

## **Minutes of the Advisory Task Force on Composition of Judicial Districts**

**October 29, 2018**

The meeting was called to order on October 29, 2018 at 1 pm CDT by Chairman Chancellor Telford Forgety at the Administrative Office of the Courts in Nashville, Tennessee. Members District Public Defender Bo Burk, Chancellor J.B. Cox, District Attorney General Mark Davidson, District Public Defender Craig Fickling, Clerk and Master John Fine, District Attorney General Kim Helper, District Attorney General Russell Johnson, Chancellor Jim Kyle, and District Public Defender Kim Nelson, were also present with Member John Ryder present via conference call.

House Speaker Beth Harwell welcomed and thanked the committee members for their service.

Chairman Forgety asked for volunteers to act as Executive Secretary. Kim Helper was unanimously approved by the members,

Chairman Forgety discussed the legislative mandate included in Chapter 974 with the focus on recommending and publishing a proposed statewide judicial redistricting plan. Chapter 974, Section 4 (2)(A). Prior to publishing its findings, Section 4(2)(B) requires the Task Force to hold at least one public hearing in each Grand Division. Chairman Forgety encouraged all members to listen and learn and to keep an open mind as the Task Force moves forward with its charge.

Deborah Taylor Tate, Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), welcomed the members to the AOC and introduced her staff who will be working with the Commission. Director Tate highlighted several resources available to the Commission, including the National Center for State Courts which worked with both Kentucky and Virginia on redistricting issues. Director Tate hopes to have a General Sessions Repository up and available for Commission use by October 2019. Chairman Forgety questioned what other states use/have used as data for redistricting.

The Commission discussed scheduling of meetings, specifically when, how often, and the mechanism for meetings. A motion was made, properly seconded, and approved to meet on the third Mondays of the month at 1 pm CT. A motion was made, properly seconded, and approved to meet on the second Mondays in January and February because of State holidays. Subsequently, the Commission members opted to allow the Chairman to schedule these meetings when there is information available and topics to be discussed. Meetings will be held at the AOC with conferencing capabilities in place around the State.

Additional discussion centered on the Commission's charge to have public meetings in each of the Grand Divisions. A motion was made, properly seconded, and approved to consider a public meeting in Nashville on March 4 or 5, 2019 at 1 pm to allow legislators to attend and learn about the Commission's work. Director Tate stated she would look at the availability of a legislative committee room for the hearing.

A motion was made, properly seconded, and approved to hold a public hearing in Jackson, TN in the Spring 2019 (April or May), to have a hearing in East Tennessee, potentially at Roane State on May 20, 2019 and a hearing on June 12<sup>th</sup> in the Nashville Area. A suggestion was made to schedule the Middle Division public hearing at MTSU.

Commission members expressed a need to disseminate information to the public and concerned groups. Among the groups identified were Drug Task Forces, Child Support Offices, CASA, Child Advocacy Centers, the Office of Criminal Justice Programs, Treatment Courts, State and Local Bar Associations, the Board of Probation and Parole, Court Clerks, and General Sessions judges. A website was mentioned as one option for sharing information.

Chairman Forgety also spoke about the scope of the duties of the Commission. While there may be a need to look at the allocation of resources for District Attorneys and Public Defenders, the legislation appears to keep the task narrowly focused on setting forth any redistricting recommendations. The Commission again expressed a desire to look at how Kentucky and Virginia accomplished redistricting, as well as looking at geography and any available weighted caseload numbers.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m CDT.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Kim Helper