



Judicial Council Minutes

February 18, 2021

Via WebEx

The Judicial Council met on Thursday, February 18, 2021. Second District Assistant Chief Judge Sara Grewing attended for Chief Judge Leonardo Castro.

1. Approval of Draft January 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes

A suggestion was made to make amendments to the Draft January 14, 2021 Minutes, aimed at clarifying the discussion. A motion was made and seconded to approve the January Minutes, as amended. The motion carried.

Council Action

The Judicial Council approved the January 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes, as amended.

2. Discussion Item: Other Side Workgroup Report

Judge Michelle Lawson, Rick Larkin, Emergency Management Analyst and Grant Hoheisel, Court Services Division, presented the monthly Other Side Work Group Report. Information on the current COVID-19 indicators, criminal clearance rates, remote hearings, and the litigant and attorney survey were presented.

Judge Lawson reported on the progress of remote civil jury trial research. A discussion on remote civil jury trials ensued. It was agreed that districts should submit applications to conduct remote civil jury trials to the Judicial Council Executive Committee. Applications, for initial consideration, should be submitted by March 5. It was noted that the deadline can be extended. It was agreed that participation must be voluntary.

A motion was made and seconded to approve remote civil jury trials with initial submission due to the Judicial Council Executive Committee by March 5, 2021. Subsequent applications will be accepted. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council approved the commencement of remote civil jury trials, subject to approval by the Judicial Council Executive Committee.

Judge Lawson also reported on recommendations pertaining to the gradual return to in-person hearings. A discussion ensued on the need to continue to prioritize in-person criminal trials.

A motion was made and seconded to provide that, as of March 15, criminal jury trials can proceed in person as long as COVID plans are adhered to. All other proceedings, including civil jury trials, will be held remotely unless an exception is granted by chief judge, through April 30. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council voted to provide that, as of March 15, criminal jury trials can proceed in person as long as COVID plans are adhered to. All other proceedings, including civil jury trials, will be held remotely unless an exception is granted by chief judge, through April 30.

A discussion ensued on whether each county currently has a public service counter open. A motion was made and seconded to recommend no changes to the current Chief Justice Order relating to public service counters. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council voted to recommend no changes to the current Chief Justice Order as it relates to public service counters.

3. Discussion Item: Proposed Judicial Council Judicial Benchmark Policy and Survey

Chief Judge Jodi Williamson, Third Judicial District, Chair, HR/EOD Committee, presented the HR/EOD Committee recommendations to recommend a revised and updated judicial development policy and procedures, now called a Judicial Benchmark Policy 221 and surveys. It was noted that the program is meant to serve as an individual development tool.

A discussion ensued on the phrase “Issues timely orders.” It was suggested that the Committee consider adding language to define the term.

4. Discussion Item: Second Quarter FY21 Financial Report

Dan Ostdiek, Finance Director, reviewed the Second Quarter FY21 Financial Report.

5. Discussion Item: Other Business

- a. Minnesota Court Records Online (MCRO) Project Update** – Jeff Shorba reported that the MCRO test phase has gone very well and that the roll out date for Phase 1 will be March 17.
- b. Executive Session** – A motion was made and seconded to go into Executive session to discuss personnel matters. The motion prevailed.

Following discussion a motion was made and seconded to exit Executive Session.
The motion prevailed.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned.