

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 14, 2021

Attendees: Judges Anthony, Barrett, Becker, Berkenstock, Brandt, Darby, DeGennaro, Fox, Gardner Riordan, Magistrali, Maxham, Randich, and also Probate Court Administrator Judge Streit-Kefalas, Chief Counsel Heather Dostaler and Director of Financial Services, Lisa Hansen.

1. Call to Order:

Due to the continued public health emergency, the meeting was held remotely via Cisco Webex video conferencing and in person, and was called to order at 9:50 a.m.

2. Approval of the Minutes:

A motion was made by Judge DeGennaro, seconded by Judge Barrett and carried to accept the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of March 10, 2021 as presented.

3. Correspondence:

Judge Brandt reported that he had received no correspondence. Judge Streit-Kefalas reported she also had not received any correspondence.

4. Treasurer's Report:

Judge Magistrali reported no expenditures and the Assembly account remains fully funded. A motion was made by Judge Randich and seconded by Judge DeGennaro and unanimously carried to approve the Treasurer's Report.

5. Committee Reports:

Continuing Education

Judge Becker indicated that she had nothing new to report. She reminded the judges to register early in Paychex for continuing education webinars.

On behalf of Judge Yamin, she reminded all that the NCPJ conference is virtual on May 12, 2021 at noon. Judge Streit-Kefalas also reminded judges that continuing education credit is not automatic. Per Regulation 26, the Judicial Education Standards Committee must approve any non-Assembly or -Probate Administration sponsored programs.

Ethics

Judge Magistrali reported that the Committee has not met. He asked his Committee members to review the Code and thus far has had no indication that any Code sections should be addressed. He will continue to send along ethics opinions he receives them.

Legislative

Judge Fox reported that the General Assembly is still in session and wrapping up the initial phase. We continue to receive almost daily updates from PCA and Pete Smith. The Committee continues to monitor the bills of interest. Our probate ops bill has passed out of the Judiciary Committee. The Act Concerning Probate Court Employees has been

referred to the Judiciary Committee. Judges should contact their legislatures regarding all bills that impact the courts

Nominating
No Report

Planning
Judge Anthony indicated that his Committee had not received any assignments from the Executive Committee or the President.

Procedures Review
Judge Berkenstock reported that the next Committee meeting will be on May 3, 2021.

Public Information
No Report

AD HOC COMMITTEES

Conservator Guidelines
Judge DeGennaro indicated he is waiting for directions from the Executive Committee.

Hospitality
No Report

Court Security
No Report

Floating Clerks
No Report.

6. Comments of the Probate Court Administrator:

Judge Streit-Kefalas introduced Heather Dostaler as new Chief Counsel for PCA. She reported that the Advisory Committee for the review of the Probate Rules of Procedure is actively engaged. Subcommittee Chairs are Judges Randich, Barrett and Maxham. Anyone wishing to address a rule, please send your issues to Judge Streit-Kefalas or Heather Dostaler.

She reminded all judges that the Executive Orders suspending in-person hearings will expire on April 19, 2021 unless extended. Please prepare court facilities for the eventual resumption of in-person hearings.

Lisa Hansen and Judge Streit-Kefalas presented a PowerPoint summary of the proposed budget for FYE 06/30/2022 and 06/30/2023. Included in the budget are merit raises and COLA increases for employees. PCA is expecting to expand eFiling to state agencies by the end of this summer. An enhanced Paychex program called Paychex Flex will be rolled out likely in August after completion of open enrollment for health insurance. This

program will improve work flow and be more secure.

Judge Streit-Kefalas and Lisa Hansen addressed Committee members' questions on the budget and the impact on the courts if the general fund appropriation is reduced by the Governor. In light of the Governor's proposal and the volatility of probate fee revenue, PCA will be seeking a suspension of the sweep. All judges are encouraged to speak with their local state representatives and senators to support full funding of the probate budget.

The proposed budget will be submitted by May 15 to the Chief Court Administrator.

7. Comments of the President Judge:

Judge Brandt reminded everyone of the Annual Meeting next week on April 21, 2021 at which Chief Justice Robinson will be speaking. The meeting will be set up virtually on Webex, like an expanded Executive Committee meeting.

Congratulations to Heather Dostaler on her appointment as chief counsel.

Other Business to come before the Executive Committee:

None

8. Adjournment:

A motion was made by Judge Gardner-Riordan, seconded by Judge Darby and unanimously approved to adjourn. The meeting ended at 10:56 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Hon. Kathleen N. Maxham
Recording Secretary