



TEXAS JUDICIAL COUNCIL

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CHAIR:

HON. NATHAN L. HECHT
Chief Justice, Supreme Court

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

David Slayton

VICE CHAIR:

HON. SHARON KELLER
Presiding Judge, Court of Criminal Appeals

MINUTES OF MEETING

February 14, 2020
10:00 AM

Tom C. Clark - 1st Floor Conference Room
205 W. 14th Street
Austin, Texas

COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

On February 14, 2020, Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht called the meeting¹ of the [Texas Judicial Council](#) ("Council") to order at approximately 10:00 a.m. in the conference room of the Tom C. Clark Building in Austin, Texas.

The following members of the Council were present:

Hon. Nathan L. Hecht, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Texas
Hon. Bill Boyce (Fmr.), Justice, 14th Court of Appeals, Houston
Ms. Sonia Clayton, Virtual Intelligence Providers LLC, Houston
Hon. Bill Gravell Jr., Constitutional County Judge, Williamson County
Hon. Emily Miskel, Judge, 470th District Court, McKinney
Hon. Valencia Nash, Justice of the Peace Pct. 1, Place 2, Dallas County
Hon. Kathleen Person, Judge, City of Temple Municipal Court, Temple
Hon. Sherry Radack, Chief Justice, 1st Court of Appeals, Houston
Mr. Kenneth S. Saks, Oliva Saks Garcia & Curiel, LLP, San Antonio
Hon. Maggie Sawyer, Justice of the Peace, McCulloch County, Brady
Hon. Reggie Smith, State Representative, Sherman
Hon. Edward J. Spillane, III, Presiding Judge, City of College Station
Mr. Evan Young, Baker Botts, Austin
Hon. Judith Zaffirini, State Senator, Laredo

Members attending by phone were:

Hon. Sharon Keller, Presiding Judge, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals
Hon. Jeff Leach, State Representative, Allen
Hon. Kelly Moore (Ret.), Presiding Judge, 9th Administrative Judicial Region
Ms. Rachel Racz, Vista Proppants & Logistics, Fort Worth
Hon. Vivian Torres (Ret.), County Court at Law, Hondo

¹ The meeting may be viewed on the Office of Court Administration YouTube site at <https://www.youtube.com/user/TexasCourtAdmin/>.

Members not in attendance were Senator Brandon Creighton, Mr. Kevin Bryant, and Mr. Jon Gimble.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The [November 15, 2019](#), meeting minutes were approved as presented.

REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

Texas Indigent Defense Commission Report

Geoff Burkhardt, Executive Director, Texas Indigent Defense Commission, presented on the TIDC Report.

Highlights of the Annual Statistical Report for the Judiciary (Fiscal Year 2019)

Ms. Angela Garcia, Chief Data Officer, Research and Court Services Division, Office of Court Administration, presented highlights from the [Annual Statistical Report](#) for Fiscal Year 2019. She reported on changes in case filings for Civil Courts, Family Courts, Juvenile Courts, Criminal Courts, and Appellate Courts.

Update on Court Security

Mr. Hector Gomez, Court Security Director, Research and Court Services Division, Office of Court Administration, updated the Council on court security within the State of Texas.

Consideration of Approval of Designation of Courts as Judicial Center of Excellence

Mr. Michael Smith, Management Analyst, Research and Court Services Division, Office of Court Administration, introduced Honorable Claudia Laird from Montgomery County Court-at-Law No. 2 in Conroe, Texas as a Judicial Center of Excellence. Judge Laird's court is the first court with an exclusive civil docket to complete the program and has a 100% compliance record.

Judge Laird introduced court staff and family in attendance.

Sen. Zaffirini moved to approve Montgomery County Court-at-Law No. 2 as a Judicial Center of Excellence, second by Chief Justice Sherry Radack. Motion was approved unanimously.

Civil Justice Committee

Chief Justice Sherry Radack announced that the National Center for State Courts has awarded OCA a grant to train county court judges and staff on the expedited actions rules and to assist with business court pilots in the state. OCA hopes to have a report on how these pilot projects are working by the end of the year. Chief Justice Hecht mentioned that a number of these programs are running around the country and are very successful, and he hopes we can replicate that here.

Criminal Justice Committee Report

Judge Kelly Moore reported on the committee's work on its charges.

Chief Justice Hecht acknowledged Judge Moore's service to the judiciary and announced Judge Moore's new position as the Director of the Lubbock Private Defender Office.

Consider Final Adoption of Judicial Admonishment Rule and Authorize Publication in the Texas Register

Mr. Slayton discussed the Judicial Admonishment Rule, specifically addressing how an individual would be notified orally and in writing of the admonishment by a judge. If adopted, model oral and written admonishment language for judges' use will be presented at the Council's next meeting for the Council's consideration. The Office of Court Administration will also be providing adequate training on the rules that would go into effect on September 1, 2020. Mr. Slayton reported that the Governor's Office is aware of these updates.

Upon a motion to finally adopt the judicial admonishment rule and authorize publication in the Texas Register by Judge Valencia Nash and second by Mr. Saks, the motion passed unanimously. Presiding Judge Keller abstained from the vote.

Data Committee

Judge Bill Gravell provided an update on the work of the committee to develop new guidelines from the Council on how to collect case level data.

Public Trust and Confidence Committee

Judge Ed Spillane discussed the work of the committee on its charges and a presentation given to the committee from District Judge Ruben Reyes (Lubbock) on the Family Drug Court Program Best Practice Standards. The committee recommends adoption of the Family Drug Court Program Best Practice Standards with a two-year implementation.

Consider Approval of Family Drug Court Program Best Practice Standards

Upon a committee motion from the Public Trust and Confidence Committee to approve the Family Drug Court Program Best Practice Standards with an effective date of June 1, 2022, the motion passed unanimously.

Strategic Vision Committee

Justice Bill Boyce discussed the committee's work to develop a five-year strategic plan addressing the needs of the Texas Judiciary and Court System.

NEW BUSINESS

Recognition of Meredith Higgins

Chief Justice Hecht and Senator Zaffirini presented to Meredith Higgins Texas Senate Proclamation 125 commendation for her dedication to the Texas Judiciary.

Next Meeting - June 12, 2020

Adjourn - 11:56 pm



Nathan L. Hecht
Chair