

Minutes
Family Commission
August 25, 2010

The Family Commission met in room 607L at the Middlesex Judicial District Courthouse located at 1 Court Street, Middletown, CT on August 25, 2010.

Those in attendance: Hon. Lynda B. Munro (Chair), Hon. Holly Abery-Wetstone, Hon. Sandra Sosnoff Baird, Hon. John D. Boland, Attorney Constance Frontis, Hon. Elaine Gordon, Johanna Greenfield, David Iaccarino, Attorney Maureen Murphy, Attorney Thomas Parrino.

Also in attendance were Attorney Joseph Del Ciampo and Attorney Nancy Porter from the Judicial Branch's Legal Services Unit.

The meeting was called to order at 2:15 PM by Judge Munro.

I. Review and approval of minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on June 23, 2010 were approved by the members of the Commission who were in attendance.

II. Rule proposals to consider

A draft proposal regarding court-ordered evaluations was approved by unanimous vote of the Commission members in attendance for submission to the Rules Committee.

Draft proposed revisions to Rule 25-60 were approved as amended and by unanimous vote of the Commission members in attendance for submission to the Rules Committee. There will be additional commentary added to the proposal.

A draft proposal regarding automatic orders in non-magistrate support petitions was approved by unanimous vote of the Commission members in attendance for submission to the Rules Committee.

Draft proposed revisions to Rule 25-31 were approved by unanimous vote of the Commission members in attendance for submission to the Rules Committee.

Draft proposed revisions to Rule 25-62 were approved by unanimous vote of the Commission members in attendance for submission to the Rules Committee. If passed, an effective date of July 1, 2012 will be requested.

A draft proposal regarding the appointment of an attorney for a minor child was approved by unanimous vote of the Commission members in attendance for submission to the Rules Committee. If passed, an effective date of July 1, 2012 will be requested.

It was further discussed that the GAL list for family court needs to be separate from the GAL list for juvenile court.

III. Role of GAL and duration of appointment

This will be put over to the next meeting. "Role" may not be the right word to use for the topic. The issue is more the appropriate method for a guardian ad litem to bring something to the court's attention. Perhaps taking a look at the Committee model in foreclosure actions will help with some kind of an "advice to the guardians ad litem" mechanism. The Commission will look at what the appellate rules say regarding guardians ad litem.

IV. Such other matters that may come before the Commission

Individualized Docket Management – Judge Munro has gotten approval to speak to the bench and bar further about this. She is currently exploring how to empirically study the most effective point in a case to intervene and get it on the appropriate track.

Standing Orders – The Commission was asked for input regarding needed standing orders and the following topics were raised that will be discussed at the next Commission meeting:

- Do the trial management orders apply to protracted hearings?
- Fee waiver applications – uniformity as to whether documentation is required.

The need for Spanish-speaking guardians ad litem and whether attorneys who go through the GAL training should commit to taking a certain number of appointments – One solution is that at the training the participants could be asked to indicate what languages they speak. The Commission members will give further thought to these issues.

V. Next Meeting

The next meeting date is October 6, 2010.

Judge Munro adjourned the meeting at 4:16 p.m.