

**Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services – Commissioners Meeting
March 16, 2020**

Minutes

Commissioners Present by Telephone: Michael Carey, Sarah Churchill, Robert LeBrasseur, Ronald Schneider, Joshua Tardy, Mary Zmigrodski, Robert Cummins

MCILS Staff Present: Ellie Maciag, John Pelletier

Agenda Item	Discussion	Outcome/Action Item/Responsible Party
Discussion of telephonic meeting protocol	Chair Tardy acknowledged that the Commission was in uncharted territory holding a telephonic meeting, but that pressing Commission business required immediate discussion. Chair Tardy announced that the scheduled meeting for the following day would be postponed a week until emergency legislation is enacted that gives express authority for boards and commissions to meet telephonically.	
Discussion of Judicial Branch emergency notice and Order	Director Pelletier and Deputy Director Maciag briefed the Commissioners on the latest details concerning the new lawyer of the day procedures and the desire by all involved to keep as many people out of jail as possible. Commissioner LeBrasseur relayed that there are some attorneys that have concerns about going to the jail and the courthouse. Chair Tardy asked staff to send a memo to all lawyers informing them about the new lawyer of the day protocols. Chair Tardy also requested staff explore video conference capabilities with the various sheriffs and officials at the Department of Corrections. Director Pelletier relayed that in child protection cases, the court is trying to minimize the number in-person appearances and are looking at ways to accomplish hearings by telephone or video conference.	
Supplemental Budget Update	Director Pelletier stated that he was continuing to monitor the Appropriations Committee hearing on the supplemental budget and that no public announcement had yet been made prior to the start of the Commission meeting.	

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Authorizing Interim Vouchers	<p>The discussion turned to Commissioner LeBrasseur’s proposal to allow interim billing for all open cases due to the court closures. Director Pelletier stated that the rule allows interim billing “upon approval by the executive director.” He believes that interim billing makes a lot of sense and that because involuntary commitment and child protective cases are unaffected by the court closure, the only cases that would need interim bills would be adult criminal and juvenile cases. He also noted that it will be cost neutral since these vouchers will have to be paid at some point in time. Director Pelletier suggested that the Commission ask attorneys to be moderate in their submissions and submit them over time, allowing staff to have enough time to timely process the vouchers. Commissioner Churchill suggested staff send an email to attorneys reminding them that if a case is finished but not yet billed, they should work quickly to get that voucher submitted. Chair Tardy stated that the Commission should wait to hear about the supplemental budget before sending out communication to attorneys about interim billing.</p>	
Public Comment	<p><u>Cory McKenna, Esq.</u>: Criminal jury trials were scheduled for next week so bail amendments should be kept on the radar.</p>	
Executive Session	None	
Adjournment of meeting	The next meeting will be held telephonically on March 24, 2020 at 8 am.	