

District Court of Appeal Budget Commission
April 9, 2007
Video Conference Call
(10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon)
Meeting Minutes

DCABC Members Present:

Judge Carolyn Fulmer, Chair
Judge Matthew Stevenson, Vice Chair
Judge Robert Pleus, Jr.
Judge Edwin Browning, Jr.
Judge Peter Webster
Judge Stevan Northcutt
Judge David Gersten
Judge George Shahood
Judge William Palmer

Others Present:

Marshal Don Brannon
Marshal Velma Johnson
Marshal Dottie Munro
Marshal Glen Rubin
Marshal Ty Berdeaux
Al Sadowski
Lisa Goodner
OSCA Staff

Absent:

Judge Gerald Cope, Jr.

Judge Carolyn Fulmer called the District Court of Appeal Budget Commission (DCABC) meeting to order at 10:32 a.m.

Status Report from Legislative Meetings

Judge Fulmer opened the meeting with a status report of the discussion from various meetings with legislators and legislative committees. Meetings have occurred weekly since the beginning of the session and member responses to DCA budget issues have been both receptive and positive.

Status Report -- General Appropriations Act (GAA)

Each chamber will pass their respective General Appropriations Act's (SB 2800 and HB 5001) and various implementing bills (SB 2802, HB 5003, etc.) this week. Judge Fulmer and Lisa Goodner reviewed the summaries outlining the State Courts System Legislative Budget Request, the House proposal, as of March 27, 2007, and the Senate proposal, as of March 30, 2007. The House proposal currently contains partial funding for the

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telephone system replacement; full funding of the First DCA air conditioning issue; and partial funding of the new court building within the First DCA. The House proposal did not pick up any of the State Courts System Capitol Improvement Projects (CIP). Ms. Goodner suggested making contacts with legislators in the House to further lobby for these projects.

The current Senate proposal funds 1 FTE (Five FTE's were requested) for the appellate court workload issue; full funding of the appellate court security workload; full funding of the information technology digital recording equipment; full funding of the appellate court operational increases; partial funding for the telephone system replacement; partial funding of the new court building in the First DCA; and full funding of the remaining State Courts System Capitol Improvement Project (CIP) requests.

Judge Fulmer noted that the law related reference materials were not funded in either the Senate or House proposal. Judge Pleus pointed out that Judge Winifred Sharp has graciously agreed to assist with funding for this request and that the budget request for this project was no longer needed.

Judge Browning asked about the status of proposed reductions in judicial assistant FTE and funding. Judge Fulmer indicated that no reduction was taken in either bill.

Discussion of Budget Strategies for Conference

Ms. Goodner reviewed the Senate tentative block calendar for the week of April 16-20, 2007, and stated that conference will begin the morning of Tuesday, April 17, with ongoing meetings throughout the week and weekend. Once the conference members are appointed, a list will be provided to the commission members. At the present time, there is a \$1 billion difference between the Senate and House budgets, which will have to be reconciled during the conference process. Additionally, as the conference meetings progress and specific allocations are further recommended by the conference members, Ms. Goodner recommended that each DCA closely examine their respective issues and notify OSCA with specific priorities for final lobbying efforts.

Judge Pleus inquired as to whom he should contact to discuss the Fifth DCA's central staff FTE (law clerk). Ms. Goodner suggested making contacts with local legislators in the House and that a list outlining local key members (Senate and House) would be provided to assist with making contacts and setting up meetings with those members.

Judge Pleus asked about the status of the judicial pay raises. Ms. Goodner answered that nothing has materialized at this point and that traditionally pay issues are resolved towards the end of Session.

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Judge Stevenson asked about using recurring dollars for the law clerks issue and or CIP projects. Ms. Goodner indicated that it was a better strategy to emphasize the use of non-recurring dollars for funding CIP projects and use recurring dollars for the remaining requests.

Other Business

The status of the judicial certification bill was raised. Ms. Goodner said that the Senate legislation, SB 588, is currently in the Senate Criminal and Civil Justice Appropriations committee and that a Proposed Committee Bill (PCB) has not been filed in the House relating to certification of new judgeships.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.