



TEXAS JUDICIAL COUNCIL

205 WEST 14TH STREET, SUITE 600 • TOM C. CLARK BUILDING • (512) 463-1625 • FAX (512) 936-2423
P. O. Box 12066 • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711-2066

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

**September 29, 2017
10:00 AM**

**Tom C. Clark - 1st Floor Conference Room
205 W. 14th Street
Austin, Texas**

COMMENCEMENT OF MEETING

On September 29, 2017, Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht called the meeting¹ of the [Texas Judicial Council](#) ("Council") to order at approximately 10:00 a.m. in the in the Tom C. Clark Building – 1st Floor Conference Room 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
Hon. Bill Boyce, Justice, 14th Court of Appeals, Houston
Ms. Sonia Clayton, Virtual Intelligence Providers LLC, Houston
Hon. Bill Gravell Jr., Justice of the Peace Pct. 3, Williamson County
Hon. Scott Jenkins, Judge, 53rd District Court, Travis County
Hon. Kelly Moore, Judge, 121st Judicial District, Terry & Yoakum
Hon. Andrew Murr, Representative, Junction
Hon. Valencia Nash, Justice of the Peace Pct. 1, Place 2, Dallas County
Hon. Sherry Radack, Chief Justice, 1st Court of Appeals, Houston
Mr. Kenneth S. Saks, Oliva Saks Garcia & Curiel, LLP, San Antonio
Hon. Edward J. Spillane, III, Presiding Judge, City of College Station
Hon. Vivian Torres, Medina County Court at Law, Hondo
Mr. Evan Young, Baker Botts, Austin
Hon. Judith Zaffirini, Senator, Laredo

Judge Gary Bellair attended by phone.

¹ The meeting may be viewed on the [Office of Court Administration YouTube](#) site.

Members not in attendance were Carlos Amaral, Senator Brandon Creighton, Allyson Ho, Ashley Johnson, Representative John Smithee, and Judge Polly Spencer.

MINUTES

The [June 30, 2017](#) meeting minutes were approved.

REPORTS AND ACTION ITEMS

Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC)

Presiding Judge Sharon Keller and Jim Bethke, TIDC Executive Director, co-presented highlights from the TIDC Director's [Report](#).

Judge Keller recognized Mr. Bethke's upcoming retirement and announced hire of a new Executive Director, Geoffrey Burkhart.

Civil Justice Committee

Chief Justice Sherry Radack reported the committee had met on September 28 to review charges and received presentations for consideration. The committee spent some time discussing initial thoughts and will continue meeting to develop recommendations.

Criminal Justice Committee

Judge Kelly Moore reported the committee had met on September 1 to review charges. He highlighted key points from presentations and discussion related to pretrial release, opioid drug use, specialty courts, and Senate Bill 47 (Zaffirini / Wu).

Regarding pretrial risk assessment pilot testing, Mr. Slayton believes pilot testing of automation will begin within the next few weeks and will include urban, rural, large and small counties, with the goal to have information available to the judiciary by January.

Data Committee

Judge Bill Gravell reported the committee had met on September 18 with the convening of an advisory committee to assist. The committee reviewed charges and considered the reporting requirements of Senate Bill 1893 (Birdwell, Zaffirini / Smithee). Judge Gravell requested adoption of the committee's recommendation in support of the new reporting requirements of information from the presiding judges of the administrative judicial regions. Mr. Slayton reviewed the nine data elements [recommended](#) by the Regional Presiding Judges.

Motion: Senator Judith Zaffirini, 2nd: Judge Kelly Moore. Adopted unanimously.

Mr. Slayton noted changes will be effective January 2018.

Guardianship, Mental Health, & Intellectual/Developmental Disability Committee

Justice Bill Boyce reported the committee had met on September 19 for discussion on three areas of focus: 1) implementation of training, 2) guardianship, and 3) a standing commission on mental health – the latter of which received unanimous consensus from committee.

Chief Justice Hecht stated the Court decided last week to create such a Commission and have been in discussion with the Children's Commission and the Meadows Foundation. The Court of Criminal Appeals will be involved and the Children's Commission will assist with additional staffing. More information will be provided to Council later.

Juvenile Justice Committee

Judge Valencia Nash reported the committee had met on August 31 along with an advisory group to review charges. The committee will continue to review data and report at the next Council meeting.

Public Trust & Confidence Committee

Judge Ed Spillane reported the committee had met on September 8 to review charges. The committee received a presentation from Scott Griffith, OCA Research & Court Services Director, on Judicial Centers for Excellence.

Additionally, the committee voted to conduct polling with questions from the National Center for State Courts study and to add questions related to technology and customer service. The goal is to receive results in early 2018.

Update on the Judicial Response to Hurricane Harvey

Mr. Slayton provided an update on the judicial response to Hurricane Harvey. Chief Justice Hecht commented on the support and offers for assistance he had received from Supreme Court Chief Justices from other states and the quick response to get up and running from other judicial agencies such as Lone Star Legal Aid.

NEW BUSINESS

Mena Ramón, OCA General Counsel, presented amendments to the Texas Judicial Council Collections Improvement Program Rules (1 TAC Sec. 175.1(B)) and requested approval from Council to authorize notice in the Texas Register.

Motion: Judge Ed Spillane, 2nd: Judge Valencia Nash. Approved unanimously.

NEXT MEETING

Chief Justice Hecht announced the next meeting will be on February 23, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

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


Nathan L. Hecht
Chair