



PUBLIC SERVICE AND TRUST COMMISSION

Standing Committee on Video & Teleconferencing

Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2010

Those in attendance:

Hon. Elliot Solomon, Chair
Hon. Christine Keller
Hon. Linda Lager
Atty. Brian Carlow
Mr. Robert Cosgrove

Ms. Marilou Giovannucci
Dr. Michael Norko
Atty. Nancy Porter
Atty. Jennifer Robinson
Mr. Scott Rosengrant

Not Present:

Hon. Robert Devlin
Hon. Lynda Munro
Atty. Scott Murphy

The Standing Committee on Video and Teleconferencing met on September 23, 2010 at 2 p.m. at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield in Room 204 on the second floor.

The meeting was called to order by Judge Solomon at 2:13 p.m. Judge Solomon gave an overview of the Agenda for the meeting.

The Committee members unanimously approved the minutes from the meeting on January 28, 2010 at 2:15 p.m.

Dr. Michael Norko, from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), joined the meeting to inform members about the steps that DMHAS is taking to expand their videoconferencing capabilities. DMHAS has consulted with their videoconferencing vendor and has signed off to purchase the equipment. Dr. Norko explained that there will be two videoconferencing units at Whiting (maximum security) facility. One unit will be in a large visiting room and a small unit will be in a smaller visiting room in order to accommodate private attorney/client conversations. A third videoconferencing unit is being installed at a lower level security building so that no one will have to be moved in order to participate in a video hearing. The project is expected to cost less than a \$100,000 bond. DMHAS has

worked with Judicial on the project. As soon as DMHAS has final approval from the Department of Administrative Services they will begin preparing the equipment with protective covers to ensure the equipment safety. It is expected that the installation will take about 2 weeks.

Attorney Carlow talked about the use of videoconferencing with CVH and most often the Public Defenders Office would not have an issue with using the equipment provided that the parties agreed to its use.

Judge Solomon noted that it would be in the interest of CVH for the examiners to request a hearing by videoconferencing.

Attorney Carlow indicated that it would make sense for the Public Defenders to travel to CVH so they could be in the same room with their client.

Judge Solomon inquired whether the attorney/client room would be soundproof.

Doctor Norko said that conversation at a normal level would not be heard outside of the room.

Judge Solomon asked whether Judicial is getting headsets for the attorneys to use in court to hear their client.

Scott Rosengrant said we were not because the Grant that was awarded Judicial does not include this option. Scott will look into to this option and report back to the Committee.

Judge Keller inquired about Attorney/client equipment being installed in the Juvenile Courts.

Attorney Robinson said there were computer/camera units being installed in conference rooms that can be used for that purpose.

Robert Cosgrove for Department of Correction (DOC) addressed the Committee and requested that Maryann Normandeau be added as a member of the Committee because of her background in videoconferencing with DOC.

Judge Solomon agreed.

Mr. Cosgrove explained where DOC is with the expansion of videoconferencing. DOC has purchased all of the equipment that they will be installing and they are working with DOIT on wiring for the equipment. Macdougall, Radgowski, and Cybulski will be getting their first videoconferencing units, as they have been using the units that are housed at the shared facilities located adjacent to them. All other facilities will be getting a second videoconferencing room, and the Osborn Correctional Facility may get a third unit. Mr. Cosgrove explained that CSSD Probation Officers are using the equipment a great deal already. Availability of the equipment may be problematic as volume increases.

Judge Solomon asked if The Board of Pardons and Parole has a set schedule of cases.

Mr. Cosgrove will provide that information to the Committee.

Attorney Robinson mentioned the Videoconferencing Scheduling System that Court Operations has developed for use with DOC and the courts. The System is expected to be used on a limited basis with the existing 6 Family Support Magistrate Dockets beginning November 15, 2010.

Judge Lager mentioned that civil courts may be interested in expanding use to Short Calendar matters.

Judge Keller asked whether attorneys could consult with their clients being held at DOC, at a certain time such as in the morning or afternoon.

Judge Solomon mentioned an experience he had where he had an individual housed at the Northern Correctional Facility (maximum security facility) and he offered to give the public defender access to the videoconference equipment for a confidential conversation with their client. The public defender declined to talk to their client.

Attorney Carlow mentioned that there was a meeting scheduled next week with all of the Public Defenders in the State and he would discuss this with them.

Mr. Cosgrove said that they may eventually get some smaller videoconferencing units that could accommodate just attorney/client or CSSD use. He mentioned that Administrative Segregation hearings are being done by video instead of transporting between DOC facilities. Also, he pointed out that the shared DOC facilities right now only have one videoconferencing unit at one of the locations. He also mentioned that as of August 2008 there were 75 inmate videoconferencing proceedings per month. In 2010 DOC is averaging over 400 inmate proceedings per month.

Scott Rosengrant gave an update on the expansion to the courts of videoconferencing equipment. Judicial is now running on its own internet connection out of East Hartford and Waterbury. He talked about Movi software that is available through the Judicial Branch that can be used for video connections with individuals that don't have a video program and need to participate in a court proceeding. Judicial can give them a temporary license to use the software. Judicial has upgraded circuits and has a bridge that allows for multi point videoconferencing. Tom Phibbs at JIS has been working with the contractor and the courts on upgrading all of the court circuits. The Danbury and Willimantic Juvenile courts are the only courts that have not been upgraded to a high speed circuit yet. The Rockville and Willimantic court will have videoconference equipment installed in October and November. The courts that do not have equipment yet are G.A. 12 Manchester, G.A. 14 Hartford, G.A. 20 Norwalk, G.A. 21 Norwich, Stamford Juvenile and Waterford Juvenile.

Judge Solomon mentioned that Judge Devlin, the new Chief Administrative Judge for Criminal Matters, would like to start videoconferencing in criminal matters with Part A call backs.

Marilou Giovannucci mentioned that the PC units with cameras on the top that will be used for juvenile status conferences and atty/client conversations are on a slower installation schedule because the courts need to have equipment installed first.

Mr. Rosengrant mentioned that he has staff to help with the videoconferencing installations.

Judge Keller suggested that the Public Defenders be trained on how to use the videoconferencing equipment.

Attorney Carlow said he could look into funding for equipment for PC's and/or cameras for the Public Defender's for videoconferencing purposes. The Chief Public Defender is having a meeting with the Public Defenders from each court and Attorney Carlow will discuss videoconferencing at that meeting. He will also talk to Attorney Robinson about training and the Scheduling System.

Attorney Robinson explained that the courts were having the videoconferencing equipment installed first so that the money from the Grant was not jeopardized. Training of staff to operate the equipment will occur as JIS and Court Operations become available and after the courts are equipped. She also talked about the Videoconferencing Scheduler that has been developed by Court Operations and the anticipated

start date for using it is on November 15, 2010 on a limited basis. She also stated that the Rules Committee will be considering the rules that were proposed by the Committee at the next meeting on September 27, 2010.

Attorney Porter said that the Rules Committee has sent questions to the Legal Services Unit about some of the proposals on the Agenda.

Judge Keller mentioned that she would like to see the Juvenile Rules changed because the way that they are written now Juvenile courts are precluded from using videoconferencing. She also said that videoconferencing would be helpful to facilitate parent visitation with children being held in juvenile detention centers.

Mr. Cosgrove mentioned that DOC has been contacted by the Families in Crisis Center inquiring about nighttime visits.

Judge Keller gave an update for the Juvenile Division. Juvenile has not used videoconferencing yet, but the Juvenile judges will have a demonstration of videoconferencing at their division meeting on September 24th. She said that the Juvenile Division is accustomed to doing telephonic hearings and would like to begin using videoconferencing. Her concerns are to have the staff trained; Public Defender's trained and how scheduling will work. Will they schedule directly with DOC? DOC needs to communicate to us how much time will be needed to schedule an inmate. Judge Keller asked Attorney Robinson to talk to the Chief Public Defender for Juvenile Matters about training.

The Committee discussed the issue of interpreters and confidentiality.

Mr. Cosgrove stated that spur of the moment scheduling with DOC for videoconferencing would not work, as DOC needs to have advance notice.

Judge Lager gave an update for the Civil Division. She mentioned that some of the areas that Civil is interested in using videoconferencing for are inmate related matters for hearings in damages and short calendar. She has received some feedback that it is difficult to get someone to stop talking on the other side. She said that video is one way to facilitate a proceeding where a traumatized person does not want to be in the same room with the other person and for pretrial conferences. She also said it would be helpful with the scheduling to know when the equipment will be available at each court and DOC. She said it would be difficult to use videoconferencing for trials. Videoconferencing would be helpful with out of state witness. She requested that the videoconferencing demonstration for the Civil Judges Meeting be as specific to Civil Courts as possible. She asked for a list of the court locations (the courtrooms) and contacts for each court, either the Chief Clerk or the Deputy Chief Clerk.

The Committee talked about whether private counsel should be able to use Judicial equipment and if so, could there be a fee?

Judge Lager also mentioned that when scheduling Short Calendar matters with inmates, the court could schedule the matter out to another date after it has been marked ready. Short Calendar has to be marked according to the Practice Book, but once cases are marked ready the court could specially assign the case for another date.

Judge Solomon indicated that Family Division would like to use videoconferencing more and that the court should be proactive in using videoconferencing.

Judge Solomon gave an update for Criminal. Judge Devlin had explained to Judge Solomon that he sees a benefit to using videoconferencing, particularly for callbacks in Part A, but not for dispositive matters. Judge Solomon also indicated that Judge Devlin wanted to hold off on pursuing arraignments at this time.

Attorney Carlow will follow up with the Public Defender's to determine their position on videoconferencing.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for December 9, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. in room 204, at 225 Spring Street in Wethersfield. The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

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