

Standing Committee on Self-Represented Litigants
Montana State Law Library, Helena, Montana
April 12, 2016 1:30pm – 3pm
Meeting Minutes

It is the vision of the Standing Committee on Self-Represented Litigants to achieve the fair and efficient resolution of unmet legal needs.

1. Introductions and roll call

- a. Present in person was Ann Goldes-Sheahan.
- b. Present by phone were Abby Brown, Kay Pace, August Swanson, Kayre Chattelier, Tierce Bauer (AmeriCorps volunteer at Cascade County Law Clinic), Ed Higgins, Erin Farris-Olsen and Randy Snyder, Kay Lynn Lee

2. Public Comment about non-agenda items

None.

3. Approve January 12, 2016 Minutes

After request to change spelling of 2 names, January meeting minutes were approved. A motion was made by Randy and seconded by Erin. Unanimously approved.

4. Update on A2J Commission & Housekeeping for this Committee (Abby & Ann)

- a. Ann and Abby presented an update to the Commission in March, they will present again in June. Randy Snyder is heading a subcommittee to set a new long term plan for the Commission.
- b. Lisa Mecklenberg-Jackson has left the law library so Kay will forward all e-mail to Abby and Ann to forward on as needed.
- c. New members that might be needed for this Committee: Clerk from a district courts and courts of limited jurisdiction- we don't have these folks and it would be a good idea because much of the education and training is geared towards their group and they could help guide and inform us.
 - i. District Court Judge Ortley is retiring, so someone will need to take his place.
 - ii. Some members on the Committee website are not active so Abby will reach out to see if they are still interested in staying on the Committee to determine what other gaps in membership we have.
 - iii. Erin suggests that Judge Carter may want to be involved now that our strategic plan is pared down and he may have interest in our legislative subgroup. Randy Snyder offered to reach out to him and will let Abby know the status.

- iv. Wynona Tanner- Tribal Court Judge is listed on the site but has never been involved, Ann or Abby will reach out to her to determine her interest.
- v. August suggests updating listserv and forms subcommittee members
- d. Clerks of District Court have meeting in September and would be a good idea to be on their agenda. The meeting is September 27th. Ann stated she will try to get on the agenda to present and build relationships

5. Forms Subcommittee Update (Erin Farris-Olsen)

- a. Meets Tuesday at 4:00 p.m.- Ed will chair during Erin's maternity leave
- b. Meetings are open, so feel free to join
- c. The dissolution form is completed and posted to the law library website
 - i. The pilot program is starting in Cascade and Gallatin counties- they are notifying self-help center staff, the judiciary and the clerks
 - ii. Feedback is requested by the Committee and will go to the scsrl@mt.gov e-mail address
 - iii. People in pilot counties are the only people encouraged to use the form at this time- probably for approximately 3-6 months because that is how long a dissolution usually takes
 - iv. The public comment/feedback is very important so that the form can be constantly updated due to the feedback received
 - v. Training has started on the form— members and will continue to train as needs arise
 - vi. Other forms are being looked at for revision, and they will come to the SC SRL for approval

6. Dividing Tasks for Two Focus Areas (Abby Brown/Ann Goldes)

- a. Quarterly updates from Self-Help Center
- b. Education & Outreach
 - i. Planned in-Person trainings
 - 1. Abby will present two: 1 in May at a Water Law CLE; 1 in June for Disability Rights Montana
 - 2. Ann presented one on limited scope in Kalispell
 - ii. Selecting Chair of Sub-Committee- August
 - 1. Members – Ed, Kayre
 - iii. Grant \$- MJF mini grants?
 - 1. Clerk Conference?
- c. Legislative Changes
 - i. Selecting Chair of Sub-Committee- Ann
 - 1. Members: Randy, Erin, Kay, Abby
 - ii. Trying to make plan to be more prepared and proactive
 - 1. Need a protocol on how to comment/be involved because we are a subcommittee of ACTJ commission.

7. New Business

- a. Inability to Pay Issue/Fee Approval/Waiver (Erin Farris-Olsen/Kayre Chatellier)
 - i. May be new case law forthcoming in regards to justice court denying fee waiver
 - ii. Ed Higgins states that Amy Hall filed writ of supervisory appeal of a judge in Missoula county who denied fee waiver for very needy people
 - 1. Should we bring the issue up to the commission as a whole?
 - a. Action plan- do they want to be involved?
 - b. Commission will want to know what we think
 - i. 2 options
 - 1. Randy – need to recommend to the Commission to as the Supreme Court to standardize this form or some protocol to qualify for fee waivers
 - 2. Ed- Supreme Court needs to tell the District Courts that the form is a statutory form and needs to be used
 - 3. Randy makes motion for SCSRL to recommend to ACTJ that they recommend to the Supreme Court that the process for fee waivers be standardized
 - a. Motion made and seconded. Abby will present at the June 3rd ATJ Commission meeting.

8. Next Meeting Date

- a. A2J Commission Meetings (June 3; September 9; December 9)
- b. Next Committee meeting date July 12, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m., place TBD – Abby and Ann will discuss with Justice Baker if we can hold only telephone meeting in terms of whether that will satisfy the public participation element since almost all Committee members participate by telephone