

Minutes
Public Service and Trust Commission
Pro Bono Committee
April 27, 2011

The Pro Bono Committee met on Wednesday, April 27, 2011, at 2:00pm in the Attorney's Conference Room, 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT.

Those in attendance: Hon William Bright, Chair, Attorney Edward Heath, Attorney Alfred Casella, Attorney Timothy Johnston, Attorney Janice Chiaretto, Attorney Barry Hawkins, Attorney Steve Eppler-Epstein, Attorney Dwight Merriam, Attorney Ian Lodovice, Attorney Jeffrey Eglash, Attorney Norman Janes and Attorney Daniel Horwitch.

Meeting was called to order at 2:07 pm.

The Committee voted to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2011 meeting. Attorney Eglash abstained.

1. Since the March 23rd Pro Bono Committee meeting, each of the subcommittees met again and reported on their progress:

Logistics

Attorney Barndollar, chair of the Logistics subcommittee was not present, so Judge Bright provided an update on her behalf. Judge Bright reported that the subcommittee had narrowed its search for a venue site for the Summit to either Quinnipiac Law School or the Legislative Office Building (LOB) with UCONN Law School as a reserve option if the first two were not feasible. However, because the proposed dates for the Summit (September 21st, September 28th, or October 5th) are all in the fall when the law schools are in session, neither of the law schools will be available. Judge Bright reported that he and others would be touring the LOB space after the meeting and invited the other Committee members to join him.

A discussion was held regarding the possibility of changing the date of the Summit to coincide with National Pro Bono Awareness Week at the end of October. The Committee thought it best to hold the Summit on the originally contemplated dates, but agreed that it was a good idea to perhaps conduct a press conference during National Pro Bono Week where the positive results from the Summit could be announced and reinforced.

Judge Bright reiterated the plan to begin the Summit at 8:30a.m. and provide breakfast and refreshments for the attendees. Judge Bright also reported that he was reviewing the list of Connecticut law firms with 25 or more attorneys as well as the list of Connecticut Corporations which was provided by the Secretary of State's Office. Several Committee members reported that a more succinct list of Connecticut corporations could be obtained from the Pro Bono Partnership, WESFACA or the Law Tribune. Attorney Edward Heath offered to obtain a list and provide it to the Committee.

A discussion was also held about how best to determine which members of the various Legal Aid agencies to invite to the Summit. The Committee discussed inviting any Legal

Aid agency who was an IOLTA grantee or a member of the Pro Bono Network. Attorney Steve Eppler-Epstein will put together a list of suggested invitees.

The Committee also discussed the idea of also inviting the pro bono coordinators from each of the larger Connecticut law firms in addition to the managing partners. There was some concern that the size of the Summit might become too large if both representatives were invited and additional concern was expressed that inviting two representatives from the larger law firms might then cause the smaller firms and/or sole practitioners to be excluded from attending. The Committee agreed that it was a good idea to focus on the presidents of the local bar associations to ensure representation from the smaller firms. Each bar president could be asked to identify someone in their organization who might be interested in pro bono work. This might help to ensure representation from the smaller firms and/or sole practitioners.

Judge Bright reported on some of the other groups who would be invited to attend the Summit, namely representatives from the law schools, the Attorney General's Office, the Civil, Family and Juvenile Chief Administrative Judges, Appellate Court Judge Alexandra DiPentima, Judge Raymond Norko, Chair of the Access to Justice Commission and other judges as determined. Judge Bright also indicated that it would be best to have a larger number of speakers who would speak for shorter periods of time. This would allow the Summit to showcase a wider variety of speakers and cover a larger array of areas of interest to the attendees.

Programs

Attorney Steve Eppler-Epstein, chair of the Programs subcommittee reported that the subcommittee had essentially two charges – to develop a catalog for the Summit and to also develop the actual pro bono programs to be presented. To this end, the subcommittee prepared a draft outline of the programs to be presented at the Summit including welcoming remarks by Chief Justice Rogers, a presentation about the self-represented party crisis with a presentation by a client who had a negative experience representing themselves, but who was ultimately helped by a pro bono lawyer. In addition to the overview of the pro bono catalog and a presentation by Statewide Legal Services, the Summit would highlight the five basic models of pro bono services:

1. Legal Service in-house volunteers;
2. Clinic model;
3. Corporate models;
4. Co-counseling in major litigation;
5. Lawyer of the day projects in court

Also, the Summit program would include such topics as the pro bono website, reducing in-court costs, limited appearances and authorized in-house counsel. There would also be an emphasis placed upon rewards and recognition for attorneys who performed pro bono work and consideration would be given to such concepts as preferential Committee assignments for foreclosures and other awards and recognition. Finally, Attorney Eppler-Epstein reported that the Summit program would touch upon why pro bono was good business for Connecticut corporations and law firms.

The Committee discussed asking the Summit attendees to sign a pro bono pledge like the Pro Bono Institute's pledge which asks attorneys to dedicate 3% of their billable time to performing pro bono work. Additionally, the Committee discussed having booths staffed

by the various non-profit groups where attorneys could stop by and learn more about the organization and sign up for pro bono opportunities if they so desired.

Training

Attorney Gregg Benson, chair of the Training subcommittee was unable to attend the meeting so Attorney Ian Lodovice reported on his behalf. Attorney Lodovice reported that Attorney Benson will contact the CBA to find out who coordinates the training. The Committee agreed that having one central location where attorneys can obtain information about training for various pro bono programs was a great idea. New Haven Legal Assistance has developed a website CTLaw.org and have committed to creating a pro bono portal on the website for all of the training information.

The Committee agreed that the training efforts should be coordinated through the CBA and that judges should be part of the training process. The Committee also discussed having Legal Aid provide in-house training to the large firms that would target specific pro bono projects and initiatives. The Committee agreed that it would be a nice contrast to the CBA training that is provided which tends to be more general and generic in nature.

Communication

Attorney Janice Chiaretto, chair of the Communication subcommittee reported on the subcommittee's work. A discussion was held regarding the attorney portion of the website and what the contents should look like. For example, the attorney piece of the website should contain information about available training as well as a recognition corner which could contain features such as "lawyer of the month" and client testimonials. Some concern was expressed about having adequate staff to update and maintain the website and a suggestion was made to enlist corporate resources to assist in this capacity. The website would also have a client side with information on how to access legal aid, how to go to court and fill out forms, etc.

A discussion was held regarding utilizing the electronic annual attorney registration process to assist in the pro bono effort. The Committee discussed whether the attorney registration process was the proper forum for getting information to attorneys on pro bono opportunities and a suggestion was made to instead include a link at the bottom of the registration form that said "Click here for information on pro bono opportunities."

The Committee agreed, however, that the main focus of the Communication subcommittee should be the development and coordination of the website.

Recognition and Recruitment

The Recognition and Recruitment subcommittee briefly reported on their work. Specifically, the subcommittee reported that the CBA already has an established recognition system. Also, as part of recognizing attorneys who perform pro bono work, the subcommittee agreed that an important component should be brown-bag type lunches with the judges to create a forum for attorneys to discuss issues that may be important to them.

Metrics

Judge Bright, Chair of the Metrics subcommittee reported that the subcommittee has continued its work on mandatory reporting of pro bono work. There was some concern expressed about using the annual attorney registration form to report pro bono efforts. Some felt that the potential existed for misusing the information on reported pro bono

efforts and perhaps the attorney registration process was not the proper vehicle to gather this data. The discussion was held regarding the use of the attorney registration process for purposes other than collecting information that was relevant and necessary to the practice of law. Additionally, it was reported that the CBA was very supportive of the idea of mandatory reporting as part of the annual registration process.

Judge Bright asked the Committee to review the proposal from *Sonalysts* that had been distributed at the beginning of the meeting regarding the creation of a 5-minute video which would communicate the need for pro bono services for people who cannot afford legal representation. The video would run in a continuous loop at the Summit as attendees filtered into the venue. According to the proposal, the cost of producing the 5-minute video would be around \$20,000. Judge Bright said he would follow up with Judicial regarding the feasibility of subsidizing such an endeavor.

Judge Bright reminded the Committee that the focus of everyone's work should be on the Summit and he hoped to solidify the date and the place for the Summit at the May meeting of the Pro Bono Committee.

2. The next meeting of the Pro Bono Committee will be on Thursday, May 26, 2011 at 2:00pm at 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, in the Attorney's Conference Room.
3. The meeting adjourned at 3:49p.m.