

MINUTES
Connecticut Judicial Branch
Law Library Advisory Committee
September 24, 2010

The Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Library Advisory Committee met on Friday, September 24, 2010 at the Quinnipiac University School of Law Library, 275 Mount Carmel Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut in the law library conference room, LL241.

Present:

Hon. Douglas C. Mintz, Chair
Hon. William H. Bright, Jr.
Hon. William J. Lavery
Atty. Adam J. Cohen
Ms. Ann DeVeaux
Atty. Virginia C. Foreman
Ms. Darcy Kirk
Atty. William P. Yelenak

Absent:

Hon. James W. Abrams
Hon. Jon C. Blue
Hon. Theodore R. Tyma
Atty. William H. Clendenen, Jr.
Mr. Blair Kauffman

Other Attendees

Ms. Faith P. Arkin
Ms. Maureen D. Well

The chair of the committee, Judge Mintz, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

I. Welcome & Introductions.

Judge Mintz welcomed new members to the committee and asked each member to introduce themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes.

Minutes from the November 20, 2009 Law Library Advisory Committee meeting were approved.

III. Supreme Court Policies.

Ms. Well reported on the changes approved July 14, 2010 to the *Policies for the Establishment and Maintenance of a System of Law Libraries* by the Connecticut Supreme Court. In section 1, the words "Ansonia/Milford at Milford" and "and Norwich" were removed. In section 5(a), the word "twelve" was replaced by the word "thirteen." And in Appendix A, the words "Milford" and "Norwich" were removed. These changes were made to reflect the fact that the law libraries at Milford and Norwich were closed on April 1, 2010, and that the membership of the Law Library Advisory Committee was increased from twelve to thirteen members.

Bill Yelenak asked if there was any chance that the Milford and Norwich Law Libraries might be reopened at some point in the future. Ms. Arkin and Ms. Well responded that they thought that possibility was unlikely.

Ms. Well suggested that in light of the state's budget problems, the committee might wish to review the *Law Library Minimum Collection Standards*. Judge Bright suggested that each committee member rank each entry on a scale of 1 to 5 or 1 to 3. This prioritization in terms of importance for each standard would help the committee with their review of the standards. Ms. Well indicated that she will send a ranking grid to each committee member prior to the next meeting.

IV. Focus Groups and Judges' Survey.

Judge Mintz stated that he has been asked by the Chief Justice to look at the Law Library System as a whole. He proposed using focus groups to find out what services and resources attorneys use and what they feel is necessary. He thought that input from judges could be obtained through a survey. Judge Lavery added that the legal research clerks, as well as the permanent Supreme and Appellate Court law clerks should be surveyed. Ms. Well said that the law librarians could provide surveys to self-represented parties in the libraries.

After a discussion as to the best approach to accomplish the gathering of this information, it was agreed that surveys should be used rather than focus groups. A motion was made and passed unanimously to survey attorneys, judges, law clerks and self-represented parties. Judge Bright offered to work with Ms. Well on the survey for judges and law clerks. Bill Yelenak offered to help with the survey for attorneys. It was agreed that the data gathering, compilation and a follow-up meeting should take place in a timely manner, given the pending election and budget deficit.

V. Operations Report.

Ms. Well proceeded to report on the operations of the Law Library System. During the past two years there have been four retirements, one termination, one promotion and two reassignments of law library staff. Supervisory units have been reorganized and a chart was provided to indicate the new structure.

After subscriptions and standing orders were cancelled during the first seven months of fiscal year 2010, budgets were allocated in the third and fourth quarters totaling \$1,695,000 for print publications. Partial funding of \$793,000 for print resources has been authorized for the first six months of fiscal year 2011.

This fall marks the fifth year that the seminar, *Connecticut Legal Research and Courthouse Resources for New and Experienced Attorneys*, will be offered. Law librarians coordinate these free training sessions and present sections on Connecticut legal research and law library services. There are additional

presentations on court service centers, e-services and web-based court information and the foreclosure mediation program. The seminars will be offered this year at the Bridgeport courthouse on October 18th, the Litchfield courthouse on October 25th, and the New London courthouse on November 1st.

The law libraries' website has added new research guides for the topics of foreclosures, domestic violence and municipal tax sales. New Connecticut "law by subject" pages include computer crimes, condominiums, parental kidnapping and vexatious litigation. Law library staff also created a Self-Represented Parties web page which includes a video information series on civil procedure. The first two videos in this series are entitled "Connecticut Civil Lawsuit: First Steps as a Defendant" and "How-To Video for Filling Out Appearance Form JD-CL-12."

Recent marketing and outreach efforts by law library staff include customized letters to judges delivered in September to welcome them to their new assignments, highlighting specialized library services which are available to them; a newsletter directed at private attorneys who attended the June CBA annual meeting; and a handout for pro se parties entitled "Tips for the Self-Represented."

Bill Yelenak asked if the Judicial Branch was considering WI-FI access to the Internet in courthouses. Ms. Arkin will look into the issue.

VI. Strategic Plan.

Ms. Arkin pointed out that the last revision of the *Strategic Plan for the Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Library System* was approved in 2007. Subsequently the Branch has undertaken its own strategic planning process. Ms. Arkin suggested that the committee might wish to review the law library plan within the context of the Branch's new strategic plan.

Judge Mintz then expressed his personal belief that the Judiciary is the cornerstone of a democracy and that the law libraries are a core function of the Judicial Branch.

VII. Future Meetings and Adjournment.

It was agreed that priority should be given to a review of the minimum collection standards and the library surveys. The next meeting of the committee was scheduled for Friday, December 3rd. The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maureen D. Well
Secretary