Committee. The Conference agreed that all members should have the opportunity to comment and make suggested changes to the proposed rule change. After sufficient opportunity for comments and review, it was agreed that the Conference would conduct an electronic (or email) vote on the proposed additions and changes to Rule 113 prior to the April meeting.

Legislative Liaison Committee: Judge Snyder provided an update to the Conference on the work of the Legislative Liaison Committee in advance of the upcoming legislative session.

New Business:

Committee assignments: Judge Lavery informed the Conference of the need to make new assignments to various committees in light of Judge Day and Judge Perry's retirements; Judge Rumpke's impending retirement; and Justice Fenn's selection to the Wyoming Supreme Court. The Conference approved of the following assignments:

- Judge Sharpe: Chancery Court Committee, Governor's Council on Impaired Driving.
- Judge Froelicher: Permanent Rules Advisory Committee (Appellate)
- Judge Snyder: Juvenile Pattern Jury Instruction Committee
- Judge Peasley: Permanent Rules Advisory Committee (Civil)
- Judge Bluemel: Permanent Rules Advisory Committee (Evidence)
- Judge Wilking: Children's Justice Project.
- Judge Healy: Legislative Liaison Committee
- Judge Forgey: Juvenile Pattern Jury Instructions; Wyoming Commission on Judicial Conduct and Ethics.
- Judge Owens: Court Reporter Standards Committee.
- Judge Overfield: Access to Justice

The Conference also agreed to "disband" the District Judges Reopening Committee. Judge Lavery also indicated he would reach out to Lisa Finkey as to the need to have a district court judge serve on the Continuing Judicial Education Committee and will report back. Judge Day will continue to serve on the Judicial Advisory Poll Committee as the work of that committee has almost concluded. The Conference did not fill, at this time, the BJPA opening that will be left by Judge Rumpke's impending retirement from the bench. That opening will be filled at a later date.

