

**U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania
Attorney Advisory Committee**

February 26, 2026, at 1:00 PM

Attendance: Judge Van Eck, Sarah Rothermel, Jack Rose, Angelina Coine, Judge Conway, Sarah Crouch, Troy Sellars, Seth Eisenberg, Jenifer Misceovich, Rick Thompson, Joe Schalk, Jack Zaharopoulos, Jill Manuel-Coughlin, Dawn Cutaia, James Jones, David Harris, Lisa Doran, Chad Julius, Vince Rubino, Robert Chernicoff, and Lawrence Young.

OLD BUSINESS: The only old business topic was the requirement of debtors' counsel to provide email addresses with the list of the 20 largest unsecured creditors. Those email addresses are needed by the UST for the solicitation of unsecured creditor committees and certain first-day motions, such as utility motions. Initially, the topic was tabled as Attorney Chernicoff was absent. Attorney Chernicoff joined the meeting later and the topic was discussed between Judge Van Eck, Attorney Chernicoff and Joseph Schalk. Ultimately, Judge Van Eck decided that the Court can't really order the debtor to provide email addresses for creditors but that the debtor should try to provide the email addresses. Attorney Chernicoff said he would make more of an effort to get the email addresses.

NEW BUSINESS:

Patient Care Ombudsman Motions.

Judge Van Eck led a discussion on how Patient Care Ombudsman are appointed in health care cases. The item was placed on the agenda by Judge Van Eck after an incident when the UST filed the appointment of a Patient Care Ombudsman based upon a date set by forth on the docket rather than a direct Order from the Court. A robust discussion was held between Judge Van Eck, and Acting AUST Schalk wherein it was noted that in health care cases, Judge Conway enters a standard form of Order which addresses the requirement for the appointment of a Patient Care Ombudsman under Section 333 of the Bankruptcy Code. At the end of the discussion, Judge Van Eck indicated he would adopt Judge Conway's form of Order which should fully address the issue.

Market Trends:

A general discussion was held between all of the meeting attendees regarding the filing trends and market conditions affecting bankruptcy filings. Some of the highlights from that discussion include:

An indication from Acting AUST Schalk that more small healthcare businesses (dental offices) will be filing for Bankruptcy.

Overall filings are still on the rise and Chief Deputy Clerk Sellars noted, in response to an inquiry from Judge Van Eck, that he estimated that in five years our filings would be north of 5,000 cases per year and that the District's historic caseload was around 5,500 cases per year before COVID.

Several of the attendees noted that while Chapter 7 case loads were flat, Sub V and chapter 13 cases are on the rise and that for new consumer cases, the filing mix is likely a 50/50 split of chapter 7 and 13 cases. Chapter 13 Trustee Jack Zaharopoulos reported that since he was appointed in 2021 there has been a 10% increase in active Chapter 13 cases in the District.

Attorney David Harris noted that recently the Supreme Court heard argument regarding the constitutionality of state tax foreclosure sales and whether the foreclosing tax authority was allowed to keep proceeds more than what was owed to the authority in the case of Pung v. Isabella County. Attorney Harris noted that although this isn't a bankruptcy case, it will have effects on our bankruptcy filings.

Attorney Jill Coughlin is finding that there's a slowdown in creditors giving out multiple loan modifications and that may increase bankruptcy filings.

CLOSING THE MEETING

Judge Van Eck encouraged members to bring issues they may be having to the committee's attention and May 28, 2026, at 1:00 p.m. was selected as the next meeting date and time.

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting Date: May 28, 2026, at 1:00 PM.