

LFLAC Meeting Minutes

October 25, 2007

The meeting opened with introductions from Judge Waller, Judge McKnight, Judge Wyatt, Judge Stuart, Judge Svetkey, Judge Tennyson and Judge Ryan.

Judge McKnight spoke briefly about the history of the LFLAC (Local Family Law Advisory Committee) in this county, and also described the state FLAC and issues it is currently addressing on a state wide basis.

Judge Waller then raised several potential issues that Multnomah County's LFLAC could address over the coming year and solicited input from those present (as well as other interested people) on what areas of court practice participants would like to provide the Court input. The issues with the most interest included: Trial scheduling issues such as the call process and how to improve upon it; a comprehensive review of Supplementary Local Rules of court procedure (the SLRs) and the drafting of any new or revised local rules of procedure which would need to be completed by July 2008; specific review and possible revision of SLR 8.075 - Multnomah County standard parenting time guideline; and settlement/status conference opportunities.

There was a lively discussion and a number of suggestions for how to disseminate the word more broadly of upcoming meeting dates and solicitation of input on issues of interest. There was general agreement that subcommittees should be formed which would meet at least monthly and that the LFLAC should meet quarterly. Additionally, participants encouraged the Court to disseminate more information about contemplated changes in court procedure, as well as upcoming LFLAC meeting schedules through the various lawyer Listserv, an expanded email list, the Multnomah Bar Association (MBA) newsletter, and the Multnomah County Circuit Court website. The Court was also encouraged to use relevant MBA continuing legal education sessions to publicize issues.

Of the issues on the table, participants in the audience voiced concerns about the following matters:

- There will be less available supervised parenting time resources next year due to a loss of grant money at Safety Matters. Therefore, parenting time slots will be greatly reduced next year and ideas are needed on how to make more resources available for supervised parenting time particularly in domestic violence situations.

- Some participants expressed concern about how difficult it is to try to calendar time on judges' calendars for settlement conferences. Some attorneys suggested mandatory status conferences should be set similar to those in Washington County based upon the belief that such conferences are very helpful in moving cases along by resolving discovery matters, etc. and frequently settling matters at this early stage since the parties are required to complete all discovery prior to the day of the conference, and actually meet face to face with parties also present. Generally, these conferences are set for 15 minutes but the judge is available

throughout the day to assist with settlement and put resolutions on the record. A trial date is not set until a status conference has occurred.

After general discussion on a number of the above issues, it was agreed that the following subcommittees would be formed

- Call / Settlement/ Status conferences
- The Standard Parenting Guidelines
- SLR review and revisions
- Safety Matters and other supervised parenting issues

It was agreed that the full LFLAC meetings will take place quarterly. The next LFLAC is therefore scheduled for January 24, 2008 at noon in Room 602 of the Multnomah County Courthouse. If you would like to participate on a subcommittee (please confirm your interest if you signed a list at the meeting) or have agenda requests/thoughts, please contact Judge Diana Stuart at 503-988-3201 or 1021 SW Fourth Avenue, Multnomah County Courthouse, or diana.i.stuart@ojd.state.or.us.