

MINUTES
BENCH BAR COMMITTEE
Monday, November 2, 2020
By C. Edward S. Mitchell, Chairman

Attendance

Participants were: Judge Butts, Judge McCoy, Judge Linhardt, Judge Tira, Skip Greevy, Jessica Harlow, Jennifer Heverly, Ed Mitchell, Cliff Rieders, Nicole Spring, Dave Wilk, Michele Frey

Method: Because of continuing restrictions on in-person gatherings and the continued judicial emergency in Lycoming County, the meeting was conducted by conference call.

Judge Butts advised that the Court is continuing to pick juries and intends to pick juries in January. Judge Butts confirmed that the order issued September 17, 2020 extended the judicial emergency order until the end of the year. She noted the courthouse is monitoring for CDC compliance and trying to be consistent with masks and accommodate those with Covid-related concerns. On November 2, 2020, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, through Pennsylvania's Court Administrator Geoff Moulton, issued a reminder that Judges in Pennsylvania should take whatever actions are necessary to assure compliance with applicable CDC guidelines.

Judge McCoy had nothing specific with respect to family court and welcomed any questions. There were none.

Judge Linhardt reported that one civil bench trial and one civil jury trial were completed during the last term with no issues.

Judge Tira had nothing specific to raise with the committee.

Dave Wilk did raise the issue of the small room used for arbitration hearings and concerns about social distancing in such a small space. Judge Butts and Adrienne Stahl were able to confirm that issue was on the court's radar and they have been trying to use other courtrooms or the juror's lounge when they can, to provide more space for arbitration hearings.

Judge Lovecchio was unable to be present for the call.

Cliff Rieders had a question about whether or not specific instructions are being given to jurors with respect to Covid. He noted the suggested jury instruction committee is seeking comments. There was a discussion that a letter drafted by Judge Butts is being sent to all potential jurors and a copy of that letter will be sent by Adrienne to Cliff.

Judge Butts did note that Eileen Dgien is retiring at the end of the year and that the Court is actively interviewing for the position of Deputy Court Administrator.

No other participants on the call had any further business to discuss.

The next meeting will be Monday, February 1, 2021 at noon.

Respectfully submitted,

C. Edward S. Mitchell
Chairman