

Minutes
Workgroup on Family Rules
September 17, 2008

The Workgroup on Family Rules met in room 301 at the Middlesex Judicial District Courthouse located at 1 Court Street, Middletown, CT on September 17, 2008.

Those in attendance: Hon. Holly Abery-Wetstone, Hon. Sandra Sosnoff Baird, Hon. John Boland, Attorney Steven Dembo, Hon. Anne Dranginis, Attorney Gaetano Ferro, Hon. Steven Frazzini, Attorney Constance Frontis, Hon. Elaine Gordon, Attorney Johanna Greenfield, Hon. Lynda Munro (Chair), Attorney Maureen Murphy, Attorney Thomas Parrino, Hon. Elliott Solomon.

Also in attendance were Attorneys Joseph Del Ciampo and Nancy Porter from the Judicial Branch's Legal Services Unit and Judge Munro's clerk, Jason.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM by Judge Munro.

I. Introduction

Those in attendance introduced themselves. Judge Munro then introduced the goals of the group, which are to review the existing family rules; to identify any civil rules that may need to be included in the family chapter; fill in gaps in the family practice book rules and to review rules for family support magistrate court. Judge Munro brought to the attention of the committee a letter from Roberta Friedman regarding the topic of co-petitioners in mediated cases for later discussion.

II. Review of existing family rules

The approach initially being taken for the review of existing family rules (Chapter 25) prior to any drafting will be to go through them one by one and identify issues.

At this meeting Rules 25-1 through 25-15 were reviewed with two exceptions—Rule 25-5 so that members have more time to review it individually and identify issues to bring back to the group at the next meeting, and Rule 25-6 so that members have time to review the other rules that are specifically referenced therein.

III. Identify civil rules, if any, that might be needed for family matters

It was noted that the discovery rules should be examined as they may relate to family matters. The proposed rule changes from April 2008 out of the American Academy of Matrimonial lawyers dealt with issues

regarding discovery, experts and stays, as well as the automatic orders and will be discussed.

IV. Identify gaps, if any, in family rules

Perceived gaps in the rules will be identified as they arise in discussion.

V. Family Support Magistrate rules

It was noted that family support magistrate court currently does not have formalized rules. Judge Munro and Magistrate Sosnoff Baird have been asked to co-chair a subcommittee regarding family support magistrate rules that will include family support magistrates, judges, representatives from the Department of Social Services, Court Operations, Support Enforcement Services, and the Office of the Attorney General and others. It was recommended that those on this committee who haven't spent time in magistrate court recently to do so and to review the statutes so as to become familiar with its current processes and the unique challenges faced therein.

The schedule of the group will be every three weeks, generally from 2 p.m. to approximately 5 p.m. However, the next meeting will be Wednesday, October 8, 2008 at 9:30 a.m. in room 301 at Middlesex Superior Court, 1 Court Street Middletown, CT.

Judge Munro adjourned the meeting at 4:45 p.m.