

COUNCIL OF JUDGES EMERGENCY MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 17, 2020

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT on the 17TH day of March, 2020, there was begun and held a joint meeting of the Council of District Judges and County Court at law Judges in the Fifth Floor Courtroom of the Nueces County Courthouse, 901 Leopard Street, Corpus Christi, Texas, wherein the following members were present:

Judge Nanette Hasette, Local Administrative Presiding Judge	28th District Court
Judge Lisa Gonzales, Local Administrative Judge, County Courts	County Court at Law No. 2
Judge Sandra Watts	117 th District Court
Judge Missy Medary	347 th District Court
Judge Robert Vargas	County Court at Law No. 1
Judge Carlos Valdez	148 th District Court
Judge Bobby Galvan	94 th District Court
Judge Inna Klein	214 th District Court
Judge Deeanne Galvan	County Court at Law No. 3
Judge Mark Woerner	County Court at Law No. 4
Judge Tim McCoy	County Court at Law No. 5
Judge David Stith	319 th District Court
Judge Barbara Canales	County Judge

Other Departments Represented:

Marilee Roberts	Court Administrator
Emily	Fifth Region
Chris Hooper	Sheriff
Judge Susan Barclay	IVD
Lilia Ann Gutierrez	District Clerk
Linda Schauer	Magistrate
Mark Gonzales	District Attorney
Angelica Hernandez	District Attorney
Andrew Garcia	347 th District Court
Linda Harrison	28 th District Court
Sandra Banielos	319 th District Court
Thelma Lopez	148 th District Court
Lance Murphy	IT
Bridget Tyler	IT
Will Shull	CSCD
David Henry	
Steve Lopez	

1. Agenda Item 1. Call to Order

Judge Nanette Hasette called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

ACTION ITEM 1 – Family Law matters – Judge Hasette led a discussion related to the definition of essential family law matters. After considerable discussion, Mr. Henry and Mr. Lopez addressed the Board and presented a proposed General Standing Order which applies to

orders issued by County Court at Law 5 and the District Courts. (Copy attached). The Board approved the Standing Order unanimously by affixing their signatures. The Board agreed that agreed divorce decrees can be signed without a hearing if all necessary signatures are on the decrees.

ACTION ITEM 2 - Judge Hasette asked Board to consider the cancellation of additional juries. Questions about the ability to conduct hearings telephonically were raised. Mr. Murphy advised the Board that Ms. Roberts had completed an inventory of courts currently in possession of CourtCall equipment and that the acquisition of sufficient equipment for all courts was underway. Kiosks were also being ordered for use in the Jail. Judge Medary advised that the Office of Court Administration had investigated a remote access service (ZOOM) and that it would soon be available to all courts. Judge Watts recommended the use of on line panels exclusively to avoid mass gatherings in the central jury room. Ms. Hernandez commented on possible objections by defense attorneys. After considerable discussion, and on an original motion by Judge Watts, seconded by Judge Woerner, amended by Judge Woerner and seconded by Judge Watts, the Board unanimously agreed to postpone all civil, family law and criminal jury trials (defendants on bond) for eight weeks (3/23/20 to 5/25/20), and all criminal trials where the defendant is in custody for four weeks (3/23/20 to 4/20/20)(Copy attached).

The District Attorney addressed concerns about the cancellation of criminal trials and the impact on jail population. Judge Watts recommended that the magistrates possibly be authorized to conduct risk assessments. Discussion followed. Misdemeanor prosecutors will be doing intake remotely.

Probation reported that office visits are being delayed and that no reviews are being requested unless of an emergency.

Judge Watts suggested cancelling all non-essential civil and family law matters. After discussion, the Board agreed on the matters to be defined as essential. Ms. Roberts will draft a resolution reflecting the Board's decision. (Copy attached). Judge McCoy raised additional concerns about deadlines imposed on cases assigned to County Court 5.

Judge Medary made a motion to recess, seconded by Judge Valdez. All in favor, meeting recessed at 11:34 a.m. Judge Medary made a motion to reconvene, seconded by Judge Woerner. All in favor. Meeting reconvened at 11:56 am.

The Board discussed expanding the authority of the magistrates. On a motion, by Judge Watts, seconded by Judge Valdez, the Board unanimously agreed to expand the authorities of the magistrates related to bonds on Failures to Appear and Motions to Revoke (Copy attached). The Board approved the Resolution by affixing their signatures. Judge Watts recommended led a discussion on the value of the risk assessment staff to reduce jail population. Discussion followed. On a motion by Judge Watts, seconded by Judge Medary, the Board asked Judge Canales to consider funding for a third risk assessor and to expand the hours of the magistrates to 29 hours per week. All in favor, motion passes.

The matter of arraignments was discussed at length. On a motion by Judge Klein, amended by Judge Medary and Judge Woerner and seconded by Judges Medary, the district courts will accept waivers of arraignment with conditions. All in favor, motion passes (Copy of resolution

attached). Judge Watts indicated that she would draft an order setting all deadlines for the courts to use (upon approval).

Judge Watts made a motion, seconded that all Motions for summary judgement will be considered by submission unless oral argument is requested. If requested, those arguments will be conducted by video conferencing (commencing after 3-17-20 if video conferencing is available). All in favor, motion passes.

3. A Motion was made by Judge Watts to recess the meeting, seconded by Judge Valdez; all in favor. Meeting is recessed at 1:00 p.m, to reconvene at 11:30 a.m. on March 18, 2020.
4. Judge Hasette reconvened the meeting at 11:42 and presented the resolutions regarding waivers, additional authority to magistrates, and family law matters to the Board.
5. Judge Hasette asked the Board to consider approval of the revised lists of attorneys on Odyssey based on the submission of the new application (objective criteria submitted in conjunction with TIDC plan in 2019). After discussion, Judge Valdez made a motion that the Court Administrator have the authority to add or delete attorneys from the lists based on completed applications. Motion seconded by Judge Deanne Galvan. All in favor, motion passes.
6. Monte English addressed the Board and asked for their help in crafting guidance to the bar related to videoconferencing and the ability to continue to conduct discovery. After considerable discussion, Judge Watts made a motion, seconded by Judge Klein, to craft a resolution (copy attached). All in favor, motion passes.
7. Judge Valdez made a motion to adjourn at 12:32, seconded by Judge Bobby Galvan. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.