

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GEORGIA COURTS AUTOMATION COMMISSION
Wyndham Vinings Hotel
Overlook B Conference Room
Atlanta, Georgia
December 8, 2005**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Vice Chair Judge Kenneth Van Horn, Probate Court of Chattahoochee County
Judge Jerry Day, Chief Magistrate of Walker County
Judge Charlie Mikell, Georgia Court of Appeals
Judge Sammy Ozburn, Superior Court, Alcovy Judicial Circuit, Newton County
Chief Judge Rucker Smith, Superior Court, Southwestern Judicial Circuit
Judge David Strickland, Municipal Courts of Covington and Porterdale, Newton County

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS AND DESIGNEES PRESENT

Mr. Walt Davis, Director of Clemency for the Pardons & Parole Division
Ms. Rhonda Neal, GBI, Georgia Crime Information Center
Ms. Molly Perry, Director of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

STAFF PRESENT

Mr. George Nolan, Executive Director of Georgia Courts Automation Commission

GUESTS PRESENT

Mr. Jorge Basto, Administrative Office of the Courts
Mr. Byron Branch, Administrative Office of the Court
Ms. Cortne Brent, GBI, Georgia Crime Information Center
Ms. Cynthia Clanton, Administrative Office of the Courts
Mr. Vince Harris, Administrative Office of the Courts
Mr. Mike Miller, Bull Services
Ms. Debra Nesbit, Administrative Office of the Courts
Mr. Robert Woodruff, Georgia Technology Authority

Introductory Remarks and Announcements

Vice Chair Judge Kenneth Van Horn welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM.

Approval of Minutes

Vice Chair Van Horn asked for any comments or corrections to the minutes of the August 2005 meeting as presented. None were offered. Judge Day moved to accept the minutes as presented and Judge Mikell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Conflict Of Interest Policy

Vice Chair Van Horn informed the members that Article 12 on page 7 of the Rules of the Commission under the section regarding Ethical Behavior required a revision to include a new proposed Conflict of Interest Policy. Each member of the Commission would be

required to sign a copy of this new policy if the change to the Rules was accepted. After review of the document Judge Smith moved for acceptance of the proposed Conflict of Interest Policy and Judge Day seconded. Vice Chair Van Horn asked if there was any discussion. No objections or changes were offered. The Commission approved the motion. Vice Chair Van Horn advised the commission that the policy would become effective immediately and would require annual renewal by each member.

Change in the Rules for the GCAC

Vice Chair Van Horn asked that all members carefully review the proposed change to the wording in Article 12 on page 7 of the Rules of the Commission to accommodate the new Conflict of Interest Policy. He then asked for a motion to adopt the proposed change in the wording of the Rules. Judge Mikell moved to accept and Judge Strickland seconded. The Commission approved the motion to adopt the change to the Rules.

Court Technology Conference in Seattle

Mr. George Nolan reported that six GCAC members attended the Court Technology Conference (CTC9) in Seattle, Washington September 13-15. Twenty-three hundred people reportedly registered for this conference. Eighty-nine of these people were from Georgia. He said the XML (eXtended Markup Language) was one of the main topics of the conference and that it was now viewed as the most accepted language for the exchange of criminal justice data. Mr. Nolan stated that Microsoft Corporation had announced that their next release of their MS Office Suite would be compatible with the XML. Vice Chair Van Horn added that the file types produced from this Suite of products would render them XML compliant and easily recognized as such. Mr. Nolan said that future documents produced from MS Word would be labeled .docx in lieu of the current .doc so that third party software could recognize them as XML compliant and allow the exchange of data with others. It was noted that most people are currently using a release of Microsoft Suite 2003. The proposed label for the 2006 release of the product is Microsoft Vista. Mr. Nolan asked for others in the room who attended the conference to share their thoughts and impressions of the conference.

Vice Chair Van Horn offered that GJXDM was now a standard for all software development for the State of Georgia. He shared an example of how Florida had saved \$5 to \$7 million dollars in one county the initial year of implementation by complying with the GJXDM standard and reducing their data entry redundancy. He also shared that an analysis of the judicial system in Albany, Georgia had revealed they were entering the basic information of a person flowing through their criminal justice system as many as 28 times. He added that when the Commission had succeeded in its mission to implement GJXDM statewide in Georgia, the savings would far exceed that figure. He said the National Center for State Courts had taken some interest in what the Commission was doing and had plans to come to Georgia to study the approach and benefits of GCAC's work. Judge Smith added that he found some very helpful information regarding the use of new technology in simplifying the construction of new court houses while attending the conference.

Update of the Strategic Technology Planning Project

Mr. Nolan reminded the members that this project was begun as an initiative to assist the six classes of Georgia courts with their next level of automation. He said this two step process included the clarification and documentation of common data definitions and information flow into, through, and out of the courts and the development of a two to four year strategic technology plan for each class of court. Mr. Nolan said upon completion of the development and approval of the six individual strategic technology plans, a statewide strategic technology plan would be developed for use as a guide to data sharing within the courts and with appropriate state agencies.

Mr. Nolan updated the members on the progress of the project to date. He said that the Probate, Municipal, Juvenile, and State courts had all completed their Data Definition Sessions and that the State and Superior Courts were considering dates in the first quarter of 2006 to schedule their sessions. The Juvenile Courts had scheduled their Strategic Technology Planning at the same time as the Commission meeting and were currently in session. The Municipal Courts had their Strategic Technology session scheduled for December 13th - 15th and the Probate Courts would hold their Strategic Technology session at the end of January 2006. The State, Magistrate, and Superior Courts should all complete their Strategic Technology sessions during the first calendar quarter of 2006. Mr. Nolan said with six of the sessions now successfully completed the project was one-half the way to the finish line. He said with the cooperation of the Councils there should not be a problem in completing the remainder of the sessions during the first calendar quarter of 2006.

Vice Chair Van Horn explained that when implemented this sharing of data would enable our courts and state agencies to better serve the public. He provided an example of how the filing of a valid marriage license in a Probate Court could generate an electronic transfer of data and request to the Department of Driver Services for a new Drivers License, and that could in turn generate an electronic transfer of data and generate a request to Social Security for appropriate changes and new card issue. All of this is now possible because of XML. We can now build a statewide integrated automation system, a world wide web of sorts within our justice community with all systems working together sharing data, seamlessly, statewide.

Traffic Court Software Certification Project Update

Mr. Nolan reported that Columbus State University continued its development of the Traffic Court Software Certification Program and reminded the Commission that the existing contract was scheduled to expire on December 31, 2005. He referenced the August progress report submitted to the Commission by the University and discussed the benefits derived from a meeting with some of the vendors. That meeting attended by CourtWare Solutions, Criminal Justice Technologies, Harris Custom Programming, and the AOC IT allowed the vendors a forum to discuss the positive and negative issues of the certification program, the benefits to be derived from direct communication with the state on major issues affecting their products, like House Bill 1EX, and the overall benefit of open communication and exchange of information with the state. Certified software

with an appropriately attached seal will provide a certain level of comfort to both existing and potential client courts and offer a certain reliability factor as well.

Mr. Nolan said the initial certification cost per software product per vendor had been set at \$1000.00 with an annual re-certification fee of \$750.00. The \$750 re-certification fee would also apply to any re-certifications required during a calendar year due to vendor enhancements, revisions, upgrades, new releases, etc. He said MDS had volunteered to be the first to submit their software for certification.

Mr. Nolan read a request from Columbus State University for a revision to any new contract with GCAC that would move the receipt of vendor certification monies from them to GCAC. This request further stated that it was the desire of CSU to receive grant funding from GCAC to perform the certification work in lieu their having to bill vendors for the service. Vice Chair Van Horn expressed a concern regarding the need to review this request for alternatives and suggested that perhaps an extension of the contract with CSU might offer the time needed to study and recommend alternates. Judge Day made a motion to extend the contract for an additional six months to allow time for a review and possible resolution to the requests by CSU. There was a second from Judge Ozburn. The motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Van Horn said Executive Committee needed to be authorized to negotiate a new contract should a resolution be reached. Judge Smith made that motion and Judge Day seconded. The motion carried.

Strategic Plan Review

Mr. Nolan reported that the current plan dated June 2004 and approved by the Commission was being utilized by the Commission as intended to address planned objectives and achieve specific goals. He said the plan requires a periodic review and revision to maintain a current status. An annual review by the Commission as a group is the most desirable way to accomplish this. Vice Chair Van Horn recommended the combining of a plan revision session with a regular GCAC meeting. Mr. Nolan suggested the Commission consider having North Highland facilitate the meeting. Vice Chair Van Horn suggested the dates of April 26-28, 2006 for the plan update and GCAC Executive Committee and Business meetings. The GCAC Office was assigned the responsibility of finding a location suitable for the meetings.

Budget Report –FY06

Mr. Nolan referred the members to the budget report in their individual meeting packets. The total budget for the commission for FY06 is \$326,387 as is used to fund three main functions - strategic technology planning for the six classes of courts; software certification for the courts; and travel and other Commission related expenses. Mr. Nolan said that \$200,000 of the total funds was earmarked for facilitated strategic planning session for the courts. Six contracts totaling \$100,000 are currently in place with the North Highland Company, one each for State and Magistrate Courts Data Definition sessions and one each for State, Probate and Municipal Courts Strategic Technology Planning sessions. The remaining \$100,000 would be used for the final six facilitated

sessions. The Courts Software Certification Program work currently underway at Columbus State University has an allocation of \$55,000 for the certification of software for the next class of court, following the completion of the Traffic Court software certification. Mr. Nolan reminded the members that GCAC would need to continue this program of certifying software for the other classes of courts until the software for all courts had been certified.

Mr. Nolan said the total allocation for travel and other Commission expenses was \$66,387. The total expenses to-date for meetings, travel and other office related expenses was \$23,951 leaving a balance of \$42,436. The total balance of GCAC funds as of the November 30, 2005 was \$202,436.

Judge Smith made a motion to authorize Executive Committee to contact North Highland regarding the facilitation of the GCAC Strategic Plan update as a part of its next regular meeting. Judge Ozburn seconded the motion. After some discussion the motion carried unanimously.

Judge Van Horne recognized two guests joining the meeting in progress, Robert Woodruff from GTA and Mike Miller of Bull Services.

GCAC/ AOC Memorandum of Understanding

Jorge Basto, AOC Assistant Director for Technology, distributed a written report for members regarding the Technology Support provided for GCAC per a Memorandum of Understanding currently in effect between GCAC and the AOC.

Mr. Basto began his oral report with recap of their SUSTAIN support services for the local courts. He said that currently 145 courts were using the SUSTAIN software, 39 on the web enabled Citrix system and 106 were locally installed sites. A graph of the support calls for this system was provided indicating that the Network Operations staff of 2 in house and 3 field technicians had received 1072 SUSTAIN related calls since January 1, 2005. This volume of calls overwhelms the current staffing support model and makes it ineffective. Mr. Basto said at this time the budget would not allow the hiring of additional support staff. The AOC Information Technology Division recommends using the web enabled Citrix or Operation Sustain Over Citrix (OSOC) product which provides the SUSTAIN case management system over the internet. This allows for easier maintenance, administration and upgrades to the system when required.

Mr. Basto made a proposal for an endorsement of support for the Operation SUSTAIN Over Citrix (OSOC) Project as one part of a plan to fix the support model. He said AOC IT would like to propose that a letter from GCAC supporting and encouraging the initiative to move all local installations to a Citrix environment be sent out in FY06 Q3 to all levels of court.

Judge Smith inquired about local data storage, access and security with Citrix and its advantages. Mr. Basto explained that the use of web enabled and web based systems allows data storage, back up and program maintenance to be handled from a single

location, like the Atlanta AOC, as opposed to required travel to individual court locations whenever assistance was required. He also reassured Judge Smith and others that a back up of all data would be a significant benefit should their system go down for any reason. Byron Branch clarified that on-line central processing is now and for some time has clearly been the preferred approach to providing automated technology services because of its advantage of wholesale updates to software and reduced dependency on staff support time.

Ms. Molly Perry asked if there was a cost projection of dollars to be saved in terms of technology field staff with the shifting over to Citrix and what other effect would this change have on the local courts. Mr. Nolan advised that no additional system related cost would be incurred by the local courts for the change over to Citrix unless a court required the installation of a Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) to communicate with the servers in Atlanta. A discussion on the advantages of central processing ensued that included input from Mr. Basto and Mr. Robert Woodruff of GTA. Mr. Basto concluded the discussion by stating that while no firm estimate of savings had been projected, it was a certainty that both money and time would be saved due to reduction in required on-site maintenance functions.

Vice Chair Van Horne returned to the question of endorsement of support for the Operation SUSTAIN Over Citrix (OSOC) proposal. After some discussion he said the Commission could not write a letter of endorsement because of the current Memorandum of Understanding agreement in place with the AOC. Mr. Vince Harris suggested that maybe the AOC Information Technology Division could send out a letter to all courts recommending a change over to OSOC by July 1, 2006. Chairman Van Horn asked if there was any other discussion on this issue. None was offered.

Mr. Basto announced the creation of a new Project Management Office (PMO) within AOC IT to be lead by two project managers, Rex McElrath and Michael Neuren. He said Mr. McElrath was well versed in legal XML and GJXDM and would be managing technical development, overseeing all development projects for AOC IT. Mr. Michael Neuren would manage software support and related issues, such as the SLAs (Service Level Agreements).

Mr. Basto said this new PMO could address 85% of their existing Strategic Plan with products already developed and technologies already built. Reusability of codes and modules already built were high priority as were the reporting of measures and metrics that would also be a consolidated effort under the PMO. Integration of application logic and specific code sets would enable AOC IT to accelerate the delivery of products. Mr. Basto said although there were budget limitations, AOC IT was looking at other resources as viable options when considering performance, security and accessibility, and made it clear that efficiency was a main focal point to be addressed with every initiative. He gave an example of Michael Neuren's recommendation to eliminate the services of an outside server used to manage Jury files by moving them to an AOC in house server resulting in an annual savings to AOC of \$10,000.

Mr. Basto reported that the AOC provided Traffic Information Processing System (TIPS) that allows individual courts to efficiently process traffic citations had doubled in size in the past two months and was now serving 64 courts. A consultant was used to analyze the code, evaluate the application, determine if front end calculations were correct and determine if the system was optimized for future growth. This resulted in a 73 page report on the software. Mr. Basto said that AOC IT was performing internal self audits of its web sites to insure reduced vulnerability in security.

Vice Chair Van Horn expressed to Mr. Basto that he was having a problem monitoring a HEAT ticket and suggested allowing individuals to reopen tickets for updates that have been closed for less than a week. Mr. Basto stated the capability to allow the reopening of tickets was an option of the system but due to other conflicts the feature had not been enabled. Vice Chair Van Horn also said the availability for requesting technical assistance through the HEAT system was not widely known and suggested that it should be broadcast on the listservs of all courts.

Mr. Basto continued his report reporting that AOC IT was looking into the reusability of user names and passwords and the use of an Out of Office Reporter System to automate the management of vacation, sick, and out of the office time. This system should be ready to activate in early 2006. It will allow a greater and more efficient workflow saving one week of time for one individual in the Fiscal Office.

Mr. Basto said that additional monies were being saved via the Georgiacourts.org website hosted by AOC Information Technology. For the month of November a total of 1,934,573 hits were recorded by this web site. Ten domains are hosted by AOC IT and only 8.87 GB total bandwidth is used monthly. As mentioned earlier the Traffic Information Processing System had doubled in size in the past two months now serving 64 courts and enabling \$1,934,573 million dollars to be made in fee and fine disbursements. On a daily average, 75% of all e-mails are blocked preventing spam or viruses from entering the network traffic.

Another consideration being implemented into all AOC IT efforts is a Sustainable Funding Model. He said that IT was analyzing a long term cycle to ensure that it could continue to provide adequate levels of support.

He said there was new concentration on educating all users by providing more training. Users are requesting functions that already exist. This implies that the training program requires more attention. Vice Chair Van Horne suggested using web conferencing as a training venue allowing participants to gain knowledge from their office. This would save in travel time and expenses.

Mr. Basto advised that AOC IT was currently working with the National Center for State Courts to implement functional specifications that have been proposed. Georgia will take an active roll in the creation and endorsements of NACM/NCSC standards at the Court Information Technology Officers Consortium (CITOC) meeting in February. IT plans to be a presenter at CTC 10 in Tampa, Florida.

Mr. Basto said that GCAC support for a viable support model with Sustain was crucial and might become a decision that is forced due to budget matters. He added that discussion during the August 30, 2005 meeting with vendors acknowledged the need to push the implementation of the structure proposed in the Verti-Ware Report. He concluded that there needed to be a joint approach to addressing requests and procedural changes within the courts and with the vendors and finished his report by stating that the information being developed by the North Highland Company for GCAC and the Court Councils would be a great value to the on-going product development efforts of AOC IT.

Vice Chair Van Horn said there were no other items on the agenda and opened the floor for discussion.

He reminded the members that the Conflict of Interest statements would need to be completed by each member of the commission present and given to Cynthia Clanton.

Judge Smith requested an update on the status of the transmission of data from the Superior Courts to the Georgia Criminal Information Center from one of their representatives present at the meeting.

Rhonda Neal reported that all Superior Courts have the resources to transmit data to GCIC. She explained that of the 159 Superior Courts 132 were utilizing one of the nine certified vendors. She added that a non-certified vendor could contact the GCIC office to become certified and then would be able to transmit data to GCIC. She said the SUSTAIN software provided by the state was certified. She said that Houston, Rockdale, and Chatham counties would begin certification for their software vendors at the beginning of 2006. Ms. Neal said that per Senate Bill 50, all Superior Courts were required to transmit criminal disposition data to GCIC but they were also receiving information directly from some lower courts.

Judge Mikkell asked if any State Courts were transmitting data. Ms. Neal answered that there were some transmitting especially in counties where the Clerk of Superior Court served multiple courts. She said that some other courts do transmit directly to GCIC.

Cortne Brent from the GCIC Customer Service and Compliance Office reported that a part of their strategic plan included the encouragement of the non-automated reporting courts to take advantage of their fully automated systems and the education and support of those courts in utilizing the reporting of dispositions to promote the collection of delinquent dispositions across the state. She said the three projects of their Byrne Grant were notification, education and change to improve the reporting process. Ms Brent said there were 117,000 open felony arrest records on the GCIC database, and 200,000 dispositions in their Suspense File waiting to be matched to fingerprint cards. Eighty percent of these suspended dispositions are from convicted felons. Ms. Brent explained that an important part of the education process was an awareness program for the clerks of court to insure they understood the meaning of the notifications they received from GCIC and how they should respond to these notifications when they are received. One

extremely important change is the data entry and full utilization of the offender tracking number field in order to link the arrest, court, and GCIC information.

Ms. Neal added that she had attended a recent Sustain Training Session in Macon and found that other attendees were interested in implementing the Suspense File information that is now allowed by all certified vendors.

Chairman Van Horn asked if there was any input from the Advisory Council.

Molly Perry said the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) had helped fund and were continuing to fund the Cordele Data Exchange Project that had become successful in identifying exchanges between the Sheriff, Magistrate Court, Clerk's Office, Public Defender's Office and the District Attorney's Office and asked if the Georgia Courts Automation Commission had any involvement or interest in that project. Mr. Nolan said the Commission had been involved in the Albany-Dougherty County integrated project but had had no involvement in the Cordele project.

Ms. Perry went on to say that through the use of XML the data is entered in the Sheriff's Office and is pushed into the other areas all the way up to the DA and Public Defender's Office. The Public Defender's Standards Council and Prosecuting Attorney's Council Offices have contributed funds in addition to grant funds provided by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Office for this demonstration project. The plan now is to move this model into the other counties of the Cordele Judicial Circuit. The original model left out the Chief of Police in Cordele because of some XML compliance issues with that case management system. One of the requirements to participate in the project was that each entity would prepare its case management system for the XML project. Ms. Perry said a vendor prepared the XML interfacing bringing everything together and added that another grant consisting of funds from the Public Defender's Standards Council, the Prosecuting Attorney's Council, and the state would be made available for the circuit wide implementation of this model.

Mr. Nolan acknowledged the value of the county wide and circuit wide integration effort offered by the Cordele model and the benefits it would have to the statewide effort underway by the Commission.

Vice Chair Van Horn added that the Commission had experimented with this same integration in Walker and Douglas Counties and learned that by having all vendor software certified would allow other counties to interface as well by using XML. This would allow other agencies across the state to exchange information. He added that the weakness in the model using proprietary interface software surfaced when there was a change in an elected office and that new person wanted to change software. If we establish a statewide non-proprietary system then different software will always be compatible.

Mr. Nolan publicly gave recognition to AOC IT's Byron Branch for his continuous contributions and dedicated assistance to the him as the Executive Director of the

Commission and to the Commission. Mr. Nolan said Mr. Branch was always willing to offer his help regardless of the task and regardless of the hour of the day and that his service deserved the recognition and appreciation of the Commission.

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