



Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision

West Region Meeting MINUTES

July 23, 2020 · 2:00 PM ET
Teleconference

Members in Attendance:

1. Roberta Cohen (NM), Chair
2. Rebecca Brunger (AK)
3. Dori Littler (AZ)
4. Merideth McGrath (CO)
5. Dwight Sakai (HI)
6. Cathy Gordon (MT)
7. Sheri Sliva (NV)
8. Jeremiah Stromberg (OR)
9. Dan Blanchard (UT)
10. Mac Pevey (WA)

Members not in Attendance:

1. David Babby (CA)
2. Denton Darrington (ID)
3. Coltan Harrington (WY)

Guests:

1. Lorna Colver (AK)
2. Matthew Poyzer (AZ)
3. Chris Smalling (CA)
4. Andrew Zavaras (CO)
5. Michael Knott (HI)
6. Victoria Vigil (NM)
7. John Gillis (NOVA)
8. Bill West (NV)
9. Mark Patterson (OR)
10. Jennifer Calvo (Utah)
11. Tanja Gilmore (WA)
12. Pat Odell (WY)

Staff:

1. Ashley Lippert, Executive Director
2. Allen Eskridge, Policy and Operations Director
3. Barno Saturday, Logistics and Administrative Coordinator
4. Mindy Spring, Administrative and Training Coordinator
5. Xavier Donnelly, ICOTS Project Manager
6. Kelsey Cole, Web Applications and Tech Support Manager

Call to Order

Chair R. Cohen (NM) called the meeting to order at 2:00 pm ET, ten out of thirteen members were present; a quorum was established. She wished a happy Parole and Probation week to the region.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Commissioner J. Stromberg (OR) moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner M. Pevey (WA) seconded. Agenda approved.

Commissioner C. Gordon (MT) moved to approve the minutes from April 23, 2020 as drafted. Commissioner D. Littler (AZ) seconded. Minutes approved.

Discussion

Chair R. Cohen (NM) stated that state budgets face significant pressure to cut their spending as a result of economic challenges presented by COVID-19. To help states navigate this uncertain time, the Executive Committee proposed that the Commission use reserve funds in fiscal year 2022 to provide one-time dues relief.

Coupled with operational changes, accessing reserves will allow for a manageable one-time 30% dues reduction for the FY22 without significant effect on the Commission's services or goals.

The full Commission will vote on the FY22 dues reduction proposal at the upcoming Annual Business Meeting (ABM) this fall.

Executive Director A. Lippert added that the Commission would see roughly \$164K in savings in FY21 largely resulting from the 2020 ABM moving to a virtual platform.

She added that in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, national office staff had been working remotely since March. With no loss in productivity or efficiency, the Executive Committee approved the national office to transition to a virtual office environment long-term. The transition would generate sustainable ongoing savings for the Commission cutting the operational cost and realizing about \$48K in savings in FY22. The remaining amount of \$281K will be taken from the Commission's reserve fund.

Commissioner D. Littler (AZ) expressed her support for the proposal. She noted that most states would face their financial problems in FY23 and advised considering the dues reduction proposal for FY23 instead.

Commissioner of Oregon and Commission Chair J. Stromberg, stated that the national office received a request from a member state asking for relief of their FY21 dues payment. By that time, eighteen states had already paid their annual fee. With a dues reduction requiring a full Commission vote, actions taken in FY21 would be complex.

He added that the Commission had a strong reserve fund intended for a rainy day. The Executive Committee may consider another dues relief proposal on a year to year basis.

Chair R. Cohen (NM) thanked the national office and the Executive Committee for putting together the proposal.

DCA West Region chair report – DCA T. Gilmore (WA) had nothing new to report at this time.

Chair R. Cohen (NM) thanked the West Region DCAs for working so well together in this difficult time.

State Updates: Chair R. Cohen (NM) asked the members to share their state updates.

Oregon: Commissioner J. Stromberg (OR) stated that Oregon was making international news on daily basis due to ongoing civil unrest. He noted that these issues and rising COVID-19 numbers created complications with interstate cases.

He added that the Executive Committee was closely monitoring the pandemic on the national level to make sure states conduct compact business in a timely manner with proper tools in place.

DCA M. Patterson (OR) shared challenges with the legality of offender and witness electronic signatures during the quarantine.

Chair R. Cohen (NM) recommended discussing this issue at the DCA region level.

Commissioner C. Gordon (MT) stated that Montana solves this issue by requiring an offender to sign the application in front of a witness, while being on the phone with a compact office staff member.

Executive Director A. Lippert noted that after consulting the ICAOS Legal Counsel, the national office published an article on this matter in the July newsletter <https://mailchi.mp/interstatecompact/july-icaos-monthly-newsletter?e=62ad0fad6>.

Each state had laws and court rules that affect the question of acceptance of e-signatures. Therefore, questions regarding validity and use must be answered by the sending state and documented where applicable.

She added that given the COVID-19 crisis, some states have taken emergency actions recognizing the need for electronic signatures by issuing executive orders or enacting emergency legislation.

Alaska – Commissioner R. Brunger stated that their Interstate Compact office was fully operational and the state troopers were completing extraditions. She noted that there could be potential delay with investigation responses due to increasing COVID-19 numbers.

All visitors must be tested prior to arriving or at the airport and quarantined for 14 days.

Arizona – Commissioner D. Littler stated that the probation side was operating as normal as possible under the circumstances. They utilized different methods and a variety of technologies to supervise offenders and complete investigations.

DCA M. Poyzer stated that Parole had limited contact with offenders except for offenders on intensive supervision and sex-offenders. He added that sometimes it took them longer than 30 days to retake offenders. Further, they had revised and simplified conditions of supervision.

California – DCA C. Smalling stated that California’s COVID-19 cases were on the rise as well. The compact office was processing incoming and outgoing transfers from the last few months. They were honoring their retaking obligations via Return of Reporting Instructions. He noted that at this time, they were only able to complete a very limited number of extraditions.

Colorado – Commissioner M. McGrath stated that eight of their prisons were experiencing an outbreak of the pandemic. Their field offices were open at 50% staffing capacity.

She added that Montana experienced increased level of parolee violence on the streets.

Hawaii – Commissioner D. Sakai noted that COVID-19 cases were increasing in Hawaii. They continued to utilize different methods to supervise offenders. They retained minimum staff in the compact office.

He added that Hawaii announced considerable budget cuts and many of the compact office vacancies had been suspended for FY21.

Nevada – Commissioner S. Sliva stated that Nevada had to reinstate their restrictions and were currently processing only mandatory cases. The compact office staff was working remotely. They had multiple vacancies on their state council. Nevada was experiencing a number of personnel and budget issues.

Utah – Commissioner D. Blanchard stated that different counties had different limitations on compact requirements. Nevertheless, the Utah compact office was keeping up with Compact required compliance timeframes. He noted that Utah compact staff continued to telecommute.

Washington – Commissioner M. Pevey stated that Washington State was projected to have a \$9 billion shortfall in the next three years representing 15% reduction in spending for their department. He noted the difficulties given many of their department’s spending items were constitutionally mandated. The budget cuts will greatly influence incarceration and supervision numbers.

He added that Washington was limited in their operations and was in stage one of reopening. They had two facilities impacted by COVID-19.

Commissioner M. Pevey stated that Washington’s DOC had a robust ombudsman office that constantly reminded them about offenders who had been held on a warrant for over 60 and 90 days as a result of limitations on extraditions caused by the pandemic.

Wyoming – DCA P. Odell noted that that the compact office was working remotely and had limited contact with offenders. She anticipated budget cuts in the near future.

New Mexico – Chair R. Cohen stated that New Mexico held a special legislative session to make changes to the state budget. However, the compact office was open and fully operational. She noted that they hired three new probation and parole officers, who were currently in training.

Montana: Commissioner C. Gordon stated that Montana was experiencing surging number of COVID-19 cases. The probation and parole officers were encouraged to use a curbside home visit approach. The compact office was operational and working from their offices. Currently, Montana was not extraditing or incarcerating offenders from other states.

Executive Director Update: Executive Director A. Lippert stated that the 2020 ABM was going virtual this year. The meeting registration opens on July 27 and she encouraged everyone to register for the meeting.

Old/New Business

Commissioner D. Littler (AZ) expressed her concerns with the extraditions asking everyone a question “if we are required to accept transfers, why are not required to retake?”

She noted that the violated offenders were more dangerous than the ones not in a violation status. She added that states were losing track of offenders creating a public safety issue.

Commissioner D. Blanchard (UT) and Commissioner C. Gordon (MT) confirmed similar challenges with their compact and local cases.

Commissioner S. Sliva (NV) noted that Nevada no longer had funds to complete all extraditions and implemented very selective extradition criteria based on the offender’s risk factors.

Adjourn

Commissioner M. McGrath (CO) moved to adjourn. Commissioner S. Sliva (NV) seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 3:09 pm ET.