Regular Meeting of the Probate Court Budget Committee Minutes

Wednesday, December 6, 2023 5 p.m.

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

The meeting was called to order by Probate Court Administrator and Chair Beverly K. Streit-Kefalas at 5:08 p.m.

Members Present

Probate Court Administrator and Chair Beverly K. Streit-Kefalas, Judge Fred J. Anthony, and Judge Michael R. Brandt.

Public Comment and Correspondence

There was no public comment. There was correspondence from Judge Foye Smith (PD01), Judge Evelyn Daly (PD10) and Judge John McGrath (PD28).

Remarks by the Chair

Chair Streit-Kefalas remarked the December Budget Committee meeting agenda is to review budgeted compensation adjustments for court staff effective 01/01/2024. She reported that this fiscal year's probate fee revenue is slightly above budget, but is not quite as strong as recent prior years. Chair Streit-Kefalas reminded the committee of the reduction in the General Fund appropriation to \$81,024 for FY24; however, the revenue sweep was suspended for FY23 to help with the increased expense in health insurance premiums, compensation adjustments, and other funding changes.

Compensation Plan Adjustment

Chair Streit-Kefalas turned over the meeting to Lisa Hansen, PCA Director of Financial Services, who reported on the July 2023 compensation adjustments for eligible employees. Chair Streit-Kefalas proposed a 3.0% cost of living adjustment (COLA) effective for the pay period commencing December 23, 2023 to be included in the January 11, 2024 paycheck. Judge Anthony moved to approve the proposed COLA which motion Judge Brandt seconded. After discussion, there was a call for a vote and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Streit-Kefalas also proposed a one-time compensation compression adjustment of 3.5% to adjust hourly rates in response to the state of Connecticut minimum wage changes. The one-time adjustment would be effective for the same pay period and paycheck as the COLA. Judge Brandt moved to approve the one-time compression adjustment, which Judge Anthony seconded. After a call for discussion, Chair Streit-Kefalas called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2025 Office Expense Budget

Chair Streit-Kefalas submitted the following budget assumptions for the Office Budget Expenses for FY25:

Probate Court Budget Committee Minutes of the December 6, 2023 Meeting Page 2 of 2

Education / Seminars / Meetings \$600 per district

\$600 per Regional Children's Probate Court + \$200

per family specialist

• Dues Other = \$25 per person

Subscriptions
Court proposal, subject to \$1,500 max.

• Other Expenses \$500 per district

Judge Anthony moved to approve the FY25 Office Budget Expenses for all courts and Judge Brandt seconded. After vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

Staffing Level Adjustment

Chair Streit-Kefalas recommended an increase in benchmark staffing level of 2.5 hours (.1 FTE) for the Chief Clerk I position in Madison-Guilford (PD34) and 4 hours (.1 FTE) for the Clerk position in Branford-North Branford (PD35). These hours had been approved on a temporary basis for an extended period of time and the proposal is approve them as permanent hours. Judge Brandt moved to approve the recommended changes and Judge Anthony seconded. After discussion, and vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Streit-Kefalas then addressed the correspondence submitted by Hartford Probate Court Judge Foye Smith requesting an increase to the court's staffing level. Chair Streit-Kefalas is recommending a staffing level adjustment of an additional 3.0 FTE (1.0 Clerk, 2.0 Assistant Clerk). Judge Brandt moved and Judge Anthony seconded approval of the change. After discussion, Chair Streit-Kefalas called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

At this time, Chair Streit-Kefalas is not recommending approval of the requests from the Farmington Regional and the Windham-Colchester Probate Courts. There was discussion by the committee for future review of overall benchmark staffing levels.

Other Business

None.

Set 2024 Meeting Schedule

The Committee set the meeting schedule for the 2024 calendar year as follows: March 6, 2024; June 5, 2024; and December 4, 2024.

Adjournment

With no further business before the committee, Chair Streit-Kefalas called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was moved by Judge Anthony and seconded by Judge Brandt. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Cathie Topper HR Manager and Senior Financial Analyst