



CONNECTICUT PROBATE ASSEMBLY

Regular Meeting of the Ethics Committee

September 14, 2023

9:30 a.m.

MINUTES

In attendance: Judges Bartlett, Brandt, Gardner Riordan, Hoyle, Jalowiec, Landgrebe, Lewis, McGrath and Probate Court Administrator Streit-Kefalas

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:34 a.m.

2. Approval of minutes of the June 22, 2023 meeting

Judge Gardner Riordan made a motion to approve the minutes. Judge Landgrebe seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Suggestions from Council of Probate Judicial Conduct

Judge Brandt opened discussion with his thoughts on the goals of the committee: 1) to provide instruction to the judges on the Code and ethical rules and decisions and 2) to provide strategies to the judges to avoid or minimize complaints to the Council. He reiterated his plan to provide decisions or relevant information on ethical issues to the judges on a regular basis. He also discussed some of the suggestions of Attorney Healey and the Council to assist the judges in minimizing grievances.

Judge Streit-Kefalas explained that there is a panel of pro bono attorneys maintained by her office, who may assist those individuals who may not be eligible for a court-appointed attorney but need assistance in the probate processes. The committee members expressed their willingness to suggest the panel to self-represented parties in a probate matter. The committee continued to discuss "best practices" to minimize ethical complaints.

4. Judicial Decisions on ethical issues to share

Judge Brandt summarized many of the decisions that have appeared from the National Center for State Courts and other internet sites. The committee felt that a review of decisions on campaign ethics may be appropriate coming into this election season. Judge Streit-Kefalas and Judge Brandt will prepare an email from prior presentations or other guidance to share with the judges. The Committee agreed with the plan for an email on campaign ethics to be sent to the judges to prepare for the upcoming campaign season and election. The Committee also agreed that a Continuing Education program on best practices for judges and courts to avoid ethical complaints may be appropriate.

5. New Business

No additional new business.

6. Meeting Schedule

The next meeting of the Committee will be Thursday at 9:30 a.m. on December 7, 2023.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael R. Brandt
Committee Chair