**Court Reform Council**

Meeting #1

May 23, 2017, 9:00 AM

Room 501, Banc Room | Health Building, 47 Trinity Avenue

**MINUTES**

At 9:00 AM, Attorney General Carr called the first meeting of the Court Reform Council to order and initiated round-table introductions.

Attorney General Carr provided an overview of the Council’s purpose, read Governor Deal’s Executive Order, reminded members of the Council about the December 1, 2017 deadline for submitting their report and emphasized the importance of meeting that deadline with thoughtful recommendations. He also requested input on developing logistical procedures for the Council moving forward.

Attorney General Carr explained how the council would have at least three subcommittees with chairs for each. Attorney General Carr reviewed the responsibilities of the subcommittee—which will conduct a deeper analysis within their issue-specific areas to report back to the group—and emphasized those subcommittees can meet as often as needed. Attorney General Carr let the Council know that the Council will vote on whether to include additional issues raised by each subcommittee.

Attorney General Carr reminded the group about the Council’s public e-mail address—which serves as a platform for general input—and the Office of the Attorney General’s public website (law.georgia.gov/court-reform-council)—which the Council will aim to put information concerning the Council. Attorney General Carr also reiterated that the Council will aim to put the agenda and dates for each meeting at least seven days in advance.

Solicitor General Sarah Hawkins Warren proposed subcommittee matters for feedback:

1. A subcommittee examining Administrative Procedure Act led by Chief Judge Michael Malihi
2. A subcommittee examining a Statewide Business Court, led by David Werner
3. A subcommittee examining Sovereign Immunity

Attorney General Carr expressed that is would behoove the group to identify the main goals and areas of focus for the purpose of the Council by the next full-council meeting.

Judge Malihi commented that any reform would need input from all courts, so if we need to reach out to involve them in subcommittees, we should.

Executive Counsel David Werner echoed that he would like insight from a wide variety of entities.

Attorney General Carr called for other ideas.

Solicitor General Sarah Hawkins Warren provided background on PACER—a court-document system as an example. Sarah mentioned that she understood some were exploring how the Court of Appeals (or other courts) could be more accessible. Sarah asked the group asks if they foresaw any challenges.

Justice Nels Peterson reminded the group that some are currently working on exploring the issue of technology in the court system. He cautioned that the Council should avoid duplicating efforts, and recommended the Council should study the things these groups may have already addressed to make more headway.

Representative Mary Margaret Oliver acknowledged past legislative efforts to this regard.

Representative Christian Coomer stated this would be a great platform to talk through some of the challenges with previously-attempted legislation.

Judge Asha Jackson commented that she sits on judicial committee that is looking at reforming municipal courts and how they operate statewide. As they are tackling that issue, she raised the possibility that this Council might also look into it.

Judge Trent Brown raised a concern about spending large efforts on e-filing.

Attorney General Carr reminded the Council that we want to be sure we devote fair attention to each issue yet prioritize the time the Council has between now and December 1, 2017.

Attorney General Carr said subcommittees and meeting dates should be decided by June and the July meeting will serve as a platform for the subcommittees to report to the full council to collectively decide exactly which issues to address.

Judge Charlie Bethel asked if anyone from the Council could send the last status of legislative efforts for court reform and what the technology committee has already tried to do for review.

Chief Deputy Dennis Dunn reiterated the time-frame and acknowledged the committee needs to balance time and content to provide a meaningful report.

Attorney General Carr requested that the Council spend time gathering information on efforts to modernize court technology for a more informed conversation in July.

Chief Deputy Dennis Dunn, raised that Judge Melton is exploring how to access criminal records in the counties across the state and stated that they might have meaningful proposals to include.

Attorney General Carr concluded that by the end of the week, Council members should designate which subcommittee they will be participating in and the subcommittee should provide dates for their first meeting.

Attorney General Carr provided that his office will help coordinate the distribution of supplementary materials for the next meeting.

Chief of Staff Travis Johnson reminded the group that the next meeting will be in the Coleman Conference Room in the Judicial Building.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:35 A.M.