

Minutes
Public Service and Trust Commission
March 25, 2008

Those in attendance: Hon. Alexandra DiPentima (Chair), Magistrate Sandra Sosnoff Baird, Hon. Robert E. Beach, Jr., Hon. John D. Boland, Joseph F. Camilleri, Hon. Patrick L. Carroll, III, Atty. Joseph D. D'Alesio, Hon. Nina F. Elgo, Atty. Melissa Farley, Hon. James T. Graham, Ms. Lisa Holden, Atty. Norman K. Janes, Hon. Clarence J. Jones, Atty. Kevin T. Kane, Justice Joette Katz, Caren Kittredge, Hon. Douglas C. Mintz, Atty. Joseph Mirrione, Atty. William H. Prout, Jr., Hon. Barbara M. Quinn, Hon. Antonio C. Robaina, Atty. Kenneth B. Rubin, Hon. William B. Rush, Atty. Michael T. Ryan, Atty. Mary Sommer Sandak, Hon. Joseph Shortall, Thomas A. Siconolfi, Atty. Carolyn Signorelli, Atty. Toni M. Smith-Rosario, Atty. Robert Stillman, Hon. Hillary B. Strackbein, Atty. Frederic Ury, Atty. Dawne G. Westbrook, Alex Wood, and Atty. Jennifer Zito.

The meeting was called to order at 3:13 PM.

1. Welcome – Judge DiPentima welcomed members of the commission and expressed appreciation for their work in gathering, analyzing and organizing the information.
2. Approval of minutes – The next agenda item was the approval of the meeting minutes from December 11, 2007. Upon motion and second, the minutes were unanimously approved.
3. Timeline and Outline of Strategic Plan –The Chief Justice will present the strategic plan to the judges at their annual meeting at the end of June so it must be completed by the end of May to allow her to review it at the beginning of June. To meet this deadline, all committees' strategies and performance measures must be completed by the middle of April. The plan will include an introduction (formation of the commission, charge, members, list of committees, and process of obtaining the information). It will also include the vision, mission and values, the five outcome goals, and their strategies and performance measures. A separate implementation plan will contain the activities. That implementation plan will be prepared primarily by the Office of the Chief Court Administrator and Branch staff with members of the steering committee and some judges. If commission members have any suggestions regarding the contents of the plan, contact Judge DiPentima.
4. Formatting of the Strategic Plan –In order to have a cohesive and readable document, the material from each of the committees will be subject to stylistic editing and reformatting as the final Strategic Plan is completed.
5. Vision, Mission and Values Committee – Judge DiPentima listed the members of the Vision, Mission and Values Committee, which has a representative from each of the committees. They are: Judge Mintz (chair) (Steering Committee), Atty. Westbrook (Steering Committee), Judge Shortall (Committee on Access), Atty. Zito (Committee on Accountability), Judge Jones (Committee on Changing Demographics), Mr. Siconolfi (Committee on Collaboration) and Atty. Stillman (Committee on Delivery of Services). This committee will review the mission statement in light of Constitutional and statutory language, define the values based upon the information from the focus groups and draft a vision statement that incorporates the outcome goals of each committee. The first meeting is scheduled for April 3rd.
6. Legislative update – Atty. Ury and Atty. Westbrook testified before the Judiciary Committee on raised bill 605 at the legislature regarding the work of the commission because many of the items in the bill are already being addressed by the work of the Public Service and Trust Commission. One of the focuses of the testimony was the rule making portion of the bill. Other bar groups and members of the media submitted testimony as well.
7. Presentation of Outcome Goals - Each committee through its co-chairs reported on work of the committee, including the outcome goal and why that goal was chosen.

- Atty. Norman Janes and Judge Boland reported on behalf of the Committee on Delivery of Services. The outcome goal is: The Judicial Branch will provide effective, uniform and consistent delivery of services by enhancing the management of court practices. The goal is the product of many hours of discussion and revisions based on the review of a vast volume of information and trends. It addresses the needs of stakeholders for clear rules and procedures that are enforced uniformly in every court, the need for additional resources to address the needs of the unrepresented, and the need to enhance the experience of jurors to encourage greater and more willing participation in the process.
- Judge Graham and Mr. Siconolfi reported on behalf of the Committee on Collaboration. The committee has basically finalized the outcome goal, rationale, and performance measures and is close to completing the work on the strategies and their performance measures. The outcome goal is: The Judicial Branch will improve its communication and collaboration with the Executive and Legislative Branches of government and their agencies to better serve the needs of all who interact with the Judicial Branch. The goal addresses the need for further collaborative efforts and expanded communication between the Branch and its partners, including bar associations, governmental agencies, other branches of government and entities with which the Branch contracts to provide services to ensure the resolution of matters before the court, the development of effective public policy, the successful implementation and operation of joint efforts between the branch, government, and private agencies, the effective education of the public on Branch functions and responsibilities, and the obtaining of adequate resources to provide sufficient and efficient services to those who interact with the Branch.
- Atty. Signorelli and Judge Robaina reported on behalf of the Committee on Changing Demographics. The outcome goal is: The Judicial Branch will provide a diverse, socially aware, and culturally competent environment that is sensitive to the values and responsive to the needs of all who interact with the Judicial Branch. The goal addresses the issues of poverty, racial, cultural and ethnic diversity, changing ages of juveniles, and people with mental illnesses that Connecticut's courts face in serving an increasingly diverse population. Unless people can communicate their needs, are provided with the assistance in understanding what is happening, can process and understand the advisement of rights given from the bench in a criminal case, can obtain culturally appropriate services, or are able to participate meaningfully in the proceedings, the mission of the Branch is compromised.

A discussion of the meaning of the term "socially aware" occurred. Being socially aware means that staff and judges must understand with whom they are dealing, offer appropriate assistance, and display empathy and understanding to those who come into the courts feeling stressed and overwhelmed. The question about potential overlap with the Committee on Access was raised and the Steering Committee will make sure that the goals and strategies are not duplicative.

- Justice Katz and Ms. Kittredge reported on the Committee on Accountability. The committee faced many and varied issues as part of its charge. The outcome goal is: The Judicial Branch will ensure a judicial system where all participants can expect and experience clear, fair and consistent justice from an independent and impartial judiciary. The ensuing discussion addressed the issues of unclear expectations and a limited understanding of the judicial process by stakeholders, the need for personal safety that must be balanced against rights to privacy, confidentiality and against personal intrusions, and the need for, role of, and meaning of judicial independence and expectations. Strategies and activities will address the need to establish and communicate standards and consistent operational rules in all courts and courthouses, to communicate with staff, stakeholders, and judges, what to expect and what is expected of them in the courts, to implement a robust communications network for feedback from

all, to consider specialization, to assess and evaluate current process for judicial evaluation, and to consider alternative methods of case management, among others.

- Judge Shortall and Attorney Smith-Rosario reported on the Committee on Access. The outcome goal is: The Judicial Branch will provide equal and unobstructed access to all Judicial Branch facilities, processes, and information through the identification and removal of barriers. The issues fell into four general categories: barriers found in facilities, including comfort, ADA requirements, navigability, overcrowding, privacy, and more efficient use of facilities, barriers for people with physical, psychiatric or intellectual disabilities, barriers for people with communication difficulties, particularly those people with limited English proficiency, and finally the need to balance the demand for more information with the privacy rights of individuals, so that people involved with the judicial system know that their information is secure and will not be abused. The question as to whether the need for new facilities will be addressed by the committee was raised. This issue came up in the focus groups, and under the strategies, the construction of new or improved court facilities will be addressed.

Judge DiPentima asked that each committee provide, through staff, their written materials so that the Steering Committee, at its meeting on April 9th, can review the materials to identify and address any overlapping between the committees' work.

9. Other Business: The office of the chief court administrator has already begun to address some of the issues that were raised in the focus groups, at public hearings, in the surveys, and informally through emails to members of the Steering Committee. A committee to look at the complex litigation docket has been formed and will meet at the end of April; a committee has been formed to address the issues regarding small claims; and a committee to look at the judicial evaluation process has been formed. Other changes that have been, or are in the process of being, made in response to concerns raised by many of the bar groups include opening courthouse doors at 8:30 AM, keeping attorney conference rooms and courtrooms open during lunch hours and before court commences to the extent consistent with security needs, streamlining the process for attorneys to bring electronic equipment into the courts, beginning the process to change the rule on camera phones in the courts, liberalizing the rules on having water in the courthouse, implementing a new public service excellence training program, and working on a process to allow expedited courthouse access to attorneys with an attorney identification card, among other issues.

The next meeting of the full commission will be on May 29th at a time to be determined.

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 PM.