



The Florida Courts E-Filing Authority Minutes

Florida Courts E-Filing Authority Board of Directors held a regular meeting on May 7, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., EDT, by WebEx. The following members were present: Tim Smith, Putnam County Clerk, Chair; Don Barbee, Esq., Hernando County, Vice Chair; Tara Green, Clay County Clerk, Secretary/Treasurer; John Tomasino, Clerk, Supreme Court; Alex Alford, Walton County Clerk; Gail Wadsworth, Flagler County Clerk; Karen Rushing, Sarasota County Clerk; Sharon Bock, Esq., Palm Beach County Clerk; were present. Lynn Hoshihara, Esq., Authority General Counsel, and Bob Inzer, Leon County Clerk, were unable to attend.

I. Welcome

Mr. Tim Smith, Chair, opened the meeting at 2:30 p.m. with a roll call. He welcomed all on the WebEx. He reminded all those on the WebEx to mute their phones and keep extraneous noise to a minimum. He welcomed Ms. PK Jameson and thanked her for attending.

II. Agenda

Ms. Tara Green moved adoption of the agenda. Ms. Sharon Bock seconded the motion. All voted favorably.

III. Reading and Approval of Minutes

Mr. Tim Smith recognized Ms. Green to present the March 2015 minutes. Hearing no suggested corrections or changes, Ms. Green moved adoption of the minutes. Mr. John Tomasino seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

IV. Old Business

Mr. Smith opened the discussion on standardization by explaining that the board needed to find a clear path for this effort. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to talk about where we are on the effort, what we have done and where do we need to go with good result. He reminded everyone of what then Chief Justice Polston had said about wanting to see standard drop-down menus for filers. He noted that it has not been an easy task, that there is no simple solution that helps all. He recognized Ms. Carolyn Weber to discuss the recommendations made to date and provide a demonstration of the portal so the board members could see what was available for filers and the various points in which drop-down menus were available.

Ms. Weber explained that they have put together a plan. She told the board that there are four areas where drop-down menus are seen while filing. She reviewed division, case type and subtype. The fourth drop-down area is the document description.

She explained that the top-most level, division, was mostly consistent across the state. There are a few counties where it is different based on differently county case maintenance systems, or nuances in that county. She showed Monroe County as an example. She noted that they have the divisions, but have to break it out differently due to the different courthouses and what is handled in each one. However, she continued, most counties are consistent and are using the Summary Reporting System (SRS) divisions. The case type and subtypes, she explained, the next levels down, are also defined by SRS. These areas are less uniform, but can be easily revised by the county administrator, she reported. She told the board that the training document she had put together was posted with the meeting materials and it gave step-by-step directions on how to go about revision the drop-down fields.

The last drop down box available in the portal is the document description. When filing and attempting to add a document, one sees a search box in which to type the title of the document. Once typed in, the different document names used in that county appear on the screen. This is the area where it gets complex and is not as easy to settle on a “set.” The work of the Best Practice Committee at this point, she told the board, was in this particular area.

Mr. Smith recognized the Hon. Marcia Johnson, Franklin County Clerk, as the chair of the FCCC Best Practices Committee, to report on what the Best Practices Committee has been working on in regard to standardization. She reported that the committee had just approved the first set of document types and document descriptions and were looking to move on to the next phase of the review. She explained that they had formed a workgroup of 25 counties who looked at the document types and document descriptions and came up with 80 document types and 182 document descriptions. Ms. Johnson remarked that she didn’t want to rush the process. She said the Best Practices Committee had just approved the list of 182 as a Phase I and wanted to continue on. She asked Ms. Jean Sperbeck, Esq., Alachua County Clerk’s Office, as a member of the workgroup to explain their process.

Ms. Sperbeck explained they had taken the document descriptions from 25 counties and pared the list to 80 of the most used descriptions. In doing so, she said the workgroup recognized that the larger counties had a need for more detail. In order to gain that flexibility, the workgroup was going to continue to look at the lists.

Mr. Smith opened the floor for discussion. A discussion ensued about document descriptions and who would update those. Mr. Smith urged the Authority to first take a position of what could be done and ask that the standardization effort be adopted by all the Clerks by September 1, 2015.

There was brief discussion about how to go about communicating this to FCTC. Mr. Smith stated that this was not a functional change to the portal, but more like edits to what the counties have already typed in. He also wanted Ms. Weber to show the process to the FCTC, then all will get a chance to review the approach and make sure everyone agrees. He asked for a motion.

Ms. Gail Wadsworth moved that the board “adopt the use of the divisions, case types and subtypes as the standard.” Ms. Bock seconded the motion.

Ms. Tara Green asked if the counties would just map to what was put in? Ms. Weber clarified that each county would have to do the work to check the drop-downs and update them if needed in those three areas. Ms. Green continued by asking if there would be any quality control to all use the same language; who will make sure it is consistent across the state? Mr. Smith noted that the Authority can ask for reports so they can see the discrepancies and contact the county.

Ms. Rushing asked if the divisions, case types and subtypes are compliant with SRS? Ms. Weber answered affirmatively. All voted favorably on the motion.

Mr. Smith asked if there was any concern with the September 1 deadline. There were no comments against adopting that date.

Ms. Bock asked who would do the updating? Ms. Weber explained that the county administrator would need to do it, but it was not a big a task as may be thought. Ms. Bock asked if a county could go ahead and get it done prior to the September 1 date? Mr. Smith agreed the work could begin as soon as practicable.

Mr. Smith told the board that he would draft a letter so the action of the board could be communicated to each Clerk.

V. New Business

Mr. Smith told the board that the letter in the meeting materials from the Honorable John Tomasino to Judge Lisa T. Munyon, chair of the Florida Courts Technology Commission, was to let her know that a high volume traffic defense firm in Miami-Dade County was requesting the portal to develop front-end batch filing for civil cases. There was no discussion.

Public Comment

Mr. Smith opened the floor for public discussion. He recognized Ms. Laurie Reaves, Miami-Dade Clerk’s Office, who asked if Miami-Dade could have the opportunity to review the document descriptions. She shared reservations about meeting the September 1 deadline.

Mr. Smith took a moment to ask the Best Practices Committee to continue on with their work on the fourth level of standardization, the document descriptions. He stated that for a filer, this first step would have a tremendous impact.

Mr. Smith noted the next meeting would be the annual meeting of the authority on June 1 at Sawgrass. He took a moment to thank all those who assist with the e-filing effort.

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.