

Minutes of the Court Security Committee
Monday, May 11, 2020

In accordance with the governor's order regarding social distancing in the workplace, the meeting was held via phone conference hosted by PCA.

Members in attendance:

Hon. Domenick Calabrese – Chair, Jackie Buckle, Atty. Anne Holihan, Atty. Thomas Smith

Also present: Hon. Beverly Streit-Kefalas – ex officio, Melissa Riley, Audrey Honig Geragosian

The meeting was called to order with a quorum present at 10:11 a.m.

Comments of the Chair

Judge Calabrese indicated that although a quorum was not present to hold an official meeting in March, the committee did hold a full and productive discussion at its January meeting.

Given the extraordinary time we are all going through now, he is working with the Education Committee on the previously scheduled active shooter training that was supposed to be conducted in its June program. That program will not be held by WebEx; rescheduling is under discussion.

Judge Calabrese said he was heartened to see that a number of courts have already completed or scheduled new security assessments. They are important for all the Probate Courts in the near term.

Probate Court Administrator Streit-Kefalas echoed Judge Calabrese's appreciation that so many courts scheduled and completed their assessments. She thanked the committee members for their time and suggested that with a new President Judge of the Probate Assembly, it might be a good time for other committee members to be reminded of their membership.

Resources/Materials

Judge Calabrese expressed his appreciation for the training materials Attorney Holihan provided to the committee. He and Melissa will schedule a discussion to identify additional print and video resources beyond what we have through PCA. Court security is really up to individual judges and it is the role of the committee to identify resources that may have special importance.

Security Assessment Update

As of May 6, eight courts had completed assessments and others were in the process of scheduling them. There have been instances, for example, Judge Calabrese's court, where police prefer to wait until the building reopens to have a better understanding of the flow of individuals in a normal situation. Conversely, some police departments may be less busy than usual, which may provide an opportunity to complete assessments now.

Both Attorney Holihan and Jackie Buckle reported that in connection with retrofitting their offices to prevent the spread of COVID-19, in both courts, local government willingly used the opportunity to provide long-desired glass at the counter rather than plexiglass, thus meeting a security goal as well as a public health guideline.

Attorney Smith suggested that one of the problems at the moment is that with town halls being closed, everyone in courts is as secure as they have ever been.

The minutes from the January 13, 2020 meeting were accepted and approved without discussion.

Next meeting

10 a.m., Monday, July 13, 2020.

If it is not possible to meet at PCA, it will be held via conference call.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.