

BAIL BOND BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 21, 2024

THOSE PRESENT: Judge Ransom "Duce" Jones

Judge Raquel West

Becky Bertrand

Keith Da

Tim Funchess

Haylee Fournier

Kellie Holmes

Leslie Hughes

Capt. A. Mor

Rhonda Brode

Sandra Mott

Quentin Price

Al Reed

1 JUDGE WEST: Let's call the meeting to order.

2 Thanks everybody for being here and accommodating us on a
3 Wednesday.

4 Before we get started, I do have a jury; and I've
5 told them we're starting back at 1:00 o'clock because we have
6 the autopsy doctor here. So, I'm going to try to make this as
7 quick and efficient as possible.

8 First, we've got the minutes from last meeting.

9 Everybody should have been emailed a copy of those. We'll need
10 a motion.

11 MR. PRICE: I move to approve.

12 JUDGE JONES: Second.

13 JUDGE WEST: We've got a motion by Quentin and
14 a second by Judge Jones. Any discussion about the minutes? All
15 those in favor of approving?

16 | (RESPONSES MADE)

17 JUDGE WEST: Any opposed? All right. Thank
18 you very much. That's approved.

19 Let's see. We've got a report. Do we have our D.A.
20 report?

21 MS. MOTT: We're still not doing reports yet,
22 but they are collecting.

JUDGE JONES: Do you have an agenda?

24 MR. PRICE: I've got him one.

25 JUDGE WEST: Consideration and approval of any

1 applications or renewals. Do we have any?

2 MS. BERTRAND: Yes, ma'am. We have Jamie
3 Lynch. She is an employee of Professional Bail Bonds.
4 Everything is in order. However, the only thing I don't have
5 from her is her criminal history. She has submitted for one,
6 but it just hasn't come back yet.

7 JUDGE WEST: Do we need to wait or can we take
8 a vote and then have that motion and vote be on approving it if
9 that comes back?

10 MS. BERTRAND: Yes, ma'am, we can go ahead and
11 approve this on the contingency that her criminal history comes
12 back clean, it's turned in and approved by you, that we sign her
13 jail card.

14 JUDGE WEST: Okay. And I'll do that once that
15 happens. All right. So --

16 MR. PRICE: I make that motion, your Honor.

17 JUDGE WEST: Thank you. We've got a motion to
18 approve Jamie Lynch.

19 MR. FUNCHESS: I'll second that.

20 JUDGE WEST: We've got a second. And that
21 motion would be specifically to approve it pending the clear
22 criminal history report, correct?

23 MR. PRICE: Correct.

24 JUDGE WEST: Is there any other discussion
25 about that? All those in favor?

1 (RESPONSES MADE)

2 JUDGE WEST: Any opposed? All right. So that
3 will be approved pending the clear criminal history and as soon
4 as we get that, I'll sign off on it. If not, we'll take it up
5 at the next meeting.

6 Any complaints?

7 MS. HOLMES: No, ma'am.

8 JUDGE WEST: Treasurer's report.

9 MR. FUNCHESS: It's been passed out.

10 JUDGE WEST: Everybody has a copy of that. Any
11 questions of our treasurer on that one? All right. Thank you
12 very much. Anything that you want to discuss about it?

13 MR. FUNCHESS: No, ma'am.

14 JUDGE WEST: All right. Perfect.

15 We have any release of property, collateral, anything
16 like that?

17 MS. BERTRAND: Not to my knowledge.

18 JUDGE WEST: Okay. We've got the auditor. Do
19 we have a report?

20 MS. BRODE: I did distribute the general ledger
21 report. We are not doing the bondsman and attorney report as of
22 yet. I'm hoping next month after we get everything cleaned up.

23 JUDGE WEST: Okay. Any questions with regard
24 to that report?

25 The grace period on bondsman liability. Are we -- I

1 know a couple of months ago, at least, we were saying everybody
2 needed to start getting caught up and looking at their reports.
3 And are we still in a position that we need to extend that, or
4 are we ready to get where everybody --

5 MS. BRODE: I would say that we need to clean up
6 the Class C's before we start looking at their liability. What
7 about --

8 JUDGE WEST: Okay. And that should probably be
9 the last thing that gets cleaned up and we'll be able to get
10 that done. Okay. Which we'll discuss in just a minute, as
11 well. All right. So, apparently last month, and I know we've
12 talked about it before but there was discussion about which
13 bonds go against the bondsman liability; JP, out-of-county,
14 municipal, as well as -- and if those applied. And so we had
15 had some discussion before and kind of came to a conclusion that
16 we have now I think realized after getting Roger Moore involved
17 that we're probably not correct. I do have some copies if
18 anybody wants them of an e-mail string between -- we've got
19 Keith who looked into it with Roger and we have a copy of those.
20 And the response was that anything for a Class B or higher,
21 whether it's out-of-county or not goes on the bondsman's
22 liability. And so that's what he sent. I know that's probably
23 not what everybody would love to hear, but that's what it sounds
24 like the law is and that's -- which is what kind of our system
25 also does and the plan -- we've had a small meeting yesterday;

1 Becky and Rhonda and Judge Woods and myself and Captain Morris,
2 about kind of how to make sure that those bonds do not go, the
3 ones that are Class C's and JP's, how they aren't going to go on
4 your liability and we've kind of come up with -- and Mary was
5 here and --

6 MS. BRODE: Alex.

7 MS. BERTRAND: Alex.

8 JUDGE WEST: -- and Alex from MIS. And so what
9 they are going to do, and Captain Morris is going to help get
10 that done out at the jail where when you make a bond and it's
11 for a Class C or a JP, there is going to be a separate "company"
12 listed that kind of says for Class C's so it will still go under
13 your name and it will know that you made it but it is not going
14 to go on your liability, those won't. So they're going to have
15 to be trained and make sure they select Class C's or regular
16 stuff that will go on your liability.

17 We're going to ask all of y'all, obviously, to
18 be paying attention to your reports because it's going take a
19 little bit for it all to get done probably right. And even when
20 it's done, there is going to be some mistakes every now and
21 then. So it's going to be up to you guys to make sure if you
22 find something, to get with Leslie at the jail and to make sure
23 that gets corrected. So that's going to be kind of the plan of
24 how to differentiate in the system between Class B and up and
25 Class C's.

1 MS. BRODE: And the fees will go along with it.

2 JUDGE WEST: And the fees, also that 15-dollar
3 fee, is required. On the same things that go on your liability,
4 the 15-dollar fee goes on it whether it's out-of-county or
5 otherwise so ...

6 MR. DAY: Two things. First off, on the fees,
7 seeing as this going to be -- it's not really a policy because
8 it's law obviously but a law we haven't been -- are the
9 15-dollar fees going to start now or are we backtracking?

10 MS. BRODE: Oh, no.

11 JUDGE WEST: No, we are not backtracking.

12 MR. DAY: Okay. Good. Okay. That was the
13 first question.

14 The second question was since this is also new
15 with these out-of-county bonds going on our liability, they go
16 on; they're going to have to be removed.

17 JUDGE WEST: So, here is what we discussed about
18 how to get that taken care of. It's going to be really up to
19 the bonding companies to provide some type of documentation from
20 whatever the county is that the case has been disposed of, just
21 some piece of paper that says it's been refused, it's been
22 dismissed or it's over. And that can -- we're considering maybe
23 getting some type of form or something, but it will be scanned
24 in when you're -- when that's released. And that will also go
25 through the jail; so, we will -- it's up to you guys to let us,

1 not us, me, to let the appropriate people to know which will be
2 probably Leslie at the jail know that that case has been
3 disposed of and then it can be taken off your liability.

4 MS. BERTRAND: Judge, it's been brought to my
5 attention that the bondsmen do have difficulty in some counties
6 where it's only a verbal over the phone. In these instances,
7 Orange County, Hardin County -- Hardin County only releases
8 felony information -- Madison, Jasper, Newton, Sabine, Walker,
9 Liberty, Galveston are just a few that they will only give
10 verbals over the phone.

11 JUDGE WEST: So, then what we had also discussed
12 and what might be the better plan is for us to come up with a
13 form that the bondsman signs off on, swears to maybe, you know,
14 maybe a notarized form that says: This is what I've found out.
15 And you can turn that form in if you can't get something in
16 writing. And we'll come up with a form quickly.

17 MR. DAY: Just to add one more stipulation to
18 that, there is also -- you're going to come across some
19 situation, maybe not often but some situations where the
20 bondsman is off but the case is not disposed of for, you know,
21 taking, for instance, if I post a bond and guy quits checking in
22 with us --

23 JUDGE WEST: Sure. An AFRS or something like
24 that.

25 MR. DAY: -- and I do an AFRS, he goes back to

1 jail, posts a new bond with another bonding company. I'm off.
2 I'm done so --

3 JUDGE WEST: I would say on this form, we can
4 have maybe some check boxes for normal things and then also a
5 check box that has a place for "other" and then you can write in
6 what is; there was an AFRS or the surety was -- whatever the
7 release was or whatever the -- whatever happened, we'll have it
8 on that form. Y'all can submit that, and that will be what we
9 have to do, I think, on that.

10 MS. RITENOUR: Probably a good thing to add to
11 that form is my office is required to get a name, a department
12 and a phone number and make a note of that in case anything ever
13 pops up so I would probably add that.

14 JUDGE WEST: Contact information for where you
15 got that information?

16 MS. RITENOUR: Yes.

17 JUDGE WEST: I like that idea.

18 MS. RITENOUR: A lot of the counties, you
19 really cannot -- they refuse to send anything; so, it's all
20 verbal.

21 JUDGE WEST: Sure.

22 MS. RITENOUR: So, I make sure my girls cover
23 their self so that's probably one of the good things to have on
24 that form.

25 MS. BERTRAND: I'll put it on the form.

1 JUDGE WEST: Okay. Yeah, Let's put -- we'll
2 put that, as well. Thanks. That's a good idea.

3 Any other concerns about what we might should
4 have on that form that would cover kind of everybody? We'll get
5 it. Let's just get the form done and then draft it and then
6 we'll send it out maybe once I take a look at it with Becky and
7 then we can vote on it at the next meeting to approve it.

8 MR. DAY: Now, I asked a question. I don't
9 know if this was answered. I was questioning the bond
10 assessment fees on the out-of-county. But are out-of-county
11 bonds that we've already posted, are they going against our
12 liability; or is this just moving forward the bonds going
13 against our liability?

14 JUDGE WEST: I think everything is moving
15 forward. I don't think anybody wants to go backwards. Right?

16 MS. BRODE: I don't think we're going backwards
17 but aren't the out-of-county against their liability already?

18 JUDGE WEST: But if they already are?

19 MS. BRODE: There is no way to distinguish; so,
20 we'll just leave them.

21 MR. DAY: Okay.

22 JUDGE WEST: Anything that's changing that
23 hasn't been done is going to be from going forward, where
24 nobody -- we're having a hard enough time with that, much less
25 trying to backtrack. All right.

1 Anything else on that? Everybody kind of
2 understand, I guess, what -- thankfully, we have someone to ask.
3 Thanks, Keith, for getting in touch with Roger on that. We
4 appreciate it.

5 Let's see. The last thing I have is to discuss
6 the refund procedure of the bond assessment fee.

7 MS. BRODE: I failed Tim. I did not do the
8 form for this. Can we table it?

9 JUDGE WEST: Yeah. Okay. We'll just keep 11,
10 keep that on the -- I was going to say menu -- and I already ate
11 so I'm not hungry but, obviously, keep that on the agenda for
12 next month.

13 MR. FUNCHESS: I will add, we have the
14 procedure down pat. It's just going to require a form; so,
15 we're in the process of -- and that's what this panel had asked
16 for last time was to bring the form back and approve the form.

17 JUDGE WEST: Okay.

18 MR. FUNCHESS: So once it's done, we'll upload
19 it. I mean, we'll get it approved; and then we'll upload it
20 onto the Bail Bond Board site.

21 JUDGE WEST: Okay. We'll take that up at the
22 next meeting. That's it on the agenda.

23 Is there any other old or new business items
24 anybody needs to discuss?

25 Yes, ma'am.

1 MS. RITENOUR: For our accusation report, we're
2 still having a few questions as to how to get certain things off
3 of that report like Beaumont City, old out-of-counties, Port
4 Arthur, cases that were filed that went on our liability on both
5 but have come off of the court's because they closed out but
6 they are still showing in a few of those accusations. We still
7 need to figure out how to get that cleaned up.

8 MS. BERTRAND: Okay. So, I actually printed
9 it. It's on my printer. I came up here and forgot it. What
10 I'm doing is like for each scenario that we need to remove
11 something, who you will contact.

12 MS. RITENOUR: Oh.

13 MS. BERTRAND: Like if it's a refusal from the
14 DA's office, a no bill or whatever, it's going to be the jail.
15 If it's an actual filed case, surrender, whatever, it's going to
16 be the court. So, I'm actually -- I've already created it. I
17 just need to go back and make a few touches and then I can get
18 that out to y'all as to who to contact for what scenario you
19 might be having and for the ones where it's on both of your
20 reports.

21 MS. RITENOUR: Right. Okay.

22 MR. DAY: Now, do they know this? The people
23 that we're supposed to be contacting, do they know?

24 MS. BERTRAND: I will inform them, as well.

25 MS. RITENOUR: JP court, my staff walked JP

courts through this week on how to take them off our liability.

JUDGE WEST: Okay. Good.

MS. RITENOUR: So, every court, every JP, should know now and they all came off mine except for Guillory maybe, but everybody should know now. I got almost all my JPs taken care of.

JUDGE WEST: Thank you for doing that.

MS. RITENOUR: Any time. Any time.

JUDGE WEST: We sure appreciate you.

MS. RITENOUR: I know y'all do.

JUDGE WEST: We really do. We really, really

Anything else? All right. Good deal. I have a few minutes. Is there a motion to adjourn?

MR. FUNCHESS: Move to adjourn.

MR. PRICE: Second.

JUDGE WEST: All right. We

Thanks, everybody, again.