

Minutes
Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and
Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters
October 29, 2020

The Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters met remotely via Microsoft Teams on October 29, 2020. The meeting was convened by the chair in Courtroom 407 at 1 Court Street, Middletown, Connecticut and live streamed to the public on YouTube.

Those in attendance: Judge Michael Albis (chair); Attorney Mark Korber; Mr. Stephen B. Carragher, Public Health Services Manager, Practitioner Licensing and Investigations Section, Department of Public Health; Attorney Justine Rakich-Kelly; Attorney Susan Hamilton (designated by Attorney Christine Perra Rapillo); Ms. Liza Andrews, Policy Director, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Attorney Danielle S. Rado; Attorney Bryan Cafferelli

Absent: No members were absent

Also in attendance was Attorney Michael Bowler, Statewide Bar Counsel, and Attorney Damon Goldstein and Ms. Lauren Orłowski from the Judicial Branch's Court Operations Unit.

The meeting was called to order at 3:31 PM by Judge Albis.

I. Review and Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Mark Korber, and seconded by Liza Andrews, to approve the minutes from the meeting held on March 6, 2020. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0 with 1 Committee member abstaining as a result of her absence at the March meeting. The minutes were approved.

II. Possible Removal of Individuals from List of Persons Qualified to Serve as a GAL/AMC

At 3:35 PM, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §1-200(6)(a), Liza Andrews moved, and Mark Korber seconded, to enter executive session to discuss complaints for removal of guardians ad litem. The Committee approved going into executive session by an 8-0 vote. Michael Bowler, Damon Goldstein and Lauren Orłowski were asked by the Committee to remain present for the executive session.

A motion was made by Susan Hamilton, and seconded by Mark Korber, to end the executive session. The motion passed by a vote of 8-0. The executive session concluded and the Committee reconvened in open session at 3:52 PM.

a. Complaint 1

A motion was made by Susan Hamilton, and seconded by Liza Andrews, to accept the Probable Cause Panel's finding of no probable cause and recommendation of dismissing the first complaint in question. The motion passed by an 8-0 vote. The complaint was dismissed.

b. Complaint 2

A motion was then made by Mark Korber, and seconded by Justine Rakich-Kelly, to accept the second Probable Cause Panel's finding of no probable cause and recommendation of dismissing the second complaint in question. The motion passed by an 8-0 vote. The complaint was dismissed.

c. Complaint 3

A motion was then made by Mark Korber, and seconded by Danielle Rado, to accept the third Probable Cause Panel's finding of no probable cause and recommendation of dismissing the third complaint in question. The motion passed by an 8-0 vote. The complaint was dismissed.

III. Changes to the Active List of Persons Qualified to Serve as a GAL/AMC

a. Emily Thaller

Attorney Emily Thaller was removed from the active list in 2015 because she did not respond to an email sent to her. Attorney Thaller emailed a request to be reinstated to the active list on October 13, 2020. Attorney Thaller meets all the requirements of Practice Book Section 25-62.

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Bryan Cafferelli moved, and Liza Andrews seconded, that Attorney Thaller be reinstated to the active list. The Committee approved the reinstatement by an 8-0 vote.

b. Scott Chamberlain

Attorney Scott Chamberlain was removed from the active list because he did not respond to an email sent to him on or about November 17, 2017. Attorney Chamberlain emailed a request to be reinstated to the active list on September 24, 2020. Attorney Chamberlain meets all the requirements of Practice Book Section 25-62.

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Mark Korber moved, and Susan Hamilton seconded, that Attorney Chamberlain be reinstated to the active list. The Committee approved the reinstatement by an 8-0 vote.

c. Mary Piscatelli Brigham

Attorney Mary Piscatelli Brigham was removed from the active list because she did not respond to an email sent to her on or about November 15, 2019. Attorney Brigham emailed a request to be reinstated to the active list on February 26, 2020. Attorney Brigham meets all the requirements of Practice Book Section 25-62(b).

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Danielle Rado moved, and Susan Hamilton seconded, that Attorney Brigham be reinstated to the active list, subject to her submission of proof to Damon Goldstein regarding her compliance with Connecticut Practice Book Rule 25-62(c)(1) . The Committee approved the reinstatement, subject to the condition stated, by an 8-0 vote.

d. Bonnie Lee MacDonald

Attorney Bonnie Lee MacDonald was removed from the active list because she did not respond to an email sent to her on or about November 15, 2019. Attorney MacDonald emailed a request to be reinstated to the active list on October 29, 2020. Attorney MacDonald meets all the requirements of Practice Book Section 25-62.

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Danielle Rado moved, and Justine Rakich-Kelly seconded, that Attorney MacDonald be reinstated to the active list. The Committee approved the reinstatement by an 8-0 vote.

IV. 2020 Request for Updated Information from Individuals on the List of Persons Qualified to Serve as a GAL/AMC

Damon Goldstein indicated that a target date of November 13, 2020 is set for annual emails to be sent to currently serving GALs, requesting their updated information. A response deadline is likely to be set on or around December 18, 2020. A motion was made by Liza Andrews and seconded by Danielle Rado to authorize Damon Goldstein to send the emails, as well as reminder emails to be sent on or around December 4, 2020, to those who have not responded to the inquiry. The motion passed by an 8-0 vote.

V. Pre Service Training

Susan Hamilton led the members in discussion about plans for GAL training which was originally scheduled to be held in June of 2020 but was cancelled due to COVID-19. The proposed idea is to complete an online video presentation that can be used as a replacement for in-person training in the short term while larger, in person

gatherings are not possible. This could ultimately be incorporated as part of regular trainings, as well. The Committee would like for a live remote question and answer session, or other interactive component, to be incorporated in the training as well. Susan Hamilton will reach out to those who administered the last training and determine a timeline for the creation and development of a virtual training. This item will remain on the agenda for a report back from the Training Subcommittee.

VI. Future Meetings

The Committee will reconvene in January, on a date to be determined, to approve of the updated Guardians Ad Litem list for the year 2021 along with any other business needing the Committee's attention.

VII. Such Other Matters as may Properly Come Before the Standing Committee

Judge Albis addressed that longstanding Committee member Judge Graziani is now a Judge Trial Referee; thus, he is ineligible to serve on the Committee. A motion was made by Danielle Rado and seconded by Liza Andrews to pass a Resolution thanking Judge Graziani for his hard work and dedication to the Committee. The motion passed by an 8-0 vote.

Bryan Cafferelli moved, and Danielle Rado seconded, a motion to adjourn the meeting. The Committee approved the motion by an 8-0 vote. Judge Albis adjourned the meeting at 4:24 PM.