

STRONGER *Together!*

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TEXAS COURT CLERKS ASSOCIATION

Letter from President

Dear TCCA Members,

It is hard to believe Summer is already here and the 2022 Annual Conference is just around the corner. The Conference Planning Committee is hard at work to ensure our 50th Golden Jubilee will be something to remember.

I want to take this opportunity to tell you about some changes I believe will help strengthen our Association and allow members to be more active at the local level. Before I begin, I want to assure you that we are not rushing this process. All of the proposed changes will be on the ballot in 2023 for a vote.

In November 2021, an ad hoc committee was formed to research and suggest ways we can improve service to our membership. After speaking with the Chapter Presidents at the post-conference meeting, we realized the burden Chapter Presidents are under. Chapters are having a hard time keeping Board members, which is the reason the Panhandle and West Texas Chapters have become inactive. They are not alone, some Chapter Presidents are struggling to schedule meetings because no one is attending, even with the virtual option.

It seems that we have inadvertently caused problems by some of the policies we have in place. One of the topics we discussed was the financial aspect of Chapter funds. The responsibility of maintaining those funds and preparing for the annual audit are cumbersome and time consuming.

Years ago, it was decided that the Chapters would be setup to "mirror" the State level. It sounds good in theory, but I believe we have gotten to a point that it has become burdensome for our Chapters.

The ad hoc committee has been meeting monthly since December 2021 and have had great discussions about proposed changes. The first task I asked them to tackle was re-drawing the boundary lines of Chapters. The committee brought a couple of proposals to the Board at our Mid-Year meeting, after a LOT of discussion, we think leaving the boundaries as they are now makes the most sense.

I will now outline some of the proposed changes, keep in mind we are in the early stages of this process and nothing will be done without our members having an opportunity to cast their vote.

Proposed Bylaw Changes

1. Chapters would become Regions (1-7)
2. Chapter Boards would be dissolved
3. Regions would be represented by a Regional Director
4. Regions would have a Regional Education Representative
5. Chapter Financials would be managed by the State Treasurer/ Assistant Treasurer by having their accounts under TCCA's Chase Bank Account Profile (4 Chapters have already elected this option.)
6. Funds would be distributed annually to Regions for meetings or social events (Holiday parties, membership drives, etc)
7. The TCCA Education Committee would host regional trainings throughout the year. The idea is to develop a training session that TCCA could bring to each region on an annual basis.

If these proposed changes were implemented, the Regions would basically be the "fun cousin" of TCCA. The State Board would take on the day-to-day tasks of the Association and the Regions would throw parties and network all year long! These changes would eliminate the need for each Region to have a Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. Each Region would still be represented and Regional Directors would hold a seat on the TCCA Board of Directors.

This is just a "hilltop" overview of what changes have been discussed. This is YOUR Association and we want YOUR input. I would love to get emails from each and every one of you – yes, I would like to respond to over 1,000 emails if that is what it takes to get your feedback. Please feel free to contact me or any member of the ad hoc committee with questions, concerns, likes, dislikes – whatever you

Reorganization Ad Hoc Committee Members

Lisa Howard, Chair
Jeremy Leonard
Robin Shellard
Andrea Goff
Jennifer Dorsett
Tiffany Totah

David Baker (South)
Courtney Broussard (Gulf)
Tracy Ventura (Central)
Leandra Quick (Freedom Trail)
Tavin Brady (North)
Sheila Seymore-Roach (West)

Letter from President

I will keep you posted as discussions continue. It is important to note that the by-laws would have to be revamped. We plan to present a completely new set of by-laws for an up or down vote, there would be too many changes to vote on them in stages. Proposed by-laws changes must be submitted the TCCA Board at the 2023 Mid-Year meeting in February. We have plenty of time to work on them before the ballot is sent out in 2023.

Please see pages 16 through 31 to see the latest version of the **proposed bylaw changes**.

I can't wait to see you in person at the 2022 Annual Conference!



Landra
isolansky@seguintexas.gov
210-885-2645 (cell)

One State, One Team, One Dream
TCCA Strong!



2022 TCCA CONFERENCE

This year we are celebrating 50 years as an organization! The TCCA Golden Jubilee Conference will be held November 6-9, at the San Marcos Embassy Suites. This year's conference will be an amazing event. We plan to highlight our Founding Members and celebrate 50 years of dignity, integrity and unity.

We have an amazing educational line up this year. Kent Julian will lead the conference with his expertise in creating "DREAM-to-DO" work cultures. He speaks all over the country and focuses on the multi-generational workforce. Kent will also close out the conference with a high energy and engaging session.

Hassan Bozorgnia will also be back by popular demand (if you missed his session last year you don't want to miss it again) the delegate reviews on his session were off the chart!

Detective Robert Wiley, City of Texas City and Task Force Officer at the United States Secret Service, will present a class on cyber security.



This class will focus on teaching us how to safeguard our personal information and protect our agencies from cyber-attacks. This session qualifies for use of technology or security funds. The Exhibitor Expo will be showcased on Monday afternoon, so you will have several opportunities to network with our amazing exhibitors. Our TCCA Merchandise Committee will be in the Expo Hall, make sure you stop by to see the new merchandise. We plan to do online sales again this year, so make sure you watch for that announcement.

If you are unable to attend the conference in person, the business meeting, awards ceremony and Level III pinning ceremony will be offered virtually. Members can receive 2 hours of continuing education for virtual attendance. We look forward to seeing you in San Marcos! #TCCA50

**One State, One Team, One Dream
TCCA Strong!**



SAVE *The* DATE

TCCA GOLDEN JUBILEE CONFERENCE

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF TCCA
NOVEMBER 6-9



IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

06/01 thru 06/15 - Nominations for State Positions

06/16 thru 06/30 - Nominations for Chapter Positions

07/01 - **Delegate Registrations OPENS**

08/01 thru 08/15 - State Elections

08/15 thru 08/30 - Chapter Elections

09/01 thru 09/15 - Nominations for State Awards

09/15 - Conference Registration **CLOSE** (Exhibitor & Delegate)

09/16 thru 09/30 - Nominations for Chapter Awards

11/05 - Level I & II Prep Sessions

11/06 - Certification Testing

11/06 thru 11/09 - **TCCA GOLDEN JUBILEE CONFERENCE**





A traffic citation is issued and the offender, now defendant in a case on your docket, drives away. What happens if that person doesn't pay the fine and resolve the case within 30 days? How about 90 days? What happens if that case remains open for 120 days or longer? With an ever-growing number of cases vying for municipal courts' resources, the longer a case remains open, the more work it takes to close. That's why courts around the country are turning to technology to lighten the load.

WAYS TO GO FROM CASE MANAGEMENT TO CASE RESOLUTION

Online Case Resolution Tools

From waiting in line to going online

Regardless of location, local politics, or any other varying factor, court clerks across the country spend their days doing the same thing: managing payments. Whether that means accepting a payment in full, setting up a payment plan, considering a request to extend a deadline, or even analyzing a request to defer or dismiss a ticket rather than make a payment – one of a municipal court clerk's primary responsibilities is to resolve cases by accepting payment of fines.

For some citation types, that will always require the defendant to make a trip to the court house, but the majority of cases could be resolved online.

Using a citizen-facing web portal, courts are changing the way they interact with defendants by directing them to manage their tickets online rather than by waiting in line. This seemingly simple change has proven to drastically increase compliance rates while simultaneously decreasing the number of customers court clerks have to directly interact with on a daily basis.

Online Case Records Tools

From printed to instant

For many municipal courts, connecting with justice partners requires an in-person visit to gather the information about specific cases they need. With the same citizen-facing online portal, however, courts have found that this doesn't have to be the only option.

Rather than physically going to the court and waiting for certain documents to be manually located by a clerk and then printed out for review, local attorneys, police, and other case parties can simply log in to the website and search for the information they need, including the court docket schedule.

No call. No visit. No paper wasted.

Engagement Tools

From time wasted to time spared

When a defendant fails to show up for a court date over-and-over again, the resources it takes to resolve the initial case can triple. From issuing warrants and arresting defendants to investigating unresolved warrants or even incarcerating defendants – the cost to the tax payers almost always ends up being more than the initial citation.

With automatic notifications, however, courts across the country are seeing major drops in failure to appear rates. One city saw a drop of 8 percent in the first 60 days and 33 percent in a year. Further than that, lobby traffic in the same court dropped by 23 percent because the simple reminder text gave defendants the opportunity to take advantage of alternative options like paying online or by phone.

These types of notifications relieve the court of the responsibility of contacting defendants to inform them of unpaid citations, hearings, warrants issued, or other matters by offering the capability to create and send customized phone messages in an audited environment.

Accessibility Tools

From one location to many

In some cases, physically visiting the court may be as much of a barrier as the ability to pay. Municipal courts are overcoming this challenge by continuing to provide virtual court options to defendants even as pandemic restrictions lift.

Conducting a productive online hearing, however, is about more than just a video stream, it's about providing access to justice to everyone regardless of circumstance. Knowing most defendants want to resolve court business but are sometimes prevented from doing so by circumstances out of their control, courts are leveraging tools intentionally designed to empower those defendants with a flexible option to take care of a citation in a timely manner.

Visit our booth or online at tylertech.com/casesresolutiontools.



Director At Large Introduction

Hi all,

My name is Michelle Smith.

I am writing you all to introduce myself as your new TCCA Director at Large Position 6. It is truly an honor to be a part of this organization. With accepting the Director at Large position, I am looking to expand and broaden my horizons and opportunities in the professional field of the Municipal Court World. Accepting the position is a major accomplishment and component for me to achieve future endeavors. I am highly motivated, always multitasking, have OCD-like organizational skills, always up for a new challenge, and I am a fast learner... I do believe I will bring a young and fresh perspective to this group. My wealth of knowledge and experience will be a great asset to the association. I am also a member of the TCCA Scribe publications team since 2016, a TMCEC Prep Session Facilitator as of 2019, and part of the TMCEC Speakers Bureau for the Houston Area.

A little more about myself I was born and raised here in this very diverse 4th largest city in

America and the largest city in our own Lonestar State Houston. I started my court career at 19 years old for the City of Houston Municipal Court as a temporary data entry clerk /quality assurance clerk in April of 2005, then I got hired permanently in August 2005.

Our city went through a major reclassification, and I got transferred to the courtroom in 2007 where I started as a junior clerk and then got promoted to a senior clerk shortly after. I remained in the courtroom until the end of December 2015. It is in the courtroom where I first got introduced to both the TMCEC and TCCA organizations.

In January of 2016, I was promoted to my current position as a Customer Service Representative 3 in our Quality Assurance Pre-Courts Section. I now serve as a group team leader since the end of 2020, and I help lead a great team of 5 with the support of my Supervisor and Manager.

Being such a large municipal court over the years I was able to get cross-trained in many different areas such as warrant verification,

bonding, working on our many specialty dockets (juvenile, homeless, jail, teen court), affiants, scanning, cashier, parking, mail room, public service booth, and as a fill-in for the administrator for our 214 Judicial Office.

I was able to pass both level 1 in 2010 and level 2 in 2018 of the TMCEC certification test all while working a full-time job, and attending college classes part-time I got my A.A. in 2016 and currently working on my bachelor's degree at the University of Houston, and raising 2 children. I am currently studying for level 3 which is no easy task while still working through the pandemic, dealing with my oldest daughter heading to middle school, my youngest son starting elementary school, and now the adoption of a fur baby kitten we named Apollo. I love to read even though I don't have much time these days, I also like to write, I am almost finished with a book I have been working on, and I am hoping to get it published by the end of this year. I also have an online boutique store and I help manage a logistics trucking service with some of my family members.



I look forward to meeting all of you someday ~Michelle

**Please feel free to email me anytime at
michelle.smith@houstontx.gov or 7132474320**

Conference Scholarship Corner

Hello all!

My name is Chrissy Dahse, and I am currently your TCCA Scholarship Chair. I wanted to take a few minutes to speak about the amazing opportunities afforded to us through this organization. Each year **TEN** association level scholarships are awarded to our annual conference, as well as numerous scholarships at the chapter levels. We as an association realize that many courts have very restricted budgets when it comes to education and these scholarships could afford you that chance to attend.

While the deadlines have already expired for this year's scholarships, I wanted to plant the bug for next year. What I do not think many of you realize is that every year some scholarships go unused. These are missed opportunities!! Missed chances to network and grow with fellow court clerks! These connections will surprisingly turn out to be some of your most admired mentors and lifelong friends. So please, please, please take the initiative to complete the submission process next year and join us at conference!!



**So please, please,
please take the
initiative to
complete the
submission
process next year
and join us at
conference in
2023!**



***Want to join us at conference this year? For more details,
check out our conference page!***

<https://texascourtclerks.org/2022conference>

Greetings from the Freedom Trail Chapter

Summer is just about here and half of 2022 has come and gone. I hope that everyone is staying safe and healthy. TCCA's 50th Anniversary is this year and I hope that you will be able to attend the Golden Jubilee celebration with us. The annual conference will be held November 6-9, 2022 in San Marcos, TX. I hope that you all have a safe and fun summer.

If you ever need anything, have any concerns or may be interested in helping out the Freedom Trail Chapter reach out to me anytime by email: agoff@helotes-tx.gov or by phone: 210-695-5902. We look forward to visiting with you soon, when we all work together it takes us even further.

Take care,

Andrea M. Goff Fontanes

Andrea M. Goff Fontanes, CMCC, CCM
Helotes Municipal Court Administrator

FREEDOM TRAIL BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

President-Andrea M. Goff Fontanes (Helotes)

Vice-President-Leandra Quick (New Braunfels)

Treasurer-Stacy Martin (San Antonio)

Secretary-Maribel Garcia (San Antonio)

Education Chair-Leandra Quick (New Braunfels)

Membership Chair-Robin Shellard (New Braunfels)

Historian Chair-Christina Zelenak (Castle Hills)

Legislative Chair-Fred Garcia (San Antonio)

Nominations Chair-Maribel Garcia (San Antonio)

Scholarship Chair-Stacy Martin (San Antonio)



NORTHEAST CHAPTER



• Certifications •



Bailey Spoonemore-Greenville Municipal Court
Received BOTH Level I & II in less than a year!!!!

• Clerking & Judging •

Paula Booth- De Kalb Municipal Court-Clerk & Alternate Judge
Rhonda Knight- Malakoff Municipal Court
Clerk appointed & sworn in as Presiding Judge on 02/25/2022



COURT SHOUT OUT



malakoff municipal court

Participated in the Texas Marshal's Association Warrant
Resolution Week & resolved 65 warrants & brought in an
additional \$19K!

Congratulations to TCCA State Scholarship Recipient



Suzanne Pharr ~ Mt. Enterprise Municipal Court



Northeast Chapter members attended

*Undue Hardships, Court Cost & I Love My Career
by Lisa Howard in Big Sandy, TX*

(Attendees: Paula Booth, Stacie Chitty, Donna Dugger,
Teresa Garrison, Beth Hall, Lona Maxted & Lisa Sechrest)



Chapter Board of Directors

President: *Lisa Sechrest*

Treasurer: *Donna Dugger*

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Accessibility mission prepares court for pandemic-era success

By Sam Hankins, City of Victoria communications specialist
This article originally appeared in the May issue of Texas Town & City, published by the Texas Municipal League.

During the spring of 2020, as a mysterious new virus forced local governments to shutter their services, City of Victoria Municipal Court Judge Vanessa Heinold was sure of one thing: She didn't want the justice system to be another source of stress for residents burdened by COVID-19.

"During this situation, people have lists of worries that they need to prioritize, like shelter, security, food and medicine," Heinold said in an April 2020 news release. "I don't want Municipal Court fines to be another item on that list along with life-and-death issues."

The court's history of compassionate justice goes back to well before the pandemic. As the head of a local court that mostly deals with traffic tickets and other minor offenses, Heinold knows firsthand that there are those who can pay a ticket and be done with it and those whose small mistakes snowball into chronic struggles. Generally, the difference boils down to factors outside of a person's control: they can't pay the fine, they can't take the time to come to court or they don't have the transportation to get there.

Since becoming Victoria's Municipal Court judge, Heinold has strived to implement policies that improve access to justice.

One such policy was the addition of open court dockets, which let defendants come in and discuss their options without having to worry about being arrested.

"Previously, someone with overdue payments would have had to make a lump-sum payment before seeing the judge," Heinold explained. "I wanted to get away from that pay-to-play system and help people find solutions regardless of their financial difficulties."

This emphasis of resolution over arrest was further solidified in 2018 when Victoria declined to participate in the Texas Warrant Roundup, a program that involves seeking out and arresting people with outstanding warrants. Instead, the court established Warrant Resolution Month, scheduling extra dockets to encourage defendants to come to court.

That same year, the court began scheduling dockets on the weekends and after working hours, creating an extra level of accessibility for people with demanding work obligations. But what about those who have trouble coming to the court in the first place?

Some defendants don't have access to reliable transportation, and others don't live in Victoria at all; they might have received a speeding ticket while passing through, only to be summoned to an in-person court appearance hours away.



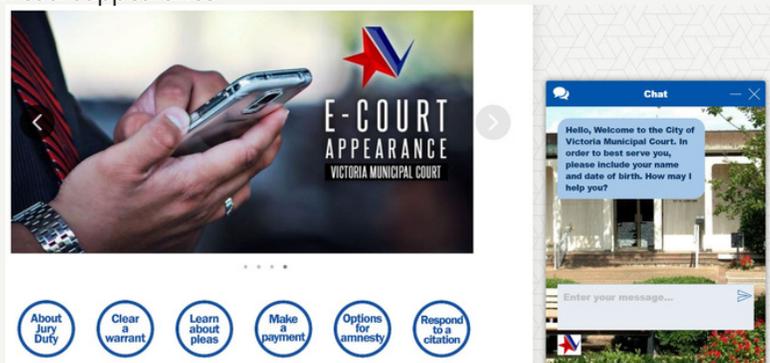
To solve this problem, court officials met with the City's IT department to discuss the idea of hosting a virtual docket, perhaps through videoconferencing. They weighed multiple different platforms, including Webex, GoToMeeting and Microsoft Teams.

At last, the court found a platform that fit all of their needs: a user-friendly interface, robust call volume support and the ability to host breakout sessions and chatrooms.

So, in 2019, the court began making preparations to host virtual dockets through a little-known videoconferencing platform known as Zoom.

E-court's in session

When COVID-19 appeared in the Victoria Crossroads region in March 2020, the discussions about virtual dockets shifted overnight from luxury to necessity. "We hit the ground running," said Municipal Court Administrator Tiffany Totah. "We already had the Zoom account in the budget, and we'd been working through how to use it. So when everything started closing in March, we said, 'Okay, Zoom it is.'"



The transition went as smoothly as anyone could have wanted. On Saturday, March 21, all City of Victoria offices closed to the public. The court hosted its first virtual docket two days later.

It was a time when everyone was struggling to conduct their day-to-day affairs in a new way. To help soften the learning curve, the court reached out to the City's Communications & Public Affairs department, which produced a video tutorial that thoroughly explained how to join an e-court docket, chat with court staff and navigate the breakout rooms to speak with prosecutors.

As the twice-weekly virtual sessions became the new normal, court officials started getting feedback that echoed public sentiment about countless other newfangled remote services: It wasn't what they were used to, but it was actually better in some ways.

"For the first time, people could get on their phones on their lunch break and attend a docket without having to take off work or drive across town," Heinold said. "We knew that we were starting something that would continue in the future because of how convenient it was."

Other courts take notice

With courts across the nation experiencing the same challenges, the Victoria Municipal Court began getting messages from other court officials, asking: How do we do what you're doing?

Soon, Totah was hosting training sessions for court officials in Texas and out of state, outlining best practices and sharing forms and documentation used for the e-court dockets. Eventually, Victoria's policies would serve as a model for courts in many other cities, including larger communities like Fort Worth and Sugar Land.

Totah's leadership caught the attention of the Texas Court Clerks Association, which honored her in October 2020 with the Distinguished Service Award and in November 2021 with the even more prestigious Extraordinary Achievement Award.

Totah "has served as a role model for all municipal courts through the pandemic," according to the commendation that was presented at the Extraordinary Achievement Award ceremony. "Her innovation and leadership skills were an inspiration."

In 2021, the Victoria Municipal Court brought its collaborative innovation to the next level as a member of the National Center for State Courts' Implementation Lab initiative. The Victoria court applied and was chosen to serve in the Remote & Virtual Hearings lab, meeting monthly with a small group of court officials from around the country to discuss policies and procedures, what works and what doesn't. Now that the program has ended, the cohort's findings are available to courts everywhere looking to fine-tune their own virtual programs.



Innovation beyond the Zoom call

Other court functions had to shift to a remote format during the pandemic as well. Fortunately, just as with the new types of dockets, the switch to accessibility had already started.

"Our residents have been able to look up their cases online since 2013," Totah said. "We've had some of our online services for years, and we were already expanding our use of text notifications as well. Some of our citizens find it easier to access services online or by phone, so we wanted to make it more convenient for those people."

Court officials had been looking into other services at residents' request, and some of those came to fruition during the pandemic: the ability to resolve cases and sign up for driver's safety courses online, the ability to make payments over the phone, an online chatbox to help residents connect with court clerks.

"One of the benefits of the chatbox is that we can see what page of the website residents are visiting when they message us about a specific service," Totah said. "We're planning to take that information into account during our website redesign this year."

In 2021, the court's innovative services received national recognition by way of Tyler Technologies' Tyler Excellence Award. The court's use of Tyler Technologies' Incode software for multiple remote services caused it to be selected from about 1,000 Incode users nationwide.

And the court introduced another useful if low-tech innovation, too: Residents can now drop off payments and documents after hours using the drop box at the entrance to the court building.

"People used to try and slide their payments between our doors, and we would come in and find envelopes lying on the ground," Totah said. "So we knew that was something people wanted."

Accessibility after COVID-19

Late in 2020, with some pandemic restrictions being lifted, Heinold scheduled an event she'd been planning for a while: "Java with the Judge," a meet-and-greet over coffee and muffins. A courtyard location made for easy social distancing, and the informal setup provided an ideal opportunity for residents to ask questions and learn more about the Municipal Court and about Heinold and Totah.

"When people share a cup of coffee, they find that they have a lot of things in common," Heinold said.

As pandemic-era practices fade, some things have stayed the same. Totah is still hosting training courses to help other court officials be the best they can be. One of the topics she taught this year was, fittingly, "Access to Justice Beyond the Courtroom Walls."

As for the Zoom dockets, they've permanently shifted to a hybrid model. Now, whatever barrier residents may be facing—whether it's a lack of transportation or a lack of an internet connection—they can come to court in whatever format suits them best.

All in all, the return to in-person interactions hasn't changed the court's goal of improving accessibility; it's simply given officials more tools to meet that goal. On April 4, the court hosted its first-ever "outreach docket" at the local Salvation Army shelter. Traditional hearings and virtual dockets are equally out of reach for Victoria's most vulnerable residents, so Heinold has resolved to go where she's needed, armed with a laptop, and help residents get back on the right path in whatever way she can.



After all, her mission of improving access to justice wasn't derailed by the pandemic, and it's not going to stop anytime soon.



*Judge Vanessa Heinold,
Presiding Judge of the City
of Victoria*

Tiffany Totah, the Municipal Court Administrator for the City of Victoria, serves on the Texas Court Clerks Association as the South Chapter President. For more information, you may contact her at ttotah@victoriatx.gov or visit www.victoriatx.gov/municipalcourt



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TEXAS

COURT CLERKS

ASSOCIATION

BYLAWS

CHARTER #309589

ORGANIZED—MARCH 14, 1972

FOUNDERS

Alexander, Gloria	Baytown, Texas
Bryant, Ruby	Galena Park, Texas
Coe, Elizabeth	Baytown, Texas
Corney, Jean	Friendswood, Texas
Gibson, Nadine (Proxy L.E.N.)	Hedwig Village, Texas
Gillespie, Jennie	Webster, Texas
Kennedy, Zelle	Jacinto City, Texas
Nelson, Lorna	Deer Park, Texas
O'Neal, Margaret	Brookside Village, Texas
Sease, Joyce	La Porte, Texas
Thomas, Minnie	Webster, Texas
Walker, Leonida	Shoreacres, Texas

CHARTER MEMBERS

Aboosh, Norman D	Beaumont, Texas
Akers, Anne	Texas City, Texas
Alexander, Gloria	Baytown, Texas
Anderson, Doris	Deer Park, Texas
Beach, Wanda	Hurst, Texas
Bryant, Ruby	Galena Park, Texas
Coe, Elizabeth	Baytown, Texas
Felkner, Truman	Texas City, Texas

Ferguson, Gail	Deer Park, Texas
Gibson, Nadine	Houston, Texas
Guthrie, Farrell	Pearland, Texas
Harris, Barbara	Katy, Texas
Kennedy, Zelle	Jacinto City, Texas
Larsen, Margaret T	Hurst, Texas
Monkres, Poline	DeSoto, Texas
Nelson, Lorna E	Deer Park, Texas
O'Neal, Margaret	Brookside, Texas
Pittman, James C	Houston, Texas
Prukop, Anna V	Victoria, Texas
Sease, Joyce	La Porte, Texas
Southard, John	Fort Worth, Texas
Thompson, Dorothy	Pearland, Texas
Walker, Leonida	Shoreacres, Texas
Walker, Nina M	Deer Park, Texas
Weatherly, Dorothy	Bedford, Texas

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Article I.

Section 1.01. Definitions

- (a). The name of the Association shall be Texas Court Clerks Association.
- (b). The Texas Court Clerks Association (TCCA) was founded in 1972 by and for Texas Municipal Court Clerks and Justice Court Clerks

Section 1.02. Purposes

- (a). Specific and Primary Purposes. To associate any person serving in a ministerial capacity at a Court which has original jurisdiction over Class C fine only misdemeanors.
- (b). General Purposes. To engage in any activity, undertaking, business, or venture as shall assist or be pertinent to the carrying out of the specific and primary purposes of this corporation, so long as those activities, undertakings, business, or ventures are non-political in nature and are simultaneous with the purposes and intent of this organization in refraining from any politically motivated or associated activity.

Article 2. General Powers

Section 2.01. Financial Health

- (a). The Association, at the Board level, shall have the power to make agreements, end agreements, audit, maintain, further, manage and oversee the financial health of the organization through the office of the Treasurer, and with the guidance and oversight of the Board of Directors.
- (b). The Association shall have the power and authority to conduct any activities designed to promote or implement the following:
 - (i). Organization or reconstitution of new or existing Regions.
 - (ii). Instruction or education of the members of the Association regarding their duties, responsibilities, and procedures as an authorized member of the Association.
 - (iii). The Association shall have the authority to secure the funds of any entity under its umbrella that becomes inactive.
 - (iv). By a motion of the Executive Board and with the Approval of the Board all budgets and financial obligations may be guarded and dispersed.

Article 3. Membership and Dues

Section 3.01. The membership of the Association shall be divided into five classes: Regular Membership, Associate Membership, Affiliate Membership, Emeritus, and Corporate Partnerships. Members must pay annual dues in an amount determined by the Board of Directors.

(a). **Regular Membership.** Any person serving in a non-judicial, non-exhibitor capacity as Court Clerk, Administrator, or in any other capacity within the framework of municipal court or justice of the peace court, serving on a full time or part time basis, is eligible for membership upon paying the dues as provided for herein. Regular Membership dues include automatic regional affiliation. Regular members in good standing shall be entitled to receive copies of the Association newsletter and other mailings, attend the Annual Conference, attend the Annual Business Meeting and regional activities, vote, hold office, and chair and serve on committees.

(b). **Associate Membership.** Any person who serves in a non-exhibitor dual capacity role, primarily as a Court Clerk. Associate members in good standing shall be entitled to receive copies of the Association newsletter and other mailings, attend the Annual Conference, attend the Annual Business Meeting and regional activities and vote, but shall not hold office or chair a committee. An Associate member may serve on a committee. Associate Membership dues include automatic regional affiliation.

(c). **Affiliate Membership.** Any person who previously held a Regular or Associate membership or was designated as an Emeritus until their employment with an exhibitor. An Affiliate Member shall be entitled to receive copies of the Association Newsletter, attend the Annual Business Meeting, Annual Conference, Regional Activities and Education. An Affiliate Member may not hold another class of membership in the Association and may not vote or hold office. An Affiliate Member may not serve on a committee. If the person is no longer employed by a vendor and was previously an Emeritus, their standing may be restored. Affiliate Membership dues include Regional affiliation.

(d). **Emeritus.** Any non-exhibitor person who has made a significant contribution to the science of court administration or rendered distinguished service in related fields may apply for Emeritus membership through an application process. Applications for Emeritus shall be submitted to the Membership Chair and voted on by the Board of Directors as applications are received. The applicants and membership will be notified of the results after the vote by the Board of Directors. An Emeritus shall be entitled to receive copies of the association newsletter. An Emeritus may not hold another class of membership in the Association and does have the right to attend the Annual Business Meeting, attend Conference and Regional Activities but may not vote or hold office. An Emeritus may serve on a committee.

(e.) **Corporate Partnership.** Exhibitors may apply for Corporate Partnership with the Texas Court Clerks Association. Corporate Partners are entitled to receive copies of the Association newsletter as well as a copy of the Association's current membership list. Copies of the Association newsletter and membership lists will be provided to the representative indicated in the Corporate Partnership application. Corporate Partners shall register as vendors to attend the Annual Conference of the Texas Court Clerks Association. Corporate Partners shall not have the right to attend the Annual Business Meeting, Regional Activities, vote, hold office or serve on a committee. Corporate Partners may advertise they are partners of the Texas Court Clerks Association; however, partnership does not constitute endorsement of their product, nor are vendors to imply as such. Any violation or appearance

of a violation of this bylaw will result in revocation of the Corporate Partnership by the Board of Directors. Corporate Partners may underwrite any hospitality and promote their product. Corporate Partners may not use the Texas Court Clerks Association logo on their advertising material. Application for Corporate Partnership will be reviewed and voted on by the Board of Directors for approval.

Section 3.02. Membership Dues

- (a). Shall be payable in January and shall be for the calendar year from January through December.
- (b). Memberships are purchased with city funds and will remain the property of the entity that paid the dues.

Article 4. Officers

Section 4.01. Association Officers

- (a). **Office of the President**
 - (i). Shall have previously served as an Officer of the Association for one full term.
 - (ii). Shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Association.
 - (iii). Shall be elected in even numbered years.
- (b). **Office of the Vice President**
 - (i). Shall serve as the Chief Operations Officer of the Association.
 - (ii). Shall be elected in odd numbered years.
- (c.). **Office of the Secretary**
 - (i). Shall maintain records, recordings and manuscripts of the Association in accordance with non-profit organization laws as required by the State of Texas.
 - (ii). Shall be elected in even numbered years.
- (d). **Office of the Treasurer**
 - (i). Shall serve as the Chief Financial Officer of the Association.
 - (ii). Shall be elected in odd numbered years.
- (e.). **Office of the Past President**
 - (i). Shall be automatically appointed in even years to the most recent available past president of the Association.
- (f). **Office of the Regional Directors**

- (i). Shall represent the members of their region on the Board of Directors.
- (ii). Shall be divided into at least seven Regions
- (iii). The odd numbered Regions will be elected in odd numbered years.
- (iv). The even numbered Regions will be elected in even numbered years.

Article 5. Duties of Officers

Section 5.01. Officer Duties

(a). **President**

(i). The President shall have active executive management of the operation of the Association, subject, however, to the control of the Board of Directors.

(ii). They shall preside at all meetings of the members and at all meetings of the Board of Directors, discharge all the duties incumbent upon a presiding officer and perform such other duties as these bylaws provide of the Board of Directors may prescribe.

(iii). They shall be an ex-officio member of all Standing Committees

(iv). They shall make a semi-annual report to the officers and Board members, advising them on all Association business transacted.

(b). **Vice – President**

(i). In the absence of the President, the Vice-President shall assume the duties of the President.

(ii). They shall also assume such other duties as are assigned to them by the President, or the Board of Directors.

(iii). In the event of a vacancy occurring in the office of the President, the Vice-President shall serve as President until the next general election.

(c). **Treasurer**

(i). The Treasurer shall collect, receive, and have custody of all funds of the Association with the exception of the Certification Program Funds. They shall deposit such funds in a bank designated by the Board of Directors and shall provide for the expenditures of such funds.

(ii). They shall make a semi-annual financial report to the officers and the Board of Directors and shall make a report to the Association at the Annual Business Meeting.

(iii). They shall assume such duties in connection with the work of the Treasurer as shall be designated, specified, or assigned by the Board of Directors.

(iv). They shall deliver to the successor all Association property and records in his/her possession immediately after the installation of a new Treasurer.

(v). The Treasurer shall be required to furnish a bond in such amount as shall be determined by the Board of Directors. The premium of said bond shall be a proper expenditure of Association funds.

(vi). All checks shall have the signature of the Treasurer or President, and on the unavailability of either, the Vice-President.

(vii). The Treasurer shall present a proposed line-item balanced budget for the next fiscal year to the membership at the Annual Business Meeting for discussion.

1. The Board of Directors shall vote on the budget at the Post Conference Meeting.
2. The Board of Directors shall be authorized to perform a line-item transfer, providing the transfer does not result in exceeding the overall budget.
3. Any realized line-item overage shall require the Treasurer to submit a revised budget for the Board approval as stated above.
4. This may be approved by electronic means, email, verbal or in writing.
5. There shall be a full compliance review of all books and records of the Association annually.

(viii). IRS tax forms shall be completed in compliance with current Federal Law, and appropriate tax documents shall be filed by the Treasurer annually with the CPA for filing of taxes with the IRS.

(d). **Secretary**

(i). The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings of the Association and of the Board of Directors, and shall preserve and retain all papers, letter, transcripts, recordings and transactions of the Association.

(ii). They shall deliver to his successor all Association property and records in his/her possession immediately after the installation of a new secretary.

(iii). They shall assume all duties in connection with the work of the Secretary as shall be specified or assigned by the Board of Directors.

(e). **Regional Directors**

(i). The Regional Directors shall serve as a voice and voting party for the regional members on the Board of Directors.

(ii). They shall deliver to the successor all Association property and records in his/her possession immediately after the installation of a new Regional Director.

(iii). They shall assume the duties as assigned by the Board of Directors

(f). **Past President**

(i). The immediate past president shall serve as an advisor to the President and the executive board.

(ii). They shall assume the duties as assigned by the Board of Directors

(g). **The Executive Board**

(i). Shall be comprised of the

1. President
2. Vice-President
3. Secretary
4. Treasurer
5. Immediate Past President

(ii). Meetings of the Executive Board shall be called at the will of the President, upon the request of another Executive Board Member in exigent circumstances or may be pre-set by the President.

(iii). The management and business affairs of the Board of Directors shall be vested in the Executive board. Actions taken by the Executive Board shall be relayed to the Board of Directors following action taken.

(h). **Vacancies**

(i). Vacancies or Absences in the Executive Board shall follow a line of succession in this order: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Article 6. Board of Directors

Section 6.01. Composition of the Board

(a). The Board of Directors shall consist of President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Past President, Six Directors at Large and Seven Regional Directors

(b). Term Limits are to be limited to a total of two year terms unless no nominations are received.

(c). Members of the Board are each given a vote as a member of the Board of Directors.

(d). All positions may be elected or appointed in a manner which is most beneficial to the Association.

Section 6.02. Actions of the Board

(a). **Reimbursement**

(i). All Board members as such shall not receive any compensation for their services. The Board of Directors by a simple majority vote of the Board may authorize reimbursement of all or part of the actual expenses incurred in attending a special meeting, including, but not limited to, the Spring Board meeting and Annual Meeting.

(ii). The Board may request specific individuals to provide information which would require personal appearance at a called meeting and may authorize reimbursement of all or part of the actual expenses incurred by that individual.

(b). **Actions of the Board**

(i). All actions of the Board of Directors may be in the form of a letter, electronic means, email, teleconferences or facsimiles to all members of the Board.

Article 7. Duties of the Board of Directors

Section 7.01. All Board Members

(a). All Board members of the Association shall swear and abide by the Code of Judicial Conduct without reservation and sign an Ethics agreement annually.

(b). All Board members shall work with one another for the betterment of the Association as a whole.

(c). All Board members shall dutifully discharge their duties in connection, or conjunction with their position, or representation to the best of their ability.

(d). Board members can be removed for cause by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

Article 8. Appointments and Standing Committees

Section 8.01. Standing Committees

(a). The President shall appoint a regular member as a chairperson of the Standing Committees or a regular member to a non-board position with the approval of the Board of Directors except as otherwise provided herein.

(b). The Chairperson of the following Standing Committees or appointed individual to a non-board position shall be appointed to serve until the next Annual meeting, or until their respective successors are appointed:

- Advisory Committee
- Bylaws Committee
- Certification and Educational Programs Committee
- Certification Program Financial Manager
- Conference Planning Committee
- Ethics Committee
- Exhibitor Committee
- Finance Committee
- Historian Committee
- Internal Audit Committee

- Legislative Committee
- Membership Committee
- Merchandise Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Public Relations Committee
- Publications Committee
- Scholarship Committee
- Technology Committee

(c). Standing Committees shall be composed of non-exhibitor individuals, who may provide value and expertise in that area, appointed by the Chairperson of each of the respective committees

(i). **Advisory Committee.** The advisory committee shall be comprised of those board members that have completed their term of office and are no longer serving in their elected board capacity. Immediate Past President will chair the advisory committee, if eligible to serve as chair.

(ii). **Bylaws Committee.** The Chairperson of the committee on bylaws shall act as parliamentarian of the association. It shall be the duty of the committee to review the bylaws of the association as to their practicality and application. The committee shall also review the needs of the association for amending or adding to the bylaws. The chairperson shall make a report of its finding to the Board of Directors.

(iii). **Certification and Education Program Committee.** The certification and education program committee shall be responsible for the planning and development of the educational program at the Annual meeting and such other educational and development programs. The education committee shall be responsible for the approval of certification credit hours provided for the purpose of continuing education for the Clerk's Certification Program. This committee shall serve as the decision making body for the certification program.

(iv). **Certification Program Financial Manager.** The certification program financial manager shall collect, receive and have custody of all funds derived by and from the Court Clerks Certification Program. He/She shall deposit such funds in a bank designated by the Board of Directors and shall provide for the expenditures of such funds. All checks shall have the signature of the certification program financial manager or education committee chairperson, and on the unavailability of either, the TCCA President. He/She shall perform all other duties required of the Treasurer as they relate to the certification program funds. They will be a member of the Finance Committee.

(v). **Conference Planning Committee.** The chairperson of the conference planning committee shall be assigned by the current President. This committee shall be responsible for the selection of meeting facilities, housing accommodations and planning of the conference, subject to approval by the conference planning committee and Board of Directors.

(vi). **Exhibitor Committee.** The exhibitor committee shall serve as a liaison between the conference planning committee and exhibitors. The exhibitor committee shall be responsible for recruiting Corporate partner members, exhibitor conference registration and exhibitor logistics.

(vii). **Finance Committee.** The Finance committee shall consist of the Treasurer as chair and an Assistant Treasurer, appointed by the Board as Co-Chair. Members of the Finance committee shall consist of each Regional Director and the Certification Program Financial Manager. The finance committee shall be responsible for maintaining the finances for the regions they represent and making any requests for money to the Chair and Co-Chair for distribution as long as they have the means. It shall be the duty of this committee to maintain, review and update the financial policies of the Association. At the end of each budget cycle all funds will return to the State Treasurer for equal disbursement in the State fund and Education Funds for the benefit of it's members.

(viii). **Historian Committee.** The historian committee shall be responsible for preserving the history of the TCCA by collecting various articles, documents, and photos regarding the Association's activities and placing them into scrapbooks, photo albums and/or electronic storage equipment. The historian is responsible for storing and maintaining all Association scrapbooks, photo albums and electronic media.

(xi). **Internal Audit Committee.** The internal audit committee shall perform a compliance review of all financial records of TCCA and make a report to the Board of Directors.

(x). **Legislative Committee.** The legislative committee shall be responsible to assimilate information from the membership regarding suggested legislative changes and to provide that information to proper sources for subsequent presentation to legislative authorities. It shall be the duty of the committee to advise the membership of proposed legislation during each legislative session.

(xi). **Membership Committee.** The membership committee shall be responsible for the recruiting of members, the circulation of information about our Association to other organizations and individuals.

(xii). **Merchandise Committee.** The merchandise committee shall be responsible for ordering merchandise to be sold at the Annual conference and managing the merchandise booth during the conference.

(xiii). **Nominations Committee.** The committee shall prepare and distribute nominations for officers and members of the Board of Directors of this Association prior to the Annual Meeting to permit circulation of the Committee's nominations to all members of the Association. Nominations and ballots may be submitted by means approved by the board. The list of members as disclosed by the membership committee chairperson's records shall be conclusive as to the total membership of the Association.

(xiv). **Public Relations Committee.** The public relations committee shall be responsible for soliciting nominations for awards to be presented at the Annual Meeting. Qualifications for the awards shall include, but not be limited to, outstanding contributions to the Texas Court Clerks Association and/or the regions. The public relations committee shall also be responsible for obtaining any other awards deemed necessary by the Board.

(xv). **Publications Committee.** The publications committee shall circulate questionnaires and compile the answers from them and shall prepare other reports for distribution to the membership. The committee shall be responsible for the Association publication and for its distribution to the membership.

(xvi). **Scholarship Committee.** The scholarship committee shall be responsible for informing TCCA members about the scholarship program. The committee will solicit members to apply for a scholarship and ensure that the selection process is carried out per TCCA guidelines.

(xvii). **Technology Committee.** The technology committee shall be responsible for the development and maintenance of the TCCA website, hardware, software, social media and other technology as deemed necessary.

Article 9. Annual Meeting

Section 9.01. The Association shall hold an Annual Meeting for all members to attend.

Section 9.02. The order of business at each Annual Meeting shall be fixed to allow for publications or notice of the agenda and shall include the following:

- Address of the President
- Reports of the Board of Directors
- Reports of Officers
- Reports of Special Committees
- Reports of Standing Committees
- Election Results of Officers and Directors
- Miscellaneous Business

Article 10. Quorum

Section 10.01. A quorum at an Annual Meeting shall consist of a simple majority of the members present and registered and shall be deemed sufficient to conduct the business of the Association.

Article 11. Parliamentary Authority

Section 11.01. Parliamentary procedures at the Annual Meeting and meetings of the Board of Directors shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order.

Article 12. Negotiable Instruments Deeds and Contracts

Section 12.01. All checks, drafts, notes, bonds, bills of exchange and orders for the payment of money of the Association; all deeds, mortgages, and other written contracts and agreements to which the Association shall be a party; and all assignments or endorsements of stock certificates, registered bonds, or other securities owned by the Association, shall unless otherwise required by law, be signed by the President.

Article 13. Amendments

Section 13.01. Recommendations for bylaw amendments must be presented to the TCCA Board of Directors for consideration. Any member in good standing may make a recommendation to the Bylaws committee. All proposed Bylaw amendments shall be referred to the Bylaws committee for review and recommendation. The Board of Directors will review the considerations for amendments at the spring board meeting for a vote to be placed on the ballot. Those amendments are presented to the membership for review and vote.

Article 14. Responsibility of Regions

Section 14.01. Regional Directors shall maintain records including, but not limited to:

- a. Educational
- b. Membership list
- c. Financial Requests
- d. Scholarship Requests

Article 15. Responsibility to Regions

Section 15.02.

(a). The TCCA Board of Directors shall assist each region in equal measure without regard to the number of members or offering priority for regions with larger membership concentrations.

(b). Each region may request scholarship slots, financial assistance, or repayment for expenses regarding education, meeting expenses and budgetary needs.

(c). The membership chair shall update Regional Directors on a membership total at least once a month on the 1st or 15th of each month, and when requested.

Article 16. Regional Officers

Section 16.01.

(a). Regional Director

(i). The Regional Director shall be elected from those nominated by the Region to serve in the position for a term of two years.

(ii). The Regional Director shall serve on the TCCA Board of Directors in representation of their membership.

(iii). A Regional Director shall not be limited in terms of office.

(iv). Vacancies will be appointed and approved by a majority vote of the TCCA Board of Directors.