

# **Probate Court Budget Committee**

## **Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, January 6, 2010

4:00 PM

Library at the Office of the Probate Court Administrator  
186 Newington Road, West Hartford

Meeting was convened at 4:10 PM.

In attendance: Judge Paul J. Knierim, Probate Court Administrator and Chair, Judge Joseph Marino, and Judge Dianne Yamin.

PCA staff in attendance: Andrea King, Director of Financial Services, Attorney Bonnie Bennet, Attorney Debra Cohen, and Vincent Russo.

### **Public Comment**

Judge Knierim asked for comments from those in attendance.

Those making comments were:

Carol Modugno, Asst. Clerk of the Manchester Probate Court (including a written submission); Mary MacGregor, Clerk of the Glastonbury Probate Court and the President of the CT Association of Probate Clerks (who also read a statement from Sharon Tiezzi, Clerk of the Old Saybrook Probate Court); Pat Saviano, Clerk of the Danbury Probate Court; The Honorable Dom Calabrese, Judge of the Woodbury Probate District; and The Honorable Diane Blick, Judge of the Litchfield Probate District

### **Update on Compensation Study**

Attorney Bonnie Bennet is working with the compensation consultants. A report is expected by the end of this week.

The objective job evaluation process is underway. Desk audits have been conducted at the Hartford, West Hartford, and Farmington Probate Courts. Additional desk audits will be conducted at one or more regional children's probate courts.

## **Update on Miscellaneous Office Budgets**

Forms have been sent to the courts requesting 2009 actual expenses. PCA is requesting proposals for the first 6 months of 2011 from those courts that are not merging. For merging courts, PCA will prepare a spreadsheet showing the actual 2009 amounts from each separate court. The judges of the merging courts will be asked to collaborate in developing a joint proposal for the new courts for the first 6 months of 2011. Forms have been sent to the Regional Children's Courts as well.

## **Benefits Plan/Time-Off Policy for Court Staff**

Judge Knierim presented a written summary of the paid time off policies applicable to Judicial Branch employees and suggested that the committee discuss adoption of the policies as a uniform plan for court employees.

Judge Marino moved the proposal, Judge Yamin seconded.

Judge Knierim summarized the proposal, which includes proposed policies governing vacation, sick time, personal days, and holidays.

Judge Marino moved to amend the vacation policy by substituting the following schedule for the Judicial Branch policy:

0 - 5 years of experience; 10 vacation days/year  
6 – 15 years of experience; 15 vacation days/year  
16 – 24 years of experience; 20 vacation days/year  
25+ years of experience; 25 vacation days/year

Judge Marino also clarified that the policy would be applied to all court employees and that existing time off policies would not be grandfathered.

Judge Marino's amendment was seconded by Judge Yamin.

The amendment passed unanimously.

Judge Knierim called for a vote on the policies for paid time off, as amended. The motion passed unanimously. The approved policy is attached.

## **Other Business**

The committee received two letters from clerks expressing opposition to the extension of the compensation freeze for the first six months of 2010 as set forth in administrator's December 11, 2010 memo. The committee asked that Judge Knierim reply to the letters to explain that the committee's authority to establish the compensation and benefits does not take effect until January 1, 2011.

### **Schedule Next Meeting and Adjournment**

The committee revised the schedule of upcoming meetings (see attached).

Next meeting will be January 20, 2010 at 4 PM.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:57 PM.

**Probate Court Budget Committee  
Meeting Schedule (Revised)**

Wednesdays at 4:00 PM:

January 20, 2010  
February 3, 2010  
February 17, 2010  
February 24, 2010  
March 10, 2010  
March 24, 2010