

DOMESTIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – February 20, 2004

PRESENT:

-
-

CO-CHAIRS:

Hon. Mark Anderson, Co-Chair
Hon. Karen Johnson, Co-Chair

MEMBERS:

-
- Hon. Karen Adam
- Hon. David Bradley
- Hon. Bill Brotherton
- Sidney Buckman
- Kat Cooper
- Frank Costanzo
- William Fabricius
- Hon. Beverly Frame
- Nancy Gray
- Bill Hart
- Terrill J. Haugen
- Jennifer Jordan
-
- Ella Maley
- Hon. Dale Nielson
- David Norton
- Steve Phinney
- Karen Kretschman
-
-
-
- Ellen Seaborne
-
-
- Kelly Spence
-
-
- Judy Walruff
- Steve Wolfson
- Debbora Woods-Schmitt
- Brian Yee
- Jeff Zimmerman

GUESTS:

Michael Durham	2 nd Spoken Voice
Sharon Searles	AZPPN
Joel Glassman	Self
Robert Roll	AOC
Karl Heckart	AOC
John Blackburn Jr.	ACJC
Julianna Koob	AZCADV
Martin Susnjara	Self
David Weinstock	Self
Therese Martin	Office of the Attorney General
Danny Cartagena	Parent

STAFF:

Megan Hunter
Elizabeth Portillo

Administrative Office of the Courts
Administrative Office of the Courts

The meeting was called to order at 10:20 a.m. with a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: David Norton made a motion to approve the minutes with a correction to the spelling of Senator Brotherton's name. Jennifer Jordan seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Representative Johnson and Senator Anderson had scheduling conflicts. Representative Bradley and Senator Brotherton served as co-chairs for the meeting.

LEGISLATION

Julie Koob, Arizona Coalition Against Domestic Violence discussed Senate Bill 1308 dealing with custody evaluators. The proposal would require training in domestic violence to those conducting custody evaluations or assessments; require assessment and contracting entities to meet separately with parties when there has been a history of domestic violence or order of protection; and set a standard for payment of evaluations and assessments. The Committee will discuss this bill next month.

Marianne Hardy, House staff, presented an overview of domestic-related bills introduced in the House. HB2001 would allow parties to agree to the appointment of a judge pro tem to hear the action and would require the parties to pay for the pro tem's time. HB 2348 would allow the court to consider marital misconduct in the disposition of property. HB 2704 was the presumptive joint custody proposal vetted through this Committee, but that eventually failed. Representative Boone introduced the bill.

Barbara Guenther, Senate staff, presented an overview of domestic-relations bills introduced in the Senate. Of particular importance, SB 1156 would allow the court to order child support retroactively to the date of separation in a dissolution, legal separation or annulment case.

Dr. Joel Glassman, custody evaluator, discussed a bill concerning complaints against psychologists to the Board of Psychologists. The bill would require the chairman of the board to appoint a complaint screening committee to review all complaints and take action such as dismissing the complaint if it is without merit, or refer the complaint to the full board for further review and action.

Mike Durham, 2nd Spoke Voice, discussed a bill that would require the Arizona Supreme Court to modify its automation systems concerning orders of protection. Mr. Durham seeks to require the Court to expand their domestic violence statistics and make them Arizona specific. He asserted that statistics used in Arizona in the domestic violence area are from national databases, not Arizona. David Benton and Karl Heckart, Administrative Office of the Courts, provided additional information on the same bill, including the types of information currently available in

the court's automation system and the fiscal prohibitions from implementing the provisions of this bill.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

Danny Cartagena, parent, discussed his concerns regarding solutions in the absence of presumed joint custody. He specifically wanted to ask questions of committee members regarding interpretation of statute. Mr. Cartagena was notified that pursuant to Open Meeting Laws, the members of this Committee are not required to answer questions during call to the public and that this time is reserved for members of the public to address the Committee.

Sharon Searles Farmer, Arizona Protective Parents Network, discussed her concerns regarding domestic violence and parenting time and custody.

BREAK/LUNCH

The Committee dismissed for lunch at 12:00. The meeting reconvened at 12:15 p.m.

DOMESTIC RELATIONS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

The Education/Prevention Workgroup has been developing a children's divorce education program over the past several months. Dr. Irwin Sandler, Director of the ASU Prevention Research Center spoke to the group about his research on these types of programs in other states and highlighted those with empirical evidence of success. He emphasized the importance of building an evaluative component into the project, if such a project is commenced. He discussed research on children's adjustment after divorce and provided an overview of the phases of program development. Because the legislative agenda item took a great deal of time, Dr. Sandler's presentation will be continued in March.

DEDICATED FAMILY BENCH

Dr. Yee reviewed the final draft of the letters that will be sent to the Pima and Maricopa County Trial Court Commissions. Members made several suggestions for language changes. Megan will prepare the final draft and send it to the Commissions prior to the next meeting.

INTEGRATED FAMILY COURT

No updates were provided as no changes have occurred.

WORKGROUP REPORTS

The workgroups did not have an opportunity to meet; no reports were necessary.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

No requests to speak were received for the call to the public.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on March 19, 2004, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm at the Arizona State Courts Building, 1501 W. Washington, Conference Room 119.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.