

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GEORGIA COURTS AUTOMATION COMMISSION
Wyndham Vinings Hotel
Main Ballroom
Atlanta, Georgia
August 30, 2006**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair Judge Timothy Pape, Juvenile Court, Rome Judicial Circuit
Judge Harris Adams, Georgia Court of Appeals
Judge Jackson Harris, Superior Court, Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit
Mr. David Ratley, Director, Administrative Office of the Courts (designee for Chief Justice Leah Sears)
Chief Judge Rucker Smith, Superior Courts, Southwestern Judicial Circuit
Judge C. David Strickland, Municipal Courts, Covington and Porterdales
Judge Kenneth Van Horn, Probate Court of Chattahoochee County

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS AND DESIGNEES PRESENT

Ms. Rhonda Neal, Georgia Bureau of Investigations (designee for GBI Director Vernon Keenan)

STAFF PRESENT

Mr. George Nolan, Executive Director

GUESTS PRESENT

Mr. Jorge Basto, Assistant Director IT, Administrative Office of the Courts
Mr. Byron Branch, Sr. Mgr. IT Support Services, Administrative Office of the Court
Ms. Patricia Gavel, Administrative Assistant IT, Administrative Office of the Courts
Mr. Vince Harris, Associate Director Administration, Administrative Office of the Courts

Introductory Remarks and Announcements

Chairman Pape welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Approval of Minutes

Chairman Pape asked for any comments or corrections to the minutes of the June 2006 meeting. None were offered. Mr. Ratley moved to accept the minutes as presented and Judge Adams seconded. The minutes were approved as presented.

The Commission's August 4, 2006 FY08 Budget Conference Call Minutes were presented for approval by Chairman Pape. With a correction noted and applied to the total anticipated amount of the FY09 request, Judge Van Horn moved to accept the minutes as corrected. Judge Day seconded the motion. These minutes were approved.

Budget Reports

FY05 Year End

Mr. Nolan reported a FY05 balance of approximately \$46,000 as indicated on financial reports provided through the AOC Fiscal Office. It was stated that these remaining funds should adequately cover the fourth quarter expenses incurred and not yet paid by the Commission and would bring the fiscal year end balance to a near zero figure.

FY06 Expenditures and Balance

It was reported that the new fiscal year was only 43 business days old at this point in time and no funds had yet been expensed from the budget.

FY07 Appropriations Request

Chairman Pape used a PowerPoint presentation to explain the planned use of the Commission's requested FY07 Budget. Requested state appropriations for FY07 was reported as identical to that of FY06 at \$326,387. An amended request for an additional \$74,330 was also submitted raising the total requested amount to \$400,717. The reason for the additional funds was clarified as a need to recover dollars diverted from the Traffic Certification program to cover the cost of the Commission's Executive Directors salary that was transferred to the GCAC budget by the AOC. It was noted that the FY07 budget also included a cost of living increase of approximately \$3600 as part of a COLA approved for state employees by the 2006 Session of the General Assembly. With the majority of budgeted dollars funding only two major projects, the Traffic Software Certification project was chosen by the Commission for reduction to accommodate the impact of the transfer of the Executive Director salary.

Mr. Vince Harris recommended a conservative approach to the FY07 supplemental request, offering the advice that historically these amended requests were submitted for the support of un-funded mandates and emergency purposes. He suggested that consideration be given to rescinding the supplemental request for FY07, giving best effort to survive the year using the initial funds provided, and seeking recovery funding as a part of the Commission's request for FY08 funding.

Judge Jackson Harris recommended that the budget be left as presented for now and revisited at the December 2006 meeting of the Commission.

Mr. Harris said that the budget approval process involved the submitting of a budget to the Governor's Office and Legislature by August 31st, with House and Senate work on all budget requests taking place between September and January. He said the additional funds request by the Commission could be rescinded as late as the beginning day of the 2007 Legislature.

Mr. David Ratley advised that a representative of the Georgia Courts Automation Commission should attend the upcoming September 13th Senate Budget hearing to articulate the need for the increase and to inform that committee of the possibility that the Commission might want to withdraw the supplemental request.

Mr. Harris said his understanding of the instructions to Executive Branch agencies regarding FY07 budget requests was they were to submit flat, no increase budgets. Any enhancements or amended items should be submitted off line as “white papers” without dollar amounts stipulated. After a review, if the items were approved for consideration by committee, the agencies would then be asked to submit related dollar amounts.

Mr. Ratley said some agencies had reported using in-house teams and some had hired consultants to address the issues of “white papers” required by the legislature. He suggested the Commission consider hiring someone to write a white paper to support the amended request.

Judge Harris made a motion to approve the FY07 budget with the requested amendment. Judge Van Horn seconded the motion. The motion passed.

A recommendation was made to revisit the amended request at the December 2006 meeting of the Commission to reconsider its submission prior to the convening of the 2007 Session of the General Assembly. This step would be necessary if alternative funding is not identified before the December 2006 meeting or if an agreement is not reached to adjust existing funding to a survival level for FY07.

FY08 Proposed Budget Request

Chairman Pape referenced a PowerPoint presentation showing a breakdown of the proposed FY08 budget request. This proposed request included, along with standard operating expense items, the \$74,330 enhancement to restore the Software Certification program to full funding, full salary for the GCAC Executive Director, and the enhancements needed to implement the Strategic Technology Initiatives for the six Judges Councils. The total for the FY08 budget request was \$780,000. Judge Van Horn made a motion to approve the FY08 Budget Request. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ratley. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Review of GCAC Strategic Technology Planning and Presentation to Judicial Council

Chairman Pape presented an overview of a PowerPoint presentation previously given to the Judicial Council regarding the strategic technology planning work of the Commission. He said the purpose of the presentation to the Council was to insure that the strategic business plan and the work being carried out by the Georgia Courts Automation Commission was in sync with what the Council understood it to be. Chairman Pape said the purpose of the presentation was also to reaffirm the Council’s understanding of the GCAC Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles and to clarify their understanding of the linkage of all strategic objectives and key initiatives to the GCAC budget.

Chairman Pape confirmed that the Strategic Technology Plans for the six Judge’s Councils targeted for FY06 had all been accomplished, that the Judiciary-wide Strategic Technology Plan for the creation of standards and architecture would also be accomplished with the approval of the requested FY07 state appropriations, as would the Judiciary-wide initiatives planned for FY08. He reiterated that all work funded by the

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Commission was directly tied to published, agreed upon, judiciary-wide initiatives and that the Commission's Strategic Business Plan could and should always be used as a reference to show the coordination of the planned work of the Commission, both in progress and accomplished, with the state appropriations provided for this work.

Chairman Pape said that most all state appropriations to agencies are based on the assumption of continuation budgeting, that an agency would be doing the same thing all the time. He said that the work of the Commission was different in that it moved along a planned path, not purely a path of continuation, but from plateau to plateau building on successes. He said the concept of completing levels of efforts and moving on to new levels was not something government was accustomed to seeing and the challenge with presenting a five year budget strategy to the Legislature was in educating them on the concept that GCAC does not continually do the same project all the time, As the projects change, so will the budget.

Mr. Ratley suggested that GCAC more clearly define for the legislative folks the differences between its initiatives and other popular IT projects in an effort to promote the continued funding for its programs. He said others need to understand that GCAC is in no way in competition with them, that it is not in that business and is in no way inconsistent with their initiatives. The Commission's strategic business plan supports this, provides support to its long range goals, and allows monitoring of initiatives and progress. The legislators need more information about the work of the commission and a comfortable level that GCAC is not in conflict with what others are doing. There seems to be a void in the information available to legislators on technology issues as they impact the courts. We need to educate the legislature and their staffs in as many ways as possible on the needs and advantages of the judiciary-wide approach being taken by GCAC. Mr. Ratley said the strategic plan should be presented to the Senate Subcommittee on Criminal Justice budgets.

Judge Harris suggested that perhaps the commission should develop an educational video that could be replayed on demand to provide this information. Mr. Ratley added that this or something like this would serve as confirmation of the commission's use of its plan, a systematic forward movement, achieving what it said it would accomplish. He said additional outlets were needed to help the Commissions do a better job of communicating outside of its own family to other state branches, agencies, etc.

Ms. Rhonda Neal added that the submission of a white paper could help generate continued support for the work plan. She suggested including in the plan a break down of the support provided to each court. She said there were many who did not understand the purpose and function of GCAC nor how its statewide initiative was difference from that being pushed by the joint effort of CJCC, PAC, GPDSC, and GSCCCA. She said it was important to get the message of interdependence across to everyone.

Judge Pape said the plan's overall goal was to produce more collaboration and cooperation between the state's agencies and the Judicial Branch, which would benefit the Legislature as well as countless others. He said the success of GCAC's plan would

provide the legislature with much of the statistical data they are constantly seeking to use in measuring the levels of success within the courts. He added that the success of the goals established for GCAC could be tracked by reviewing the current phase of the strategic business plan. The accomplishment of this FY06 phase includes the completion of a Strategic Technology and Data Definition Plan for every class of court. The next phase scheduled for FY07 is to gain approval of the budget needed to support the hosting and facilitation of meetings with each council's IT Committee to discuss the next steps defined within each of their strategic technology plans and talking with the National Center of State Court or an equivalent group about mapping the Data Definitions to standards such as those published and supported by OASIS.

Mr. Ratley suggested that a briefing was needed for the partners in the criminal justice community to communicate GCAC's success with the Strategic Technology and Data Definition products. He said BJA, GBI, DDS and others needed to be updated on the development of these products, to hear from GCAC on the success of reaching this milestone and to get their feedback on what has been done. He said that AOC's IT would certainly have input as would their people in Research, Grants, and Drug Courts.

A suggestion was made to use the lists of stakeholders from the Council's Strategic Technology Plans when considering the delivery of the Data Definitions to others and to include state agency PR people. There is a need to let as many people as possible know about the work that has been accomplished so far to build alliances with others and to leverage the use of this work with the efforts of others to avoid duplication of effort. With any luck at all this sharing can help speed up the process of data sharing and data exchange.

Mr. Nolan mentioned that a newsletter had just been initiated to help with the dissemination of information regarding the work of the Commission. The newsletter is being mailed and made available to the people in every level of court, the legislature, and other interested parties. Mr. Nolan also mentioned that the Data Definition plans for all six Judges Councils were posted on the GCAC website for public viewing.

Mr. Ratley said notification of this information to interested agencies was needed to help with the communication and collaboration efforts.

Update on Traffic Court Software Certification Project

Judge Van Horn reported that two vendors had indicated a readiness to become certified under the certification program established for the Commission by Columbus State University. The Commission discussed funding the cost of the certification process for the first five vendors volunteering their software for testing before December 31, 2006. Chairman Pape asked for a motion in support of funding this certification testing. Judge Van Horn made a motion to fund up to \$20,000.00 toward a contract for services to Columbus State University for the certification testing of up to five vendors through December 31, 2006. Judge Jerry Day seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Review of GCAC/AOC MOU and AOC IT Report

Mr. Basto gave the Commission an on-line visual presentation of the AOC Information Technology **Dashboard Tracking System** used to track and report consolidated activity for software support, network traffic and data management. He said AOC IT was concentrating on reporting metrics and key performance indicators and added that this allowed IT to identify and focus on where the most urgent needs were and enabled them to align their resources where most needed. He said the HEAT helpdesk tickets were tracked allowing software installations and support calls to be monitored more closely. The dashboard provides a one stop shop for real time data with real time information statistics on SUSTAIN support, online tracking of HEAT data, TIPS, etc. He said immediate information was available to show for example that 82 courts had local installs of software offered by the AOC, Sustain over Citrix was installed in 40 courts, and 55 courts had TIPS installed with another 25 pending.

Mr. Basto said their success in utilizing Citrix to web enable products had allowed some previously stand alone products to be more widely used by the courts. He said the MCIS and PCIS products had been web enabled using Citrix and that five courts were currently beta testing the MCIS over Citrix. He said November 1 the AOC would begin gathering informational data from Magistrate and Probate Courts to begin the building of a web based case management product for those courts.

Mr. Basto said Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity were key initiatives being addressed by AOC IT. The initial phase of implementing backup and storage solutions for AOC agency wide data has been completed. Approximately 32 million records of data were currently managed, processed or housed within the AOC. Mr. Basto said the AOC was looking at co-location server replication at an off site location.

Judge Harris commented that the dashboard program could be extremely useful when customized for the purpose of a Judge's daily routine as it relates to the scheduling, monitoring, and planning of court cases. He said there was an overwhelming indifference around the state for the ability of a central office to gather data and report it. He said this dashboard structure provided the capability to identify batches of cases or tasks to act upon. This type of a program could be customized to a judge's daily routine. For example those cases that have aged six months from the filing of an answer, not all cases that are six months old but only cases where answers are filed and six months have past since the filing of that answer. This batching ability would also give the ability to batch a notice to every interested Counsel for pre-trial orders, a productivity tool for actionable data. Mr. Basto said this type of reporting system could be used with data from any application very easily to accommodate the requirements mentioned by Judge Harris.

Mr. Basto said that by December 2006 AOC IT hoped to have the next iteration of the Dashboard Tracking and Reporting System to show more useful data including the location of courts using certain software, the distribution of products and support services, and more useful workflow data.

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Judge Pape asked who in IT was involved with OASIS. Mr. Basto said AOC was an active partner in OASIS and that Rex McElrath was a Co-Chair of one of the technology committees. He said IT was limited in their involvement with OASIS but used the standards established by OASIS and any newly released standards establish for government and non-government programs and documents. Judge Pape then asked if AOC IT had a group that could take the Data Definitions developed for the Councils and adapt them for interface with various automated state and local systems. Mr. Basto replied that while these definitions could be submitted to OASIS for adoption, the building of an interface would require an extremely high level of involvement.

Judge Van Horn asked if the GECPS vs. GJXDM data reporting requirements for the Department of Driver Services had been resolved. Mr. Basto said it had not but he understood that work was continuing at DDS on the use of GJXDM.

E-Court Conference – December 11-13, 2006

Judge Pape reminded everyone about the upcoming E-Court Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada on December 11-13, 2006.

Next Meeting of the Commission

The next meeting of the Commission was set for the morning of December 6, 2006 at the Wyndham Vinings Hotel in Atlanta.

Judge Pape thanked everyone for their feedback on the work and efforts of the Commission with a special word of thanks to Judge Rucker Smith for his contributions regarding the newsletter.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

The above and foregoing minutes were approved at the meeting of the Georgia Courts Automation Commission held on _____ day of _____, 2006.

Respectfully submitted:

Judge R. Rucker Smith
Secretary