

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF THE  
PROBATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

186 NEWINGTON ROAD  
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06110

PAUL J. KNIERIM  
Probate Court Administrator

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## **Probate Court Budget Committee**

Meeting Agenda  
Wednesday, March 16, 2016  
5:00 p.m.

- I. Convene Meeting
- II. Public Comment and Correspondence
- III. Remarks by the Chair
- IV. Cancel COLA for Court Staff
- V. Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Office Budgets
- VI. Staffing Level Adjustments
- VII. Long Term and Short-Term Disability Insurance
- VIII. Other Business
- IX. Schedule Next Meeting
- X. Adjournment

# CAPC

## Connecticut Association of Probate Clerks

*Patricia E. Saviano*  
President, Danbury

*Elaine D. Johnson*  
Treasurer, Wallingford

*Evan Brunetti*  
Vice President, Farmington-Burlington

*Pamela Griffin*  
Secretary, Tobacco Valley

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March 14, 2016

TO: Members of the Budget Committee;  
Hon. Paul Knierim, Hon. Joseph Marino, Hon. Fred Anthony  
RE: State of Connecticut Budget: Probate Court Compensation Increases.

Dear Budget Committee,

First and foremost, we would like to thank you for your ongoing service to the Probate Court System and countless hours struggling with the issues of the times. We, as a diverse and vibrant provider of court and social services, have come a long way since the days of pre-consolidation, and we clerks certainly appreciate the ongoing efforts of the budget committee to improve the fairness and equity of our compensation and benefits.

Today, I speak to you as the President of CAPC and on behalf of our fellow court employees. I ask you to please consider the planned implementation of our salary increases, including, cost of living, merit, and compensation study recommendations. Please know, we fully recognize the financial difficulties the State of Connecticut faces, and the oppressive economic climate of the Judicial Branch, however, we offer the following in support of our request.

First, although the system has made incredible strides in ensuring the equity, fairness, and competitiveness of our court employee compensation and benefits, we began the process stunted in our growth. Since 2008, court employees have endured pay freezes, partial increases, and seemingly slow advances to where equity implies we should have been from the start. When reflecting on the over eight years of history, to impose another pause in our compensation and benefits would thereby impose a unique burden on court employees. For example, I recently spoke with a fellow clerk who is a single parent and is completely dependent on the salary increases in improving the lives of her and her children. We believe our COLA, merit, and our compensation study increases have been targeted to correct our stunted history and to bring us into the future as a 21<sup>st</sup> century court system. We do not intend this in any way to minimize our appreciation or the impact of your past efforts to provide fair compensation. On the contrary, we commend this Committees work thus far, and urge you to stay the course. Therefore, we ask you to continue to unify and provide further equity in our system, and implement our planned 2016 compensation increases.

Second, the increases being sought were previously accounted for and budgeted by this Committee. They are certain and known liabilities and we ask for no more than what has been planned; a 2016 COLA increase, a 2016 merit increase, and the other half of our 2016 compensation study increases. It is our understanding from reading our probate court budget that the proposed compensation increases alone will not cause any significant deficit to the

# CAPC

## *Connecticut Association of Probate Clerks*

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overall system budget. Therefore, we again ask the Budget Committee to stay the course, and implement the compensation increases as planned.

Third, although we have great sympathy for our brothers and sisters in the Judicial Branch, we do not live in their house, and should not bear the burden of their overhead. We clerks agree that it is important to gather support for the Probate Courts in all areas, if only because we provide crucial services to our communities and live among colleagues in administering justice in Connecticut. Furthermore, we do wish to communicate our support for the Judicial Branch, and especially our PCA partners. No one from the Judicial Branch knows the probate court staff better than PCA, and they too have suffered under this economy. Nevertheless, the head of the Judicial household should not make claims against our house, a house whose affairs are in particular order (save our need for appropriation for indigency costs, kinship and respite funds, and certain administration expenses; all as reflected in the proposed 2016 budget, and all are crucial services we provide).

Lastly, we urge the Budget Committee to remember we are only asking to continue to be treated fairly and look to the recently conducted compensation study as a barometer. We believe this study showed two important factors; 1) we as a probate court system have already been making great strides in improving the system; and 2) there remains a continued need to align our compensation with our proportionate job-court-clerk-work conducted. So please, stay the course.

In the end, we recognize we are an integral part of the system of justice in Connecticut, and as such, we too are not insulated from those forces that affect the Judicial Branch. Tough economic times, unrealistic budget demands from OPM, and all of the other hard issues left to be answered by the Office of the Probate Court Administrator continue to make more demands of the Probate Courts and court employees. Nevertheless, we continue to ask this Budget Committee to stay the course and implement the compensation increases as planned. We would be doing a disservice to our membership, if we did not express our hopes for the probate system.

Thank you again for your service, time, consideration, and support. If you have any questions as to the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Warmest Regards,

/s/

Patricia Saviano,  
CAPC President

Court of Probate, District of Cheshire-Southington  
(203) 271-6608

March 8, 2016

Paul J. Knierim  
Probate Court Administration  
186 Newington Road  
West Hartford, CT 06110-2320

Dear Judge Knierim:

We felt the need to respond to your email dated March 4, 2016. This was not as much difficult as shocking to say the least.

To start the courts were forced into consolidation in 2010 to make the system fiscally sound. The number of courts went from 123 to 54 and the projections on the money to be saved were substantial. So then why did we create new courts for children's matters? The money saved now pays for rental properties to house these courts and all the monthly expenses that go with that. They are fully staffed with a Chief Clerk, Probate Court Officers and additional staff. It poses the question why did we consolidate to save money and then create new courts that produce little or no income and are funded by Probate Administration. This makes no sense to us especially since the work that the Probate Courts do is what brings in the revenue. The staff of all the Probate Courts do the work, money gets spent on other things and then we are told sorry your COLA has been cancelled (which has already been deferred since January) or your July 2016 merit increase is on hold (so much for a job well done) and the November 2016 compensation study increase and January 2017 COLA are at risk. To think that hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent on a Pay Equity Study to show that our salary's needed to be adjusted and we were only given half in November 2015. That was bad enough but now we may not get the other half. Maybe the money spent on the equity study should have just been given out to the staff. Again, why does the court staff have to always bear the burden when we bring in the revenue?

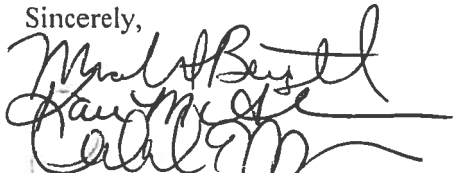
We are always told we have to follow Judicial or the Executive branch but we don't understand why since we are not state employees. We shouldn't have to abide by agency's that we are not affiliated with or a part of. Our courts are fiscally sound. We the staff do the work to produce the revenue only to get an email such as this. We are not pro union by any means but at least the Judicial and Executive branch have a union that will follow through especially for a salary study. They do not get an email saying "cancelled".

When you look at state salaries ([www.ctsunlight.org](http://www.ctsunlight.org)) some employees make more than Judge's and also the clerks and we the courts produce the revenue. Again we ask why?

Our town pays all our expenses from providing us office space all our office supplies, laser fiche machines, and all our filming which we believe is done in 90% of the courts. Where is all our revenue going?

If the state is facing a budget shortfall it affects us too. All of us have to live within a budget and as expenses go up salaries need to also, especially when you agreed to the salary study. **We ask that you find some way to give the staff in all courts there COLA increase and compensation study adjustments.** We all need them and deserve them. Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,



Cheshire-Southington Probate Court  
Margherita Bergstrand, Chief Clerk  
Karen Stonoha, Clerk  
Deb Brown, Clerk

By Email and US Mail

CC: Hon. Joseph D. Marino

Hon. Fred J. Anthony

Patricia E. Saviano, Chief Clerk

Cc; All Court Employees, by email only

**Office Expense Budget  
 FY 2017 Budget Proposal  
 July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017**

Budget Committee Meeting - March 16, 2016

District Nos.: 1 through 54

No. of Employees (Judge and Court Staff) 341 \*\*

Description	FY 2016 Budget	FY 2017 Proposed	Budget Committee Assumptions
Educ/Seminars/Mtgs	32,300	32,800	\$600 per district
Dues	8,600	8,525	Other = \$25 per person average (Excludes Probate Assembly, bar & NCPJ dues)
Subscriptions	51,520	51,835	Court proposal, subject to \$1,500 maximum
Other Expenses	54,040	54,040	\$500 per district
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>146,460</b>	<b>147,200</b>	

\*\* Represents number of individuals (not FTE)

**Office Expense Budget  
 FY 2017 Budget Proposal  
 July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017  
 RCPC:**

Budget Committee Meeting - March 16, 2016

**ALL RCPCs**

**55-60**

District No.:

**49**

No. of Employees (AJ and Court Staff)

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Description	FY 2016 Budget	FY 2017 Proposed	Budget Committee Assumptions
Rent and Taxes	243,668	244,868	Court proposal
Repairs & Maintenance	40,800		Budget line eliminated for FY17; included in PCA central budget
Utilities	27,780	25,600	Court proposal
Office Supplies	39,800	39,500	Court proposal
Purchased Office Furniture and Equip	30,000		Budget line eliminated for FY17; included in PCA central budget
Leased Office Equipment	-	21,850	Court proposal
Postage Equip/Fees(incl leased equip)	42,365	45,200	Court proposal
Legal Notices and Ads	34,200	31,800	Court proposal
Liability Insurance	10,500	10,400	Court proposal
Education/Seminars/Meetings	6,800	6,800	\$600 per RCPC, plus \$200 per PCO
Dues	1,250	1,225	Other = \$25 per person average (Excludes Probate Assembly, bar & NCPJ dues)
Subscriptions	2,925	3,425	Court proposal, subject to \$1,500 maximum
Other Expenses	4,000	3,500	\$500 per district, plus \$500 for parking
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>484,088</b>	<b>434,168</b>	

\*\* Represents number of individuals (not FTE)

**Educ/Seminars/Mtg**

Budget Committee Meeting - March 16, 2016

No.	District Name	FY17 Budget	Budget Committee Guidelines	Variance over (under) guideline
1	Hartford	600	600	-
2	West Hartford	600	600	-
3	Tobacco Valley	600	600	-
4	Greater Windsor	600	600	-
5	East Hartford	600	600	-
6	Glastonbury-Hebron	600	600	-
7	Newington	600	600	-
8	Berlin	600	600	-
9	Simsbury Regional	600	600	-
10	Farmington-Burlington	600	600	-
11	North Central Connecticut	600	600	-
12	Ellington	600	600	-
13	Greater Manchester	600	600	-
14	Region # 14	600	600	-
15	Middletown	600	600	-
16	Meriden	600	600	-
17	Wallingford	600	600	-
18	Cheshire-Southington	600	600	-
19	Region # 19	600	600	-
20	Waterbury	600	600	-
21	Naugatuck	600	600	-
22	Region # 22	600	600	-
23	Torrington Area	600	600	-
24	Litchfield Hills	600	600	-
25	Toiland-Mansfield	600	600	-
26	Northeast	600	600	-
27	Plainfield-Killingly Regional	600	600	-
28	Windham-Colchester	600	600	-
29	Norwich	600	600	-
30	Southeastern CT Regional	600	600	-
31	New London	600	600	-
32	Niantic Regional	600	600	-
33	Saybrook	600	600	-
34	Madison-Guilford	600	600	-
35	Branford-North Branford	1,000	600	400
36	East Haven-North Haven	600	600	-
37	Hamden-Bethany	600	600	-
38	New Haven	600	600	-
39	West Haven	600	600	-
40	Milford-Orange	600	600	-
41	Derby	600	600	-
42	Shelton	600	600	-
43	Danbury	600	600	-
44	Housatonic	600	600	-
45	Northern Fairfield County	600	600	-
46	Trumbull	600	600	-
47	Stratford	600	600	-
48	Bridgeport	600	600	-
49	Fairfield	600	600	-
50	Westport	600	600	-
51	Norwalk-Wilton	600	600	-
52	Darien-New Canaan	600	600	-
53	Stamford	600	600	-
54	Greenwich	600	600	-
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>32,800</b>	<b>32,400</b>	<b>400</b>
55	New Haven Regional Children's	1,400	1,400	-
56	Central CT Regional Children's	1,000	1,000	-
57	New London Regional Children's	1,000	1,000	-
58	Waterbury Regional Children's	1,000	1,000	-
59	Northeast Regional Children's	1,000	1,000	-
60	Hartford Regional Children's	1,400	1,400	-
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>6,800</b>	<b>6,800</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>39,600</b>	<b>39,200</b>	<b>400</b>



## Dues

Budget Committee Meeting - March 16, 2016

No.	District Name	# of Court Staff	FY17 Budget	Budget Committee Guidelines	Variance over (under) guideline
1	Hartford	11	275	275	0
2	West Hartford	9	225	225	0
3	Tobacco Valley	5	125	125	0
4	Greater Windsor	5	125	125	0
5	East Hartford	5	125	125	0
6	Glastonbury-Hebron	4	100	100	0
7	Newington	8	200	200	0
8	Berlin	7	175	175	0
9	Simsbury Regional	8	200	200	0
10	Farmington-Burlington	5	125	125	0
11	North Central Connecticut	5	125	125	0
12	Ellington	5	125	125	0
13	Greater Manchester	7	175	175	0
14	Region # 14	4	100	100	0
15	Middletown	6	150	150	0
16	Meriden	3	75	75	0
17	Wallingford	5	125	125	0
18	Cheshire-Southington	6	150	150	0
19	Region # 19	10	250	250	0
20	Waterbury	10	250	250	0
21	Naugatuck	5	125	125	0
22	Region # 22	8	200	200	0
23	Torrington Area	6	150	150	0
24	Litchfield Hills	6	150	150	0
25	Tolland-Mansfield	4	100	100	0
26	Northeast	5	125	125	0
27	Plainfield-Killingly Regional	5	125	125	0
28	Windham-Colchester	5	125	125	0
29	Norwich	6	150	150	0
30	Southeastern CT Regional	6	150	150	0
31	New London	6	150	150	0
32	Niantic Regional	6	150	150	0
33	Saybrook	8	200	200	0
34	Madison-Guilford	5	125	125	0
35	Branford-North Branford	4	100	100	0
36	East Haven-North Haven	5	125	125	0
37	Hamden-Bethany	5	125	125	0
38	New Haven	14	350	350	0
39	West Haven	8	200	200	0
40	Millford-Orange	6	150	150	0
41	Derby	6	150	150	0
42	Shelton	5	125	125	0
43	Danbury	6	150	150	0
44	Housatonic	5	125	125	0
45	Northern Fairfield County	5	125	125	0
46	Trumbull	5	125	125	0
47	Stratford	5	125	125	0
48	Bridgeport	14	350	350	0
49	Fairfield	7	175	175	0
50	Westport	5	125	125	0
51	Norwalk-Wilton	9	225	225	0
52	Darien-New Canaan	4	100	100	0
53	Stamford	8	200	200	0
54	Greenwich	6	150	150	0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>341</b>	<b>8,525</b>	<b>8,525</b>	<b>-</b>
55	New Haven Regional Children's	13	325	325	0
56	Central CT Regional Children's	5	125	125	0
57	New London Regional Children's	5	125	125	0
58	Waterbury Regional Children's	7	175	175	0
59	Northeast Regional Children's	7	175	175	0
60	Hartford Regional Children's	12	300	300	0
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>1,225</b>	<b>1,225</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>390</b>	<b>9,750</b>	<b>9,750</b>	<b>-</b>

## Subscriptions

Budget Committee Meeting - March 15, 2016

No.	District Name	FY17 Budget
1	Hartford	1,500
2	West Hartford	-
3	Tobacco Valley	700
4	Greater Windsor	800
5	East Hartford	-
6	Glastonbury-Hebron	35
7	Newington	425
8	Berlin	1,200
9	Simsbury Regional	1,500
10	Farmington-Burlington	1,500
11	North Central Connecticut	500
12	Ellington	375
13	Greater Manchester	1,500
14	Region # 14	1,500
15	Middletown	1,500
16	Meriden	1,500
17	Wallingford	600
18	Cheshire-Southington	800
19	Region # 19	1,500
20	Waterbury	1,500
21	Naugatuck	1,500
22	Region # 22	1,500
23	Torrington Area	1,500
24	Litchfield Hills	750
25	Tolland-Mansfield	650
26	Northeast	500
27	Plainfield-Killingly Regional	250
28	Windham-Colchester	-
29	Norwich	800
30	Southeastern CT Regional	400
31	New London	500
32	Niantic Regional	150
33	Saybrook	1,000
34	Madison-Guilford	1,200
35	Branford-North Branford	1,500
36	East Haven-North Haven	500
37	Hamden-Bethany	500
38	New Haven	1,500
39	West Haven	500
40	Milford-Orange	1,500
41	Derby	1,500
42	Shelton	500
43	Danbury	1,500
44	Housatonic	1,500
45	Northern Fairfield County	1,500
46	Trumbull	1,200
47	Stratford	1,000
48	Bridgeport	1,000
49	Fairfield	500
50	Westport	1,500
51	Norwalk-Wilton	1,500
52	Darien-New Canaan	1,500
53	Stamford	1,500
54	Greenwich	-
SUBTOTAL		51,835
55	New Haven Regional Children's	1,500
56	Central CT Regional Children's	325
57	New London Regional Children's	-
58	Waterbury Regional Children's	600
59	Northeast Regional Children's	-
60	Hartford Regional Children's	1,000
SUBTOTAL		3,425
TOTAL		55,260

## Other Expenses

Budget Committee Meeting - March 15, 2016

		FY17 Budget	Budget Committee Guidelines	Variance over (under) guideline
1	Hartford	500	500	0
2	West Hartford	500	500	0
3	Tobacco Valley	500	500	0
4	Greater Windsor	500	500	0
5	East Hartford	500	500	0
6	Glastonbury-Hebron	500	500	0
7	Newington	500	500	0
8	Berlin	500	500	0
9	Simsbury Regional	500	500	0
10	Farmington-Burlington	500	500	0
11	North Central Connecticut	500	500	0
12	Ellington	500	500	0
13	Greater Manchester	500	500	0
14	Region # 14	500	500	0
15	Middletown	500	500	0
16	Meriden	500	500	0
17	Wallingford	500	500	0
18	Cheshire-Southington	500	500	0
19	Region # 19	500	500	0
20	Waterbury	500	500	0
21	Naugatuck	500	500	0
22	Region # 22	500	500	0
23	Torrington Area	500	500	0
24	Litchfield Hills	500	500	0
25	Tolland-Mansfield	500	500	0
26	Northeast	500	500	0
27	Plainfield-Killingly Regional	500	500	0
28	Windham-Colchester	500	500	0
29	Norwich	500	500	0
30	Southeastern CT Regional	500	500	0
31	New London	4,500	500	4,000
32	Niantic Regional	500	500	0
33	Saybrook	500	500	0
34	Madison-Guilford	500	500	0
35	Branford-North Branford	500	500	0
36	East Haven-North Haven	500	500	0
37	Hamden-Bethany	500	500	0
38	New Haven	23,540	500	23,040
39	West Haven	500	500	0
40	Milford-Orange	500	500	0
41	Derby	500	500	0
42	Shelton	500	500	0
43	Danbury	500	500	0
44	Housatonic	500	500	0
45	Northern Fairfield County	500	500	0
46	Trumbull	500	500	0
47	Stratford	500	500	0
48	Bridgeport	500	500	0
49	Fairfield	500	500	0
50	Westport	500	500	0
51	Norwalk-Wilton	500	500	0
52	Darien-New Canaan	500	500	0
53	Stamford	500	500	0
54	Greenwich	500	500	0
SUBTOTAL		54,040	27,000	27,040
55	New Haven Regional Children's	500	500	0
56	Central CT Regional Children's	500	500	0
57	New London Regional Children's	500	500	0
58	Waterbury Regional Children's	500	500	0
59	Northeast Regional Children's	500	500	0
60	Hartford Regional Children's	1,000	500	500
SUBTOTAL		3,500	3,000	500
TOTAL		57,540	30,000	27,540

# STAFFING PLAN

Budget Committee Meeting: March 16, 2016

Probate District:

Norwalk-Wilton

District No.:

51

Positions	Original Benchmark	Proposed Benchmark	Transitional Authorization
Chief Clerk III			
Chief Clerk II	0.9	0.9	1.0
Chief Clerk I			
Deputy Clerk			0.6
Clerk	1.8	1.8	1.8
Assistant Clerk	3.6	4.0	2.4
Court Assistant	0.4		
Court Staff Attorney			0.9
Temporary Staff			
Probate Court Officer			
Security Officer			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6.7</b>		<b>6.7</b>

## Notes Subsequent to 1/5/2011

### Notes:

- Transitional reduced from 7.5 FTE through attrition
- Benchmark of 0.4 for Court Assistant reclassified to Assistant Clerk position to facilitate 40 hour work week

Full Time Equivalents (FTE) = 40 Hour Work Week (2,080 Annual Hours)

# STAFFING PLAN

Budget Committee Meeting: March 16, 2020

Probate District:

Plainfield-Killingly

District No.:

27

Positions	Benchmark	Proposed Benchmark
Chief Clerk III		
Chief Clerk II		
Chief Clerk I	0.9	1.0
Deputy Clerk		
Clerk	0.9	0.9
Assistant Clerk	0.5	0.4
Court Assistant		
Court Staff Attorney		
Temporary Staff		
Probate Court Officer		
Security Officer		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.3</b>

Full Time Equivalents (FTE) = 40 Hour Work Week (2,080 Annual Hours)