

CONNECTICUT PROBATE ASSEMBLY

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

September 9, 2015

In attendance: President Judge Elkin, Judges Becker, Brandt, DePanfilis, Forgione, Greene, Keeney, Magistrali, Mahon, Purnell, Randich, Schad, Streit-Kefalas, Wright, and Probate Court Administrator Knierim.

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 9:50 a.m.

2. Approval of the July 8, 2015 Meeting Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve minutes. The motion passed.

3. Correspondence

No correspondence.

4. Treasurer's Report

Judge Magistrali reported that he paid the auditor's bill and Attorney Lindsay's bill and made partial reimbursements to the judges who attended the NCPJ program. The certificate of deposit had matured and he was authorized to transfer the balance to the Office of the Probate Court Administrator. He received a bank check made out to the Treasurer, State of Connecticut and the accounts were closed.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed.

5. Committee Reports

Continuing Education

Judge Elkin reported that the upcoming seminars would be on Tuesday, September 22, 2015 on children's matters, a Judge's Institute on October 28, 2015 and a joint presentation with the Connecticut Bar Association on December 2, 2015.

Ethics

Judge Magistrali informed the Executive Committee that the Ethics Committee will be meeting September 17 to begin to put together the comparison of the former code provisions with the proposed revisions.

Legislative

Judge Mahon explained that the new association will address legislation affecting the judges, but that the Probate Assembly will continue to make legislative proposals.

The Committee would be beginning to develop proposed legislation in the next month or so.

Nominating

No report.

Planning

No report.

Procedures Review

Judge Wright informed the Executive Committee that the Procedures Review continues to meet to update forms.

Public Information

Judge Purnell reported that the Committee had a meeting on August 7, 2015. He explained that the Committee will be finalizing three additional display boards. The Committee will prepare an email blast setting forth a communications strategy with a fact sheet prepared by the Office of the Probate Court Administrator. The Committee was also thinking about organizing regional meetings with legislators. Judge Purnell explained that Judge Wexler had published an Op-Ed piece and a discussion followed. Judge Brandt will be preparing a draft form article for judges to use as a template, allowing each judge to personalize the piece for publishing in local newspapers.

Ad Hoc Committees

Conservatorship Guidelines

Judge Elkin reported that the Committee is moving along and will be meeting in October.

Court Security

No report.

Floating Clerks

No report.

Hospitality

No report.

Judicial Selection Working Group

The Committee is scheduled for a meeting on September 17, 2015 in Hamden.

6. Comments of the Probate Court Administrator

Judge Knierim explained that his office is carefully monitoring fee revenue. As expected, the fee increases have not yet produced significant changes in revenue. There are approximately thirty invoices over \$12,500.00 now. To date, the highest fee collected was approximately \$100,000.00. His office continues to work with OPM so that OPM will understand the process. He spoke about the legislative strategy of partnering with

agencies and organizations to garner support. For example, AARP and Connecticut Hospital Association are willing to support the probate courts in the legislature. Judge Knierim also felt that direct feedback on fee changes from the public would be effective and that perhaps attorneys can initiate client contact with legislators.

Judge Knierim reported that the merit payment increases for court staff went into effect and the compensation study is complete with implementation as the next step. Each staff member will get his or her personal information and each judge will get a compilation of the effects of the compensation study on their staff members.

There are required revisions to the probate regulations. Judge Knierim will provide drafts for the Executive Committee to review. The revisions are mainly updates, but there are two substantive regulations related to mediation panels and to records management that will need some discussion.

The probate website has been updated to include links to Probate Assembly and Committee meetings with posted agenda and minutes. This would allow compliance with the recommendations of the Planning Committee.

7. Comments of the President-Judge

Judge Mahon reported that revised bylaws would be sent out. He also explained that the legislation creating an inchoate lien for probate fees required a new form. As of now, it is a second form that requires additional fees for recording, but there was a need to get a form out immediately. The forms will be reviewed to determine if a single form could be used by the probate courts to release estate tax liens and probate fee liens in one.

8. Other business to come before the Executive Committee

None.

9. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn. The motion was seconded. Meeting closed at 10:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael R. Brandt
Executive Secretary