



PUBLIC SERVICE AND TRUST COMMISSION

Committee on Alternatives to Court Appearances

Minutes
December 18, 2008

Those in attendance:

Hon. Elliot N. Solomon, Chair
Atty. David Belt
Hon. Thomas A. Bishop
Hon. David Borden
Ms. Linda Cimino
Hon. Patrick J. Clifford
Family Support Magistrate John E. Colella
Hon. Emmet L. Cosgrove
Atty. Joseph Del Ciampo
Atty. Joseph Garrison
Ms. Marilou Giovannucci
Atty. Eric Groody
Atty. Scott Hartley
Hon. Arthur A. Hiller
Mr. David Iaccarino
Hon. Christine E. Keller

Dr. Thomas A. Kirk
Mr. Ronald Macchio
Mr. Richard Miele
Hon. Lynda B. Munro
Atty. Mark Ostrowski
Atty. Adele V. Patterson
Atty. Nancy Porter
Hon. O. James Purnell, III
Mr. Gary Roberge
Atty. Norman A. Roberts II
Atty. Jennifer O. Robinson
Ms. Betsy Rosser
Atty. Robin C. Smith
Hon. Hillary B. Strackbein
Hon. David R. Tobin

Not Present:

Hon. Patrick L. Carroll III
Mr. O'Donovan Murphy
Atty. Norman Pattis
Mr. Scott Rosengrant

Ms. Celia Seifert
Atty. Maureen Platt Temchin
Hon. David R. Tobin

The Committee on Alternatives to Court Appearances met on December 18, 2008 at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, in the 4th Floor Training room at 2:00 p.m.

The Meeting was called to order at 2:01 p.m. by Judge Solomon. As the first order of business the minutes for the meeting held on November 18th, 2008 were approved unanimously by committee members.

Judge Solomon welcomed new committee members from other agencies and provided them with a brief summary of the Public Service and Trust Commission and the formation of the Committee on Alternatives to Court Appearances and its goals. He also addressed the formation of the four

subcommittees and briefly discussed the goals of each. He welcomed committee members and led with their introductions.

Judge Solomon addressed the importance of the Purposes Subcommittee to identify the possible uses of technology in order for other subcommittee's to complete their report.

Purposes Subcommittee

Judge Strackbein provided a handout to committee members and reviewed the list and addressed some of the technological and non-technological uses that would be worth looking into. There were disagreements among some of the uses proposed for Video Conference (VC), but there was agreement on others that would be possible to implement and be beneficial.

Committee members discussed the possible uses of VC in Family, Juvenile, Civil and Criminal. Discussions led to types of hearing that can be included and the benefits/limitation of not having participants in court. Justice Borden suggested looking at other states to see what types of hearing VC is used for.

Judge Solomon asked committee members to keep in mind cost/efficiency including manpower and security when addressing the uses of VC. Also noted was the availability of other agencies having the VC equipment.

Committee members discussed benefit and drawbacks of not having prisoners come into court. The committee also discussed the possibility of having a specific room in courthouses where attorneys can speak with their clients outside of their scheduled court date.

Statutes and Rules Subcommittee

Atty. Robinson reported out to committee members issues addressed in the subcommittee's meeting.

The subcommittee discussed potential areas of the statutes and rules to examine that prohibit the use of VC in all divisions. The subcommittee will consider which statutes and rules to tailor and amend based on the Purposes Subcommittee's recommendations.

Cost/Benefit Subcommittee

Mr. Iaccarino reported out to committee members issues addressed in the subcommittee's meeting.

The subcommittee focused their meeting on procedures for VC and Teleconferencing (TC) that would benefit everyone. Monetary and Non-Monetary costs were discussed including benefits on savings for the people and making the court more user-friendly.

The subcommittee discussed waiting until the Purposes Subcommittee makes their recommendations and estimates completing their recommendations a month after. The subcommittee also discussed interacting with both the Purposes and Technology Subcommittee's with a possible joint meeting in the future.

Judge Keller informed committee members that in many Child Protection cases incarcerated parent should not have to come to court and it would be beneficial having VC.

Technology Subcommittee

Judge Solomon reported out to committee members via an e-mail that was sent from Scott Rosengrant, chair of the subcommittee.

Mr. Rosengrant provided subcommittee members with an in-depth overview of the VC equipment. Also discussed was the necessity to upgrade courts with high speed circuits and prioritizing based on the courts' need for this new upgrade. The subcommittee discussed the need to expand TC units in every courthouse, specifically for status conferences. Judge Bishop informed committee members to consider the needs of the Bar in their ability to participate in a courthouse conference.

Mr. Rosengrant recommended bringing in the VC vendor to discuss other areas the units could be used for. Security concerns are important and the levels of security must be discussed with the vendor. Also, replicating a VC in a video format for the court record must be looked into.

Atty. Adele indicated that it is worth inquiring what the Bar is using regarding VC. Judge Solomon asked if committee members would inquire to see what the Bar's view is on VC. Also, inquiry should be made to see if the federal court is using VC and at what capacity.

The Committee discussed the report back date as unrealistic and the need to prioritize the most important aspects of implementing video conferencing.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 22, 2008 at 12:00 p.m. in the 4th Floor training room at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109.

The meeting adjourned at 3:32 p.m.