

Judicial Council of Georgia
Access, Fairness, and Public Trust and Confidence Committee
Meeting Summary-Wednesday, February 10, 2016
Judicial Conference Room
244 Washington Street, S.W. Suite 500
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. and was adjourned at 1:38 p.m.

Access, Fairness, and Public Trust and Confidence Committee members present: Justice Robert Benham, Justice Carol W. Hunstein, Judge Sara L. Doyle, Judge Cassandra Kirk, Judge Robert Rodatus, Mr. Will Simmons, Ms. Tracy Johnson, Ms. Lori Gelchion (by phone), Mr. Coy Johnson, Jr., Mr. David M. Sneed (by phone), Judge Gail Tusan, Ms. Joy Lampley-Fortson (by phone), Judge Sherry Moore (by phone), Ms. Monica Khant (by phone).

Others Present: Ms. Karlise Grier, ancillary to Access, Fairness, and Public Trust and Confidence Committee; Ms. Cynthia Clanton, Director, Administrative Office of Courts (AOC); Mr. Rob Rhodes, Director of Projects, Georgia Appleseed Project; Ms. Taylor Jones, Executive Director, Council of Accountability Court Judges; Ms. Stephanie Everett, Executive Director, Lawyers for Equal Justice; Mr. Bruce Shaw, AOC; Ms. Ashley Stollar, AOC; Ms. Patricia Buonodono, AOC; L'Tanya Keith-Robinson, Grier Law Office (by phone)

(1) Welcome and Introductions

Justices Benham recalled that the forerunner to the Access, Fairness and Public Trust and Confidence Committee was the Governor's Commission on Drug Awareness and Prevention formed by Governor Joe Frank Harris in the 1985 to assess substance abuse issues in Georgia. At that time the only tools used to combat substance abuse were jail and fines which were doing little to curb the growing problem and in many cases making them worse. The Governor's Commission on Drug Awareness and Prevention marks the beginning of the exploration to incarceration alternatives in Georgia and in many aspects the Access, Fairness, and Public Trust and Confidence Committee continues to carry that baton, for which there is a long way to go.

(2) Written Reports

- **New Committee Order/Continued Committee Service**
- **Summary of November 4, 2016 meeting**
- **Future Meeting Dates**
 - **May 11, 2016, 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**
 - **September 14, 2016, 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**
 - **November 9, 2016, 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

Project and Community Updates

(3) Introduction to the Georgia Council of Accountability Court Judges

Ms. Taylor Jones, the Executive Director for the Council of Accountability Court Judges of Georgia since October 2015 (CACJ), gave an overview of the structure of the CACJ. The CACJ was formed in the 2015 legislative session and is defined by four statutes: OCGA § 15-1-15, et seq. CACJ staff, currently consisting of five people, is housed at the AOC through an MOU and Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCJ) provides technical assistance such as support for grants administration and appropriations. The CACJ has within it an executive committee as well as five standing committees: Standards and Certifications Committee, Funding Committee, Training Committee, Legislative Committee, and Nominations Committee.

(4) Lawyers for Equal Justice (Law School Incubator Project)

Ms. Stephanie Everett, the Executive Director for Lawyers for Equal Justice, gave an update on the progress of the Law School Incubator. The project has secured 501(c)3 status and has begun building out office space in the International Tower of Peachtree Center on the same floor as the Atlanta Bar Association. The deadline for initial program applicants was extended to February 12, 2016. The primary focus for recruitment is new lawyers, ones who have graduated law school within the last three years but the initial class is expected to include participants outside of this preference. A pro bono coordinator position is also being filled which will be paid for by a federal grant secured by Georgia Legal Services Program. Participants in the program will not be employees or contractors but they will be independent practices that are provided support, office space, practice management software, legal research software, and a bevy experienced lawyers for mentoring. The end goal is have practices providing affordable services to the underserved while maintaining a living wage for the attorneys.

(5) NAWJ Conference

Judge Sara Doyle stated that the 2017 NAWJ Conference theme will be “Access to Justice: Past, Present, and Future” tying nicely into this committee’s work because of the emphasis on criminal and juvenile justice reform. The Sheraton Atlanta has been selected as the hotel and several potential locations have been identified for a reception including the Museum for Civil Rights and the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals facilities. The conference planning is in the nascent stages and great amount of work remains in all aspects of the preparations and fundraising.

(6) Equal Justice in Law Enforcement Symposium Information

Justice Benham reported that the Equal Justice in Law Enforcement Symposium was a well attended all day event hosted by Georgia State University. Attendees spanned from police officials, judges, attorneys, and members of the community. The conversation was lively and all were allowed to be heard, Justice Benham hopes this discussion will go a long way in developing best practices for police interaction with communities.

Ms. Karlise Grier thanked the jurists who participated in the “View From the Bench” panel: Justice Benham, Judge Carla McMillan, Judge M. Yvette Miller, Judge Henry Newkirk, Judge Clayton Scofield, and Judge Mark Anthony Scott. Ms. Grier reported that since the event, Sharon Hill, director of the Georgia Appleseed Project has had three police chiefs reach out for help organizing community trainings and forums.

(7) Georgia Appleseed Report on Race, Law Enforcement and the Law

Mr. Rob Rhodes explained that the Georgia Appleseed project is a nonprofit legal services group that advocates for systemic change in the law and policies that deal with social justice issues such as juvenile justice and cradle to prison pipelines. In spring of 2015 Georgia Appleseed began a project in response to the myriad of national stories emerging of police force being used, causing death and bodily harm to members of the community, such as in Ferguson, Missouri. Georgia Appleseed began to look at the grand jury process in Georgia, standard operated procedure requirements for police officers, training requirements and other issues as well as discussions with community stakeholders to put together a comprehensive report on the relationships between race, law enforcement, and the law. Findings and recommendations can be found at <https://gaappleseed.org/initiatives/race-law-enforcement-and-the-law>.

(8) ADA Handbook update

Ms. Patricia Buonodono informed the committee and that the ADA Handbook was circulated to a group of court professionals who have submitted changes to Mr. Mike Galfianakis. The group has a conference call on February 11 to discuss revisions.

(9) Human Trafficking Summit Grant Proposal

Ms. Patricia Buonodono reported that the grant originates from the State Justice Institute for the purpose of technical assistance on human trafficking and the State Courts. A grant proposal has been submitted with the assistance of Ms. Betty Bernard. If the grant is received, a one day summit for Georgia State Court judges will be held along with coordination with ICJE to deliver a class to every class of court judge on the subject of human trafficking

2016 Goals and Subcommittees – Organizational Meeting

(10) 2016 Subcommittees

1. Council of Accountability Court Judge Collaboration on training and best practices

Ms. Karlise Grier reported that Justice Benham is seeking to collaborate with the Accountability Courts and has a meeting scheduled in March with Judge Jason Deal, Council of Accountability Court Judges Chairperson, to discuss possible collaboration areas.

2. Municipal Courts – Best Practices Handbook for Courts and Court Related Personnel

Ms. Karlise Grier stated that she will start a conversation with Judge Latisha Dear Jackson about best practices for Municipal Courts in light of the Ferguson Report.

3. Court-Based Self-Help Programs

Ms. Karlise Grier reported that there has been interest expressed in pilot programs in self-help programs from the Fulton County Probate Court and the Magistrate Court of Henry County but more discussion needs to be held to determine a direction forward.

- i. Probate Courts – Fulton County**
- ii. Magistrate Courts (garnishment/creditor collection)**
 - **None currently in existence**
 - **Possible pilot project with Chase Settlement Funds**

The Chase Settlement Funds are currently being lobbied away from the state’s general fund and towards the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts (JC/AOC). If lobbying efforts are successful the money will be designated for legal services grants.

- iii. Superior Courts (family law cases) – Appalachian Circuit**

4. Law Day Theme – Miranda

Ms. Karlise Grier reported that this year was the 50th anniversary of the Miranda v. Arizona and Miranda was designated as this year’s theme for Law Day. Ms. Grier encouraged anyone to present ideas in the coming months for any presentations or activities that could be held with the Access and Fairness Committee.

5. NAWJ 2017 Conference

(11) Old Business

(12) New Business & Next Meeting

(13) Adjourn

The next meeting is scheduled for May 11th, 2016 at 11:30 a.m.

Adjourn