



CONNECTICUT PROBATE ASSEMBLY

Regular Meeting of the Ethics Committee

June 22, 2023

9:30 a.m.

MINUTES

In attendance: Judges Bartlett, Brandt (Chair), Gardner Riordan, Hoyle, Landgrebe, Lewis, and Probate Court Administrator Streit-Kefalas. The meeting was held at the Office of the Probate Court Administrator.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:37 a.m.

2. Approval of minutes of the March 23, 2023 meeting

Judge Hoyle made a motion to approve the minutes. Judge Garner Riordan seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with Judge Lewis abstaining.

3. Discuss and review of Code of Probate Judicial Conduct

Judge Brandt opened discussion on the presentation held June 21, 2023 by the Council of Probate Judicial Conduct. The presenters made suggestions to the judges to minimize complaints and explained the review and investigation process.

There was discussion regarding concern that the Landgrebe decision may be interpreted that a mistake of law would be viewed as an ethical violation rather than as the basis for an appeal.

Judge Bartlett shared the different backgrounds and experience of the Council members and how it brings balance to the process.

The judges also discussed the important points highlighted by the Council such as timely issuance of decrees and promoting and maintaining public education of the Probate Court system and procedures. An issue of concern was the 8-year limitations on filing a complaint with the Council and that memories may fade with the record of the proceedings not necessarily reflective of any particular challenges in the adjudication of the case.

The judges also discussed possible changes to the complaint form to require a complainant to cite on what provision of the Code the complaint was based or, in the alternative, to have legal counsel of the Council notify the respondent Judge of the perceived provisions at issue. There was also a request that the Council's counsel notify the respondent Judge by a telephone call in addition to the required mailing of the complaint due to time sensitivity of a response.

4. New Business

Judge Lewis felt that a continuing education program on best practices for judges and courts to avoid ethical complaints may be beneficial.

5. Meeting Schedule

The next meeting of the committee will be Thursday, September 14, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.

6. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael R. Brandt
Committee Chair