

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

## September 12, 2018

Attendees: Judges Wright, Streit-Kefalas, Jalowiec, Riordan, Magistrali, Marino, Keeney, Blick, Becker, Randich, Keeney, Truppa, DeGennaro, Brandt, Schad and Probate Court Administrator Knierim.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:45 a.m.

2. **Approval of the Minutes:**

A motion was made to amend the minutes to remove the names of the Committee Chairs following the name of the Committees. Motion passed. The minutes from the June 13, 2018 meeting were approved as amended.

3. **Correspondence:**

None.

4. **Treasurer's Report:**

Judge Magistrali reported that there was a balance of \$12,849.80 at the end of the last fiscal year. This balance was returned to the Probate Court Administration Fund. The budget for the current year is \$35,000.00. The only current expense is \$60.00 for a retirement gift for Tom Gaffey.

5. **Committee Reports:**

Continuing Education

Judge Becker reported that the next continuing education program is scheduled for September 18, 2018 and will cover children's matters. There will be a Judges Institute on October 18, 2018 and the next continuing education program will be November 27, 2018 and cover decedents' estates.

Ethics

No report.

Legislative

No report.

Nominating

Judge Marino reported that the nominating committee recommends the following slate for the Executive Committee members: Judge Chadwick, Judge Streit-Kefalas and Judge McNamara. Judge Anthony has agreed to be nominated to serve another two years on the Budget Committee.

Planning

No report.

Procedures Review

No report.

Public Information

No report.

Hospitality

Judge DeGennaro reported that there will be a Social Event for Judges on September 20, 2018 in West Haven from 5:30-9:00 p.m. This event is to be held in honor of the late Judge Cravinho.

Statistics

No report.

**6. Comments of the Probate Court Administrator**

Judge Knierim stated that the next legislative session is critical for the budget for FY20 and FY21. It is imperative that funding be restored to the probate system. The FY18 budget basically broke even, based on stronger than expected fee revenue and careful expense management. The budget numbers for FY20 and FY21 have been submitted to OPM. He noted that OPM permitted the proposed budget numbers to include compensation increases for court staff. This is the first time in four years that OPM permitted raises in the budget proposal. It provides a glimmer of hope, but we won't know if raises will be approved until the legislature actually adopts a budget.

The FY20 proposed budget request is \$7.5 million and the FY21 proposed request is \$12.5 million. This \$5 million difference results from a drawdown of the funds in the PCA fund in FY20 and no draw down in FY21.

Judge Knierim requested input on a proposal to change the attorney compensation rates. Currently attorneys are compensated at a rate of \$75.00 for the first hour of hearing time and \$50.00 for additional hearing time and other work. The proposal is to simplify the system and compensate all work at a flat rate of \$54.00 per hour. This rate represents a budget neutral number. Suggestions were made to increase the proposed flat rate to \$55.00, that it may be better received. It was also suggested that how this proposal is presented to attorneys is key to its success and that it should be presented to some attorneys to see how it is received.

Judge Knierim announced that random audits of conservator accounts are starting this month. There are five specially trained CPAs statewide that will perform the audits. The plan is to perform a limited number of audits on accounts that have been filed but not yet scheduled for a hearing in order to cause the least amount of disruption. If audited, a conservator may charge for her time in complying with the audit. The results of the audit will be presented to the court but the results in no way control what the judge ultimately decides on the accounting.

At the Judges Institute scheduled for October, Judge Knierim is planning on scheduling an hour-long discussion on Unsupervised Probate.

**7. Comments of the President-Judge**

Judge Wright had no comments. Judge Keeney thanked all present for their support during his tenure as Probate Judge.

**8. Other Business to come before the Executive Committee**

None.

**9. Adjournment:**

A motion to adjourn was made.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Leah Schad  
Recording Secretary