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Conference of Circuit Judges

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF CIRCUIT JUDGES

A meeting of the Conference of Circuit Judges was held Monday, March 15, 2021, via Zoom for Government, beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Members Present

Hon. Keith A. Baynes, Chair

Hon. Brian D. Shockley
Hon. Brett W. Wilson
Hon. Stephen H. Kehoe
Hon. Angela M. Eaves
Hon. Ruth A. Jakubowski
Hon. Jeffrey S. Getty
Hon. Viki M. Pauler
Hon. Fred S. Hecker
Hon. William C. Mulford

Hon. Robert A. Greenberg
Hon. Richard Sandy
Hon. Sheila R. Tillerson Adams
Hon. Donine Carrington Martin
Hon. Audrey J. S. Carrión, Vice Chair
Hon. Barry G. Williams
Marina Fevola
Hon. Katherine Hager
Pamela Harris

Also, Present Were:

Hon. John P. Morrissey
Hon. Sean D. Wallace
Faye Gaskin
Matthew Barrett
Melinda Jensen

Gray Barton
Linda Fallowfield
Kelley O'Connor
Eliana Pangelinan

1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Judge Baynes offered words of welcome and informed everyone that the meeting would be live streamed as the Conference is subject to the Open Meetings Act. He then called for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2021, meeting. Judge Wilson moved for approval of the minutes. Following a second by Judge Carrington Martin, the motion passed.

2. Committee on Complex Litigation

Judge Sean Wallace, Chair of the Committee on Complex Litigation, appeared before the Conference to provide a status of the Committee's work. He noted that the Committee was created shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic, after study and recommendations by the MSBA Business Law Section Ad Hoc Task Force in 2017 and the Maryland Judiciary Workgroup on Business and Technology in 2019. As a result of the recommendations, the Business and Technology Subcommittee was moved from the Specialty Courts and Dockets Committee and reconstituted as the Committee on Complex Litigation under the Conference with an expanded focus on all complex litigation except asbestos. The Committee's membership comprises one judge from each of the five largest jurisdictions and one judge from each of the remaining three circuits. In addition, the recommendation to include in the Judiciary's budget the position of Complex Litigation Coordinator was approved.

The Committee held its first meeting in February 2021, where two workgroups were formed – Business and Technology and Medical Malpractice. Both workgroups will consist of nine members, including four judges, three attorneys recommended by the MSBA, one representative from the Conference of Circuit Court Clerks, and one representative from the Conference of Circuit Court Administrators. The memberships of both workgroups are being finalized. The Committee will initially focus on improving participation in the Business and Technology Case Management Program (BTCMP) and formulating recommendations to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the same. Judge Wallace noted that the Committee is reviewing criteria for admission into the BTCMP, establish a workgroup of judges to review opinions and determine which are appropriate for publication, and revamping the BTCMP website.

Judge Wallace discussed the need for enhanced training, noting the one-day training that will take place as part of the Judicial College's course offerings in 2022. He remarked that there is a lot of interest in a two-day standalone training for business and technology judges, in the form of a "boot camp," where issues that arise out of business and technology cases will be thoroughly discussed. Other items that will be considered are uniform forms and draft rules to increase the effective and efficient processing of these cases.

Judge Baynes thanked Judge Wallace for his presentation and the Committee for its work. After some discussion, it was agreed that Judge Wallace would provide a written report to the Conference after the Committee's April meeting. In addition, if there are any concerns with respect to the Committee or its workgroups, Judge Wallace will bring them to the Conference's attention to ensure they are proceeding in the direction expected by the Conference.

Judge Baynes stated that there was a matter before the Conference requiring the members to go into executive session and asked for a motion to do so. Judge Adams moved that the Conference go into executive session. Following a second by Judge Eaves, the motion carried.

Following the executive session, the meeting ended at 10:02 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 17, 2021, via Zoom for Government, beginning 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Faye Gaskin". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Faye Gaskin
Conference Secretary