

Minutes of Citizens Advisory Committee on Jury Selection
Friday, October 23, 2009
Brookens Administrative Center, Putman Meeting Room
1776 E. Washington St., Urbana, Illinois

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

Roll Call: Seven members appointed from the General Public were present: Aaron Ammons, Bill Brown, Lorraine Cowart, Barbara Kessel, Joan Miller, Jennifer Putman, Patrick Thompson. Three members appointed from the General Public were absent: Tricia Avery, Brian Dolinar, Ken Turner. Two Elected Officials were present: Justice & Social Services Committee Chair Matt Gladney, County Board Chair C. Pius Weibel. Three Court Officials were present: Judge Thomas Difanis, Court Administrator Roger Holland, Public Defender Randy Rosenbaum.

Approval of Agenda: Putman offered the motion to add Announcements & Communications as a permanent agenda item. Motion seconded and approved by unanimous consent.

Announcements/Communications: Judge Difanis announced that upcoming judicial training sessions, at which attendance is mandatory for all judges serving in Illinois courts, will include an element devoted to Jury Diversification. Putman read an article from the October 2009 newsletter of the Champaign County Chapter of the League of Women Voters announcing that Aaron Ammons will speak about the work of the CACJS at the February 11, 2010 meeting of the LWVCC.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of October 9 were approved as corrected.

Chancellor's Civic Engagement Grant Proposal: Weibel confirmed that the Circuit Court will be identified in the grant proposal as the entity that will partner with Illinois Public Media and the Youth Media Workshop in all grant application documents. The CACJS discussed definitions of the term "cultural relevance," as used by YMW Co-Director Kimberlie Kranich in an October 23 letter to Chair Weibel. Members volunteered to provide source material that could be helpful to Kranich in preparation of the narrative and letter of commitment that must be submitted to the Chancellor by Monday, November 2. Regarding the question of how a video about jury service produced by the YMW could "have legs," Administrator Holland suggested incorporating presentations of it into Law Day (May 1) observations. Members discussed the video's target audience. Consensus was that although the video production process would be carried out by youth, the target audience could be far more broad, and the video could eventually be used in other Illinois counties and in other states.

Review of Revisions to Juror Questionnaire: Members expressed unanimous appreciation to Courts Administrator Holland and consultant Kirk Bedwell for their patience and diligence in incorporating extensive changes into the Juror Qualification Questionnaire.

New Business: After brief discussion and polling of members, it was agreed to maintain Fridays at 5:30 p.m. as the standard meeting time of the CACJS.

Old Business: Chair Ammons repeated his commitment to producing a version of the Juror Orientation Video that retains the script currently read by Judge Heidi Ladd and a uniformed Court Security Officer, but features respected community leaders reading the script.

Public Participation: Journalism student Mary Beth Versaci introduced her research project to the group and thanked members for their willingness to grant interviews.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Friday, November 20.

Adjournment: Chair Ammons adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Putman
CACJS Secretary