

Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission
Approved Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2014

The Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission (MSGC) meeting was held on November 20, 2014 at the Minnesota Judicial Center; 25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.; St. Paul, MN 55155; Room G-31. Commission members present were Chair Jeffrey Edblad, Vice-Chair Justice Christopher Dietzen, Sergeant Paul Ford, Judge Carrie Lennon, Cathryn Middlebrook, Commissioner of Corrections Tom Roy, Judge Heidi Schellhas, Yamy Vang, and Sarah Walker. MSGC staff members present were Executive Director Nate Reitz, and research staff Anne Wall and Jill Payne. Assistant Attorney General Jim Early was also present. Members of the public present were Lisa Netzer, Legal Counsel, Minnesota Department of Corrections; and Bill Lemons, Minnesota County Attorneys Association.

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Justice Dietzen and seconded by Yamy Vang to approve the agenda.

Motion carried.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 6, 2014

Motion was made by Judge Lennon and seconded by Sgt. Ford to approve the minutes.

A brief discussion ensued.

Motion carried.

4. Response to Representative Debra Hilstrom's Letter

This item was first discussed at the November 6, 2014, meeting.

Rep. Hilstrom's letter dated October 16, 2014 asked five questions:

1) What have been the racial demographics of the prison population from 2004 to today? 2) Of this population, what are the racial demographics of who is receiving a departure from sentencing guidelines? 3) What crimes are most likely to receive departures? 4) Of these departures, what data do you have regarding whether the departures are a result of defendants participating in specialty courts? 5) Please provide recommendations, if any, that the Commission had regarding how the Legislature can aid its work in conjunction with specialty court across Minnesota, whether through the provision of resources or a change in policy.

Director Reitz reminded the Commission that staff had preliminarily answered questions one through four in an information request to the committee administrator, Emily Lefholz in October.

The Commission reviewed draft language to answer question five.

Motion to respond to Rep. Hilstrom's question with the following language made by Commissioner Roy and seconded by Yamy Vang:

The Commission has historically supported the development of drug courts on public-safety grounds, provided that certain funding and research concerns are addressed. See Minn. Sentencing Guidelines Comm'n, Updated Report on Drug Offender Sentencing Issues, Jan. 31, 2007, p. 22 (<http://go.usa.gov/AA6d>).

Motion carried.

5. Review Draft 2015 Report to the Legislature

The Commission reviewed the draft 2015 Report to the Legislature section by section. Due to pending matters before the Minnesota Supreme Court, Justice Dietzen recused himself from portions of the discussion. The report is due to the Legislature by Thursday, January 15, 2015.

6. Public Input

The Chair recognized members of the public.

7. Adjournment

Motion by Justice Dietzen and seconded by Judge Lennon to adjourn.

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 3:39 p.m.