

Minutes
Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem
and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters
November 10, 2025

The Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters met on November 10, 2025. The meeting was convened by the Chair in Center Court at 95 Washington Street, Hartford, Connecticut.

Those in attendance: Judge Leo Diana (Chair); Judge Jennifer Macierowski; Attorney Edward Bryan; Attorney Bryan Cafferelli; Attorney Renee Cimino (designated by the Chief Public Defender); Attorney Justine Rakich-Kelly

Absent: Attorney Nisa Khan; Ms. Rachel Boucher, Clinical Director, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Ms. Barabara Cass, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner for Long Term Care, Department of Public Health

Also in attendance were Attorney Damon Goldstein and Ms. Nicole Collins from the Judicial Branch's Court Operations Unit.

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 PM by Judge Diana.

I. Review and Approval of the Minutes

Damon Goldstein noted a typographical error in Rachel Boucher's name in the draft minutes. The error will be corrected in the final version of the minutes.

A motion was made by Justine Rakich-Kelly and seconded by Bryan Cafferelli to approve the minutes from the meeting held on September 8, 2025. The motion passed with a 3-0 vote with Judge Macierowski, Edward Bryan and Renee Cimino abstaining and three members absent.

II. Possible Removal of Individuals from List of Persons Qualified to Serve as a GAL/AMC

At 2:06 PM, in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes §1-200(6), Justine Rakich-Kelly moved, and Bryan Cafferelli seconded, to enter executive session to discuss complaints for removal of guardians ad litem. The motion passed by a 6-0 vote with three members absent. Judge Diana recused himself from the executive session and left Center Court for the discussion of complaint #25-0002. Upon completion of the discussion of that complaint, Judge Diana rejoined the executive session for the discussion of the remaining complaint.

A motion was made by Justine Rakich-Kelly and seconded by Edward Bryan to conclude the executive session. The motion passed by a 6-0 vote with three members absent. The Committee reconvened in open session at 2:16 PM.

a. Complaint #25-0002

A motion was made by Justine Rakich-Kelly and seconded by Bryan Cafferelli to accept the Probable Cause Panel's findings of no probable cause and recommendation of dismissing the complaint. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote with Judge Diana abstaining and three members absent. The complaint was dismissed.

b. Complaint #25-0005

A motion was made by Justine Rakich-Kelly and seconded by Bryan Cafferelli to accept the Probable Cause Panel's findings of no probable cause and recommendation of dismissing the complaint. The motion passed with a 6-0 vote with three members absent. The complaint was dismissed.

III. Changes to the Active List of Persons Qualified to Serve as a GAL/AMC

No business was brought before the Committee on this agenda item.

IV. Review and Possible Revisions to the Procedures by Which an Individual May be Removed from the List of Those Deemed Eligible for Appointment as a Guardian Ad Litem or Attorney for the Minor Child in Family Matters

This agenda item was tabled and will be discussed at the next scheduled meeting.

V. Practice Book Rule 25-62(b)(3) Effective January 1, 2026

Damon Goldstein reminded the Committee of the new Practice Book Rule 25-62(b)(3), which permits mental health professionals, not already identified under Section 25-62(b)(1), who are licensed by the Connecticut Public Health and in good standing, to submit an application for consideration by the Committee to serve as a guardian ad litem in family matters. Damon noted that there have been inquiries regarding the application process and asked whether the Committee should establish a formalized application. Following a brief discussion, the Committee agreed that a formal application should be developed. Damon will draft the application and circulate it among the Committee members for their review at the next scheduled meeting.

VI. GAL/AMC Application and Annual Review Process

Damon Goldstein reminded everyone that the annual email to individuals who are on the list of persons qualified to serve as a GAL/AMC asking them to recertify their compliance with Practice Book Sections 25-62 and 25-62A will be sent out on Monday November 17th. Also, every 3 years, Connecticut Practice Book Rules 25-62(c)(1) and 25-62A(c)(1) state that individuals deemed eligible to be appointed as a guardian ad litem or attorney for a minor child in family matters must “certify that they have completed twelve hours of relevant training within the past three years, three hours of which must be ethics”. This information was last requested of all GALs/AMCs in 2022 and, since it has been 3 years, will be requested again this year as a part of the email that will be going out.

Renee Cimino raised a concern regarding the GAL/AMC application and its annual review process. Renee stated that the questions currently asked of the GALs/AMCs during the review process may need further consideration to ensure the committee is exercising its due diligence in evaluating applicants. Judge Macierowski, Justine Rakich-Kelly, Edward Bryan and Renee Cimino will meet to further discuss the GAL/AMC application and its annual review process. Damon Goldstein noted that once a draft of the process is prepared, it may need to be submitted to Legal Services for review.

VII. Schedule of Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters will be held on Monday, January 26, 2026 at 2:00 PM.

VIII. Such Other Matters as may Properly Come Before the Standing Committee

After being recognized by the Chair, Attorney Sue Cousineau, a retired Guardian Ad Litem, raised two concerns relating to guardians ad litem and attorneys for the minor child. Attorney Cousineau’s first concern is when a guardian ad litem or attorney for the minor child is sued, there is no authority in the GAL Code of Conduct permitting them to disclose case-related information in response. Attorney Cousineau recommended that the Committee review Rule 1.6(d) of the Rules of Professional Conduct, Confidentiality of Information, which includes exceptions to the confidentiality requirement for attorneys, and consider whether similar language should apply to GALs/AMCs.

Attorney Cousineau’s second concern involved situations where a guardian’s or attorney’s appointment has concluded; however, their appearance remains in the case, causing them to continue to receive notices in the matter. Attorney Cousineau asked whether there was a way to automatically remove such appearance once the court ordered termination date set at the time of appointment has passed. Individual clerks’ offices have indicated there must be a court order stating that the GALs/AMCs appointment is terminated.

Justine Rakich-Kelly moved, and Bryan Cafferelli seconded, a motion to adjourn the meeting. The Committee approved the motion by a 6-0 vote with three members absent. Judge Diana adjourned the meeting at 2:54 PM.

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