

# **Probate Court Budget Committee**

Meeting Minutes

June 26, 2013

4:00 p.m.

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

The meeting was convened at 4:11 p.m.

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

## **Public Comment and Correspondence**

The committee received the following correspondence:

Letter from Kevin M. Murphy, AFSCME

Email from Judge Sydney Elkin, West Hartford Probate Court

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

## **Remarks by the Chair**

Judge Knierim indicated that he expects that the Judicial Branch will authorize pay increases for branch employees effective on July 1, 2013 and on January 1, 2014, which aligns with the planned increases for Probate Court employees in the July 11, 2013 payroll (covering the June 22 to July 5 payroll period) and the January 11, 2014 payroll (covering the December 21 to January 3 payroll period). He stated that he would reconvene the committee to adjust implementation dates if for any reason the branch approves earlier implementation of increases.

## **Draft Budget Committee Report**

The committee reviewed and approved the proposed draft annual report to the Governor and General Assembly. The report is included with the budget committee June 26, 2013 meeting materials on the website at [www.ctprobate.gov](http://www.ctprobate.gov).

## **Staffing Level Adjustment Proposal**

Judge Helander of the Madison-Guilford Probate Court gave a presentation concerning his request to increase the benchmark staffing level for his court. His proposal and the

reasons for it are detailed in his letter of April 19, 2013, which is included in the meeting materials on the website.

The committee discussed various aspects of Judge Helander's presentation, including his suggestion that the court should have a minimum of two employees on duty at all times for security reasons. Members of the committee commented that the first priority in addressing security concerns should be facilities modifications that prevent members of the public from entering staff areas, rather than increasing staffing levels, and noted that the adoption of a policy of two employees on duty would have staffing ramifications for several other courts.

Judge Knierim offered a motion that the committee not adjust the court's benchmark staffing level. Judge Anthony seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

At Judge Anthony's suggestion, Judge Knierim will assist Judge Helander in working with the two towns served by the court to improve on-site security.

### **Office Budget Adjustment Proposals**

The committee reviewed the following three proposed office budget adjustments:

New Haven Regional Children's Probate Court (FY 2013): Internal transfers with no net impact on the total office budget to make funds available for payment of insurance premium due before the end of the fiscal year.

Waterbury Regional Children's Probate Court (FY 2013): Internal transfers and an increase in the total office budget necessitated by the city of Waterbury's decision to withdraw support for children's court expenses.

Branford-North Branford (FY2014): Increase seminars by \$480 to cover the expense of Judge Forgione's attendance at meetings of the CBA Estates and Probate Section Executive Committee. Judge Forgione is the Probate Assembly's designated liaison to the executive committee.

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

### **Draft of Policy on Compensation of New Hires**

Judge Knierim asked that the committee defer discussion of a possible policy amendment dealing with the compensation of new hires so that PCA can supply additional analysis about new hires initially employed after January 2011.

### **Other Business**

None

**Schedule Next Meeting**

The committee's next meeting will be on November 6, 2013 at 4:00 PM.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:07 PM.