

Probate Court Budget Committee

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 16, 2017
4:00 p.m.

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

The meeting was convened at 4:03 p.m.

In attendance: Judge Paul Knierim, Probate Court Administrator and Chair, with Judges Joseph Marino and Fred Anthony participating by phone.

Public Comment and Correspondence

Letter from Judge Owen Eagan, West Hartford Probate Court

Lori Errico, Chief Clerk, West Hartford Probate Court

Staffing Adjustments

Three courts (Glastonbury-Hebron, Milford-Orange and West Hartford) seek to shift a court assistant position to assistant clerk. In addition, West Hartford seeks to shift an assistant clerk position to clerk. None of the requests increase overall benchmark staffing of the courts.

The West Hartford Probate Court also seeks authority, if the staffing level adjustment is approved, to hire an employee from another court into the clerk position at the employee's current rate of pay. The employee's current rate of pay is approximately \$3.00 per hour over the maximum for the clerk position. Under the proposal, the employee would not be eligible for a pay increase until the maximum for the position is higher than the current pay rate.

Judge Knierim recommended the staffing level adjustments for all three courts but recommended that the committee deny West Hartford's request to hire a transfer employee above the maximum for the position.

Judge Knierim noted that the committee has approved similar changes to the staff allocation at other courts. The change will help address workload issues because the transition from court assistant to assistant clerk will provide each court with an additional staff member who is authorized to sign documents.

Judge Knierim explained that he opposes West Hartford's proposed pay rate for the transfer employee because it is contrary to Policy 101, which provides that a transfer employee who accepts a position with a lower pay range than the employee's current

position is paid the lower of the employee's current pay rate and the maximum for the new position.

Judge Marino made a motion to approve the staffing level adjustments for the three courts but to deny West Hartford's request for an exception to Policy 101. Judge Anthony seconded the motion. Judge Knierim called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Change to Policy 301 New Hires

PCA proposes to update Policy 301 concerning new hires to provide discretion on the rate of pay when a court is hiring a former employee of another Probate Court. Under the current policy, the court can match the employee's prior rate of pay only if the individual's last employment at a court ended no more than six months before. The new provision enables PCA and the court to determine the appropriate rate of pay in light of the employee's prior position, rate of pay and length of time since employed at a Probate Court.

Judge Anthony made a motion to approve the policy change. Judge Marino seconded the motion. Judge Knierim called for a vote and the motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

None

Next Meeting

The committee will schedule a meeting shortly after a state budget is approved.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.