

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

## November 8, 2017

Attendees: Judges Mahon, Streit-Kefalas, Forgione, Berkenstock, Wright, Magistrali, Darby, Purnell, Brandt, Truppa, Schad, Probate Court Administrator Knierim and Attorney Tom Gaffey.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:49 a.m.

2. **Approval of the Minutes:**

Minutes from October 11, 2017 meeting approved.

3. **Correspondence:** None.

4. **Treasurer's Report:**

The only additional expense in the budget is the cost of the October, 2017 educational seminar. Judge Magistrali requested guidance on approval of expenses. The by-laws indicate that the Treasurer shall approve all expenses before incurred; current practice may be at odds with this by-law. He suggested that he give Sue Dornfried a blanket authorization to incur expenses for assembly meetings and educational seminars, up to a certain amount. All agreed.

The Treasurer's report dated November 8, 2017 was approved.

5. **Committee Reports:**

Continuing Education – Judge Becker

Judge Brandt reported that the joint CBA/Probate Assembly program is scheduled for November 29, 2017.

Ethics – Judge Magistrali

No report.

Legislative – Judge Fox and Judge Rowe

Judge Knierim reported that the committee has started to discuss next year's legislative agenda.

Nominating – Judge Marino

Judge Purnell nominated Judge McNamara to fill the seat of Judge Greene. Motioned approved, Judge McNamara is seated on the Executive Committee.

Planning – Judge Brandt

The committee is taking a look at fee waivers and developing best practices for reviewing and granting them.

Procedures Review – Judge Berkenstock

Judge Berkenstock reports that the Committee continues to meet monthly. Judge Purnell requested that the committee take into account the length of new and revised forms and the ease of use of forms by the public. Judge Berkenstock noted his request and assured all that the committee is very aware of these concerns.

Public Information – Judge Purnell

Judge Purnell thanked all the judges and staff who contacted their legislators during the budget process.

Hospitality – Judge Yamin

Judge Mahon reported that Judge Yamin is planning an event for summer 2018.

**6. Comments of the Probate Court Administrator – Judge Knierim**

Judge Knierim reported that the budget has been passed. The budget reduces Probate Court funding to \$2 million for the current fiscal year and \$4.5 million for the next fiscal year. He thanked all who contacted their legislators during the budget process. While the budget is not ideal, it is a manageable budget.

In the next budget cycle, Judge Knierim believes we will need to take a proactive approach to seek reinstatement of normal funding levels for the Probate Courts.

There was a discussion over the various philosophical views of Probate Court funding.

Judge Knierim updated all on the new CMS reminder system for conservatorship matters. The new system will be rolled out shortly. It allows staff to generate reminder letters to attorneys and conservators. The pilot of the roll out went very well. Amy Benjamin will be leading a webinar on the new program on Wednesday and will be available to assist courts.

PCA has contracted with a collection agency to help with debt collection. CMS will have a feature that allows clerks to easily send an overdue bill to the collections agency.

Finally, Judge Knierim reported on his meeting with the Bankers Association. The Association is willing to develop training for their member banks on working with probate decrees and certificates.

**7. Comments of the President-Judge**

Judge Mahon held a discussion over conservators and their dealings with hospitals seeking last minute authorizations for procedures.

He thanked all for reaching out to their legislators during the budget process.

**8. Other Business to come before the Executive Committee**

Judge Magistrali raised the issue of a local conservator who had a staff member involved in financial improprieties. The files involved have been audited and reviewed.

**9. Adjournment:**

A motion to adjourn was made.  
Meeting adjourned at 10:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Leah Schad  
Recording Secretary