



PUBLIC SERVICE AND TRUST COMMISSION

Committee on Alternatives to Court Appearances

Video Conference Pilot Program Exploratory Committee

Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2009

Those in attendance:

Hon. Hillary Strackbein, chair
Atty. Brian Carlow
Hon. Patrick Clifford
Hon. Christine Keller
Hon. Emmett Cosgrove

Atty. Thomas Liston
Atty. Adele Patterson
Atty. Maureen Platt
Mr. Scott Rosengrant
Hon. Elliot Solomon

Not Present:

Atty. Joseph Garrison

The newly formed Video Conference Pilot Program Exploratory Committee for Alternatives to Court Appearances met on May 13, 2009 at 2 pm at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield in the 2nd floor conference room 204.

The meeting was called to order by Judge Strackbein at 2:04 pm. Judge Strackbein led with introductions and outlined the charge of the committee. The committee discussed formulating a recommendation on location, types of hearings and other aspects of accomplishing a pilot program.

The committee discussed video conferencing arraignments and discussed that the statute would have to be changed if video conferencing would be used for sentence reviews. The committee discussed video conferencing in other states. It was pointed out that one of the reasons that other states use video conferencing is that, unlike Connecticut, they have a county jail system and are much larger in size geographically.

The committee discussed different location for a pilot program such as Union Avenue in New Haven or possibly setting up units in police departments. Judge Solomon discussed that in order for a video conferencing program to work you need numbers, i.e. many inmates using the system, and have a routine procedure, i.e. arraignments, where essentially the same procedures are used.

The committee developed and voted on what proceedings could be used for a pilot program at the Hartford Courthouse GA 14.

- 1) Part A callbacks where the court has total discretion on whether to bring the defendant in or up on the video conference screen. The committee unanimously voted in favor of this proposal.
- 2) Part A callbacks where the defendant will not be brought unless requested by counsel (already recommended).
- 3) Part B callbacks where incarcerated defendants are brought to court but can be video conferenced when counsel agree (The committee unanimously voted in favor of this proposal).
- 4) Conducting arraignments from the courthouse lock-up primarily to see how the technology works, and then possibly expand to other areas to achieve the cost savings that a video conference program can provide. Voted Yes: Judge Strackbein, Judge Solomon, Judge Clifford, Judge Keller, and Mr. Scott Rosengrant. Voted No: Atty. Maureen Platt, Atty. Adele Patterson.

The meeting adjourned at 3:39pm. The committee will discuss their recommendations of a pilot program at the Full Committee meeting on May 28.