



PUBLIC SERVICE AND TRUST COMMISSION

Committee on Alternatives to Court Appearances

Cost/Benefit Assessment Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2009

Those in attendance:

Mr. David Iaccarino, Chair
Ms. Linda Cimino
Mr. Brian Coco
Mr. Richard Miele
Mr. O'Donovan Murphy

Atty. Jennifer Robinson
Ms. Pamela Sarno
Mr. Eric Sinnamon
Hon. Elliot Solomon

The Cost/Benefit Assessment Subcommittee on Alternatives to Court Appearances met on January 9, 2009 at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, in room 204 at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting was called to order by Judge Solomon at 10:11 a.m. The minutes for the December 11th meeting were unanimously approved. Judge Solomon then led with introductions and discussed the Public Service and Trust Commission, the formation of the Committee on Alternatives to Court Appearances, and the Cost/Benefit Subcommittee's charge.

Mr. Murphy, from the Judicial Marshals Service provided the subcommittee with a report on inmate transportation issues and discussed the handout on the Prisoner Delivery System. He indicated the use of Video Conferencing (VC) will reduce the amount of marshals needed with a 70% reduction in manpower. Also, the habeas process would be more efficient if VC is used, especially concerning matters where the defendant does not go before a Judge or Magistrate.

Richard Miele, Department of Corrections (DOC) provided subcommittee members with cost saving statistics for DOC if VC is used. In 2007 there were 106,833 inmates transported by the Correctional Transportation Unit (CTU) in 8,880 vehicle trips. There were a total of 149 incidents in 2007. Some of more notable incidents were: 16 vehicle accidents, 21 vehicle breakdowns, 9 fights, 1 escape attempts, 8 inmate injuries and 18 staff injuries. There are also mental health level 5 and overall risk level 5 inmates which are facility transports. These transports usually require two and sometimes three officers on overtime, based on security and safety issues. CTU rarely transports mental health level 5 and overall risk level 5 inmates. Mr. Miele believes that having VC and Teleconference (TC) units would greatly reduce the transportation costs to the State and provide safety to the public and its employees.

Mr. Coco, Court Support Services Division (CSSD) provided subcommittee members with a cost savings report for their unit if VC and TC are implemented. Mr. Coco reported that 3,000 Pre-Sentence Investigations (PSI) are conducted annually with about 60% of those interviews are done while their clients are incarcerated. In addition, probation conducts Level Service Inventory (LSI) interviews on incarcerated clients to assess the inmate risk to society prior to their release. These interviews, if held by VC, would provide cost savings by eliminating trips to correctional facilities, which provides savings in time and fuel cost.

Also discussed are ways to provide cost savings by implementing CSSD training sessions by video conference. Pam Sarno suggested using the Genesis service that provides the presenters with the ability to communicate with staff through the web.

Video-medicine was discussed and the subcommittee was informed that UConn Health Center is very receptive to the idea. This would provide a cost savings to both DOC and Marshal's Service. Presently, DOC does Video-medicine on a small scale but is looking to expand their capability. Issues did arise regarding confidentiality and ability to connect the units.

Mr. Iaccarino provided subcommittee members with a report on the locations that have TC units. Presently, all Juvenile locations have the TC units, but not all the locations have the unit connected due to issues with courthouse infrastructure. There are also some JD and GA locations that have TC units. Mr. Iaccarino also provided a flowchart diagram of the Courts Habeas process.

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m. The next meeting of this subcommittee will be on Tuesday, February 10, 2009 at 10 a.m. in Courtroom A-2 at 90 Washington Street, Hartford.