

Judicial Section Board Meeting  
Friday, January 23, 2015  
Minutes

**Telephone Conference Board Meeting called to order by Judge David Evans:**

**In attendance:** Judge David Evans, Justice Pat Pirtle, Judge Randy Clapp, Justice Evelyn Keyes, Justice Gina Benavides, Judge Kerry Russell, Judge Jose Lopez, Judge Margaret Barnes, Judge Chris Oldner, Judge Brad Cates, Retired Chief Justice Linda Thomas, Justice Paul Green, Judge Mike Keasler, and Judge David Garcia

Excused Absence: Judge Penny Roberts, Judge Maria Salas-Mendoza, Judge Amanda Matzke

Also present: Judge Alfonso Charles, and Tracy Nuckols

1. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the September 8, 2014 board meeting were approved as corrected.
2. **Financial Report:** The Treasurer presented the financial report and the financials were approved.
3. **Board Vacancies-Judge David Evans**
  - a. **Place 13 Associate Judge** – Judge George Holmes to fill the new Associate Judge position created under the by-law amendment approved at the annual conference. Judge Holmes term will end at the upcoming annual conference
  - b. **Place 10 Retired Judge** – Judge Dean Rucker appointed to fill the unexpired term created when former Chief Justice Linda Thomas submitted her letter of resignation from the board. Judge Rucker's term will end at the upcoming annual conference.

Motion was made and passed unanimously to approve both appointments.

4. **Legislative report-Judge Alfonso Charles**

- a. Tracking mostly criminal bills at this time including HB 53 (and others): age of criminal responsibility from 17 to 18.
- b. Grand jury bills: district judges will not be allowed to select/appoint commissioners. Sen. Whitmire is behind most of these bills.
- c. Jury services bills-Must be able to read and write the English language to be on a jury and excused if you are caring for an incapacitated person.
- d. SB 63 by Huffines: Term limits for State Officials (includes judges).
- e. SB 64 by Huffines: Timely disposition of appeals for Appellate Courts.
- f. Pay Raise update:

Plan is to do it at conference again. Pitts helped write House budget proposal that put a 5% raise into the budget. Will probably be discussions about giving 3% raises every two years.

Plan II Judges: Plan is also for conference. Figures already in Pitts plan to increase plan 2 retirees to get last raise and any raise this session.

- g. Discussion regarding possibly lowering the longevity pay from 16 to 12 or 8.
- h. Bill considered to required Judicial Compensation Committee recommendations to added into the budget, which would require a bill to specifically take it out if this happened.

Legislative Committee: Will have a phone conference either with of 26<sup>th</sup> or Feb. 2 and begin their Tuesday morning meetings starting February 10, 2104.

The importance of Hank Mitchell to the Judicial Section past, present and future lobbying efforts was discussed and the need for financial assistance from our membership to assist in providing the Alliance for Judicial Funding monies to pay for his services performed on behalf of the judiciary

Judge Evans talked about the Alliance for Judicial funding and sending a fund raising letter to the membership.

Questions that came up:

- 1) If there was a bill to split the 13th Court of Appeals. Answer: Not yet
- 2) If there was a bill to add more Regional PJ regions. Answer: Not being pushed by the PJs

## **5. March Retreat-Judge David Evans/Tracy Nuckols**

The board meeting will begin on March 2, 2015 @ 2:30 p.m. We anticipate the meeting will last two hours.

Discussion regarding the possibility of inviting the various chairs of the Civil, Criminal, Family and Juvenile, Legislative committees to update the board on bills that might be affecting the judiciary to the meeting as follows:

- 1. Linda Thomas
- 2. Brett Busby      Chair Civil Justice Legislative Subcommittee;
- 3. Jean Hughes      Chair Criminal Justice Legislative Subcommittee;
- 4. Judy Warne      Chair Family Law Legislative Subcommittee;
- 5. Laura Parker      Chair Juvenile Law Legislative Subcommittee;

We will be inviting Hank Mitchell the lobbyist working on behalf of the Judiciary to our meeting.

Everyone needs to make their own hotel reservations for the March meeting/retreat

## **6. Other Business**

Associate Judge George Holmes was appointed by Judge Evans to the Legislative committee.

**Adjourn.** The next meeting will be on March 2, 2015 at 2:30 p.m. A motion was made and passed to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.