

Probate Court Budget Committee

Special Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

4:00pm

Call-In Meeting hosted by the Office of the Probate Court Administrator
186 Newington Road, West Hartford, CT

The meeting convened at 4:00 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was conducted as a call-in meeting only to ensure social distancing to protect against COVID-19 and to allow all courts to offer public comment.

In attendance: Judge Beverly Streit-Kefalas, Probate Court Administrator and Chair, Judge Joseph Marino (by telephone), Judge Fred Anthony (by telephone)

Remarks by the Chair

Judge Beverly Streit-Kefalas expressed gratitude and appreciation for the commitment and dedication of every member of the Probate Court community for continuing court operations in these challenging times. The Special Meeting of the Budget Committee is convened to address the COVID-19 Continuity of Operations Plan: Compensation and Benefits. She noted that Public Comment will follow the presentation. Inquiries raised in Public Comment will be collated and responded to after the meeting.

In response to the continuing declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies by Governor Lamont due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Judge Streit-Kefalas summarized the proposed emergency compensation plan for the pay periods of 04/18/2020 to 05/01/2020 and 05/02/2020 to 05/15/2020. Materials were distributed via electronic mail to all judges and court staff prior to the meeting.

Specifically, the summary of the emergency compensation plan for the next two pay periods is proposed as follows:

- Judges shall maintain the normal schedule of operations for the Probate Courts whenever reasonably possible.
- Courts shall continue to be closed to in-person access by the public.
- Court staff members, other than temporary employees and rehired retirees, will continue to be paid their regularly scheduled hours from April 18, 2020 to May 15, 2020 if they adhere to the work schedule established by the Judge.
- Court staff members will accrue COVID-19 personal time equal to 25% of actual hours worked in the Probate Court up to a maximum accrual of 40 hours. Accrued COVID-19 personal time will lapse if it is not used by June 30, 2022. COVID-19 personal time can

only be taken with the advance approval of the judge. There will be no payment for unused COVID-19 personal time.

- Staff will continue to have uninterrupted health insurance coverage.
- If court staff members do not adhere to the work schedule established by the Judge, then they may be eligible for leave as provided in Policy 903.
- Temporary employees and rehired retirees will be paid for actual hours worked in the Probate Court.

The Motion was made by Judge Anthony to approve the emergency compensation plan as presented. Judge Marino seconded the motion.

Public Comment and Correspondence

Public comment was opened and inquired by roll call to court personnel in each individual court.

Discussion on the motion

Judge Marino remarked that the proposal strikes a good balance of continuing court operations with discretion to the judges to establish work schedules. Judge Marino expressed approval that the proposal covers two pay periods and recommends that the policy should be revisited shortly before May 15th.

Judge Anthony remarked that the proposal enables the judges and chief clerks to make decisions that will ensure the continuity of court operations. Judge Anthony stressed that the courts must remain open and in operation and must continue to provide critical services to the public.

Vote was called by Judge Streit-Kefalas and all voted in favor of the emergency compensation plan as presented.

Motion to Adjourn was made by Judge Anthony. Judge Marino seconded.

Adjourned at 4:24 p.m.