



CONNECTICUT PROBATE ASSEMBLY

Regular Meeting of the Executive Committee

September 13, 2023

9:45 a.m.

Office of the Probate Court Administrator

186 Newington Rd.

West Hartford, CT 06110

Attendees: Judges Barrett, Berkenstock, Brandt, Ceneviva, Daly, Darby, Gardner Riordan, Hoyle, Lewis, Maxham, McCaffrey, McGrath, Randich and also Probate Court Administrator Beverly Streit-Kefalas and Chief Counsel Heather L. Dostaler.

1. Call to Order:

Judge Daly called the meeting to order at 9:50 a.m.

2. Approval of the Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of July 12, 2023 was made by Judge Darby, seconded by Judge Brandt, and unanimously approved.

3. Correspondence:

Judges Daly and Streit-Kefalas reported no correspondence for the Executive Committee or Assembly.

4. Committee Reports:

Continuing Education

Judge Lewis reported that the committee last met on August 16, 2023 and continued to plan for the two upcoming seminars to be held on September 20th and October 25th at Central Connecticut State University. Topics at the September 20th Probate Assembly will cover Child Support from AG's office, DCF Children's Matters and SIJS and Immigration Law. A panel of judges will present at the October 25th Assembly on assisting parties with Limited English Proficiency. There will be a legislative update as well as a discussion on jurisdiction and tools for judges as managers. The committee is working on the joint CBA/Probate seminar for November 14th at the Aqua Turf. Topics to be covered are Capacity, Accountings, Elder Abuse, Trust Modification and Fiduciary and Attorney Fees. The committee's next meeting will be on October 18, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. in the PCA Library.

Ethics

Judge Brandt reported that the Committee will next meet September 14, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. in the PCA Library.

Legislative

No Report

Nominating

No Report.

Planning

No Report. The Committee will be meeting on October 3, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. in the PCA Library.

Procedures Review

Judge Berkenstock reported that the committee met on September 11, 2023 and had a very productive meeting. Corrections are being made to the PC-6607 and additional language added to PC-960. The committee is discussing a new petition pursuant to new jurisdiction under Public Act 23-161 that takes effect in July 2024. The Act designates Probate Courts as the venue to seek a removal of a financial hold. All are encouraged to send form change suggestions to the Committee or PCA.

Public Information

No Report. The next meeting is October 5, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. in the PCA Library.

Security

No Report.

5. Comments of the Probate Court Administrator:

Judge Streit-Kefalas reported on the following:

- a. PCA is already engaged with legislators about the upcoming short session. Focus will be on the name change filing fee and the general fund appropriation that has been seriously impacted by the name change fee and health insurance parity bill.
- b. Clerks Roundtables throughout the state have been scheduled for the fall, the first one is set for September 29, 2023 and Judges are encouraged to attend.
- c. Court visits are ongoing with focus on conservator and guardian reviews. Judge Streit-Kefalas reported that every court should enhance its attention on and oversight of these mandatory reviews. The National Center for State Courts annually collects court data, including from the Probate Courts and review of adult guardianships and conservatorships is a key area of focus.
- d. The ethics opinion recently shared with judges regarding political activities has much relevant information but the prohibition on political contributions does not apply to Probate Judges in Connecticut.

6. Comments of the President Judge:

Judge Daly raised the issue about civility in the court that she touched on in her recent letter in the Probate Press. The judges discussed their opinions on the use of robes by Probate Judges and the issue of robe-itis. Judges can wear robes as they see fit. Judge Streit-Kefalas encouraged all to get back out into their communities to engage with the public. That engagement is very impactful. Judge Daly also commented on the recent rise in COVID cases and inquired about COVID sick time. Judge Streit-Kefalas confirmed that the PCA COVID leave policy expired with the ending of the public health emergency.

7. Other Business to come before the Executive Committee:

Judge McGrath inquired about the special election procedure in connection with judges aging out of the systems. Judge Streit-Kefalas explained the procedure.

8. Adjournment:

Judge Darby moved and Judge Hoyle seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Hon. Kathleen N. Maxham, Recording Secretary