

Minutes  
Training Subcommittee of the Standing Committee  
on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child  
in Family Matters  
July 13, 2017

The Training Subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters met in the second floor conference room located at 100 Washington Street, Hartford, CT, on July 13, 2017.

Those in attendance: Judge Elizabeth Bozzuto (Chair); Ms. Liza Andrews, Policy Director, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Attorney Christine Perra Rapillo; Attorney Justine Rakich-Kelly

Also in attendance were Ms. Frances Wickstrom from the Child Protection Unit of the Division of Public Defender Services and Attorney Damon Goldstein from the Judicial Branch's Court Operations Unit.

The meeting was called to order at 2:06 PM by Justine Rakich-Kelly.

I. Welcome

Justine Rakich-Kelly and Judge Bozzuto welcomed everyone present to the meeting and reminded them that they had been given the task of developing training requirements and reporting back to the Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters.

II. Development of Training Requirements for Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters

The members of the Subcommittee first heard from Frances Wickstrom regarding the pre-service training that had been previously offered for guardians ad litem and attorneys for the minor child in family matters. The training utilized an automated registration process and made use of afternoon breakout sessions. One issue with the previous training was that it was difficult to make up missed sessions. The training was offered over a period of 40 hours while the pre-service training being developed now will take place over a period of 20 hours.

The members then engaged in a discussion of various aspects of the pre-service training that will be developed. Among the topics discussed were the size of the class, a proposed curriculum, the number of days over which the training will be offered, and the application process. The Subcommittee will recommend that the pre-service training take place over the course of three days with

approximately six hours and forty minutes of instruction each day. The training will be open to as many as forty people who must meet all of the Practice Book requirements for eligibility. The Subcommittee will recommend that preference be given to those enrolling who are willing to accept appointments according to the sliding fee scale established by the Judicial Branch. Every attempt will also be made to make the group of forty enrollees as geographically diverse as possible. The Division of Public Defender Services will develop a draft of an online application to present to the Standing Committee.

Finally, the Subcommittee will recommend the following curriculum:

Day 1 – Child Development, Communication with Children, Family Dynamics, and Working with Parents who are Disabled

Day 2 – Domestic Violence, Trauma, Working with Mental Health and Addiction, and Cultural Competency

Day 3 – Court Practice and Procedure, Ethics, and the Role of the Guardian Ad litem

If the curriculum is approved by the Standing Committee, the Subcommittee will develop specific subtopics to supplement the curriculum where appropriate.

All of these recommendations will be presented to the Standing Committee at its October 4, 2017 meeting. Once the recommendations of the Subcommittee are reviewed by the Standing Committee, the Subcommittee will meet again to determine next steps.

### III. Schedule of Future Meetings

This Subcommittee will meet again at a date and time to be determined following the October 4, 2017 meeting of the Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters.

Justine Rakich-Kelly adjourned the meeting at 3:15 PM.