

Probate Court Budget Committee

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 15, 2016
5:00 p.m.

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

The meeting was convened at 5:06 p.m.

In attendance: Judge Paul Knierim, Probate Court Administrator and Chair, Judge Joseph Marino and Judge Fred Anthony

Public Comment and Correspondence

Letter from Pat Saviano, Chief Clerk, Danbury Probate Court and President of CAPC

Remarks by Judge Knierim

Judge Knierim thanked Pat Saviano and Evan Brunetti for their efforts to keep court staff up to date on developments with the state budget and for leading the CAPC advocacy work at the legislature. He credited court staff and judges for achieving restoration of general fund support to the Probate Courts in an extremely challenging fiscal crisis.

Judge Knierim indicated his agreement with CAPC that implementation of the second phase of the compensation study should continue to be on the budget committee's agenda until completed.

Fiscal Year 2016 Office Budget Adjustment

Andrea King presented a proposed adjustment to the office budget for the Newington Probate Court for fiscal year 2015-16 necessitated by use of court funds to pay certain expenses that are typically paid by PCA. The issue is addressed by reallocating funds within the court's budget and a net \$18 increase.

Judge Marino made a motion to approve the proposed office budget adjustment. Judge Anthony seconded the motion. Judge Knierim called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Compensation Plan

In the absence of available funds for compensation increases for court staff, judges or PCA employees in fiscal year 2016-17, Judge Knierim explained that the only committee action necessary is to extend the 2015 merit pay amounts for employees

who are subject to the 2% cap under Policy 101 (these are employees who are at the maximum rates for their positions). The action is necessary to prevent pay cuts for employees in this category because their merit pay amounts would otherwise terminate on June 30. The extension does not increase the pay of any employee and has the effect of continuing merit pay amounts for employees subject to the cap in the same position as employees not subject to the cap.

Judge Marino made a motion to extend, but not increase, the 2015 merit pay amounts for court employees subject to the 2% cap. Judge Anthony seconded the motion. Judge Knierim called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Staffing Levels

The committee previously endorsed the procedure under which courts must contact Judge Knierim or Andrea King before filling vacancies. Judge Knierim reported that PCA has worked with courts to use available authorized staff time resulting from vacancies to move towards more full-time positions. The objective of the policy is to reduce the cost of benefits by reducing the number of benefits eligible part-time positions through attrition.

Other Business

Lead Probate Court Officer and Probate Court Officer Job Descriptions

Judge Knierim presented a proposed amendment to the job description for PCOs to reflect the supervision that is provided by the lead PCO, where applicable. Following discussion, Judge Anthony made a motion to amend both the Lead PCO and PCO job descriptions to specify that a Lead PCO provides supervision the work of PCOs in the clinical field. Judge Marino seconded the motion. Judge Knierim called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Qualified Transportation Account

PCA has explored adding a qualified transportation account benefit for employees that would permit pre-tax treatment of certain commuting expenses and intends to pursue the initiative after addressing pressing issues associated with the budget cuts.

Short-Term and Long-Term Disability Insurance

Andrea King reported that employee interest in the newly available disability insurance benefit (the cost of which is paid by employees who opt in) was high. In total, 88 employees enrolled in short-term disability insurance and 54 employees enrolled in long-term disability insurance.

Schedule Next Meeting

The committee scheduled its next meeting on December 7, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.