

JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION
State of Georgia
Minutes of March 20, 2020 Open Meeting

This meeting of the Investigative Panel of the Judicial Qualifications Commission of the State of Georgia was held via teleconference. Mr. Pope Langdale chaired the meeting and Ms. Phyllis Motes served as Recording Secretary.

Commission Members Present: Mr. Pope Langdale, Judge Stacey Hydrick, Mr. Bob Barr, Judge Verda Colvin, Mr. Warren Selby, Mr. James Balli

Others Present: Mr. Chuck Boring – Director, Ms. Courtney Veal - Staff Attorney, Ms. Phyllis Motes - Case Manager, Lance Alford – Investigator

Agenda/Minutes: Chairman Langdale called the meeting to order and determined that a quorum was present.

Upon motion and second, the Minutes of the February 21, 2020 Open Meeting and Closed Meeting were approved.

Chairman's Comments: Chairman Langdale began the meeting by stating that he had no comments, and he reminded the Panel that they will be meeting by teleconference for a couple of months due to the pandemic. Chairman Langdale then turned the meeting over to the Director.

Director's Reports: Mr. Boring began by discussing the Judicial Emergency Order that was issued by Justice Melton. He reminded the Panel that the staff will be working remotely during this time. Mr. Boring and Ms. Motes will be going into the office, on different days, once a week to check the mail and perform other necessary duties.

Mr. Boring stated that he will be attending the Judicial Council meeting each week to stay updated on continuing developments regarding the pandemic situation. He added that the staff may be dealing with receipt of more election-related complaints from social media issues than with other issues due to the current pandemic.

Mr. Boring then discussed the possibility of rescheduling the May meeting to the week before it is currently scheduled as several members have a conflict.

Discussion followed among the Panel regarding rescheduling.

Chairman Langdale suggested that the Panel should look into the possibility of holding the May meeting via Zoom. He asked that someone on the staff look into the logistics of how that would work.

The Panel then asked about how the public could attend open meetings via teleconference.

Mr. Boring stated that the teleconference number and access code is listed on the Judicial Qualifications Commission's website should the public wish to join any Open Meeting conference call. He then suggested that the Panel could wait to make a final decision on rescheduling the May meeting. Mr. Boring then briefly discussed the June meeting which will be held in conjunction with the Annual Georgia State Bar meeting in Florida. He stated that there is a distinct possibility that the meeting will be cancelled or rescheduled to a later date, but he currently has no further details.

Mr. Boring then moved to a discussion on revamping the current case summary process. He stated that it was redundant to have the staff attorney compose a case summary because that information is in the docket. He added that this task is very time consuming. Mr. Boring asked if this would work for the Panel and if they had any questions or comments.

Discussion followed among the Panel, and they agreed with the Director's decision to no longer have the staff attorney write an additional case summary on each complaint.

Mr. Boring then moved to a personnel update. He reported that Mr. Lasker's last day was official March 18, but the Director has agreed to allow Mr. Lasker to continue working part time for a few weeks. Mr. Boring explained that Mr. Lasker has applied for a position with the Attorney General's office, and his application is being processed. Mr. Lasker will be working a total of 10 hours a week and paying for his insurance. This will allow him continuity of service with the State of Georgia should he get another State position, and to keep insurance for his family during the current medical emergency.

Mr. Boring then stated that he had hoped to introduce the new Deputy Director Courtney Veal in person, but due to the Judicial Emergency Order that would not be possible. He briefly summarized Ms. Veal's experience, and then he asked her to further introduce herself to the Panel.

Ms. Veal began by saying that she was very excited to be a part of the agency. She then gave her educational background and work experience. She added that she is married to an attorney, has one son and lives in the Smyrna/Vinings area.

The Panel welcomed her.

Mr. Boring added that Ms. Veal has hit the ground running. She is currently looking into our Go Daddy contract, and Mr. Boring will be turning over a couple of cases to her shortly.

Next, Mr. Boring moved to an update on the Annual Report. He stated that both Mr. Lasker and Ms. Motes worked very hard to complete this project, and it will be filed with the Supreme Court Clerk soon. It will also be posted on the Judicial Qualification Commission's website.

Mr. Boring then directed the Panel's attention to the February Financial Report. He added that the amended budget was approved, and \$40k will be added to the budget for use through June 30, 2020. He also stated the House has approved an over-\$200k budget increase for 2021, but that increase is unlikely to pass the Senate because of the current emergency situation.

A discussion followed among the Panel whether they would be using an alternate teleconference number for the closed meeting.

The Director stated that would be a good idea, and then gave the number to everyone.

There being no old or new business for discussion, the Open Meeting was adjourned.

These minutes were approved by the Judicial Qualifications Commission on April 17, 2020.

Pope Langdale, Chairman

Charles P. Boring, Director