

**CONNECTICUT PROBATE ASSEMBLY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 12, 2022**

Attendees: Judges Anthony, Becker, Berkenstock, Brandt, Daly, Darby, DeGennaro, Fox, Ganim, Gardner Riordan, Jalowiec, Lewis, Magistrali, Maxham, McGrath, Randich, Rowe, Schad, Wright and also Probate Court Administrator Judge Streit-Kefalas, and Manager of Communications, Jim Polites.

1. Call to Order:

Due to the continued public health emergency, the meeting was held in person and remotely via Cisco Webex video conferencing and was called to order at 9:47 a.m.

2. Approval of the Minutes:

A motion was made by Judge Gardner Riordan, seconded by Judge Becker and carried unanimously to accept the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of December 8, 2021 as presented.

3. Treasurer's Report:

Judge Randich presented the Treasurer's Report for the second quarter (Q2) of FYE 06/30/2022. No expenditures were reflected in the Report. A motion was made by Judge DeGennaro, seconded by Judge Magistrali and unanimously approved to accept the Report as presented.

4. Correspondence:

Judge Brandt reported that he had not received any correspondence. Judge Streit-Kefalas reported she also had not received any correspondence for the Assembly.

5. Committee Reports:

Continuing Education

Judge Becker reported that the next continuing education seminar is the Judges Institute set for January 26, 2022 at the CBA. Registration is still open, please sign up in Paychex. The next Committee meeting is January 18, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. at PCA library.

Ethics

Judge Magistrali reported that the Committee met on November 3, 2021 and approved the addition of Comment 5 to Rule 3.1 of the Code. PCA will circulate the proposed Comment prior to the next Assembly meeting on January 26, 2022 and vote will be held at that meeting.

Legislative

Judges Fox and Rowe reported that the next Committee meeting is on February 2, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. to review bills that may be proposed just ahead of the legislative session set to begin February 9th.

Nominating
No Report

Planning
No Report

Procedures Review
Judge Berkenstock indicated that the next meeting is February 7, 2022.

Public Information
Judge Streit-Kefalas reported for Judge Blick that the brochure has been printed and will be distributed to the courts shortly for further distribution to the public. Judge Streit-Kefalas thanked Judge Blick and all committee members for their hard work.

AD HOC COMMITTEES
Conservator Guidelines
No Report

Hospitality
No Report

Court Security
No Report

Floating Clerks
No Report.

6. Comments of the Probate Court Administrator:

Judge Streit-Kefalas commented that courts have reported that staff have tested positive for COVID or family members are positive or may have been exposed causing staff shortages. She offered her condolences to all who have suffered losses. She noted that hospitalizations and deaths are largely comprised of unvaccinated individuals. She recognized how hard all the judges and staff are working and encouraged all to support staff who in turn support the public.

Judge Streit-Kefalas reminded judges to report the status of court closures due to inclement weather or town hall closures per Policy 115. The public calls PCA when the courts are not answering the phone. Jim Polites is the point person; please email him with court updates. Additionally, as we are collecting data on staffing shortages due to COVID, in addition to any leave under Policy 903, please report COVID-related absences to Jim.

Please review Rule 66 regarding participation in a hearing by electronic means. Although revision of this rule has been proposed, any approval will not be effective until July 1, 2022. Judge Streit-Kefalas referred judges to her earlier email

suggesting that during this current surge, judges may consider sending notices of hearings with both in-person and Webex information, after balancing the factors set forth in Rule 66 regarding electronic participation.

PCA has secured COVID home rapid test kits for judges and staff. The kits can be picked up at PCA or other arrangements will be made for their delivery to courts. Thanks to the State Emergency Operations Center and Jim Polites for securing the test kits for the courts.

In response to an inquiry, Judge Streit-Kefalas shared that judges may consider use of these tests for staff required to undergo weekly testing but be aware that a rapid home test is generally most reliable in detecting symptomatic positive cases.

Judge Anthony shared some feedback he received about our courts becoming less open and accessible to the public. He shared that our system was a star in the initial months of the pandemic with courts continuing in operations for our critical services when other offices and agencies shut down. The members present discussed the challenges with accessibility and all were encouraged to make sure courts are as available as possible and that judges reach out to each other.

In a response to an inquiry, Judge Streit-Kefalas reported that probate fee revenue is strong and meeting our budget needs and our finances right now are in a good position.

7. Comments of the President Judge:

Judge Brandt encouraged all to register for the Judges Institute and Assembly meeting. The January meeting will be in person.

The Executive Committee will continue to meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 9:45 a.m. He reminded judges to complete and remit the Continuing Education Compliance Report due at the end of January. He asked all to call him for any further comments or questions.

8. Other Business to come before the Executive Committee:

None

9. Adjournment:

A motion was made by Judge Wright, seconded by Judge Gardner Riordan and unanimously approved to adjourn. The meeting ended at 10:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Hon. Kathleen N. Maxham
Recording Secretary