

**Minutes**  
**Friend of the Court Bureau**  
**Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**State Court Administrative Office, Lansing, MI**  
**May 21, 2010**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Anita Bilek, Lynn Ann Bullard, Peter Dever, Shauna Dunnings, Karyn Ferrick, John Frasier, Doug Howard, and Amy Yu

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Lisa Truscott and Kelleen Walters

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dan Bauer, Elizabeth Stomski, and Dana Graham

**1. Call to Order**

- a. The meeting came to order at 1:00 p.m.

**2. Administrative Matters**

- a. Approval of minutes from November 20, 2009. A motion was made to correct the spelling of Mr. Dever's last name. The minutes were not posted for review prior to the meeting; a vote for approval will be taken at the August 20, 2010 meeting.

**3. Opening Public Comment**

- a. No public comments were requested regarding agenda items.

**4. Correspondence – Since November 20, 2009**

- a. Request to sit ex-officio member on FOCB Advisory Committee (December 2, 2009)
  - i. The ex officio members are FOCs, and assist the FOCB pursuant to MCL 552.519(5). The request was not from an FOC; FOCB denied the request.
- b. Oscoda, MI (January 24, 2010)
  - i. An e-mail raised case-specific issues which cannot be addressed by FOCB
  - ii. The issue was forwarded to Oscoda FOC
- c. Hillsdale, MI (February 22, 2010)
  - i. An e-mail raised case-specific issues which cannot be addressed by FOCB
  - ii. The issue was forwarded to FOCB Info line to identify possible courses of action for the litigant.
- d. New mail (May 21, 2010)
  - i. This piece of correspondence was received after the agenda was created.
  - ii. The FOCB Advisory Committee cannot address the case specific issue, and the committee elected to take no other action.

**5. Old Business**

- a. GM Buyout Policy in Genesee County
  - i. Genesee's policy included a lump-sum payment in that year's income for child support order amount. The income amount was then adjusted back down at the end of 12 months. A member of the public (a Genesee FOC Client) had concerns about the policy at our last meeting.

- ii. Mr. Bauer communicated with Genesee FOC Director Mr. Jack Battles, who confirmed that all five family court judges in the 7<sup>th</sup> Circuit reviewed the policy and agreed it was proper.
  - iii. The FOCB noted issue and it will be considered by the FOCB when drafting future guidelines.
- b. Project with Western Michigan University
  - i. Ms. Bullard brought up a project with Western Michigan University, which studied the effectiveness of online parenting time programs. Ms. Bullard offered to send the presentation to anyone who is interested.
  - ii. The committee requested the FOCB add this to the next agenda.
  - iii. The committee requested the FOCB put this information on the public website.

## 6. New Business

- a. FOC Legislative Package Review
  - i. Mr. Bauer and Ms. Elizabeth Stomski reviewed FOCB plans and actions to implement recent legislative changes for the committee.
  - ii. The committee provided no comment.
  - iii. The chair recognized a public attendee's question regarding the effective date of one law.
    - 1. The law in question went into effect on December 28, 2009.
  - iv. Ms. Dunnings asked whether the workgroups reviewing the new laws would communicate with each other regarding their work and progress.
    - 1. Each workgroup's membership overlaps with the others, so cross-communication will be inherent.
- b. Model FOC Handbook Revisions
  - i. Several FOCs requested that the FOCB update the model handbook pursuant to new laws, and to reduce the burden for printing.
  - ii. FOCB attached a draft of the FOC Model Handbook to this meeting's agenda.
  - iii. Three SCAO staff members have reviewed the model handbook to date. FOCA also reviewed and commented.
  - iv. FOCB Intern Ms. Dana Graham reviewed the handbook with the committee and highlighted those areas that may require further clarification.
    - 1. Pro Per Court Orders
    - 2. ADR Services
    - 3. Mediation
    - 4. School Enrollment
    - 5. Parenting Time Guidelines (state vs. local)
    - 6. Contempt of Court Penalties
    - 7. Health Care Expenses
    - 8. Complaints Section
    - 9. Glossary
  - v. The committee members shared their input with FOCB staff.
  - vi. Ms. Graham will incorporate these comments at FOCB's discretion.
  - vii. SCAO staff members will revise and edit before June publication.

## **7. Closing**

- a.** No closing comments from committee members.
- b.** Final public comment
  - i.** Mr. Robert Kerr expressed concerns over public membership on committee. He indicated a concern that the statutorily required public members were not appropriately qualified in their role on this committee.
    - 1.** Mr. Bauer confirmed that he has personally vetted each member of the committee and can confirm that each met statutory requirements. Mr. Bauer will not discuss the personal lives of the committee members to justify their qualifications.
    - 2.** Chairman Howard recommended that the FOCB consider Mr. Kerr's comments, in a show of good faith. Mr. Bauer said he would consider the request from the committee.
    - 3.** Ms. Dunnings commented that this issue is more appropriate for the Bureau, as the committee shouldn't be involved in discussions on the qualifications of its members.
- c.** The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:40 p.m.