

Public Service and Trust Commission  
Juror Security Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Juror Security Subcommittee was held at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, September 9, 2015 in Conference Room 133 at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT.

Members Present: Esther Harris (Chair), Melanie Kerr, Roy Smith, Buffy Irizarry, Jeffrey Getz, Richard Loffredo, Ines Nieves, Judge Brian Fischer, Kevin Grosse and Carolina Marin.

Members Not Present: Robin C. Smith and Attorney Raymond Hassett.

The following issues were discussed by attendees:

- 1) Reviewed and approved minutes from 5/20/15.
- 2) Before today's meeting, a questionnaire was distributed to Chief Clerks, Jury Clerks and Judicial Marshals with questions developed by workgroup. Jeffrey discussed questionnaire responses. Some issues included bad building set-up, logistics, not enough Marshals/staff, social media and monitoring of jurors during lunch time. Also discovered that some of the answers they received were vague and decided that the questions need to be more specific for any future questionnaires.
- 3) Further discussed issue with social media. Jurors are instructed by the Judge many times throughout the day and throughout a trial. However, jurors are not monitored during lunch and obviously not at home, so not sure if there's anything that can be done about that. New Haven has their jurors sign a form stating they'll abide by the social media rules. This is an issue across the country as it is really difficult for people to separate themselves from social media.
- 4) Even after questionnaire, the committee still doesn't have enough information to put a security plan together. Each district is so different and the way they run their business is based on location, history, etc. Need to write a plan that lays out issues that must be addressed. The plan can talk about challenges, recommend what can be done and each district can write their own responses. Plan would outline universal standards but would need to be individualized by district. This way, that's the plan they would use and then everyone (staff, marshals, administration) would know what's going on at each JD. Additionally, people often say that procedures vary by court location so standardization would eliminate this issue.
- 5) Discussed holding Regional Meetings again for the purpose of obtaining more information for the security manual. Need to focus on asking more specific questions. Jeff and Melanie will work on developing draft document (security plan). The draft will then go to Esther for review, then to committee. After the committee revises draft, it can then be sent to Joe D'Alesio for review and approval. Then we can schedule regional

meetings where this plan will be presented and we can get further feedback and responses.

- 6) Members debated on the idea of requiring jurors to provide identification when reporting for jury service. Some concerns are:
  - a. How do we notify people?
  - b. What do we do if someone comes without ID?
  - c. What will be acceptable forms of ID?
  - d. Are there legal challenges that can arise?
  - e. The burden it would put on Jury Administration (more phone calls, no space on summons to notify juror of ID requirement, etc.).

Esther spoke to the office in New Jersey that handles jurors. They are not centralized like CT and they have some counties that do ask for ID. They started doing that because the jurors themselves brought it up to them. NJ reported that it hasn't really made a difference either way but they couldn't verify if they had gotten any legal challenges in relation to the ID being required. Melanie stated that it was the workgroup's opinion to require that ID be provided, as not verifying ID could put jury at risk. Judge Fischer mentioned that the public has access to the library in the courthouses and ID is not required. Need to continue having discussion and weigh pros and cons.

- 7) Directions to juror parking have been updated for New Haven Superior Court. Directions to parking for the Bridgeport and Waterbury Superior Courts are in the process of being updated. In addition, the idea about running shuttles for jurors from the parking lots to the courts is back on the table. The committee will need to discuss further, cost, who will drive the shuttles, and availability.
- 8) Other Business:
  - a. Esther has drafted a letter for jurors to let them know that the media and attorneys can approach them after the conclusion of a trial, but that they are not required to talk to them. Judge Fischer to review the letter and get back to Esther about any suggested revisions. Plan is to submit the letter to the larger committee and recommend that it is handed out to jurors at all courts.
  - b. Briefly talked about jurors in traumatic cases that are having difficulty coping. There is currently no official plan in place for this issue; however, they are handled on a case-by-case basis.

9) The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

10) The next Juror Security Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 7, 2015 in room 133 at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT.