

Minutes of Citizens Advisory Committee on Jury Selection
Friday, September 11, 2009
Brookens Administrative Center, Jennifer K. Putman Meeting Room
1776 E. Washington., Urbana, Illinois

Call to Order: Chair Ammons called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Roll Call:

General public (GP) members present: Aaron Ammons, Patricia Avery, Bill Brown, Brian Dolinar, Barbara Kessel, Joan Miller, and Jennifer Putman (arrived after roll call).

GP members absent: Lorraine Cowart, Patrick Thompson

Elected/appointed officials (EAO) present: Matt Gladney, Judge Thomas Difanis, Court Administrator Roger Holland, Public Defender Randy Rosenbaum

EAO members absent: Pius Wiebel, County Board Chair.

Chair Ammons made a motion to accept Patricia Avery to be the interim minute taker in the absence of Jennifer Putman, seconded by Bill Brown. Approved by unanimous consent.

Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve Holland and seconded by Difanis. The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

Approval of Minutes: The motion to approve the minutes from August 21, 2009 was deferred. Motion by Avery and seconded by Difanis. Motion to defer was approved by unanimous consent.

Public Participation: None

Discussion of proposed new language for questionnaire by Judge Difanis.

Roger Holland directed the attention of the board to view the current and revised juror qualification questionnaire forms. Judge Difanis stated that these forms were not uniformed throughout the state. Chair Ammons stated he thought the revised form was more reader friendly but he still had questions about items 4-6. Roger Holland gave an example as to why question #5 was important to know if one would be in need of special accommodations. Roger stated he actually had to sit with a juror that was hearing impaired. The committee agreed with Mr. Holland that this question was important. However there was a generous amount of discussion on other items therefore, there was a motion made by Roger Holland to modify the questionnaire and it was seconded by Jennifer Putman.

The committee agreed to modify the revised version of the questionnaire as follows:

Section A- Qualifications: Remains the same with no changes

Question 4-9 would begin a new numbering sequence beginning with 1 ending with 4. This section would also be moved to Section D-Biographical Information. Numbers 4,5,6 would become 1,2,3 Number 7 & 8 will be deleted all together and Number 9 will become #4. The committee agreed to delete the boxes in #9 that asked to check if a plaintiff or defendant. On the back page of the questionnaire we agreed to Change #2 from number of children and add a box that just ask if you have children, yes or no. We agreed to delete #4 Martial Status, change #7 to include Spouse/Partner Occupation, and to delete number #8 altogether.

Judge Difanis stated he had no problems with the changes and that he would like us to test the modified questionnaire for six months to see if we can get a better response. At that time there

would not be a follow up letter sent. The target date for the modified questionnaire to go into effect would be October 1, 2009.

Discussion about Bill Brown's presentation and summary: Deferred. Motion to defer made by Avery and seconded by Gladney. Motion approved by unanimous consent.

8. Old Business:

a) Follow up with Neil Parthum's letter –

Roger Holland stated he sent out a letter of apology on his letter head to Mr. Parthum explaining the problem with the form he received was not modified regarding parking. The committee suggested Mr. Holland send Mr. Parthum another letter stating his name would be returned to the jury pool.

b) Interpretation of how 705 ILCS 305/1 applies to Champaign County (a county served by a jury commission.

Judge Difanis explained to the committee the process by which we identify potential jurors. He state the courts receive information from a disk from the Secretary of State's office as the means to identify potential jurors. The information on the disk that is readily available comes from Illinois Drivers Licenses, State Identification Cards, Voter Registration Cards and to his knowledge there was no other county in Illinois that used any other means. The County that has a jury commission is required to get that information from Sec of States office. Any changes to acquire any other form of identification for use in the random selection process would have to go to the General Assembly.

9. New Business: working group for public service announcements

Chair Ammons will send letters to Representative Jakobsson and Senator Michael Frerichs and Jane Quinlan at Regional Office of Education by September 30th which talks about the work of our committee and our outreach efforts.

Judge Difanis spoke with the Bar Association and they agreed to contribute \$500 dollars for our outreach efforts.

Chair Ammons will send a report to the Justice & Social Services October meeting.

Joan Miller passed out new Who's Who to each of the committee members.

10. Next Meeting Scheduled for September 25, 2009

11. Public Participation: None

12. Adjournment: Chair Ammons adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

CACJS Interim Secretary Patricia Avery