

Probate Court Budget Committee
Special Meeting
Minutes
Wednesday, May 13, 2020

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

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Judge Beverly Streit-Kefalas. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was conducted as a call-in meeting only to ensure social distancing to protect against the spread of COVID-19 and to allow all courts to offer public comment.

Present: Judge Beverly Streit-Kefalas, Probate Court Administrator and Chair, Judge Fred Anthony (by telephone), Judge Philip A. Wright, Jr. (by telephone)

New Business

Remarks by the Chair

Judge Beverly Streit-Kefalas expressed appreciation for the dedication and commitment of the Probate Court community for continuing essential services of the Probate Courts during the public health and civil preparedness emergencies.

Emergency Compensation Plan

The Special Meeting of the Budget Committee is convened to address the COVID-19 Continuity of Operations Plan: Compensation and Benefits. Judge Streit-Kefalas noted that Public Comment will follow the presentation. Inquiries raised in Public Comment will be noted, collated and may be 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 May 16, 2020 to May 29, 2020 and May 30, 2020 to June 12, 2020.

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

- Court staff members, other than temporary employees and rehired retirees, who work at least fifty (50%) percent of their regularly scheduled hours during each pay period,

will be compensated for the balance of their regularly scheduled hours under the C19 Facility compensation code.

- Court staff members, other than temporary employees and rehired retirees, who do not work at least fifty (50%) percent of their regularly scheduled hours during each pay period are not eligible for the C19 Facility compensation. Court staff will be compensated for actual time worked at the court and may use available personal time and vacation time for the balance of their regularly scheduled hours, with the advance approval of the judge. COVID-19 Personal Time cannot be used during these pay periods.
- Court 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 and/or under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).
- Temporary employees and rehired retirees will be paid for actual hours worked in the Probate Court.

Public comment

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

Motion

Following public comment, a Motion was made by Judge Wright to approve the emergency compensation plan as presented. Judge Anthony seconded the motion.

Discussion on the motion

Judge Anthony remarked that he is in favor of the proposal and that the proposal is a logical progression of the emergency compensation plan as we move towards return to full capacity. Judge Anthony noted that judges have the discretion to establish work schedules as the courts continue to provide essential services to the public. Judge Anthony is in favor of the plan covering the next two pay periods to allow for proper management of staff scheduling.

Judge Wright remarked that he is in favor of the proposal and that with careful and thoughtful management of court scheduling and adherence to public health guidance and guidance from the ReOpen CT advisory committee, we can protect the health and safety of court staff and begin our return to full court operations.

Judge Streit-Kefalas remarked that the proposal supports three important goals: the protection of the physical health of court staff, the protection of the fiscal health of court staff, and the protection of the overall health of our Probate Court system and the critical services we provide to the public.

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

Next Meeting of the Probate Court Budget Committee

Judge Streit-Kefalas proposed that the regular meeting of the Probate Court Budget Committee scheduled for June 3, 2020 be rescheduled to June 10, 2020 to allow for the benefit of experience from this proposal and from up-to date information regarding the public health emergency. All members agreed.

Adjournment

A Motion to Adjourn was made by Judge Wright and seconded by Judge Anthony. The meeting was adjourned at 4:19 p.m.

The next meeting of the Probate Court Budget Committee will be on June 10, 2020 at 4:00 P.M. and will be a call-in meeting only.