

Minutes  
Family Commission  
October 26, 2011

The Family Commission met in courtroom 5A at the Middlesex Judicial District Courthouse located at 1 Court Street, Middletown, CT on October 26, 2011.

Those in attendance were: Hon. Lynda Munro (Chair), Hon. Holly Abery-Wetstone, Attorney Steven Dembo, Attorney Gaetano Ferro, Attorney Constance Frontis, Hon. Elaine Gordon, David Iaccarino, Attorney Maureen Murphy, Attorney Thomas Parrino (arrived late), Hon. Barry Pinkus, and Hon. Elliott Solomon (arrived late).

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 2:03 p.m. by Judge Munro.

I. Review and approval of minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on September 14, 2011 were approved, with one correction of a typographical error, by the members of the Commission who were in attendance except Judge Pinkus and Attorney Ferro who abstained.

II. E-Filing and the Practice Book

Judge Munro advised the Commission that the Judicial Branch expects Family Matters to migrate from Judicial's current computer system (CATER), which does not support a paperless environment or issues attendant to self-represented parties, in June, 2012 and that dissolution of marriage cases will be the first to go paperless (mandatory for attorneys) in February, 2013.

Judge Munro asked the Commission members to inform her of any Practice Book rules and/or statutes that may need revision in order to facilitate e-filing in Family Matters. Judge Munro is currently reviewing the civil rules to determine what changes were made to those rules to facilitate e-filing in civil matters and what changes may be required to the family rules.

III. Revisions to Financial Affidavit form

A draft form developed by a subcommittee of the Commission was distributed by Magistrate Sosnoff-Baird. The draft was described as a comprehensive, main-stream form that is intended to meet complicated or sophisticated financial needs of the parties. Various "income" items were discussed and modified as were various items identified as "weekly expenses not deducted from pay." The work

of the subcommittee will continue and will be discussed at future meetings.

#### IV. Self-represented parties filing appearances “in lieu of” attorneys

The filing of appearances by self-represented parties “in lieu of” attorneys was discussed and generated many issues. Often, such filings are made on the eve of, or very close to, the start of a trial in the subject case. It was discussed that a hearing on the matter should be held prior to an in lieu of appearance becoming effective. After significant discussion concerning the methods and procedures by which in lieu of appearances should be handled, Judge Munro asked the Commission members to continue to think about the problem and how the issue should be articulated. Judge Munro will contact the Family Judges and ask them to identify how often they believe this situation occurs.

#### V. Self-Represented Parties and Multiple Courts

Judge Munro raised the following issue with the Commission:

Was the “limited scope representation” that is allowed under Practice Book Section 25a-3 intended to apply to self-represented parties?

Judge Munro expressed her view that she did not envision such limited scope representation as having any application beyond attorneys who appeared on behalf of parties in Title IV-D Child Support Matters or in the Family Division of the Superior Court. The Commission members agreed with this interpretation of the rule.

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

Judge Munro explained briefly that the Commission will at future meetings continue its discussions regarding GALs.

#### VII. Next meeting

The next meeting date is December 7, 2011.

Judge Munro adjourned the meeting at 4:07 p.m.