

**Minutes**  
**Access to Justice Commission**  
**Workgroup on Video Conferencing & Access to Justice**  
**March 20, 2014**

The Workgroup on Video Conferencing & Access to Justice met on Thursday, March 20, 2014 at 2:00pm at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield in Room 4B.

Those in attendance: Ms. Krista Hess, Co-Chair, Mr. Scott Rosengrant, Co-Chair (via video conferencing), Atty. Anne Louise Blanchard, Atty. Thomas Chapman, Atty. Cheryl Halford, Mr. Matthew Mazur (via video conferencing), Atty. Mark Nordstrom (via video conferencing), Atty. Jennifer Robinson and Atty. Herman Woodard, Jr..

Mr. Carl Von Hassel, of the Judicial Branch's Information Technology Division, was also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 pm.

1. The Workgroup voted to approve the minutes of the January 31, 2014 meeting of the Workgroup on Video Conferencing & Access to Justice.
2. Ms. Hess led a discussion regarding the video conferencing projects that the Workgroup had proposed at its last meeting: Stand Down; the Judicial Branch's Foreclosure Volunteer Attorney Program; and, training. The Workgroup agreed not to pursue the introduction of a video conferencing component to the annual Stand Down event held at the Connecticut Veterans Home in Rocky Hill due to numerous logistical problems. The Workgroup supported the idea of a video conferencing pilot within the Judicial Branch's Foreclosure Volunteer Attorney Program, where self-represented mortgagors in the New Britain judicial district could video conference with volunteer attorneys in the Waterbury judicial district. The idea of utilizing video conferencing for purposes of training was widely supported. Ms. Hess has been in touch with Atty. Claudia Magnan of Statewide Legal Services, as well as others in the legal aid community, who are very enthusiastic about its potential. The Workgroup discussed how training on the new rules regarding limited appearances in family matters could reach a wider audience, which, in turn, could lead to greater participation by the bar. Mr. Rosengrant saw no technical reason why it could not work, and mentioned how the video conferencing bridge can handle twelve concurrent connections.
3. The Workgroup next considered the use of video conferencing by attorneys from their offices. The Workgroup emphasized the need for adequate hardware and a high-speed internet connection, to avoid pixelization and choppiness. Atty.

Nordstrom, who joined the meeting via video conferencing, reported that his office had some difficulty connecting to the meeting, and that the connection was less fluid than it is when he video conferences internally within General Electric (GE). Atty. Chapman noted the sharper picture in which Atty. Nordstrom was displayed, which Mr. Von Hassel explained is attributable to the superior quality of GE's camera. Atty. Woodard inquired about the internet connection, which Mr. Rosengrant, Mr. Von Hassel and Atty. Robinson explained could be set higher.

4. Ms. Hess and Mr. Rosengrant discussed with the Workgroup how they are working with Judge Bright and Judicial Branch staff regarding the use of video conferencing for pretrials / status conferences. From the technical side of things, no barriers exist. Mr. Von Hassel noted that the judges can use Cisco Jabber in their chambers, from their PCs. Mr. Rosengrant stated that it is best to know of the event in advance, in order to test the connection. Ms. Hess noted the move towards individualized calendaring and the potential increase in status conferences, as well as the positive implications if they could be accomplished through video conferencing. Mr. Rosengrant mentioned that the biggest hurdle will be the culture change and inherent learning curve.

Atty. Chapman mentioned that larger firms and corporations may have the benefit of their own IT departments, but that smaller firms and solo practitioners may have a harder time with video conferencing. Mr. Rosengrant discussed the procedure currently in place to help users navigate Cisco Jabber, and Atty. Robinson mentioned how Mr. Mazur and Mr. Von Hassel have created a helpful email template which walks new users through the process. Atty. Halford suggested that perhaps the Branch could offer more formal training on how to use Cisco Jabber. Mr. Rosengrant suggested that a training video could be created. Atty. Blanchard mentioned how the training sessions that were offered by the Judicial Branch when e-filing was first introduced were very helpful, and that the Q&As were invaluable. Atty. Chapman mentioned how he has a mediation session with Judge Kaplan in April where the adjuster will appear via video conferencing, and he will report back to the group on how it goes.

Atty. Robinson discussed the Branch's pursuit of results based accountability, and how the Branch will continue to track the use and location of the video conferencing equipment. Atty. Robinson and Mr. Von Hassel showed the Workgroup the video conferencing scheduler, which the Branch uses internally. The Department of Corrections has access to the system and checks it regularly to approve or decline video conferencing appointments.

5. Ms. Hess invited the Workgroup to share their ideas about additional ways in which video conferencing can be employed. Atty. Blanchard mentioned how being able to video conference from a third party location is attractive where travel is difficult. Atty. Blanchard also discussed the use of video conferencing in situations of domestic violence where an individual does not feel safe being in the

same location as another person. Atty. Woodard shared an experience that he had regarding a civil restraining order, where the other party, who was self-represented, appeared via video conferencing. Mr. Mazur and Mr. Von Hassel discussed how the court location of the party appearing via video conferencing in such a situation is not displayed, for safety purposes. The suggestion was made for the Judicial Branch to publicize this option more. Atty. Nordstrom mentioned the Workgroup's previous discussion about the potential for self-represented parties to be able to video conference from public libraries, and the Workgroup discussed again the confidentiality concerns and need for private space. Atty. Woodard mentioned how the location of most public libraries is probably in close proximity to courthouses.

Atty. Blanchard reiterated that the use of video conferencing in the areas of domestic violence and family law could be particularly useful, and the Workgroup then began to discuss juvenile matters. Mr. Rosengrant mentioned juvenile detainees being able to have parental visits via video conferencing, and Atty. Blanchard expressed that such an offering would be invaluable for families, and could not hurt for attorneys, too. Mr. Von Hassel and Mr. Rosengrant discussed the potential for the equipment to be physically damaged, which can be overcome by products such as locked cases and secure boxes. Mr. Rosengrant suggested that the Workgroup engage the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) about participation.

6. The date of the next meeting of the Workgroup will be determined.
7. The meeting adjourned at 2:57pm.