

Judicial-Media Committee

Minutes of meeting on April 22, 2019

Members present: Co-chair Karen Florin, Judge Joan K. Alexander, Linda J. Cimino, Judge Patrick J. Clifford, Attorney Tais C. Ericson, Attorney Melissa A. Farley, Judge David P. Gold, Attorney Paul S. Hartan, Judge Barbara Bailey Jongbloed, Eric Parker, Chris Powell, Gary A. Roberge, Thomas Scheffey, Judge Hope C. Seeley, Lauren Sellew, Judge Dawne G. Westbrook and Judge Omar A. Williams. Also in attendance were Deputy Chief Court Administrator Judge Elizabeth A. Bozzuto and Judicial Branch liaison Rhonda Hebert.

- I. Karen Florin opened the meeting at 3:05 p.m.
- II. The committee unanimously approved minutes from its meeting on Sept. 24, 2018.
- III. Eric Parker provided committee members with details on the upcoming Journalism School for Judges.
- IV. Judge Joan Alexander and Ms. Florin updated committee members on the status of a proposed rule change that would allow the court to waive the presence of a defendant in the courtroom after a finding of good cause shown on the record. This proposal would apply in cases where defendants are hospitalized and are unable to be arraigned in an open courtroom. If adopted, the media would then have access to the arraignment rather than having it occur in a hospital, where they do not have access. At the same time, the defendant's rights would be fully protected. The matter will now go before the Rules Committee for further discussion.

The other proposed rule change would give judges the discretion to decide whether to allow cameras in proceedings where the victim was sexually assaulted and murdered, provided the victim's family affirmatively consents to such coverage. This proposal will go before the Rules Committee in the fall, Ms. Florin reported.

- V. Gary Roberge, executive director of the Judicial Branch's Court Support Services Division, and Tasha Hunt, deputy director of Juvenile Probation Services, presented a very well-received overview of juvenile justice in Connecticut. They also addressed the status of responsibilities that the Legislature transferred from the Department of Children and Families to the Judicial Branch last year.
- VI. The committee adjourned and scheduled its next meeting for September 2019.