

Minutes
Public Service and Trust Commission Committee on
Uniformity of Court Procedures
January 27, 2009

The Public Service and Trust Commission Committee on Uniformity of Court Procedures met in at Court Operations, Room 204, 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT on January 27, 2009 at 2:30 PM.

Those in attendance: Atty. Timothy Bates, Hon. Bernadette Conway, Hon. James J. Devine, Atty. Tais Ericson, Atty. Thomas Esposito, Hon. James Graham, Ms. Jane Grein, Mr. David Iaccarino, Hon. John J. Langenbach, Atty. Susan E. Malliet, Hon. Douglas C. Mintz (co-chair), Atty. Joseph R. Mirrione, Hon. Lynda B. Munro, Atty. Norman Roberts, Hon. William B. Rush, Atty. Michael Ryan, Hon. Marylouise Schofield, Atty. Carolyn Signorelli, Hon. Christine S. Vertefeuille, Hon. Theodore R. Tyma, and Atty. Frederic S. Ury (co-chair).

The meeting was called to order at 2:33 PM.

1. Welcome and Introduction of New Members - Committee members were welcomed and all members introduced themselves.
2. Approval of minutes –Upon motion and second, the minutes were unanimously approved.
3. Review and Discussion of information from focus groups – The committee held three focus groups during January, one for civil practitioners and legal support staff in Bridgeport, one for family practitioners and legal support staff in Wethersfield, and a third with the American College of Trial Attorneys in New Haven. The results of those focus groups were given to the committee members. Over fifty people attended the focus groups and information was obtained on where the lack of uniformity impacts the bar and legal support staff. Some of those issues include variations in short calendar procedures, differences in standing orders and trial management orders, and variations in the handling of withdrawals of appearance in family matters.

The committee then agreed to discuss issues of uniformity as a whole committee because of space constraints (the fifth item on the agenda – breakout of subcommittees for focus groups) before discussing the formation of subcommittees (the fourth item on the agenda).

4. Focus group on uniformity issues – A discussion of the issues regarding uniformity ensued. Some of the issues mentioned by members of the committee include a lack of uniformity with respect to calendar calls from district to district, variations with respect to interactions with jurors (i.e., remarks made at orientation, handling of voir dire, interactions post-trial between judge and jurors, and taping of voir dire), extensive trial management orders and their enforcement, pre-marking of exhibits, handling of AV

equipment being used at trial, attendance of parties/adjusters at pretrials, disclosure regarding expert witnesses, number of times attorneys must come to court before trial for scheduling orders, pretrial and trial management conferences, differences in the handling of discovery disputes, appointment of special masters for discovery, more uniform use of email for communicating with judges (i.e., weather issues, delivering briefs or requests to charge) and issues with respect to short calendar procedures.

5. Formation of subcommittees – The list of subcommittee assignments was read to the members. A copy of the list will be sent to all members. Judge Hiller will chair the civil subcommittee and Judge Schofield will chair the family subcommittee. Subcommittee will meet and make recommendations on the issues raised in the focus groups. Those recommendations will then be brought back to the full committee for discussion and further action.

Subcommittees will try to meet twice within the next two months. The next full committee meeting will be in late March.

The meeting adjourned at 4:42 PM.