



PUBLIC SERVICE AND TRUST COMMISSION

Committee on Alternatives to Court Appearances

Purposes Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2009

Those in attendance:

Hon. Hillary Strackbein, Chair
Atty. David Belt
Hon. Patrick Clifford
Atty. Susan Quinn Cobb
Ms. Marilou Giovannucci
Atty. Scott Hartley
Hon. Arthur Hiller
Hon. Christine Keller

Mr. Richard Miele
Hon. Lynda Munro
Atty. Adele Patterson
Atty. Mareen Platt Temchin
Hon. O. James Purnell III
Ms. Betsy Rosser
Ms. Celia Siefert
Atty. Robin Smith

Not Present:

Hon. Thomas Bishop
Atty. Joseph Garrison
Dr. Thomas Kirk

Atty. Norman Pattis
Mr. Gary Roberge

The Purposes Subcommittee on Alternatives to Court Appearances met on January 7, 2009 at 2 p.m. at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, on the 4th Floor in Conference Room 4B.

The meeting was called to order by Judge Strackbein at 2:05 pm. The minutes of the December 11th meeting were unanimously approved pending discussed revisions.

Judge Hiller reported to the subcommittee of the possible use of Video Conferencing (VC) in civil pre-trial matters. Information he received from the National Center for State Courts and contacts in Pennsylvania was that VC is not used in civil pre-trials. Moreover, the feedback from civil judges in Connecticut is not favorable. He also noted that VC/TC for status conferences has its limitations in that an in-person court appearance may favor a resolution to the case.

Judge Strackbein discussed the need to have all courthouse equipped with teleconferencing (TC) technology, but not mandate its use. Judge Munro added that teleconferencing worked well in complex litigation matters and was a cost savings for attorneys.

Marilou Giovannucci provided a report on types of uses for VC in Juvenile matters in other states. These states included Vermont, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Missouri.

Director Miele discussed the issue with court house security. Currently there are 10 courthouse facilities with no lock-up which becomes a safety issue and a drain on resources. Many of these prisoner transports would benefit from the use of VC.

The subcommittee discussed the handout regarding what recommendations can be made to the full committee meeting on the 22nd. The areas discussed were Criminal, Family, Civil, Juvenile, Appellate, Interpreters, and other uses of VC. In addition non-technological alternatives to court appearances were discussed.

The overall general consensus of the subcommittee was that TC and VC should be made available in all courthouses, including probate courts. The decision on whether or not to use the technology should be at the discretion of the judge and only mandated in certain types of situations.

A consensus was reached on most of the issues discussed regarding TC and VC in all divisions except for criminal. Attorney Patterson will report back to the subcommittee on the proposed uses of VC when she gets responses from public defenders and members of the private criminal defense bar. Judge Strackbein suggested a possible pilot program for video arraignments to evaluate the new technology.

Members of the committee will be viewing video arraignments in Newark, New Jersey on the 16th and will report back at the full committee meeting on the 22nd.

The meeting adjourned at 4:18 pm.