



Judicial Council Minutes

January 16, 2025

9:00 a.m.

Room 230, MN Judicial Center and via Zoom

The Judicial Council met on Thursday January 16, 2025, in St. Paul, Minnesota and via Zoom. Third Judicial District Administrator Shelley Ellefson was not in attendance.

1. Decision Item: Approval of Draft December 19, 2024, Meeting Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the draft December 19, 2024, Meeting Minutes, as submitted. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council approved the December 19, 2024, Meeting Minutes, as submitted.

2. Decision Item: Approval of Consent Agenda

At the July 2024 Judicial Council meeting, the Council adopted statewide default hearing settings for all criminal and non-criminal hearings. The Council also adopted a deviation process that starts with a local deviation proposal, followed by review and approval by the Chief Judge and District Administrator, then by the Executive Committee with representation from all ten judicial districts, and then by the Judicial Council through a Consent Agenda.

The January Consent Agenda contained three deviation recommendations from the Executive Committee, which were listed on Appendix A of the Judicial Council Agenda.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council approved the Consent Agenda.

3. Decision Item: Judicial Council Policy 1101, Internal Audit Policy and New Judicial Council Policy 1103, Audit Committee Oversight Policy

Jamie Majerus, Branch Audit Manager, State Court Administration, returned for a decision on proposed revisions to Judicial Council Policy 1101, Internal Audit Policy, and a decision new Judicial Council Policy 1103, Audit Committee Oversight Policy. The changes are needed to comply with modifications to the Global Internal Auditing standards.

A motion was made and seconded to approve proposed revisions to Judicial Council Policy 1101, Internal Audit Policy. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council approved proposed revisions to Judicial Council Policy 1101, Internal Audit Policy.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the new Judicial Council Policy 1103, Audit Committee Oversight Policy. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council approved the new Judicial Council Policy 1103, Audit Committee Oversight Policy.

4. Discussion Item: Approval of the Clay County DWI Court

Judge Joseph Bueltel, TCI Chair, sought Judicial Council approval of the Clay County DWI Court.

A motion was made and seconded to change approval of the Clay County DWI Court from a discussion item to a decision item. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council changed approval of the Clay County DWI Court from a discussion item to a decision item.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Clay County DWI Court. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council approved the Clay County DWI Court.

5. Discussion Item: Digital Accessibility Project Update

Senior Judge Kathryn Messerich and Paul Patterson, Director, Court Services Division, State Court Administration, provided an update on the Digital Accessibility Project. The Minnesota Judicial Branch launched the Digital Accessibility Project (EP 321) to ensure the Judicial Branch complies with new federal requirements. The focus areas of the project include reviewing and remediating existing documents, developing accessible templates, exploring accessibility software to improve practices, and providing training to

judicial officers and staff. The Digital Accessibility Project Team will keep the Council informed with regular updates as the project advances.

6. Discussion Item: In-person Interpreter Needs

Last month the Judicial Council discussed current issues affecting the Minnesota Interpreter and Scheduling Specialist Team's (MISST) ongoing ability to provide in-person interpreter resources. As requested by Council, Paul Patterson, Director, Court Services Division, State Court Administration, returned with additional information on in-person interpreter needs including:

- The need for consistent communication to judicial officers and staff.
- Engagement of the Public Defender's Office and other defense counsel.
- Legal and constitutional concerns impacting how interpreters are provided.
- Coordinated interpreter calendaring.
- Technology solutions.
- Policy changes.
- Surveying rostered interpreters and engaging the Language Access Committee regarding challenges to filling in-person assignments.
- Pursuing improvements to increase the usage of simultaneous interpreting.

A request was made to provide judges with guidance on available resources and technological solutions for situations where an interpreter is unavailable.

7. Decision Item: Jury Task Force

Paul Patterson, Director, Court Services Division, State Court Administration, returned for a decision on the Jury Task Force. A request was made that the Jury Task Force report their recommendations to Council for approval.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Jury Task Force. The motion prevailed.

Council Action

The Judicial Council approved the Jury Task Force.

8. Discussion Item: Judicial Council Policy 309, Judicial Leave

Chief Justice Natalie E. Hudson and Craig Gustafson, Director, Legal Counsel Division, State Court Administration, presented proposed revisions to Judicial Council Policy 309, Judicial Leave. Proposed revisions included renaming the policy to the "Judicial Leave and Flexibility Policy" and adding a new paragraph G that allows the chief judge in a judicial district to approve a judge's request to conduct remote proceedings from outside the state of Minnesota in limited and exceptional circumstances for up to 21 work days per fiscal year.

The topic will return for a decision at the February Judicial Council meeting.

9. Other Business

a. Legislative Update

Jeff Shorba, State Court Administrator, provided a Legislative Update.

10. Executive Session

A motion was made and seconded to go into Executive Session. 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.