



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

TEXAS JUDICIAL COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

June 12, 2015
10:00 a.m.

SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS
Supreme Court Building
201 W. 14th Street, Room 104
Austin, Texas

COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

On June 12, 2015, Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht called the meeting¹ of the [Texas Judicial Council](#) ("Council") to order at approximately 10:00 a.m. in the courtroom of the [Supreme Court of Texas](#) ("SCOT") in Austin, Texas.

The following members of the Council were present:

Hon. Nathan L. Hecht, Chief Justice, Supreme Court of Texas
Hon. Sharon Keller, Presiding Judge, Court of Criminal Appeals
Mr. Richard Battle, Key Trak, College Station
Hon. Gary Bellair, Presiding Judge, Ransom Canyon Municipal Court
Hon. Bill Boyce, Justice, 14th Court of Appeals, Houston
Mr. Rick Figueroa, UBS Advisory & Brokerage Services, Houston
Hon. Scott Jenkins, Judge, 53rd District Court, Travis County
Hon. Kelly Moore, Judge, 121st Judicial District, Terry & Yoakum
Hon. Valencia Nash, Justice of the Peace Pct. 1, Place 2, Dallas County
Hon. Sherry Radack, Chief Justice, 1st Court of Appeals, Houston
Hon. Linda Rodriguez, Judge, County Court at Law No. 2, Hays County, Retired
Hon. Polly Jackson Spencer, Judge, Probate Court #1, Bexar County

Members attending by phone were Ms. Allyson Ho, Ms. Ashley Johnson, and Representative John Smithee.

¹ The meeting may be viewed on the State Bar of Texas website <http://www.texasbarcle.com/CLE/TSCSearch2.asp>

Members not in attendance were Representative Roberto Alonzo, Carlos Amoral, Judge Russ Casey, Chancellor Robert Duncan, Mr. Hank Nuss, Judge Glenn Phillips, and Senator Royce West.

Chief Justice Hecht noted Chancellor Duncan's resignation from the Council. He also recognized Representative Smithee's work for the Council during the legislative session.

MINUTES

Without objection, the [February 20, 2015](#) meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

[Texas Indigent Defense Commission Report](#)

Judge Keller noted the Commission recently a grant award from the Governor's Criminal Justice Division (CJD) of \$100,000 to develop a model mentoring program for court appointed attorneys. Additionally, the Conference Committee approved funding for the Lubbock-based Regional Public Defender Office for Capital Cases (RPDO); the capital public defender services in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties for the biennium; and additional funding towards closing the Fair Defense Act funding gap. The Conference Committee report also includes an expansion of the funding for innocence projects to include law schools at Texas A&M University and the University of North Texas, in addition to the University of Texas, University of Houston, Texas Tech University, and Texas Southern University.

She discussed the Timothy Cole Exoneration Review Commission, created under [HB 48](#). Judge Keller then recognized Jim Bethke, Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC) Executive Director, for being selected by the Steering Committee of the International Criminal Justice Consortium to serve on its newly formed Team of Experts that will study the International Criminal Court's Legal Aid System at the Hague.

Mr. Bethke reported a successful session and thanked the Council for its support. He highlighted events in national legislative news and noted that Bexar County will implement an innovative program providing public defenders to mentally ill defendants at the very earliest stage of a case in order to advocate for appropriate defendants to be diverted to in-patient or out-patient programs instead of remaining in jail.

He also announced that the Public Policy Institute issued a report, [Evaluation of the Texas Innocence Projects](#).

Legislative Update

David Slayton provided the legislative update including [Judicial Council Resolutions](#), appropriations and [other bills](#) affecting the Judiciary.

Chief Justice Hecht recognized the extraordinary work of Mr. Slayton during the session.

Report on Problem-Solving Court Best Practices

Anissa Johnson, OCA Problem-Solving Court Coordinator, reported on the recommendations made by the Specialty Courts Advisory Council in 2013 related to Best Practice Standards developed by the National Drug Court Association.

Report on Judicial Civics and Education Center

Megan LaVoie presented a video of the proposed Judicial Civics Education Center and responded to questions from Council.

Report on Pretrial Justice Initiatives

Mr. Slayton reported on the [Pretrial Justice Initiatives](#).

New Business

Chief Justice Hecht made appointments to a Criminal Justice Committee to study Pretrial Justice Initiatives. Members are: Judge Keller, Senator West, Judge Jenkins, Judge Casey and Mr. Amoral, with Judge Moore appointed to Chair. The Committee will be charged with assessing the impact of pretrial criminal justice statutes and policies in Texas to determine if there are ways in which Texas courts can enhance public safety and social outcomes when making pretrial confinement decisions. The Committee will identify judicial policies or initiatives that could be enacted to further those goals.

Next, Mr. Slayton discussed potential modifications to the Judicial Council monthly reporting requirements. Mr. Slayton reported on the extensive use of OCA's statistical data. The last change occurred in 2010 after a four-year study. Since then, a number of legislative changes and new data needs have created a need for changes in reporting. OCA received funding to build a new reporting database. The Council will be asked to review plans for updating those requirements at its next meeting.

Next Meeting

Chief Justice Hecht announced that the next meeting of the Council will be held on September 18, 2015.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:30 a.m.

Nathan L. Hecht
Chair