



PUBLIC SERVICE AND TRUST COMMISSION

Committee on Alternatives to Court Appearances

Minutes
November 18, 2008

Those in attendance:

Hon. Elliot N. Solomon, Chair
Atty. David Belt
Hon. Thomas A. Bishop
Hon. David Borden
Hon. Patrick L. Carroll III
Family Support Magistrate John. E. Colella
Hon. Emmet L. Cosgrove
Atty. Joseph Garrison
Mr. David Iaccarino

Atty. Adele V. Patterson
Atty. Nancy Porter
Atty. Maureen Platt Temchin
Atty. Norman A. Roberts II
Atty. Jennifer O. Robinson
Mr. Scott Rosengrant
Ms. Betsy Rosser
Hon. Hillary B. Strackbein
Hon. David R. Tobin

Not Present: Atty. Mark Ostrowski

The Committee on Alternatives to Court Appearances met on November 18, 2008 at 90 Washington Street, Hartford, in Courtroom A-2 at 2:00 p.m.

The Meeting was called to order at 2:02 pm by Judge Solomon. He provided a brief summary of the Public Service and Trust Commission and the formation of the Committee on Alternatives to Court Appearances and its goal. He welcomed committee members and led with their introductions.

Judge Solomon provided a history of video conferencing and a summary of the types of hearings video conferencing is used for in other States. He spoke about the possibility of including telephone conferencing and using video conferencing for PSI/Bail conferences with an overall goal to better serve the public.

Atty. Jen Robinson gave an overview on video conferencing in Connecticut. She provided members with a history and named the Courts and DOC facilities that utilize video conferencing.

Scott Rosengrant provided committee members with a demonstration on Judicial Branch video conferencing units, which include primary and portable units.

Judge Carroll and Magistrate Colella provided positive reviews on video conferencing with one limitation being the amount of hours DOC has available for video conferencing.

The consensus of the committee was that the January 2, 2009 date for the submission of recommendations to the Chief Court Administrator was too soon. The committee would like to extend the final report date six months to one year. Judge Carroll informed the committee that the Chief Justice gave the January 2, 2009 deadline because the expansion of video conference throughout the state is a top priority. Judge Carroll also informed the committee to continue with future and separate charges, beyond the January 2, 2009 date to provide a final report on a date to be determined.

Committee members discussed other types of possible uses for video conferencing including arraignments, pre-trials and private attorneys using video conferencing via webcam. Mr. Rosengrant discussed the possibility of looking into a “bridge” to enable multi-conferences. Confidentiality, privacy for inmates in DOC facilities and secure connections were also discussed and must be kept as a top priority. Priority must also be set on what we can do now (expand video conference) versus what can get done at a later time.

Judge Solomon addressed the formation of four key subcommittees to address the following:

- Identification of use
- Cost benefit and Benefit Assessment
- Technology
- Statute and Rules

Judge Solomon and Judge Carroll will assign committee members to one of four subcommittees. Once the subcommittees are formed, members should move forward quickly and conduct their first meeting prior to the next committee meeting.

Judge Solomon will look into the possibility of expanding the committee to include members of DOC, Assistant Attorney General’s office and the Department of Children and Families.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 18, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. in the 4th Floor training room at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.