



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF THE
PROBATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR

PAUL J. KNIERIM
Probate Court Administrator

THOMAS E. GAFFEY
Chief Counsel

HELEN B. BENNET
Attorney

DEBRA COHEN
Attorney

186 NEWINGTON ROAD
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06110

TEL (860) 231-2442
FAX (860) 231-1055

Probate Court Budget Committee
Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, June 26, 2013
4:00 PM

Library at the Office of the Probate Court Administrator
186 Newington Road, West Hartford

- I. Convene Meeting
- II. Public Comment and Correspondence
- III. Remarks by the Chair
- IV. Review Draft Budget Committee Report
- V. Staffing Level Adjustment Proposal
- VI. Office Budget Adjustment Proposal
- VII. Draft of Revised Policy on Compensation of New Hires
- VIII. Other Business
- IX. Schedule Next Meeting
- X. Adjournment

Sal Luciano
Executive Director
Local 2663
State of CT – DCF

Clarke King
President
Local 1716
City of Hartford

Anna Montalvo
Secretary
Local 1522
City of Bridgeport

Vice-Presidents

Jay Bartolomei
Local 714
State of CT – Social Services

Blair Bertaccini
Local 268
State of CT – Dept. of Labor

Gil Bironi
Local 184
MDC

Joseph Cirigliano
Local 2930
Town of Newington

Steven Curran
Local 1565
State of CT – Corrections

Marie DeSousa
Local 391
State of CT – Corrections

Robert Facey, Jr.
Local 3713
MDC

Michael Hedman
Local 1566
Milford DPW

Thursa Isaac
Local 562
State of CT – Administrative/Clerical

James LoMonaco
Local 2836
State University Administrators

Brian Mitchell
Local 1303
CT Municipals

Robert Montuori
Local 287
City of New Haven

John Ondusko
Local 749
State of CT – Judicial

Guy Pappalardo
Local 566
City of Hartford

Thomas Stough, Jr.
Local 991
Town of Manchester

Dawn Tyson
Local 538
State of CT – Administrative/Clerical

Claudine Wilkins-Chambers
Local 3429
New Haven Paraprofessionals



June 24, 2013

Probate Court Budget Committee
Office of Probate Court Administrator
186 Newington Road
West Hartford, CT 06110

Dear Budget Committee Members:

I write to urge your Committee to reverse the decision you made at your May 20th meeting to deny merit pay to employees whose salaries you have deemed above the “maximum” compensation for their position.

We believe this is unfair to the employees and creates a hostile work environment.

It is strange to say the least that you would deny long-term employees, who are those most likely to be above the maximum, merit pay. Why is their work performance not valued? What message does this send to the rest of the probate court employees?

As your committee noted when undertaking the recent pay equity study, probate court employees have significant pay disparities due to length of service. Penalizing those employees who have worked in the courts for a long portion of their careers and who meet your standards by denying them merit pay is simply unfair.

This is not to discourage your work to bring equity to the pay scales within the system. Employees who have been underpaid for many years deserve a raise. And we are glad that you have begun to address these long standing inequities.

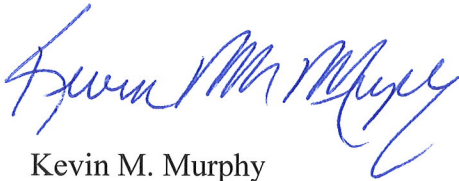
Based on your budget, we do not believe the decision to deny a small portion of the employees their merit pay had anything to do with the Probate Court’s financial situation.

We believe this injustice speaks to a larger concern that probate court employees have shared with us – namely, they do not have the ability to bargain over these matters with the administration.

Whether it's continued wage freezes, or taking so long to fix longstanding pay inequities, or this latest injustice, it's clear that the Probate Court Administration Budget Committee dictates wages and other conditions of employment without negotiating their impact on dedicated probate court employees.

Until this larger issue is rectified, all we can do is hope that your committee will make the right decision and treat each employee with the respect they deserve.

Sincerely,



Kevin M. Murphy
Director of Collective Bargaining and Organizing
Council 4 AFSCME

KMM/mcb

From: Elkin, Sydney
Sent: Wednesday, June 26, 2013 11:50 AM
To: Knierim, Paul
Subject: Budget Committee Meeting - June 26, 2013

Dear Judge Knierim,

I will not be able to attend the meeting today but did wish to comment on one matter - # 7 on the agenda. I'm glad and applaud the proposal expanding the judges' authority for better qualified new hires but I believe the "10% above the minimum" doesn't go far enough. That should be expanded or, in the alternative, a mechanism by which a judge could, administratively, request an exemption. An example might be someone who has many years as a probate paralegal and a college degree or higher.

Please share this with the entire committee. Thank you for your consideration. Sydney W. Elkin,
Judge, West Hartford Probate Court

CAPC

Connecticut Association of Probate Clerks

Patricia E. Saviano
President, Danbury

Evan Brunetti
Vice President, Farmington-Burlington

Elaine D. Johnson
Treasurer, Wallingford

Pamela Griffin
Secretary, Tobacco Valley

June 26, 2013

Judge Knierim, Judge Marino and Judge Anthony:

I am very happy to see that the equity pay study and the merit increases have passed in the Legislature and are in the process of being put into operation. However, I would like to bring a few points to the Committee's attention.

Judge Knierim, in your email of November 19, 2012, you state that the MAG internal pay equity study "calculates pay adjustments as of January 5, 2011, when the uniform compensation system was implemented". There are concerns that while this study calculates back to January, 2011, the equity pay adjustments do not. They have just recently been implemented. It is felt by many clerks that if these inequities existed since January, 2011 our equity adjustments should be retroactive to that point. MAG determined that 139 individuals were below their target pay rates. These clerks have been below the rates they should have been receiving for the past 30 months (since January 5, 2011) while clerks who have exceeded the maximum for their position have been enjoying their same salaries for all of those months. I respectfully ask, where is the equity in that?

The Budget Committee was given a task under **28.9 Probate Court Budget Committee Duties and Powers (1)** to establish "a compensation and employee benefits plan for employees of the courts of probate" and that under **28.10 Compensation and employees benefits plan (3)** "permitted periodic adjustments within a compensation range, including merit compensation and cost of living adjustments and the timing, frequency, and manner in which adjustment rates of compensation are made". It seems that the Committee by way of this can set the timing, frequency, and manner of our rates of compensation. So, I respectfully ask the Committee to consider making the equity pay adjustments retroactive to January 5, 2011.

As you know, Probate judges along with Superior Court judges were also afforded a raise in salary. I would like to bring to the Committee's attention that in determining the basis for the Probate judges increase it was in direct correlation to the judges of Superior Court. In other words, Probate judges' increases in salary were based on Judicial. CAPCs has always felt that we, as clerks, should be compared to judicial employees. In light of that, I respectfully ask why, if our judges are compared to judicial why are we not? Aren't we in the same system?

Please consider these points.

Respectfully Submitted,



Patricia E. Saviano, President

Saviano, Patricia

From: Knierim, Paul
Sent: Monday, November 19, 2012 3:18 PM
To: All Probate Court Employees
Subject: Pay equity study
Attachments: Proposed Pay Adjustments.pdf; Proposed formula and example.pdf; Compensation ranges.pdf

To: All Judges and Court Staff

Dear Colleagues,

For over a year, the Budget Committee has been working on an internal pay equity study for court employees. The committee initiated this project as a critical part of the multi-step plan to implement a uniform compensation plan as required by C.G.S. Section 45a-85. The purpose of the study is to identify and correct pay disparities among employees related to length of service in the Probate Courts. It is a one-time undertaking that will complete the transition from the decentralized compensation practices of the courts before restructuring to the system-wide compensation plan that Section 45a-85 contemplates. Implementation is planned for July 2013 and is subject to budget approval.

The committee previously established uniform job descriptions and pay ranges for each position, both of which were in place on January 5, 2011. Also at that time, the committee increased the rate of pay of any employee who was making less than the minimum for his or her position to the minimum rate. While recognizing that rates of pay would require further adjustment to reflect each employee's experience, the committee deferred making any such adjustments until a thorough study could be completed.

In October 2011, the Budget Committee engaged the compensation consultant that designed our job classification system, Management Advisory Group, Inc. (MAG), to conduct the internal pay equity study. After extensive discussions with the committee and consideration of input received from judges and court employees, MAG recommends that pay adjustments be calculated using a hybrid approach that considers both experience in the employee's current position and prior experience in other positions within the Probate Court system. MAG emphasized that most pay equity studies use experience in the current position as the sole criterion, but recommends that the Probate Court system provide additional credit for prior service to address the disparate practices among courts before restructuring. The recommended additional credit is 40% of service in a prior position.

The study calculates pay adjustments as of January 5, 2011, when the uniform compensation system was implemented. The following categories of employees were excluded from the study:

1. Employees hired on or after January 5, 2011, when the uniform compensation system was already in place
2. Employees whose rates of pay equal or exceed maximum for the position
3. Temporary employees
4. Retired employees who have returned to work

Enclosed for your review is a spreadsheet showing MAG's calculation of proposed pay adjustments for each employee included in the study. To protect the privacy of individuals, employees are listed by employee number. Employee numbers are found on your paystub.

Please note the following:

1. Your employee number will not be listed in the report if you are in one of the excluded categories noted above.
2. If you had a break in service, your hire date, promotion date and experience credit date are adjusted to reflect the length of time that you were not working in the system.
3. Employees promoted after January 5, 2011 are listed with January 5 as the promotion date. The data was entered in this manner for purposes of MAG's programming and does not affect the calculation of pay adjustments.

Additional explanation of the adjustment methodology is shown on the attached document entitled, "Proposed Formula and Example for Internal Pay Equity Study."

A third attachment, entitled "Compensation Ranges," shows the minimum and maximum pay figures for each position and is included for your convenience.

The Probate Court system currently employs 341 individuals, of which 95 were in one of the excluded categories noted above. Of the 246 employees included in the study, MAG has determined that 139 individuals are currently below their target pay rates relative to their experience in the courts. The cost to correct those salary disparities is approximately \$514,000 per year.

The Budget Committee will meet on December 12 at 5:00 p.m. to review the study. The committee welcomes comments and questions about the proposal at the meeting or any time before December 12.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me with any comments. If you have questions about the data used in the report, please contact Alyce Cariseo at extension 324 or acariseo@ctprobate.gov.

Sincerely,



Paul J. Knierim
Probate Court Administrator
186 Newington Road
West Hartford, CT 06110
(860) 231-2442

28.9 Probate Court Budget Committee Duties and Powers

(a) Subject to the provisions of C.G.S. §45a-84, the Probate Court Budget Committee, annually, shall establish for the courts of probate (1) a compensation and employee benefits plan for employees of the courts of probate, (2) a staffing level for each court of probate, and (3) a budget for each court of probate, which budget shall include the cost of compensation and employee benefits and the miscellaneous office budget.

(b) The Probate Court Budget Committee may establish guidelines to implement its responsibilities under this section.

(c) At any time, the Probate Court Budget Committee may modify the compensation and employee benefits plan, the staffing level for any court of probate, or the budget for any court of probate.

28.10 Compensation and employee benefits plan

(a) The Probate Court Budget Committee shall establish a compensation and employee benefits plan not later than November 30 for the following fiscal year. The plan may establish:

(1) job titles, job descriptions, and minimum qualifications for employees of the courts of probate,

(2) compensation ranges for employees for each job title in the courts of probate,

(3) permitted periodic adjustments within a compensation range, including merit compensation and cost of living adjustments and the timing, frequency, and manner in which adjustment of rates of compensation are made, and

(4) an employee benefits plan.

(b) Absent extraordinary circumstances, rates of compensation of individuals employed by the courts of probate on or before December 31, 2008 shall not be less than rates of compensation listed on the December 31, 2008 verification of employees form, plus any adjustments approved in writing by the administrator in 2009 and 2010.

28.11 Job Analyses

The Probate Court Budget Committee may perform job analyses to assist in establishing job titles, job descriptions, and compensation ranges for employees of the courts of probate. In performing an analysis, the committee shall consider the following factors:

(a) job duties,

(b) minimum educational qualifications,

(c) minimum experience required,

(d) compensation for similar work,

(e) internal equity of compensation among employees of the courts of probate, and

(f) other factors considered relevant by the committee.

28.12 Staffing Levels for Courts of Probate

The Probate Court Budget Committee shall establish an authorized staffing level for each court of probate which may include job titles, number of staff positions within each job title, and temporary and contract positions. In establishing the staffing level for a court of probate, the committee shall consider:

(a) efficiency of operation of the court of probate,

(b) population of the probate district, as established in the annual population estimate by the Department of Public Health for each city or town as of October first of the immediately preceding calendar year,

(c) workload of the court,

(d) types of cases heard by the court, and

(e) other factors the committee considers appropriate including, but not limited to, transitional costs to implement P.A. 09-114.



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DEBRA COHEN
Attorney

June 26, 2013

Governor Dannel P. Malloy
Executive Chambers
State Capitol
Hartford, CT 06106

Office of the Senate Clerk
Room 305
State Capitol
Hartford, CT 06106

Office of the House Clerk
Room 109
State Capitol
Hartford, CT 06106

To His Excellency the Governor and the Honorable General Assembly:

Pursuant to C.G.S. section 45-85, the Probate Court Budget Committee submits this annual report to summarize the savings from Probate Court restructuring and describe key efficiency measures undertaken during fiscal year 2012-13.

Savings from Restructuring

The consolidation of 117 Probate Courts into 54 and implementation of a streamlined financial structure were completed in January 2011. Since then, the savings resulting from restructuring has directly benefited the state budget. The General Fund appropriation for the Probate Courts has been steadily reduced from a high of \$11.25 million before restructuring to \$6.5 million in fiscal year 2012-13, for a total savings of \$8.5 million in the past two fiscal years. In addition, the Probate Court system returned surpluses to the General Fund of \$8.2 million in fiscal year 2010-11 and \$5.8 million in fiscal year 2011-12.

Efficiency Initiatives

The following summary highlights initiatives that are further improving the efficiency of the Probate Court system. The measures emphasize the use of technology to make it easier for the public to use the courts, save staff time and improve the accuracy of court records.

Automation of Reporting for Firearms Background Checks

Using funds from a federal grant, the Probate Courts have collaborated with several other state agencies to automate reporting to the database used by law-enforcement authorities to conduct background checks for persons seeking to buy firearms (known as the National Instant Criminal Background Check System,

or NICS). Under federal law, a person whom a court finds to be mentally ill is ineligible to buy firearms, and states are required to report all mental health adjudications to the NICS database. In Connecticut, mental health adjudications occur in the Probate Courts in conservatorship and commitment proceedings and in the Superior Court in criminal matters. Currently, reporting is conducted by means of a paper intensive and duplicative process in which records are faxed from courts to various state agencies and information is manually entered into the database.

The new system, which will launch in August 2013, establishes a single consolidated state database of all court records. Court computers systems will immediately transmit records to the state database, which, in turn, will electronically transmit the information to the federal NICS database. In addition to reducing the labor involved in complying with the reporting requirement, this automation will reduce the risk of human error and improve both the timeliness and accuracy of the information that the state submits to the NICS database.

Check Scanners

Check scanners enable courts to deposit payments into the Probate Court Administration Fund immediately upon receipt without traveling to a bank. After piloting check scanning technology at several courts, we are equipping all courts with scanners. The technology reduces the staff time and mileage expense associated with trips to the bank and enhances compliance with state policy on the frequency of deposits.

Credit Cards

For the convenience of the public, programming is underway to enable courts to accept credit cards for payment of probate fees. At the direction of the General Assembly, we are modifying the program so that credit card users will be charged for processing fees. This arrangement will save the system an estimated \$250,000 annually.

Accounts Payable Processing for Attorneys and Conservators

Probate Courts are required by statute to appoint attorneys to represent individuals in cases in which their constitutionally protected interests are at stake. Probate Courts also appoint conservators for individuals who are incapable of caring for themselves or managing their affairs. When an individual is indigent and unable to pay for the services of the attorney or conservator, the expense is paid by the Probate Court Administration Fund. Probate Court Regulations impose strict limits on the amount of fees in each case, but serving the needs of thousands of indigent parties will cost an expected \$5.3 million in fiscal year 2013-2014.

Currently, the accounts payable system for attorneys and conservators involves multiple steps and paper invoices. The attorney or conservator mails an invoice to the appointing Probate Court. The court determines whether the invoiced

amount is reasonable for the services performed, certifies the invoice for payment and forwards it by mail to Probate Court Administration. Probate Court Administration verifies compliance with the regulations and enters the invoice into the state's CORE CT accounting system for payment.

Planning is underway to convert to an online paperless invoice system. When the new system is completed, attorneys and conservators will enter their invoices into a secure module of the website. Courts will use the same module to review and certify the invoices, after which the invoices will be immediately available for processing by Probate Court Administration. The system will automatically verify invoices for compliance with the regulations and electronically transfer the information into CORE. The automated workflow process will eliminate manual data entry and improve internal controls.

Digital Document Storage System

Since 2011, Probate Courts have used a digital document storage system to preserve official case records. The system eliminates the expense of preparing and permanently storing cumbersome record books, which, in turn, reduces the need for expensive bricks-and-mortar storage facilities. The digital storage system's sophisticated search tools enable court staff and court users to quickly locate and review records.

In 2013, the Probate Courts and Probate Court Administration extended the use of the digital document storage system to administrative records. Working in collaboration with the Public Records Administrator, Probate Court Administration updated our records retention policies. The use of the digital document storage system will gradually reduce the expense of storing administrative records at an off-site private storage facility.

Kinship and Respite Funds

The Probate Courts administer two related state programs, the Kinship Fund and the Grandparents and Relatives Respite Fund. Through these programs, courts award modest grants to court-appointed guardians to purchase necessities for children in their care. Grants are made for activities such as after school programs, tutoring and summer camp, and participation is limited to guardians who are indigent and not eligible for foster care subsidies from the Department of Children and Families. Applications for grants are administered regionally at 10 Probate Courts.

To streamline processing of applications, Probate Court Administration is developing an additional module for the case management system. The module will eliminate the use of separate databases to track grant applications and avoid the need to re-enter information about the guardian and children that exists in the case management system for purposes of managing the original guardianship case. The module will also improve internal controls by automatically verifying

the eligibility of grant applicants and cross-checking applications system-wide to prevent duplicate grant awards.

Website

The Probate Courts launched a new website, ctprobate.gov, on March 1. The website provides up-to-date information designed to assist court users with cases in the Probate Courts and members of the public seeking general information about the Probate Court system. The website includes fillable forms, information about court procedures and answers to frequently asked questions.

This summer, we will launch an intranet for use by judges, court employees and probate administration staff. The intranet will consolidate key resources, including legal research tools, training materials, internal policies and automated payroll and benefit enrollment systems in a single, secure portal. The portal will ensure that courts have access to all current information and will facilitate prompt internal communications.

Server Monitoring and Off-site Backup

Probate Court Administration has installed a server-monitoring system by which the IT Department can identify potential data corrupting problems on court servers before they occur. This early detection system enables technicians to prevent or mitigate a problem before an intensive server rebuild is necessary to recover lost data.

To further improve data security and plan for disaster recovery, obsolete tape back-up drives are being replaced with off-site back-up technology. Local servers are connected by a secure line to a data storage center. The center is equipped with the latest hardware that stores the data in an easily recoverable manner.

Digital Audio Recording of Hearings

All Probate Courts are now equipped with digital audio recording devices for use during hearings. The devices are portable, enabling judges to carry them to hearings conducted at nursing homes, hospitals and other venues. After a hearing is concluded, court staff download the digital record of the hearing to the computer server, where it is saved in the case management system. The data is easily transferred to a CD for a person who requests a copy of the recording.

Uniform Compensation and Benefits Plan

In January 2011, the budget committee established a uniform compensation and benefits plan for court staff to replace the varied policies of individual courts before restructuring. During fiscal year 2012-13, the budget committee took the final step in transitioning to the system-wide pay and benefits plan by conducting an internal pay equity study. The purpose of the study, which was conducted by a professional compensation consulting firm, was to rectify pay disparities related to length of service in the courts. Recommended compensation adjustments were implemented in June 2013.

Employee Performance Evaluation System

A key component of the compensation plan for court staff is annual merit pay adjustments based on a uniform performance evaluation system. The web based system, which launched on May 1, establishes system-wide job performance criteria on which employees at all courts are evaluated. Annual performance evaluations promote professional development, and merit increases based on those evaluations incentivize employees to do their best work and deliver outstanding customer service.

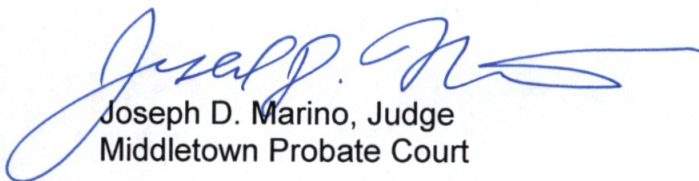
Conclusion

Probate Court restructuring significantly reduced the cost of operating the system and, as a result, the General Fund appropriation necessary to support it. The benefit to the state budget from those cost reductions is ongoing. Moreover, the streamlined court structure has enabled the system to adopt numerous measures to improve customer service and cost effectiveness.

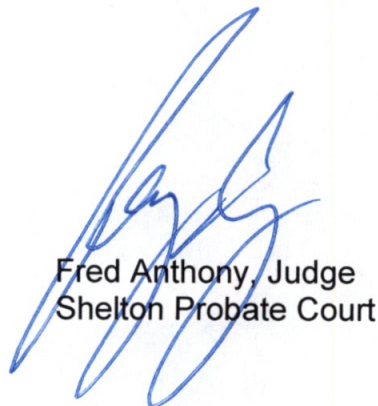
Respectfully submitted,



Paul J. Knierim
Probate Court Administrator
Chair, Probate Court Budget Committee



Joseph D. Marino, Judge
Middletown Probate Court

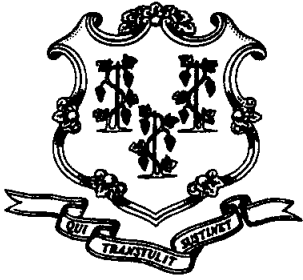


Fred Anthony, Judge
Shelton Probate Court

COPY April 9, 2013

Hon. Paul J. Knierim, Chairman
Probate Court Budget Committee
Office of Probate Court Administrator
186 Newington Road
West Hartford, CT 06110

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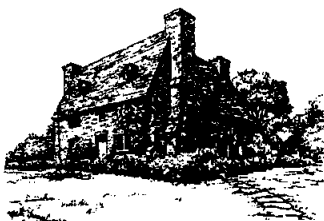


State of Connecticut

PROBATE COURT
DISTRICT OF
MADISON-GUILFORD

8 MEETINGHOUSE LANE
MADISON
CONNECTICUT
06443

JOEL E. HELANDER, JUDGE
MARY J. DiMEOLA, CHIEF CLERK
ROSEMARY L. NOLIN, CLERK
JANET V. STURK, CLERK
PRISCILLA H. GEER, ASST. CLERK
TEL. 203-245-5661
FAX 203-245-5653



1639 Henry Whitfield House

Serving the towns of
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Dear Judge Knierim (Paul),

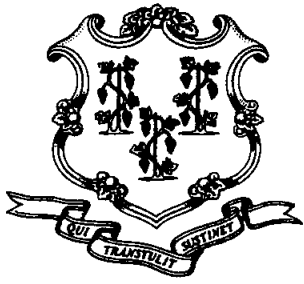
On behalf of the Madison-Guilford Probate Court, I am requesting a staffing level adjustment i.e. a nominal increase from 2.45 FTE (full-time equivalent) to 2.60 FTE.

A similar request was submitted to the Committee on February 4, 2013, but after a lengthy telephone conversation with you a few days afterwards, I withdrew the formal request for possible deferral to April '13, which would allow us time to re-evaluate the proposal. The chief clerk, Mary DiMeola, and myself have worked closely over a two month period to monitor court efficiencies and deficiencies, bringing in a conclusion that supports the proposal.

Two factors prompt our proposal: #1) The thin spread of our allocation of 98 hours/week (2.45 FTE) over a 40-hour work week and #2) serious compromises in workplace security .

In addressing the thin spread of clerks against the full work week, it is first noted that our district is the fourth smallest (by population served) in the Connecticut Probate Court System; that nearly 50% of all court users in our district are pro se parties. The effects of these verified statistics is such that this district has both a diminutive FTE assignment and diminutive weighted work load assignment.

To elaborate on population: In a large population center where a large court may employ 6 or 8 or more clerks, it is far easier to arrange or balance vacation schedules for continuing court efficiency than it is in a small court. This court employs four clerks working a patchwork schedule of hours i.e. 20, 24, 24, and 30 hours, respectively. In the aggregate, these clerks have

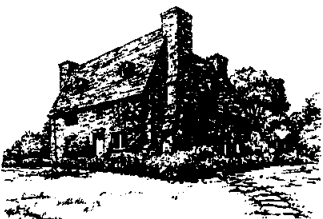


State of Connecticut

PROBATE COURT
DISTRICT OF
MADISON-GUILFORD

8 MEETINGHOUSE LANE
MADISON
CONNECTICUT
06443

JOEL E. HELANDER, JUDGE
MARY J. DiMEOLA, CHIEF CLERK
ROSEMARY L. NOLIN, CLERK
JANET V. STURK, CLERK
PRISCILLA H. GEER, ASST. CLERK
TEL. 203-245-5661
FAX 203-245-5653



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Budget Committee

4/29/2013

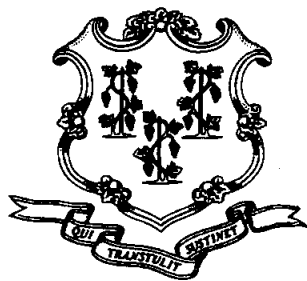
page 2 of 5

approximately 17 weeks of vacation. More often than not, it is not possible for the remaining employees to cover the open hours; and we would hardly ever dare to have two employees on vacation simultaneously because, most assuredly, court operation would be inefficient. Absences due to sickness in a small court often create similar challenges for work week coverage.

To elaborate on pro se parties: In a smaller court such as ours, there is a particular affinity to spend time with pro se parties, especially parties who may be grieving, traumatized, and facing life's trials. Indeed, the mantra heard at the time of court consolidation was *preserving user-friendliness and accessibility*. And indeed, the number of pro se parties in this category in this type of court are great and many. It is no surprise that the level of user-friendliness to pro se parties varies widely from court to court. Our court has distinguished itself for spending the time that is necessary with pro se parties. For this reason alone, an error factor appears to exist in determining weighted workloads, system wide, which has the furthering effect of skewing the assignment of FTE by strict calculation system-wide standard of $1050 \text{ WWL} = 1 \text{ FTE}$.

Our district's 2012 WWL of $2308/1050 = 2.20$ FTE or 88 hours/week, which means that our proposal for a 104 hour work week exceeds the assigned FTE by 15%. In considering that WWLs are only best estimates and subject to myriad unconsidered variables, the proposed 15% increase (or margin of error factor) does not appear inappropriate.

In addressing serious compromises in workplace security, it is quickly noted that our historic Memorial Town Hall at 8 Meetinghouse Lane, where our newly consolidated court is located, was vacated as a town hall in 1994. The only town



State of Connecticut

PROBATE COURT
DISTRICT OF
MADISON-GUILFORD

8 MEETINGHOUSE LANE
MADISON
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office remaining on our main floor is a small office for the associate director of the Madison Youth & Family Services who, by his own report, performs out-of-office work during the greater part of the work week. The downstairs of Memorial Town Hall is occupied by The Charlotte L. Evarts Memorial Archives, a non-profit group that is open only five (5) hours per week, two of which are in the evening. The top floor of the Memorial Town Hall is a large meeting room formerly much used by senior citizens, but now used minimally since the new senior center on Bradley

Road was opened last year. On the adjacent street corner from our building is an abandoned elementary school building. Meetinghouse Lane itself is an odd side street that is not a through road. Taken altogether, the offices of this probate court are relatively isolated, if not insulated.

We continue to believe that the degree of isolation and accordingly, workplace security--- for our court facility is one of the most compromised in the entire Connecticut Probate Court system. To help support this belief, we canvassed each of the other 53 probate court districts either by email or direct telephone contact. (38 responded via email and 15 responded via our telephone inquiry). Here is what we found: that only nine (9) other courts are *not* located in town/city halls with other municipal offices, such as ours; that six (6) of the nine (9) other courts share their building with other full-time offices, which leaves only three (3) other courts that appear to share a similar isolation with our court. They are: Shelton, Niantic Regional, and Greater Manchester. It is further observed that the populations served by Niantic Regional (50,000+) and Greater Manchester (72,000+) warrant a larger staff than ours, which by itself offers a level of increased security because it is easier to maintain at least two working clerks at all times.

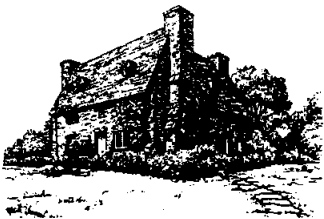


State of Connecticut

PROBATE COURT
DISTRICT OF
MADISON-GUILFORD

8 MEETINGHOUSE LANE
MADISON
CONNECTICUT
06443

JOEL E. HELANDER, JUDGE
MARY J. DiMEOLA, CHIEF CLERK
ROSEMARY L. NOLIN, CLERK
JANET V. STURK, CLERK
PRISCILLA H. GEER, ASST. CLERK
TEL. 203-245-5661
FAX 203-245-5653



1639 Henry Whitfield House

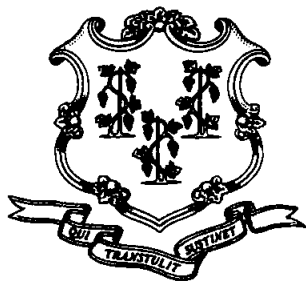
Serving the towns of
Guilford & Madison

It almost goes without saying that when other offices are within earshot or close proximity of a probate court, there is an increased security level. The six probate courts referenced above i.e. those *not* within town/city halls (Region 14, Middletown, Berlin, Hartford, Newington, and Waterbury) share facilities with myriad other offices, including offices for: a manufacturing company, marketing company, worker's compensation branch, law firms, state marshal, rehab center, computer company, building management, state banking commission, physicians, bank, insurance company, certified public accountant, realty companies, various other private offices). This court does not enjoy the security of other full-time offices in its building.

Issues of security in this court are matters of grave concern and have been addressed for two years, beginning with plans for basic countertops, which were finally installed in 2012. In February 2012, we took three action steps in research on the subject:

- 1) Telephone call with Judge Knierim in re: purchase of chemical MACE or similar spray, which he discouraged (2/16)
- 2) Meeting with John Bowers, health director/emergency management coordinator for the Town of Madison, who discussed panic buttons and video cameras (2/23)
- 3) Meeting with Lieutenant Robert Stimpson of the Madison Police Department, who compiled a 7-page document on the subject of "preventative security" for our reference (3/1)

One of the over-riding findings in our research in basic court room security is the basic premise of maintaining two or more clerks in the workplace at all times during the 40-hour work week. While this court does not have an official policy to that



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effect, it strives mightily to achieve it, but is unable to do so. There are simply not enough benchmark hours to make it consistently possible. We have calculated that the addition of six (6) benchmark hours to the work week, as proposed, can make a difference in reaching our basic security goal and also maintain the fullest operating efficiency under our workload.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request a staffing level adjustment i.e. a nominal increase from 2.45 FTE (full-time equivalent) to 2.60 FTE as soon as possible or, in any event, not later than June 3, 2013. The proposal equates to six (6) extra hours per week for a total of 104 hours.

The chief clerk and myself would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this proposal at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Budget Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel E. Helander

jeh/JEH

Office Expense Budget

District:

Branford-North Branford

Budget Committee Meeting June 26, 2013

FY 2014 Budget

Dist No:

35

July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014

No. of Employees (Judge and Court Staff):

4

Description	FY 2014 Original	Proposed Budget Adjustment	FY 2014 Revised	Comments
Educ/Seminars/Mtgs	600	480	1,080	Increase due to Judge attending estates and probate executive committee meetings.
Dues	1,700		1,700	
Subscriptions	1,500		1,500	
Coffee/Tea/Holiday/Special Occasion	320		320	
Other Expenses	500		500	
TOTAL EXPENSES	4,620	480	5,100	

Office Expense Budget

FY 2013 Budget

July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

RCPC:

New Haven

Budget Committee Meeting June 26, 2013

Dist. No.:

55

No. of Employees (Judge and Court Staff):

13

No. of PCO's included in total count above:

4

Description	FY 13 Original	Proposed Budget Adjustment	FY 13 Revised	Comments
Rent and Taxes	59,000		59,000	
Repairs, Maintenance and Utilities	36,000	(5,000)	31,000	Transfer
Office Supplies	10,000		10,000	
Office Furniture and Equipment	8,400	(300)	8,100	Transfer
Postage Equip and Fees	10,000		10,000	
Legal Notices and Ads	4,000		4,000	
Liability Insurance	5,000	5,000	10,000	Timing issue. \$4,600 premium paid in July 2013 related to FY13. Payment of \$5,108.72 due 6/15/13 for FY14.
Education/Seminars/Meetings	1,400		1,400	
Dues	325		325	
Subscriptions	200		200	
Coffee/Tea/Holiday/Special Occasion	1,040		1,040	
Other Expenses	500	300	800	Increase to cover Furniture Co-op membership fee and check printing for kinship/respite accounts
TOTAL EXPENSES	135,865	-	135,865	

Office Expense Budget

FY 2013 Budget

July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

RCPC:

Waterbury

Budget Committee Meeting June 26, 2013

Dist. No.:

58

No. of Employees (Judge and Court Staff):

7

No. of PCO's included in total count above:

2

Description	FY 13 Original	Proposed Budget Adjustment	FY 13 Revised	Comments
Rent and Taxes	-	-	-	
Repairs, Maintenance and Utilities	8,500	(800)	7,700	Budget reallocation; reduced funding from City
Office Supplies	1,000	500	1,500	
Office Furniture and Equipment	-	300	300	
Postage Equip and Fees	-	650	650	
Legal Notices and Ads	2,000	500	2,500	
Liability Insurance	-	1,000	1,000	
Education/Seminars/Meetings	1,000	(700)	300	
Dues	175	(35)	140	
Subscriptions	600	(100)	500	
Coffee/Tea/Holiday/Special Occasion	560	-	560	
Other Expenses	500	(200)	300	
TOTAL EXPENSES	14,335	1,115	15,450	

PCA Policy Manual 301 NEW HIRES

POLICY

A judge may hire a new employee to fill a vacant position that is authorized under the court's benchmark staffing level. A new employee must meet the minimum qualifications set forth in the job description for the position. The judge shall determine the employee's rate of pay in accordance with the compensation plan.

The judge or chief clerk is responsible for obtaining all necessary documentation from the new employee and submitting the material to PCA as set forth below.

The authority to fill a vacant position may be suspended by a hiring freeze. A hiring freeze supersedes authorized staffing levels.

GENERAL INFORMATION

A judge has the authority to hire new employees to fill vacant authorized positions. In exercising this discretion, the judge must comply with the following budget committee policies:

First, the judge may hire a new employee only if the position and the court's overall staffing level fall within the budget committee's benchmark staffing level authorization. Transitional staffing level authorizations, which the budget committee adopted to avoid the mandatory layoff of incumbent staff members working at courts as of December 31, 2009, do not apply to new hires.

Second, the budget committee establishes job descriptions that include specific minimum qualifications for each position within the probate court system. The judge must verify that a candidate meets the minimum qualifications before extending an offer to hire the prospective employee.

Third, the judge must determine the rate of pay for a new employee in accordance with the budget committee's compensation plan. The budget committee establishes the compensation plan annually and periodically issues guidelines regarding specific implementation issues. The budget committee also establishes a uniform benefits plan for all court staff. Variations from the benefits plan are not permitted.

Fourth, new hires external to the probate system shall be hired at the minimum rate of pay for the applicable position. If, however, the candidate possesses qualifications, experience and training that significantly exceed the requirements for the position, the judge may, with prior written approval from the Probate Court Administrator, hire the candidate at a higher rate, not to exceed 10% above of the minimum for the position.

PROCEDURES

A new hire checklist is attached to this policy.

C.G.S. § 31-71f requires an employer to advise employees, in writing, at the time of hiring, of the rate of pay, hours of employment and wage payment schedules. A judge hiring a new employee should provide an offer of employment letter that outlines the terms of employment. A sample letter is attached.

It is also recommended that courts adopt a confidentiality policy. If the court has a confidentiality policy, new employees should be asked to sign an acknowledgement to confirm receipt and agreement to its terms. A sample confidentiality policy with an acknowledgement form is attached. The original document should be retained at the court.

Upon the new employee's acceptance of the job offer, the court should immediately contact the PCA Financial Services Department, which will send the court a New Hire Kit. The kit should be provided to the prospective new employee as soon as possible. (A judge or chief clerk may also request the kit in advance to have on hand during the interview process.) The kit includes the following forms:

- Employee Data Sheet
- Form I-9
- Federal Form W-4
- Form CT-W4
- Direct Deposit Form
- MyPaychex Procedures and Instructions Guide
- Designation of Retirement System-Tier-Plan Beneficiary (Form CO-931p)
- Policy on Acceptable Use of Computer Systems and E-Mail
- Computer Access Authorization Form
- Policies related to employee benefits
- Payroll Schedule
- Information on Deferred Compensation 457 Plan
- Information on Employee Assistance Program

Employment must commence on the first business day of a pay period. The Computer Access Authorization Form must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the hire date. Within two business days of the new employee's first day of work, the court must submit all of the other documents listed above to the PCA Financial Services Department, together with a copy of the signed offer letter indicating acceptance of the position. Copies of the forms should be maintained at the court.

Court staff members, other than temporary employees, who work 20 or more hours per week are eligible for health insurance. Coverage is effective the first day of the month following date of hire. If the employee is enrolling a spouse or dependent(s), the appropriate supporting documentation must be received before the coverage is activated. If the employee is eligible for health insurance coverage, the employee must enroll online within 31 days of the date of

hire. Enrollment instructions are included in the MyPaychex Procedures and Instructions Guide.

The judge or chief clerk should provide the new employee with a general orientation regarding the position. The New Hire Checklist contains a list of items to cover in this orientation. The orientation should also cover the manner in which employment, attendance and benefit policies are handled within the court.

Questions on this policy: Contact PCA Financial Services Department at (860) 231-2442

Forms for this policy: New Hire Checklist
Sample Offer of Employment Letter
Sample Confidentiality Policy
See Policy No. 701 for Computer Access Authorization Form

DRAFT

Use this checklist to obtain necessary documentation for new employees. A list of suggested orientation topics is also included.

NEW HIRE INFORMATION

Name: _____ Date of Hire (mm/dd/yyyy): _____

Supervisor: _____

Before making offer

- Obtain resume or other form of application
- Provide job title and description
- Check references

Two weeks prior to hire date

- Submit Computer Access Authorization Form to PCA **Financial** Department

Forms to obtain on first day of employment

- Employee Data Sheet (payroll setup)
- Form I-9 completed, proof of citizenship status provided with original documentation
- Tax forms
 - Form W-4 (Federal)
 - Form CT-W4 (State)
- Direct Deposit Form with voided check attached
- Designation of Retirement System-Tier-Plan-Beneficiary (CO-931p), if applicable

Orientation topics

- Court hours and employee's scheduled work week
- Holiday schedule
- Pay period (bi-weekly schedule)
- Section 218 Agreement classification coverage
- Exempt or non-exempt status
- Timesheet procedures
- Mileage and parking expense reimbursement
- Clerk's Manual*
- PCA Policy Manual*
- Confidentiality of information
- Probate website (jud.ct.gov/probate)

Revised 07/01/2013

Benefits

- Eligibility: full-time, part-time, or temporary
 - Eligible for all benefits
 - Eligible for prorated benefits
 - Not eligible for benefits
- Paid Time Off
 - Vacation
 - Sick time
 - Personal time
 - Holidays
 - Inclement weather
 - Other leave
- Health Insurance Coverage
 - Eligibility date
- Deferred Compensation 457 Plan
 - Eligibility date
 - Brochure explaining investment options
- Retirement Plan
 - 1% or 3.75% post-tax contribution

Other

- Parking
- Building keys and access
- Telephone System
 - Local and long distance telephone calls
 - Fax machine and speed dial information
- Acknowledgement and receipt of Policy No. 701, Acceptable Use of Computer Systems and E-Mail
- Training
 - Sexual harassment training for new judges, chief clerks, deputy chief clerks, and lead probate court officers

Signatures:

I have discussed these items with, provided materials to, and received all required documents from, the new employee.

Judge or Chief Clerk

Date

I certify that I have received the documents, forms, and information listed above.

New employee

Date

Revised 07/01/2013

SAMPLE OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER
(Print on Letterhead)

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Name):

On behalf of the (name of Probate District), we are pleased to extend our offer for the position of (title). The position is (xx) hours per week, and the hourly rate is \$xx.xx, paid on a biweekly basis.

As we have agreed, your starting date will be (day of week), (month, day, year). The position hours are (x:xx) a.m. until (x:xx) p.m. with (xx) minutes for an unpaid lunch.

[Include this paragraph only if employee's standard work week is 20 or more hours.]

Your benefits package will consist of medical and dental insurance, a deferred compensation 457 plan, and retirement benefits. Enrollment is subject to applicable waiting periods and any requirements specified in each plan. You will be entitled to vacation and other benefits more specifically defined in policies provided to you.

[Include this paragraph if the court has an introductory period.] There will be an introductory period of (indicate length of time). Before the expiration of that (indicate length of time) time period, you will be notified whether or not you have successfully completed the introductory period.

Please note that C.G.S. § 45a-21 provides that court employees serve at the pleasure of the judge. This means that your employment at the court can be terminated at any time with or without cause.

If you wish to accept this offer, please sign this letter below and return it to me as soon as possible. We look forward to having you join our staff. Please call (clerk) or me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

(Name)

Judge

I hereby accept this offer of employment in accordance with the terms outlined above.

Signature

Date

Revised: 01/01/2013

PROBATE COURT CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

POLICY

The purpose of this confidentiality policy is to prevent improper disclosure of information. This policy applies to all employees, temporary staff and interns (“employees”).

GENERAL INFORMATION

For purposes of this policy, the term “confidential case information” means any data about a matter at the court that is confidential under Connecticut law. The term “personal identifying information” means: a court employee’s date of birth, motor vehicle operator’s license number, Social Security number, other government issued identification number except for a juris, license or permit number otherwise made available to the public by a government agency, health insurance identification number, financial account number, security code, personal identification number or the maiden name of the employee’s mother.

Employees may have direct or indirect access to confidential case information and personal identifying information in the course of performing work activities. Employees shall not disclose confidential case information except as provided by law. Employees shall not disclose personal identifying information about other court employees except as required to perform specific job duties.

The prohibitions on disclosure of confidential case information and personal identifying information apply to all written, electronic or oral interactions, including, but not limited to, letters, memos, emails, instant messaging, text messaging, faxes or other written correspondence and any type of verbal communication. In addition, employees shall not copy or reproduce confidential case information or personal identifying information except as necessary to perform specific job duties.

PROCEDURES

The court will provide a copy of this policy to each new employee at the time of hiring. Employees are required to sign the acknowledgement below to confirm receipt of the policy and agreement to its provisions.

Violation of this confidentiality agreement may result in disciplinary action, which may include termination from employment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above Confidentiality Policy. I agree to abide by all of the provisions set forth above.

Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Witness: _____ Date: _____
Judge or Chief Clerk

Date Issued: 07/01/2012

DRAFT