

Minutes
Trial Court Budget Commission (TCBC)
February 19-20, 2001
Ramada Inn North - Tallahassee, FL

Members Present

Susan Schaeffer, Chair
Don Briggs, Vice-Chair
Mike Bridenback
Paul Bryan
Ruben Carrerou
Joseph Farina
Charles Francis
Kim Hammond
Lee Haworth
Paul Kanarek
Randall McDonald
Donald Moran, Jr.

Stan Morris
Carol Ortman
Wayne Peacock
Nancy Perez
Belvin Perry, Jr.
Judy Pittman
Mark VanBever
Theresa Westerfield

Justice Harry Lee Anstead- Supreme Court
Liaison

Members Absent: Doug Wilkinson

Others Present: Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA) Staff
Judge Alice Blackwell White
Hunter W. Carroll, Supreme Court Law Clerk
Richard Dolan, OPPAGA
Ted Fetter, Deputy Administrative Director, New Jersey
Joe Mastropierro, Volusia County Law Library

I. Opening Remarks and Approval of Minutes - January 22-24, 2001

Judge Schaeffer called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. The secretary noted that all members of the commission were present except for Doug Wilkinson. Judge Schaeffer welcomed Justice Anstead to the meeting as the Supreme Court's liaison. Judge Francis made a motion to approve the draft minutes of the January meeting and Ms. Ortman seconded. The minutes were approved without objection.

II. New Jersey's Transition to State Funding

John Dew, OSCA Chief of Trial Court Funding Policy Section, introduced Ted Fetter, Deputy Administrative Director, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), New Jersey. Mr. Fetter is the co-chair of the New Jersey commission (a counterpart to the TCBC) which guided the transition of the New Jersey courts from local to state funding during the 1990's, and which oversees trial court budgeting in the now state funded system. (A copy of Mr. Fetter's presentation can be found on the TCBC Website located at www.flcourts.org. Click on Judicial Administration, then Article V / Revision 7, and then Slide Shows.)

History of Transition

Mr. Fetter began his presentation with the primary issues that gave impetus to state funding of the courts in New Jersey. They were: 1) county governments saw the impact of trial court expenses on property tax; 2) the courts sought greater consistency and uniformity in operations; and 3) many judges wanted to end the budget battles with the county governments. All statutory efforts for state funding of trial courts failed during the 1980's and in 1992, a constitutional amendment was enacted. It mandated the state assume funding of the courts in five years and required corresponding reductions in property taxes. In 1993 and 1994 implementing legislation was enacted. On January 1, 1995, state funding of trial court funding occurred. Over 7,700 county court employees became state employees. The legislation provided that a "base year amount" be established for the current expenditures by each county. A "step down" plan was initiated decreasing the "base amount" paid by the county by 25% each year. This was completed by 1998. Revenues which were used by the counties prior to the constitutional amendment, to support the court system, were swept into the state's General Revenue Fund.

Mr. Fetter explained that prior to 1995, the state funded court reporters and all salaries and fringe benefits for trial judges and court administrators. After 1995, other trial court staff salaries and fringe benefits, almost all operating expenses, and court administrative support were included. Excluded were facilities and security. In addition, all those court-related services provided by the local court clerks became the responsibility of the court administrators' offices.

After a brief overview of the structure of the New Jersey trial courts and how they are governed, Mr. Fetter outlined many of the issues his commission faced in the transition to state funding.

Personnel Issues

First and foremost was the issue of personnel. He related that it was recognized that these employees were not asking to become state employees. Therefore the commission sought to treat them as well as possible and began negotiating with the various unions. They adopted certain overriding guiding principles for the personnel shift which helped to focus their decisions, such as: 1) "hold

harmless” regarding salaries and fringe benefits; 2) no significant windfall, no significant harm to the employees; 3) the state would not assume county obligations for the future, and 4) state pay would not be compared to county pay after 1995. Overcoming the differences in benefits such as special kinds of leave, more generous vacation allotments, different rules for accruing vacation and compensatory time, and health care coverage were all addressed as separate issues.

Mr. Fetter emphasized the intense communication the AOC had with employees during the transition. Beginning two years before the transition, he explained they met with all employees in groups and discussed health plans, payroll, policies, credit unions, parking, etc. They used a newsletter, and an internet “bulletin board” to post answers to frequently asked questions. Over 90% of the questions related to human resources. Progress reports were presented to the Supreme Court and their Judicial Council on a quarterly basis.

Mr. Fetter explained the issues relating to payroll transition. The counties provided their data, but it was mostly not usable, and the state office had to collect payroll data in a more uniform format in order to work with it. They met with every employee to explain the state benefit plan and requested each employee to itemize their deductions and withholdings. The information was sent back to these employees to verify the options they selected. After corrections, a dummy payroll was distributed to each employee. There were only 15 errors out of 7709 pay actions in the first pay period of 1995.

Salary equalization was complicated. Most counties had lower salary ranges than the state and the disparity among the counties was 40% or more. After state funding, they began to equalize, first by setting minimum and maximum salaries for each job. And last was to factor in years of experience.

Responsibility for Services

One year prior to the implementation, the AOC met with the county government leaders in every county to explain the transition. The AOC had the option to disapprove of raises granted by the counties within six months prior to the transfer. They encouraged the counties to use lease-purchase agreements for new equipment and took title to all court furniture and equipment. They also insisted on an independent audit of all county-managed funds and the handling of funds prior to the transfer.

The statute allowed the AOC the sole discretion to contract with counties for services. Certain contractual services made sense such as mail and telephones. The county would estimate the cost and the AOC would accept or negotiate. The state would reimburse the counties. At first, they had many service agreements but this gradually changed. Many of the information technology systems were unified and centralized. Also, they found that the state could get a better deal on such items as telephones and purchasing, so the courts took that over after several years. Some service agreements are still in place, now six years after the transition.

Development of Funding Models

Once state funding occurred the goal was to provide similar services and programs within each case type, regardless of where in the state each case arose. The goal was to build a unified system. This system was divided into four parts: a) staffing equalization; b) salary equalization; c) statewide classification system for staff; and d) standards for procedures and operations. This was a multi-year effort that emphasized the authority to allocate lump sum funding from the Legislature to the Court. This made certain the need for a strong and effective Trial Court Budget Committee within the court system.

Mr. Fetter stated that the courts developed a model which established a recommendation for the desired staff size for every trial court by divisions such as civil, criminal, family, probation and court support. The recommendations were reported to their Judicial Council for final approval. Spreadsheets comparing the actual staff to the model were made for each county for that division. Each year thereafter, each conference of the divisions update their model based on new case filings, court procedure requirements and judge assignments. Based on the model, it was determined that in the first year the courts were funded at 87% of the model requirement, with some circuits at 100% and some as low as 69% of the recommended funding. The Trial Court Budget Committee recommended that funding should be available to at least provide all circuits funding in the range of 5% of the average 87%. Therefore, it was desired that staffing be at the level of between 82% and 92% of the funding model. Savings from those circuits that had more than 92% of the model were provided to those circuits that needed to be brought up to at least 82%. According to Mr. Fetter, during this process no one was ever laid off or let go from those circuits that had to bring their funding down to 92% of the model. Each year the courts have gone to the Legislature for additional funding in order to have all circuits get even closer to the 87% average. The goal for fiscal year 2001 is to have all circuits be between 87% to 91% of the funding model.

Salary Equalization

Due to time constraints, Mr. Fetter could only provide a brief overview of New Jersey's Classification and Compensation Plan for salary equalization for court employees. Mr. Fetter pointed out that prior to state funding there were over 800 different job titles for court employees and now there are only 61. Furthermore, now the court has a uniform pay process for all court employees.

Questions

A question was asked about the judicial branch's relationship with the Governor, Legislature and counties at the time of passage of the constitutional amendment and in the years that followed. Mr. Fetter responded that New Jersey was in much the same posture as Florida is now. There was a governor advocating tax cuts, reduction of state employees, and more privatization of state services. He explained that most issues were worked at the staff level. They, of course, kept the executive and legislative leadership well informed so there would be no surprises. With the counties, they negotiated

the issues with an overarching premise to buy out what existed before the effective date. After that, the courts would be responsible for any changes.

A question was asked concerning the issue of adding state employees when the desire by both the Florida governor and the legislature was to reduce the number of state employees. Mr. Fetter explained that in New Jersey the same concern arose. They handled it by having any report from the Governor's office separate out those employees that were "constitutionally mandated" to become state employees. Therefore, the Governor could still refer to the "nonconstitutional unmandated" column and show that there indeed was a reduction in the workforce apart from the assumption of county court staff.

Mr. Fetter reiterated that at all times they tried to minimize confrontation. He strongly urged the commission to take the time to organize a unified system.

Judge Schaeffer thanked Mr. Fetter for his informative presentation.

III. Report on Legislative Activities and Financial Accountability Workgroup

John Dew related that the meeting of the Legislature's Financial Accountability and Efficiency Workgroup set for February 15, 2001 had been canceled. However, he reviewed the three funding options being proposed by the staff of this committee and requested the commission's direction. The three options proposed are: 1) Converting the essential local court system functions to state operations either by converting to new state positions or privatizing; 2) Establishing a Grants-in-Aid category where the counties would be reimbursed for all personnel and/or expenses associated with certain elements of the courts, or 3) Establishing a hybrid of options 1 & 2.

Lisa Goodner, Deputy State Courts Administrator, suggested that option #3 provided the most flexibility. A general discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of each option ensued. Various members felt that the model of "best practices" should be established first before entertaining these options. Judge Schaeffer stated that it was her understanding that the counties were absolutely against option #2. A motion was made by Mr. Bridenback and seconded by Judge Pitman to recommend that staff further pursue option #3. The motion passed without objection.

Judge Farina suggested that the commission take on a more proactive posture with this committee rather than simply reacting to their proposals. A discussion arose on how New Jersey approached drafting their legislation, establishing a workgroup of all the stakeholders (counties, clerks, public defenders, state attorneys, etc.) and working with the governor's and legislative staff to craft the transition legislation. Ms. Goodner stated that once staff for the Joint Legislative Committee on Article V are hired then this process will begin in earnest. Until that point, the court staff will continue to work on the those issues identified by the TCBC.

IV. Discussion of Budget Cuts

As was indicated at the last TCBC meeting, the Governor and Legislature all were seeking to reduce the state budget. Additionally, due to a potential slowdown in the economy and a shortfall in Medicaid dollars, the Legislature was requiring all agencies and the judicial branch to offer areas in their budgets that could be reduced.

Senate Budget Cuts

Ms. Goodner reported that the Senate had presented their worksheet of proposed budget cuts for the State Courts System. The total proposed cuts were \$17 million. Included in that \$17 million was \$5.3 million in costs shift from the General Revenue Fund to the Article V Trust Fund and \$6.5 million to be cut as a Base Budget Reduction. The Senate gave state entities one week to respond to their proposal. During this week, the TCBC Executive Committee, chief judges, DCA chief judges, and the Supreme Court were contacted for their input and recommendations. The consensus response to these cuts was to first maximize cost shifts, second, allow circuits to justify programs proposed to be cut, and last, propose alternatives to the base budget reduction.

Given this direction, the chief judges were contacted and asked to provide a synopsis of each identified program in their circuit and to justify the need in a letter. These letters were included in the OSCA response to the Senate. \$2.4M was offered as an alternative base budget reduction. It was also suggested that the guardian ad litem program could be cut from state funding, since it would have a good chance of being funded at the local level or by a nonprofit organization. Ms. Goodner reported that, as of the date of the meeting, the Senate subcommittee has produced a new worksheet and backed off the \$6.5 million proposed base budget reduction. The line had been reduced to \$3.25 million leaving our \$2.4 million proposal \$850,000 short. The TCBC noted that any budget reduction to the judicial branch adversely impacts the services offered.

Ms. Goodner pointed out that the Senate is also analyzing court positions that have been vacant for 90+ days to see if such positions could be eliminated to achieve a budget reduction. This amounts to \$1.3 million. In this regard, a letter has been drafted for the Chief Justice's signature to all chief judges and trial court administrators ordering a hiring freeze on all circuit positions that are vacant or become vacant, during the remainder of the fiscal year. The members of the commission concurred with the issue of this letter. The Chief Justice has also frozen all out of state travel for the remainder of the year.

House Budget Cuts

Ms. Goodner reported that the House appropriations subcommittee was not as far along in the cut process as the Senate. However, the preliminary House proposal did not include cutting personnel positions. And that there was renewed interest in raising the jurisdiction of county judges, and that the amount for the proposed base budget reduction was \$4.7 million.

Recommendations from the TCBC

Ms. Goodner explained that the budget process is a moving target and given the above information, she requested direction from the commission on how to proceed. She related that the OSCA already has a workgroup established to address guardian ad litem issues. Because of recent discussions to cut the GAL program, they are now researching alternative funding sources. While again the TCBC expressed a concern with the impact on the trial courts if there were any budget cuts, the members chose to offer the Indigence Examiners positions first and the Guardian Ad Litem program second, should additional cuts (not already proposed) be required.

V. Discussion of Supreme Court Certification Order

Judge Schaeffer related that the Certification Order had not yet been released by the Court but is expected out next week. Discussion ensued as to the role of the TCBC as it relates to the Court's Certification Order. Members of the TCBC, during their visits with legislators, were asked about alternatives to certifying new judges. Such as more use of hearing officers or masters. Judge Schaeffer said the TCBC Executive Committee is in favor of exploring supplemental funding for other resources and hoped the Court, through their Certification Order, would seek to have the TCBC conduct further research in these areas. The TCBC members agreed that it would be a good endeavor to at look at supplemental resources concurrently with certification.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

February 20, 2001 - Day Two

Judge Schaeffer called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. She noted a quorum was present.

VI. Funding Methodology Subcommittee Report

Carol Ortman provided a review of the subcommittee's meeting held via telephone conference on February 14. She reported that the subcommittee approved the proposed work plan presented at their last meeting and made two recommendations she would like the full TCBC to address. The two issues involve drug courts and jury management.

Drug Courts

The committee discussed the designation of drug courts as a separate element and whether the services of counseling and drug testing should be included as a state funded issue. They recommended that the resources for all specialty courts be handled in a consistent manner and that these resources should be included under the essential element of case management. The committee recommended that the resources involved in counseling and drug testing should not be designated for state funding and should be considered drug treatment. Existing positions listed in the Revision 7 inventory that appear in case management and were designated for counseling and drug testing were identified.

A broad discussion was held regarding the advantages and disadvantages of each of these recommendations. A motion was made by Theresa Westerfield to roll Drug Courts into Case Management and seconded by Judge Hammond. Motion passed unanimously. Mike Bridenback made the motion to not include counseling, testing, and drug treatment for state funding as part of the case management essential elements. Wayne Peacock seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Jury Management

The committee reviewed and discussed the options set out by the TCBC at the last meeting. They were: a) the reallocation of this function from the court to the clerk in Orange, Osceola, Dade, Palm Beach, and Broward counties; b) that the above courts retain the jury management function and the costs be designated as a county responsibility; and c) that the courts retain the function of jury management and that state general revenue be requested.

The subcommittee recommended that the current statutory provision which authorizes the court the discretion to manage the jury system be retained. The funding should continue to be provided from the fees in Chapter 28.24, F.S. Additionally, funding for jury management service should be consistent statewide no matter who manages the program. For example, if in Dade County, the Court Administrator runs the jury management program, then the funding would not come from state general

revenue but from the same funding source the clerk would use. The subcommittee recommended that jury management not be considered as an essential element of state court funding.

After some discussion, a motion was made by Wayne Peacock to not include jury management as an essential element for state court funding. The motion was seconded by Ruben Carrerou and passed unanimously.

Further Funding Methodology Issues

A question was posed as to if the state funds these essential elements of the court system, could some of these staff still be outside the management of the court? The issues of staffing the drug courts was used as a primary example. It was generally agreed that if something is identified as an essential element of the court system, then it ought to be under the jurisdiction of the courts.

Judge Schaeffer asked which essential element would the Funding Methodology Subcommittee complete first and when? Specifically, she asked which essential element would the committee first have a funding formula for? Carol Ortman responded Auxiliary Aids and Services and Legal would probably be done first. These would be done by the end of April. Hearing officers and masters would probably be next and finished sometime in May. Ms. Ortman said a schedule for the completion of a funding formula for all the essential elements would be provided at the next TCBC meeting.

VII. Report on Trial Court Performance & Accountability

Judge Alice Blackwell White reported on the work of the Trial Court Performance and Accountability Committee in its efforts to help with Revision 7 implementation. She summarized the following specific initiatives established to date.

Court Interpreters

A workgroup has been established. The workgroup met on January 17 and February 15, 2001. The next meeting is March 29, 2001 and Judge White and Judge Dominguez will present input from this group back to the Funding Methodology Committee.

Masters and Hearing Officers

A workshop has been scheduled for March 6-7, 2001 to address the proceedings where masters and hearing officers provide a supplement to the judicial process. Judge White relayed that the workgroup includes judges from all the various divisions of the court, a general master, a child support hearing officer, a traffic infraction hearing officer and trial court administrators.

Judge Schaeffer expressed concern that work not be delayed on this issue since it is expected to be part of the budget discussion during this legislative session. She requested that OSCA staff be directed to examine the statutes and the Rules of Procedure relating to masters and hearing officers and to make recommendations on their potential, expanded use. Judge White explained that the workgroup is already working with OSCA staff on her exact concerns and after the March meeting, they will be ready with their recommendations. Dee Beranek, OSCA Deputy State Courts Administrator, provided some legal insight into this issue stating it involved constitutional issues, the statutes and the Court's rules. Judge Morris suggested the legal staff also look at national research on "shadow courts." He was concerned about the long term effect on the courts.

Case Management

Judge White related that Judge Janet Ferris would coordinate the analysis of the case management function and a workshop is being planned for May.

Court Reporters

A schedule has not been established yet. Judge White stated, however, that a full report on all these functions will be ready by late May early June.

Performance Measures

Judge White reviewed the Performance Measures presented to the Senate Judiciary Committee for the trial courts. She related that the District Courts and the Supreme Court also presented their budgeting measures, however, the Senate committee approved only the measures presented for the trial courts. The approved measures have been forwarded to the Appropriations Committee. They have not yet had the opportunity to present the measures to the House. She explained this is how budgeting for the courts will look in the near future. There will be outcome/outputs measure for everything we do.

A general discussion regarding the Performance Based Budgeting (PB2) process began. Judge White suggested that PB2 will allow us to demonstrate and explain clearly the impact of proposed substantive legislation, like the 10-20-life legislation that recently passed. We can show the affects of new legislation and this will give us leverage with our arguments. She explained we can and should use this to our benefit.

VIII. Follow up on Activities on Costs Inventory

John Dew summarized the progress of the Costs Inventory since the last meeting. Audits of five judicial circuit's costs inventory numbers have been completed. However, he explained, that because of the work being done by the Funding Methodology Subcommittee, the audits have been delayed until

more information is available.

Greg Cowan, OSCA Senior Court Analyst II, reported that of the twelve steps involved in completing the costs inventory analysis, steps #1-#7 have been completed. These steps include: reviewing the FY 1998-99 cost inventory; developing the FY 1999-2000 cost inventory; packaging and distributing the FY 1999-2000 cost inventory; conducting training sessions; overseeing completion of the inventory; receiving the returned inventories; and compiling all the data into a data base. Steps #8-#11 are currently being worked on. These steps include: conducting internal audits of the database versus the returned inventories; conducting field audits of the returned inventories versus expenditure and personnel records; conducting a review of the data versus institutional knowledge of program operations; and redefining and reconfiguring data accordingly. Step #12 will be the final development of a budget based on the cost inventory and any other additional information we may choose to use.

Judge Farina asked where we were with auditing the data. Greg responded that we are still conducting internal audits of the data base. However the next step, field audits, is on hold awaiting the recommendations of the Funding Methodology Committee. Mr. Dew explained that it may be more beneficial to wait a few weeks until the Funding Methodology Subcommittee had finished some of their work before we continued to audit. The reason for this because that subcommittee is potentially “redefining” or “better defining” what staff and expenses may fall into the categories of the costs inventory.

A lengthy discussion began on the necessity of this data being audited as soon as possible. Judge Schaeffer and others expressed the need to have accurate data available as soon as possible should the legislature request information. Chapter 29, Florida Statutes clearly provides that the Legislature’s appropriation of funding for the court system shall be based upon “reliable and auditable” data. Ms. Goodner, however, explained that our future budget request for Revision 7 implementation may be based on funding formulas and not on this data. If the legislature should ask for this data now, we can certainly provide it to them but with the caveat that it is not auditable.

Judge Schaeffer raised the issue of local requirements and expressed concern with defining local requirements when we are unsure of our numbers. Additional discussion ensued on what the counties in various circuits are paying now and a “hold harmless” threshold. There were many comments regarding bringing the “have-nots” circuits up to the base “model” and the effects of this on the “have” circuits. There was discussion on what should be included in a “base model year” and if there should be added some kind of multiplier dependent on special circumstances within a given circuit. Judge Schaeffer stated that the numbers needed to be accurate to build a “model.”

Jim Boyd, Supreme Court Inspector General, explained that the reason for delaying the audits was because we were unsure of the kinds of changes the Funding Methodology Committee would make in defining the essential elements. Because these changes would affect the auditing and use of the numbers, it was decided to postpone the audits until this was determined. Also, the Part II numbers are not auditable because they are provided by other judicial entities such as the Clerk and we have no

authority to request an audit of their numbers.

Mr. Dew emphasized that now that the legislative budget request for Phase I implementation of Revision 7 has been postponed by the TCBC, we have the time to completely audit the data for the September 2001 budget request. Mr. Dew indicated that he would present an audit plan with the dates for each field visit at the April TCBC meeting.

In order to provide addition insight to the field audits, a motion was made by Judge Pittman to require that a trial court administrator participate in each of these audits. The motion was seconded by Judge Hammond. The motion passed without objection.

IX. Local Requirements/County Obligations Subcommittee Report

Judge Briggs reported that the subcommittee had met three times, twice by telephone conference and in-person yesterday afternoon. He related the subcommittee held two general concerns:

1. drafting statutory language regarding the local requirements prematurely; and
2. drafting legislation in a piecemeal fashion.

The committee suggested crafting a comprehensive statutory approach such as was done in New Jersey, inviting all the stakeholders to the table and finding common ground. The Commission was in agreement with such an approach.

With this in mind, Tom Long, OSCA Chief of General Services, presented two proposed concepts the subcommittee had developed. Mr. Long outlined a preliminary, draft concept regarding local requirement issues and another concept paper to establish a commission to develop facility standards.

While a lengthy discussion took place on both these concepts, Judge Schaeffer suggested the TCBC take more time to review the language presented in each of the concept papers. She suggested coming back to this issue at the next meeting.

Judge Briggs also mentioned the subcommittee had reviewed language of a proposed legislative bill which amends county funding obligations as currently outlined in Chapter 29, Florida Statutes. (Note: Senator Silver filed SB 1034 on February 22, 2001 which incorporated this language.) The subcommittee recommended that at this time we oppose any change to Chapter 29, F.S. until such time all stakeholders could meet to work out the issues. After general discussion by the TCBC it was agreed, without a vote, that we track this legislation during the session and be available to meet with various stakeholders, as well as legislative staff.

Finally, the TCBC members discussed the issue of which entity should be responsible for funding court technology. While it currently is the responsibility of counties to fund all court technology under Chapter 29, several members of the TCBC suggested that potentially technology should be considered an essential function and paid by the state. Judge Schaeffer pointed out that this was an issue on which more research is needed and should be addressed at a later date.

X. Personnel Subcommittee Report

Mark VanBever reported that the subcommittee identified numerous policy questions related to two Article V funding options for trial court personnel currently funded by the counties. Under option 1, transferring employees from county to state, Mr. VanBever addressed 20 policy questions that the subcommittee will be answering. Under option 2, using pass through funding/grant-in aid to fund these personnel, Mr. VanBever addressed 9 policy questions the subcommittee will be answering. The TCBC members agreed that all these policy questions should be addressed.

Judge Schaeffer charged the subcommittee with studying each of these options and to make a recommendation on an option, along with recommendations on each of the issues identified. She requested this information be sent to the commission members well in advance of a meeting. Because there are so many issues related to transfer of personnel, Judge Schaeffer suggested that it may be necessary for the TCBC to spend a full day working on the personnel policy questions and recommendations.

XI. Revenue and Revenue Enhancement Subcommittee

A report from this subcommittee was delayed due to time limitations.

XII. Final Review of Operational Procedures

Judge Schaeffer explained that the changes made to these procedures at the last meeting have been incorporated, and that the Executive Committee had made further minor changes which were underlined in the document presented to each TCBC member. And finally, she had offered a few additional edits to be made. She reviewed each of these changes including the change that allows her to appoint ad hoc committees. In addition, she has appointed Judge Charles Francis to research and recommend operational procedure language for an appeal process.

A motion was made by Judge Perry and seconded by Mr. Peacock to accept the changes made to the Operational Procedures. The motion passed unanimously. Judge Schaeffer stated that at the next meeting the language involving the appeal process would be presented. Once the appeal language is approved by the TCBC members, and incorporated into the procedures, they would then be sent to the Supreme Court for approval.

Judge Schaeffer reminded the members of the next meeting, April 9, 2001, in Tallahassee. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.