

Minutes of Citizens Advisory Committee on Jury Selection
Friday, February 19, 2010
Jennifer Putman Meeting Room, Brookens Administrative Center
1776 E. Washington Street, Urbana, IL

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

Roll Call: Eight members appointed from the General Public were present: Aaron Ammons, Patricia Avery, Bill Brown, Barbara Kessel, Joan Miller, Jennifer Putman, Patrick Thompson (arrived at 6:15 pm), Ken Turner. Two members appointed from the General Public were absent: Lorraine Cowart, Brian Dolinar. One Elected Official was present: County Board Chair C. Pius Weibel. One Elected Official was absent: Justice & Social Services Committee Chair Matt Gladney. Three Court Officials were present: Judge Thomas Difanis, Court Administrator Roger Holland, Public Defender Randy Rosenbaum.

Approval of Agenda, Minutes (January 22, 2010): The agenda was approved as amended. Minutes of January 22, 2010 were approved as corrected.

Announcements/Communications: Miller complimented Chair Ammons on his presentation to the February 11 meeting of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters. Difanis provided annotated copies of printed material from the Jury Diversity section of the February educational conference of the Administrative Office of Illinois Courts (AOIC). Putman provided written comments by a member of the Champaign County Jury Commission, and reported on conversations with commissioners regarding the CACJS' interest in observing their sessions. Avery announced that Rotarian and LWV member Louise Allen suggested to her that the CACJS should consider making a presentation to the group, and possibly request contributions for the cost of airing PSAs. Ammons read a letter to the CACJS from Urbana resident Jan Kruse describing unsettling aspects of her recent experience as juror in Champaign County Circuit Court. Ammons led discussion of one topic in Kruse's letter—jurors' varied interpretations of judges' instructions.

Vice-Chancellor's Office of Public Engagement Grant Proposal: Members expressed appreciation to Kimberlie Kranich, Co-Director of the Youth Media Workshop, for submitting to the Illinois Disciples Foundation (IDF) a Letter of Inquiry of behalf of CACJS' partnership in production of the "Justice for All" educational video. Members are hopeful that the IDF will invite Ms Kranich to submit a full proposal in March 2010.

Update on Use of Revised Juror Qualification Questionnaire: Brown reported on his recent meeting with Jano System administrator Kirk Bedwell. His discussions with Bedwell will enable Brown to produce a flowchart that shows the steps from compilation of the 136,000-name Master List to mailing of the Juror Qualification Questionnaires and Summonses. Holland reported that Thursday, April 1 remains the expected launch date for use of the revised Juror Qualification Questionnaire.

LWV February 11 Meeting/ Publicity: Miller reported that she will receive a copy of the DVD produced during the League's February monthly meeting, which the CACJS can use for community education purposes. Holland reported communication from County Board Member Barbara Wysocki regarding plans for a possible Law Day (May 1) event at the County Courthouse. Although plans are not yet firm, this year's Law Day at the Courthouse may provide opportunities for the CACJS to report to the public the status of activities to date (e.g., launch of revised Juror Questionnaire, airing of first PSA). Members thanked Holland for offering to stay in contact with Wysocki to ensure cooperative coordination of the Law Day event.

Old Business (Increase Jury Stipend): Ammons proposed requesting the County Board's Finance Committee to amend the General Corporate Fund line item for Juror per Diems. Weibel expressed doubt, considering the County's stressed revenue situation, that funds could be added to this line item in the short-term future.

New Business (Public Service Announcement): Members thanked Thompson for preparing the draft of a script for a PSA and considered modifications to it.

New Business (Legislative Affairs Subcommittee): Rosenbaum reported on the subcommittee's February 19 meeting with state Representative Naomi Jakobsson. Jakobsson told members Avery, Putman, and Rosenbaum there is no likelihood of state subsidization of the sum that counties pay jurors, and little likelihood of support for a tax credit for employers who provide paid time off for juror duty. Jakobsson held more hope for another element of the CACJS legislative agenda—amendment of the Jury Act to allow counties to comprise the jury list from lists in addition to lists of registered voters, licensed drivers, holders of state ID cards, and holders of disabled persons' ID cards. Rosenbaum will furnish Jakobsson with the specific information needed to draft such an amendment to the Jury Act (for introduction in the next session of the Legislature). Jakobsson urged the CACJS to form lobbying alliances with the state bar association and with state-level chapters of the American Civil Liberties Union, National Organization for Women, and League of Women Voters. She encouraged outreach to other legislators whose districts include Champaign County—Senator Mike Frerichs and Representatives William Black, Chapin Rose, and Shane Cultra. Jakobsson recommended that CACJS members who reside in these legislators' districts make the initial contact to arrange meetings with them.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be Friday, March 12.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Putman
Recording Secretary