

**Probate Court Budget Committee**

Special Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 31, 2020

4:00pm

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

The meeting convened at 4:01 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.

Judge Streit-Kefalas summarized the actions taken by the Budget Committee in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and provided clarification of court personnel compensation for the pay period ending on 04/03/2020 as approved at the emergency special meeting on March 20, 2020.

Judge Beverly Streit-Kefalas proposed that for the pay period of 04/04/2020 to 04/17/2020, the emergency compensation plan approved on March 20, 2020 be extended and clarified as follows:

- All courts shall be closed for public / in-person access
- Courts are open for business to the fullest extent possible
- Judges and Chief Clerks shall continue to manage court operations to fullest extent possible and may do so with staggered work schedules to ensure a minimum of 6' social distancing at all times between staff.
- Judges shall ensure with their staff that there is daily review and response to:
  - telephone messages with voice mailboxes set up

- eFiling
- regular mail
- facsimile emergency filings
- the scheduling of proceedings using the streamline procedures to the greatest extent possible or if a hearing is necessary, then by telephonic hearing with no in-person attendance
- There shall also be an emergency telephone number which is shared in the outgoing telephone message of each court
- Staff will continue to be paid their regularly scheduled hours through the pay period ending April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Motion was made by Judge Anthony to approve the extension and clarification 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 Anthony commented that we provide critical services, and the courts must remain open. Each Judge needs to make a determination on how to continue court operations in these extraordinary times. Judges have the discretion to make such a determination.

Judge Marino emphasized that the courts must remain open. Judges have the discretion to determine how to staff their courts. Judge Marino expressed approval for reviewing the policy in two weeks.

Judge Streit-Kefalas reiterated the methods of the filing of appeals of quarantine and isolation orders and stated that appeals must be heard no later than seventy-two hours from receipt.

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 4:29 p.m.