

**Jury Commission Meeting
Minutes from Meeting 1
September 16, 2011**

Attendees: Court Staff Deneen Barrier, Commissioner John Albert Hunter, County Staff Starlon Padgett, Court Staff Kathy Shuart, Commissioner Robert Shoaf, Clerk of Court Archie Smith, Commissioner LiBria Stephens.

- I. Administration of Oaths by Clerk of Court Archie Smith. Commissioners John Albert Hunter, Robert Shoaf and LiBria Stephens were sworn in by Clerk of Court Archie Smith. The Commissioners then elected Robert Shoaf to serve as Chair of the Commission.

- II. Summary of 2010-2011 Biennium
 - Information was provided in the meeting agenda on (a) the number of citizens summoned for jury duty for the last four biennia; (b) the number of jurors who served, and how many of them reached a courtroom; and (c) the appearance rate. Copies of the 2009-10 and 2010-11 CourTools measure on the Effective Use of Jurors was also included as a handout at the first meeting. (See Agenda for 9/16/09 and attachments.)

- III. Juror Appreciation.
 - In 2009, the Jury Commission prepared a letter to downtown eateries, encouraging them to donate a free lunch or discount coupon once a quarter that we could use as a community "thank you" to our citizens for their service. In implementing this plan, staff contacted Legal Counsel at the Administrative Office of the Courts to make sure that there were no unforeseen issues associated with this plan. After several months, the AOC determined that, since the authors of the request were the members of the Jury Commission and not court staff, this was a County issue. Staff then contacted the County Attorney's Office regarding this proposal. After considering this for some period of time, the County Attorney's Office gave the green light on the proposal. Much time had passed, and staff chose to delay implementation until consulting with the Jury Commission at its first meeting of 2011. The Commission at its first meeting asked staff to draft a letter encouraging our downtown restaurants to offer a discount to citizens serving as jurors.

 - In 2009, the Jury Commission prepared a written recommendation to the judges that, whenever possible, a judge speak to our jurors to say thanks on behalf of the system and the community. Staff reported that this is done routinely now, and we continue to receive positive feedback from our citizens.

 - Staff was also instructed to draft a new letter to the Durham Bar Association to say thanks for their support of citizens serving on jury duty through the provision of satellite TV and coffee and tea.

- IV. Establishing the Master Jury List for 2010-11. Kathy Shuart reported that the State had moved to a different method of conveying the merged list. Rather than requesting the list on a disk, the Division of Motor Vehicles would be transmitting the lists via the Internet. She had just received word this week that the list was available for download. Information on the list will be provided by Starlon Padgette at the next Jury Commission meeting.

The Commissioners then asked that the following steps be taken to begin producing the master jury list for the new biennium:

- Identify those names on the raw list that are out-of-State or non-Durham addresses for removal from the master list.
- Request from the Administrative Office of the Courts a list of individuals whose felony conviction date falls between 1/1/10 through 9/15/11, and purge those names from the raw list.
- Produce three separate lists of 1,000 names in alphabetical order for review at the next meeting.

V. Other Issues

- Starlon Padgette updated the Jury Commission on the County's decision to upgrade the automated jury system. The county had determined that it was moving away from the platform on which the current jury management system resided. In addition, upgrades requested by the Court were not possible on the existing system. Therefore, the County issued a Request for Proposal and received three bids. A working group was formed that included Starlon, other County IT staff, court staff Angie Kelly, Lorraine Sands and Kathy Shuart, and Jury Commissioner Rob Shoaf. Based on the submissions, the group narrowed the candidates to two. Both companies made presentations to the work group, and several members of the group made trips to Greensboro and to Virginia Beach, VA, to see the systems in action. The review process was completed in August, and a recommendation made to the County. That recommendation is scheduled for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners at their meeting on Monday, October 10th.
- Kathy Shuart updated the Commission on the status of the new Courthouse. Construction of the new facility is going well, and the County hopes to take possession of the new building in late 2012 or early 2013.

- VI. Next Meeting. The next meeting is set for Friday, September 23, at 9:30 a.m. in the conference room of the County IT Department, 5th floor, historic Durham County Courthouse.

UPDATE: Meeting postponed to Thursday, September 29, at 9:30 a.m.