

*Minutes from Pilot Program Committee meeting of March 24, 2008*

Present: Co-chairs Tom Appleby & Judge Patrick Clifford; Judge Marshall Berger Jr., Sara Bernstein, Larry Callahan, Linda J. Cimino, Paul Giguere, Judge David Gold, Gail Hardy, Ken Margolfo, Patrick Sanders, Robin Smith, Judge Elliot Solomon, Kirk Varner and Dave Ward.

Absent: John Long, Mike St. Peter.

*Agenda Item No. 1 – Welcome*

Judge Clifford and Tom Appleby welcomed committee members; this was the first meeting of the committee. Judge Clifford also went through a notebook of information that committee members received.

*Agenda Item No. 2 – Summary of what’s occurred in courts with cameras since 01/01/08*

Dave Ward of Channel 3 showed four clips of court proceedings that have been videotaped since the rules change on Jan. 1, 2008. The clips included three arraignments (Hartford, New London & Rockville) and jury selection (no jurors shown).

*Agenda Item No. 3 – Discussion of committee’s mission*

Judge Clifford explained that the job of the committee is to evaluate the pilot program over the next years and make recommendations. The committee is not dealing with cameras in civil courts, he said. However, he asked whether the committee’s mission should be expanded to include an evaluation of cameras at arraignments, since this has been the bulk of camera requests since the rules change.

Regarding the pilot program in the Hartford JD, Paul Giguere of CT-N reported that CT-N will have a better handle in the next couple of weeks on whether the legislature will provide funding for CT-N to videotape court proceedings in Part A. He added that CT-N hopes to assign a crew to the Lafayette Street courthouse and would work closely with the other TV stations.

Judge Berger asked how it would play out if two or three criminal trials were going on at the same time. Mr. Giguere answered that it would depend on whether all of the stations would be interested in getting the video. Judge Clifford added that the Judicial Branch does not want to get involved in pooling issues, such as whether a station is obliged to share videotape if no one else asked to cover the proceeding.

Committee members discussed different situations that had arisen or may arise with cameras in court, i.e. a newspaper wanted to videotape a court proceeding for its website. Judge Clifford returned to the question of whether the committee should review camera coverage of arraignments, which, he added, has been going very smoothly in the various courthouses. The committee agreed to expand its mission to evaluating cameras in arraignments.

Agenda Item No. 4: Discussion of how to comply with the mission

Committee members next turned to the question of how best to comply with the mission. Judge Clifford asked whether there should be some kind of questionnaire. Hartford JD Public Defender Sara Bernstein indicated she had already asked her public defenders whether they had had cameras in their courts, for what kind of case, and whether there were any problems.

Judge Clifford suggested that a questionnaire be developed to review at the committee's next meeting. Committee members agreed that each group – i.e. judges, media, lawyers – would submit questions that they thought should be included on an evaluation. There was some discussion of appointing subcommittees to develop the questions, but committee members concluded that subcommittees were unnecessary.

Committee members also agreed that the evaluation process needs to get under way soon. Questions also may be revised as things go along, committee members added.

Agenda Item No. 5: Schedule next meeting

The committee scheduled its next meeting for Monday, April 28, 2008, at 2 p.m. at the Middlesex Judicial District Courthouse.

Agenda Item No. 6: Adjourn

The committee adjourned at approximately 4 p.m.