

**Federal Judges Association
Executive Committee Meeting Notes
Telephone Conference Call
November 22, 2019**

Participating: Judges Cynthia Rufe (President), Richard Clifton (President-elect), Karen Schreier (Secretary), J. Michelle Childs (Treasurer) and Executive Committee members: Malachy Mannion, Dan Polster, Patti Saris, Patty Shwartz, Charles Simpson, Lawrence Piersol, Leo Gordon, Leigh May, and Marilyn Huff (immediate past president).

Also participating: Meghan Cruz and Julianne Clark (MSP); and Allyson Duncan (past president).

Absent: Nannette Brown

Judge Rufe called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. EDT by telephone

President's Report – Cynthia Rufe

Judge Rufe recently attended the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges Annual Meeting in DC where she addressed the assembly as FJA President. She was also scheduled to meet with AO Director Duff along with Patti Saris but the meeting was cancelled due to illness and will be rescheduled within the month.

Judge Rufe attended and contributed remarks that were read during Judge Jerry Simandle's Memorial Service. Judge Simandle was the Treasurer, an Officer, and a long-time Board member of FJA. Judge Rufe's remarks were also posted on the FJA website.

Financial Report- Treasurer Michelle Childs

A balance sheet showing total assets of \$859,506.97 as of October 31, 2019 was provided to the Executive Committee. Additionally, a profit and loss statement for April through October 2019 was provided. The management fees are about \$40,000 per year. Judge Childs informed the executive committee that the FJA accounts have been moved to Federated Bank and we are setting aside \$25,000 per year for four years as anticipated expenses for the Quadrennial.

Secretary – Karen Schreier

It was moved by Judge Simpson and seconded by Judge Mannion that the minutes from the September executive committee meeting be approved. The motion passed.

Judge Schreier reported on the at-large director's elections. Most of the circuits have filled their positions. After Thanksgiving, Judge Schreier will follow up with the circuits that will have vacancies as of December 31 and who have not responded to her request for information.

Judge Rufe noted that we have many new members of the Board of Directors. Because of the high turnover, an orientation will be planned during our Board meeting in Denver.

Membership Report-Leigh May

Judge May reported that she has recruited one director from each circuit to be responsible for membership recruitment. She generates a list every two months of newly confirmed judges. Julianne Clark generates a letter that Judge Rufe sends to the newly confirmed judge encouraging them to join FJA. Judge May then asks the circuit representative to contact the newly confirmed judge and encourage them to join FJA. The new judges have responded positively and membership is going well. Currently there are 1072 members of FJA. 1039 pay by allotment and 33 by check.

It was suggested that we have more of a presence during Baby Judges school. Several suggestions were made including being a happy hour sponsor, having local judges or the mentor judges make a membership pitch, and giving the new judges some FJA swag (hat, mug). Judge May will follow up on these suggestions.

IAJ Conference and ANAO May 2020 meeting in DC

Judges Rufe, Allyson Duncan and David Carter attended the IAJ conference in Astana, Kazakhstan. It was a very long trip. The meeting went well and was held jointly with the Court Administrators International event and the Justice Forum for the Judiciary of Kazakhstan. The next IAJ conference will be in Costa Rica.

Judge Duncan is a member of the President's Committee and leads one of four geographical sections— ANAO. The next ANAO meeting will be in Washington, DC on May 18-20, 2020. The last ANAO meeting in DC was held in 2010. Judge Duncan requested both a financial contribution and our physical presence at the meeting. The theme of the conference will be emerging trends in technology and the sciences. The conference will include a tour of the African American Museum. It was moved by Judge Simpson and seconded by Judge Gordon that the FJA contribute \$5000 towards the expenses of the conference. After discussion, the motion passed.

Judge Mannion moved to pay the expenses of the FJA President or her designee to attend the meeting. The motion was tabled until the next meeting in January.

Communications Report- Malachy Mannion

Judge Mannion reported that the current FJA website is functioning at a minimal level. As was discussed during the September meeting, Higher Logic made a presentation several months ago about an alternative that is more user friendly, but costlier. Judge Mannion and MSP is now soliciting information and price quotes from Vanilla and Lithium regarding other alternatives. Judge Mannion will make a presentation to the Executive Committee in January regarding all the options. In the interim, the Officers and Committee Chairs will continue to communicate with our members by e-blast.

Judicial Integrity and Independence-Patti Saris

Judge Saris reported that she and Judge Rufe plan to meet with Director Duff next week. A government shut down is not expected.

Pay and Benefits – Leo Gordon and Dan Polster

The committee continues to gather documentation of past efforts regarding pay and benefits. They need additional committee members to assist with this effort. With regard to benefits, long-term care continues to be an issue with our members. The insurance consultant is available to meet with members to answer their questions about benefits. It was suggested that we gather information about the benefits judges receive in state judicial systems for comparison of those benefits to our benefits. Challenges we face include that our cohort is small, so it is difficult to get companies interested in talking with us. A question was raised regarding whether the flexible spending account annual amount could be increased from \$2750 to \$5000. Judge Piersol agreed to look into this issue.

Senior Judges—Larry Piersol

This committee also wants new committee members. In January, Judge Piersol plans to conduct a survey of members to help identify potential benefits that might be of interest to the Senior Judges.

Civics Education – Judge Rufe

As Judge Brown was unable to participate in the meeting (on a plane), Judge Rufe led the discussion. As discussed at the last meeting, the ABA Task Force on the Nineteenth Amendment, chaired by Judge Margaret McKeown, asked FJA if we would purchase and store an exhibit designed to illustrate the milestones and history of the Nineteenth Amendment, available for display in courthouses and during circuit conferences. Taking responsibility for storing and shipping the exhibits would be impractical. The Task Force also asked about FJA sponsorship of a related essay contest. Judge Rufe suggested that FJA be authorized to contribute \$5,000 for one of the display exhibits, leaving storage and shipment to the Task Force or the ABA, and that if the funds not be needed for the display, that they be made available to the Task Force for the proposed essay contest. Judge Clifton made a motion to that effect. It was passed without objection.

Next Meeting

Because several judges had to leave the call for court or other commitments, the balance of the agenda was deferred for the next meeting. In light of the holidays, the next meeting will be scheduled in January, 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 12: 08 p.m. Eastern Time.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen E. Schreier
Secretary

