

Minutes  
Family Commission  
January 8, 2014

The Family Commission met in courtroom B2 at the Hartford Judicial District Courthouse located at 90 Washington Street, Hartford, CT on January 8, 2014.

Those in attendance: Hon. Elizabeth Bozzuto, Chair, Hon. Holly Abery-Wetstone, Hon. Sandra Sosnoff Baird, Hon. John Colella, Attorney Steven Dembo, Attorney Constance Frontis, Hon. Elaine Gordon, Johanna Greenfield, Attorney Deborah Grover, David Iaccarino, Hon. Maureen Murphy, Attorney Thomas Parrino.

Also in attendance were Attorney Joseph Del Ciampo and Attorney Nancy Porter from the Judicial Branch's Legal Services Unit.

The meeting was called to order at 2:08 PM by Judge Bozzuto. A quorum was present at 2:10 PM.

I. Review and approval of minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on October 30, 2013 were approved as amended to correct a typographical error, by the members of the Commission who were in attendance.

II. New members and 2014 meeting dates

The new members, Chief Family Support Magistrate John Colella, Attorney Deborah Grover and Attorney Michael Fasano, were announced. Magistrate Colella and Attorney Grover were introduced. Attorney Fasano is expected to attend the next meeting.

III. Practice Book rule requests

Judge Adelman proposed that there be an amendment to Practice Book Sec. 13-4 (c) (2) to authorize the court to order fees in family matters for a court-appointed expert's prep time for deposition. There was much discussion regarding what is and is not already provided for in the rules. It was generally agreed that the judge should have the authority to do this and that a proposal to delete the reference to "on its own motion" in Sec. 25-33 and adding a reference to "Except otherwise provided in Sec. 25-33 ..." to Sec. 25-31 would resolve the issue.

Attorney Frontis raised that there is nothing in the practice book regarding the appearances of attorneys being deemed withdrawn

for custody cases. The Commission members generally agreed that custody cases should be included.

#### IV. Administrative Divorce

Marriages under 8 years in duration with no children were discussed briefly as well as eligibility criteria. Judge Bozzuto spoke with Deb Fuller who made some suggestions as to how to proceed legislatively. This topic will remain on the agenda.

#### V. Refinements to the Family Standing Orders

Attorney Parrino reviewed the pretrial standing order with the Commission members item by item. It was unanimously agreed that items 1, 2, 5 and 11 would remain part of the standing order. It was suggested that perhaps there should be some addition indicating that counsel and self-represented parties should be prepared if necessary to have the back-up documentation with them.

The trial management order was discussed which led to a discussion regarding the use of trial management conferences and the use of status conferences after the case management date. Judge Bozzuto indicated that she would like to convene a smaller group to look at some of these issues. Johanna Greenfield, Attorney Dembo and Attorney Parrino volunteered. Multiple members of the Commission suggested that the right timing for a trial management conference would be 7 days before trial.

#### VI. Case Management Agreement

A separate Case Management Agreement form for custody and visitation cases was proposed. Judge Bozzuto described the form for purposes of discussion.

It was suggested that it would be helpful if there was an indication as to child support orders from other cases. It was suggested in response to discussion about educational support that to request information regarding educational support may be confusing and it is preferred that it not be included on this form. Parenting education was raised, but it was noted that there is already a requirement to complete it within 60 days.

When asked about the purpose behind the form, Judge Bozzuto indicated that she views it primarily as a docket management tool and that she would like to keep it from getting too complicated. It is envisioned that this form would be completed on the first court date.

In the matter of who should complete it, it was discussed that it should not be either the clerk or family services personnel and that it is not practical for it to be a judge on a short calendar day, so that responsibility for completing the form would remain with the parties as it is on the current case management agreement form.

Suggestions for revision were made and will be incorporated into the draft.

#### VII. Such other matters that may come before the Commission

No other items were raised before the Commission at this meeting.

#### VIII. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2014.

Judge Bozzuto adjourned the meeting at 4:30 PM.