## Regular Meeting of the Probate Court Budget Committee Minutes

## Wednesday, December 4, 2024 5 p.m.

## Office of the Probate Court Administrator 186 Newington Road West Hartford, CT 06110

The meeting was called to order by Probate Court Administrator and Chair Beverly K. Streit-Kefalas at 5:01 p.m.

## **Members Present**

Probate Court Administrator and Chair Beverly K. Streit-Kefalas, Judge Fred J. Anthony, and Judge Michael R. Brandt.

# **Public Comment and Correspondence**

Judge Evelyn Daly, Judge of the Farmington Regional Probate Court, offered comments.

There was correspondence from Judge Evelyn Daly (PD10), Judge Michael Darby (PD13), Judge Paul Ganim (PD48), and Judge Lisa Wexler (PD50).

# Remarks by the Chair

Chair Streit-Kefalas remarked the December Budget Committee meeting agenda is often to review budgeted compensation adjustments for court staff effective 01/01/2025. At this time, revenue is at budgeted levels to support an increase at this time but the upcoming legislative session to address the next biennial budget is going to be difficult for budget purposes and this may impact future increases.

# **Compensation Plan Adjustment**

Chair Streit-Kefalas turned over the meeting to Cathie Topper, HR Manager and Sr. Financial Analyst, who reported on the July 2024 compensation adjustments for eligible employees.

Chair Streit-Kefalas proposed a 3.0% cost of living adjustment (COLA) effective for the pay period commencing December 22, 2024, to be included in the January 9, 2025, paycheck. Judge Brandt moved to approve the proposed COLA which motion Judge Anthony seconded. After discussion, there was a call for a vote and the motion carried unanimously.

# Guidelines for Fiscal Year 2026 Office Expense Budget

Chair Streit-Kefalas submitted the following budget assumptions for the Office Budget Expenses for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2026 (FY26):

<ul> <li>Education / Seminars / Meetings</li> </ul>	\$600 per district \$600 per Regional Children's Probate Court + \$200 per family specialist
Dues	Other = \$25 per person
<ul> <li>Subscriptions</li> </ul>	Court proposal, subject to \$1,500 max.
Other Expenses	\$500 per district

Judge Anthony moved to approve the budget assumptions for FY26 Office Budget Expenses for all courts and Judge Brandt seconded. After vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

# **Staffing Level Adjustment**

Chair Streit-Kefalas addressed the correspondence submitted by Farmington Regional Probate Court by Judge Evelyn Daly. The court requested an increase in approved benchmark staffing level from 3.9 FTE to 4.5 FTE. There was discussion without motion. Chair Streit-Kefalas is not recommending approval of the Farmington Regional Probate Court request. Judge Anthony moved to table the request to the June 2025 meeting for further review and Judge Brandt seconded. After a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Streit-Kefalas then addressed the correspondence submitted by Greater Manchester Probate Court Judge Michael Darby requesting a reallocation of benchmark hours amongst the Chief Clerk, Clerk and Assistant Clerk positions. There would be no change to total benchmark. Chair Streit-Kefalas is recommending the request. Judge Anthony moved and Judge Brandt seconded. After discussion, Chair Streit-Kefalas called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

At this time, Chair Streit-Kefalas is not recommending approval of the request from the Bridgeport Probate Court for additional staffing. Judge Anthony moved to deny the request for purposes of discussion and Brandt seconded. There was discussion by the committee. After a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Streit-Kefalas then addressed the correspondence submitted by Westport Probate Court Judge Lisa Wexler requesting an increase to the court's benchmark staffing level. Chair Streit-Kefalas is recommending a staffing level adjustment of an additional 0.2 FTE (1.1 Assistant Clerk). Judge Brandt moved and Judge Anthony seconded approval of the change. After discussion, Chair Streit-Kefalas called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously.

## **Other Business**

None.

# Set 2025 Meeting Schedule

The Committee set the meeting schedule for the 2025 calendar year as follows: March 5, 2025; June 11, 2025; and December 3, 2025.

## Adjournment

With no further business before the committee, Chair Streit-Kefalas called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was moved by Judge Brandt and seconded by Judge Anthony. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Cathie Topper HR Manager and Senior Financial Analyst