



Technology Committee Minutes

Date: February 19, 2016

Time: 10:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Location: N.C. Judicial Center, 901 Corporate Center Dr., Raleigh, N.C.

Attendees

Committee Members: Justice Barbara Jackson, Judge Susan Burch, Judge William “Mac” Cameron, Jeff Frazier, Susan Frye, Jennifer Harjo, Jason Hensley, James J. MacCallum, Kimmel McDiarmid (on behalf of Tina McNair), Brooks Raiford

Presenters: Andrew Flewelling, Charlie Leadbetter (remote), Doug Rowe, Bran Shipwash

Reporters: Paul Embley, Kurt Stephenson

Guests: Elizabeth Croom, Lorrie Dollar, Charles Fraley, Sharon Gladwell, Ginger Helms, David Johnson, Mike Lotz, Amber Lueken Barwick, Tom Maleck, James Mallory, Jeff Marecic, Mal Maynard, Erik Mazzone, Tom Murry, Emily Portner, Will Robinson, Richard Schauffler, Jon Williams, Mike Wilson, Fred Wood

Administrative Matters

A motion was made and approved to adopt the minutes from the January 29th Technology Committee meeting, as drafted and distributed.

Presentation Topics

Highlighting Information Provided by the Clerks of Superior Court in the “Stakeholder Feedback for NCCALJ” – *Susan Frye, Forsyth County Clerk of Superior Court; Jim MacCullum, Brunswick County Clerk of Superior Court; Brian Shipwash, Davidson County Clerk of Superior Court*

The Financial Management System (FMS) used by the offices of Clerks of Superior Court was discussed. A full description of the information presented can be found in the “Technology

Committee Agendas and Materials” section of the website for the North Carolina Commission on the Administration of Law & Justice.

In short, the system was first used in 1989 and since that time there have been many changes to how and when money is taken for cases. The FMS system is not fully integrated with other applications such as the Criminal Court Information System (CCIS) or the Civil Case Processing System (VCAP). The reporting features of FMS do not include all of the needed information; instead staff must verify checks and manually find balances. Magistrates do not currently have the ability in FMS to receipt money as a cashier. As a result, they receive payments, write paper receipts, and deliver money to the office of the Clerk of Superior Court.

As a part of the presentation, it was recommended that any new bookkeeping system should be fully integrated to share needed information with CCIS-CC and VCAP. “All information regarding monetary payment should automatically populate VCAP and CCIS-CC. Additionally, all monetary information should be entered only by case number to allow all payment information to be viewed by all clerks. Another significant feature of a new system should be a consistent date method (i.e. YEARMMD or MMDDYEAR). The new system should allow magistrates to enter payment information. Modern features used by most major businesses should be added, including: allowing and properly documenting credit card/online payments, allowing and properly documenting payments via electronic devices, and electronic receipts.”

The overall benefits to utilizing technology solutions in the office of the Clerk of Superior Court were highlighted through initiatives implemented in Forsyth County. Providing information on a public website has reduced telephone calls and in-person information requests for things such as requesting copies of files, foreclosure, and jury service. The District Attorney and the Clerk of Superior Court have also collaborated to provide the public with the option to process certain traffic infractions online. Staff from the District Attorney’s office are free to review and dispose of cases anytime and without being physically present in a courtroom. Using just two key strokes, an electronic record of the disposition is created, the defendant is notified of the disposition, and the Clerk’s criminal records office is also notified. Staff in the Clerk’s office spend less time handling and sorting court documents and files. This also reduces the time that the public need to spend in a courthouse; thereby eliminating issues such as missing work. If an online compliance dismissal system was linked to other agency databases then additional savings could be achieved. Furthermore, the expansion of case types which are eligible for online dismissal should be evaluated.

The public’s expectation for the use of credit cards was also examined. The current vendor contract for the use of credit cards is through March 2017. As this deadline approaches, things to consider in the development of a system designed for the future include, the ability for the person receiving credit card payments to also have the ability to enter case related data in the courtroom, the use of mobile devices and other online payment methods to increase options for remote payments, a centralized collections interface, and child support payments. It will also be important to explore options for increasing the limit for charges, guaranteed payments to reduce staff time associated with reconciliation, and review the use of physical kiosk operations which give the public cash and credit options.

A final presentation highlighted the existing estates tracking system that is an add-on application to the VCAP indexing database. It was noted that unlike most case types, the number of estate filings has increased in the last 10 years. The existing tracking system does not automatically generate reminders, and users must complete a multi-step process through reporting functions to obtain needed information. An updated and revised system would benefit from a notification or “tickler” system to help process the current backlog and an expansion of the issue types handled. It would also be advantageous for the system to be accessible online, in a user-friendly format, since many estate filings are handled without attorneys. The system should be automated to allow the office of the Clerk of Superior Court to have the role of manager of information rather than a manger of paper.

Launching the eCourts Strategic Plan – *Andrew Flewelling, Charlie Leadbetter, Doug Rowe; representatives from BerryDunn*

The team briefed the committee on their approach to strategic planning. They have established a Microsoft SharePoint site where NCAOC staff can upload documents at the request of BerryDunn consultants. This process has been initiated and the document review has begun. A web survey will go out to stakeholders and the results will inform the in-person fact-finding meetings and interviews. Through this approach they will identify opportunities, perform a gap analysis, examine barriers and issues, and ultimately merge the information into a codified list to prioritize initiatives with broad estimated costs. They also noted the importance of thinking of this as a business improvement driven process where technology is the enabler. They encouraged the committee to remain open-minded to a future business process that looks different. They suggested that the strategic plan should be evaluated annually and fed new information as needed. The finished strategic plan should be completed in approximately eight months.

The consultants then explained the project charter which “formally initiates the project, enables the sponsor to fund and commit resources to the project, validates alignment of the project to the NC AOC’s business strategy and vision, and provides the project manager with the authority to plan and execute the project.” The consultants took the committee through a project charter workshop. Committee members were asked to provide feedback for the seven charter components (vision, objectives, scope, stakeholders, assumptions, constraints, risks and issues) as they relate to the development of the eCourts Strategic Plan. The full definitions of the elements can be found in the “Technology Committee Agendas and Materials” section of the website for the North Carolina Commission on the Administration of Law & Justice. The consultants will summarize the feedback and provide a copy of the formal charter in the coming weeks.