

JUDICIAL BRANCH CERTIFICATION COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

First Floor Conference Room

Tom C. Clark Building

205 W. 14th Street

Austin, Texas 78701

Friday, February 7, 2025

(10:00 a.m. Until Adjournment)

The meeting of the Judicial Branch Certification Commission (Commission) was called to order by Judge Sid Harle, Chair, at 10:00 a.m. Members in attendance were Judge Sid Harle; Judge William Sowder; Judge Victor Villarreal; Judge Polly Spencer; Judge Glen Harrison; Velma Arellano; Ann Murray Moore; Don Ford; and Mark Blenden.

Staff members in attendance were Ron Morgan, Commission Director; Scott Gibson, Commission General Counsel; Veena Mohan, Prosecuting Attorney; Sheryl Jones, Deputy Director; Melinda Saucedo, Compliance Manager; Amy Smith, Investigator; Tyees Holcombe, Judicial Regulatory Assistant; Kaneshia Daniels, Legal Assistant; and Brian Keenan, Criminal History Specialist.

Advisory Board members in attendance via Zoom were Carol Watson, Process Servers Advisory Board; and Shari Krieger, Court Reporters Advisory Board.

Agenda Item III. Opening Remarks

Judge Harle welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Judge Sowder for chairing the previous Commission meeting. Judge Harle welcomed Ron Morgan, new Commission Director and thanked staff for their hard work getting the meeting ready.

The Commission Director thanked the Commission for their kind words and introduced himself to the group. He thanked the members for their service and thanked the staff for their hard work. The Commission Director shared there are 141 pending investigations, 7200 active licensees, which is broken down as follows: 2300 court reporters, 253 court reporting firms, 373 guardians, 36 guardianship programs, 3700 process servers, and 486 court interpreters. 109 of our licensees' certifications and registrations are pending renewal and over 1000 applications for new licenses, certifications and registrations are pending in various stages.

The Commission Director outlined specific goals for each department. For compliance, the focus is on maximizing efficiencies, improving processes, and ensuring optimal resource allocation. Regarding licensing, the priority is to identify actionable solutions to address shortages, while also engaging with stakeholders from various associations to explore how we can best support them.

Agenda Item IV. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

The November 1, 2024, minutes were approved.

Prosecuting Attorney presented agenda items V, VI, VII, VIII, and IX.

Agenda Item V. Compliance Hearing before the Commission

Process Servers Certification

A. In the Matter of Angelica Vasquez, Cause No. 0595

Sanction: Permanently revoke process server certification and assesses an administrative penalty of \$2,000 due within 12 months after the date of the Final Order.

Respondent seeks to contest only the amount of the administrative penalty. Respondent left the Zoom meeting.

On proper motion and second, the Commission adopted the sanction as a final order issued by default by unanimous vote.

Agenda Item VI. Commission Disciplinary Action, by Default, and Issuance of Final Order

Process Servers Certification

A. In the Matter of Kathryn Dial, Cause No. 0540

Sanction: Reprimand and complete a 7-hour precertification civil process service education course in addition to the continuing education requirements for recertification. The course must be completed no later than 12 months after the date of the Final Order.

On proper motion and second the Commission adopted the sanction as a final order issued by default by a unanimous vote.

Court Reporters Certification

B. In the Matter of Kathryn DeBusk, Cause No. 0579

Sanction: Reprimand and assess an administrative penalty of \$250 due within 12 months after the date of the Final Order.

C. In the Matter of Jennifer Hall, Cause No. 0674

Sanction: 5-year revocation effective the date of the Final Order.

On proper motion and second, the Commission adopted the sanction for Cause No. 0579 and Cause No. 0674 as a final order issued by default by a unanimous vote.

Agenda Item VII. Agreed Final Order - Acceptance by Respondent of Penalty and Sanction

Process Servers Certification

A. In the Matter of Donald Womble, Cause No. 0568

The Commission voted to accept the agreed order

Sanction: Permanently refuse to renew or approve process server certification.

Court Reporters Certification

B. In the Matter of Carla Sims, Cause No. 0645

The Commission voted to accept the agreed order

Sanction: 6-month probated suspension effective the date of the Final Order and assess an administrative penalty of \$500 due within 12 months after the date of the Final Order.

Agenda Item VIII. Approval of Settlement Agreement

Process Server Certification

A. In the Matter of Oluwafemi Adediran, Cause No. 0574

Sanction: Complete a 7-hour precertification civil process service education course in addition to the continuing education requirements for recertification. The course must be completed no later than 12 months after the date of the Final Order.

Assesses an administrative penalty of \$1,250 due no later than 12 months after the Final Order.

Motion to reject the settlement. Motion dies for lack of a second on the motion.

Motion to accept the settlement adopted by the Commission (Blenden opposed).

Agenda Item IX. Administrative Dismissal of Complaints

Upon proper motion and second, the Commission ratified the administrative dismissal of the following complaints by unanimous vote unless otherwise indicated:

Process Servers Certification

No misconduct:

A. In the Matter of Cause No. 0553

B. In the Matter of Cause No. 0575

C. In the Matter of Cause No. 0596

D. In the Matter of Cause No. 0598

E. In the Matter of Cause No. 0599

F. In the Matter of Cause No. 0603

G. In the Matter of Cause No. 0609

Motion to reverse administrative dismissal. Motion dies for lack of a second on the motion.

Motion to ratify administrative dismissal adopted by the Commission (Blenden opposed).

H. In the Matter of Cause No. 0637

I. In the Matter of Cause No. 0715

J. In the Matter of Cause No. 0716

K. In the Matter of Cause No. 0717

L. In the Matter of Cause No. 0718

M. In the Matter of Cause No. 0730

Court Reporters Certification

No misconduct:

- A. In the Matter of Cause No. 0687
- B. In the Matter of Cause No. 0702
- C. In the Matter of Cause No. 0735
- D. In the Matter of Cause No. 0742

No misconduct and outside the jurisdiction of the Commission:

- E. In the Matter of Cause No. 0712
- F. In the Matter of Cause No. 0739

Outside the jurisdiction of the Commission:

- G. In the Matter of Cause No. 0728

Professions Not Regulated by the Commission

Outside the jurisdiction of the Commission:

- A. In the Matter of Cause No. 0766

Agenda Item X. Request for Reconsideration on Administrative Dismissal of Complaints

Upon proper motion and second, the Commission voted to affirm its previous decision to ratify the administrative dismissal and deny reconsideration.

Process Servers Certification

- A. In the Matter of Cause No. 0615

Guardianship Certification

- B. In the Matter of Cause No. 0708

Agenda Item XI. Administrative Dismissal of Complaints and Requests For Reconsideration

Process Servers Certification

- A. In the Matter of Cause No. 0543
The Complainant attended the meeting via Zoom and addressed the Commission
Upon proper motion and second, the Commission voted to ratify the administrative dismissal and deny the reconsideration
- B. In the Matter of Cause No. 0546
Upon proper motion and second, the Commission voted to ratify the administrative dismissal and deny the reconsideration
- C. In the Matter of Cause No. 0605
Upon proper motion and second, the Commission voted to ratify the administrative dismissal and deny the reconsideration
- D. In the Matter of Cause No. 0689
Upon proper motion and second, the Commission voted to ratify the administrative dismissal and deny the reconsideration

Agenda Item XII. Request for Reconsideration of Denial of Application

The Commission convened in closed session at 11:08 a.m. and reconvened in public session at 11:38 a.m. to confer on Item XII. A.

A. Cara Lavender

The Commission considered her request for reconsideration of staff's denial of the applications for certification. On motion and second, the Commission considered approval of applicant's application. Without objection, motion was amended to consider approval of applicant's application, subject to conditions precedent.

The motion passed as amended (Harrison and Sowder opposed).

Agenda Item XIII. Administrative Matters Relating to the Commission

- A. Pending Litigation – *Judicial Branch Certification Commission, et al. v. Holmgren and Preferred Legal Services, Inc.*, The Commission convened in closed session at 10:50 a.m. to confer with Legal Counsel and reconvened in open session at 11:38.
- B. Approval of the *Code of Ethics and Minimum Standards for Guardianship Services*
Upon proper motion and second, the Commission voted to adopt amendments to the Code of Ethics and Minimum Standards for Guardianship Services
- C. Approval of the *Certified Guardians and Guardianship Programs Sanction Matrix*
Upon proper motion and second, the Commission voted to adopt the Certified Guardians and Guardianship Programs Sanction Matrix
- D. *Uniform Format Manual Update*
The Commission's proposed amendments to the manual are pending before the Supreme Court.
- E. Next Commission Meeting- Friday, May 2, 2025

Agenda Item XIV. Public Comment

There were no public comments made.

Agenda Item XV. Closing Remarks

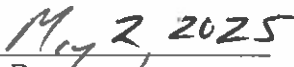
Judge Harle thanked everyone for their hard work.

Agenda Item XVI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.



Judge Sid Harle, Chair



Date