

Minutes
Public Service and Trust Commission – Jury Committee
Before Court Appearance Subcommittee (BCAS)
January 8, 2009

The meeting of the Before Court Appearance Subcommittee (BCAS) was called to order at 11:38 a.m.

Present: Attorney Karen A. Berris, Chair; Attorney William Sadek, Co-Chair; Hon. Linda K. Lager, Liaison; Hon. Julia DiCocco Dewey, member; Hon. Aaron Ment, member; Attorney Jay Sandak, member

I. Attorney Berris provided members with an overview of the various steps in the pre-approval process, which begins each year with the creation of the Jury Master File. Some brief discussion occurred regarding each step.

- Source lists are obtained yearly from the State Departments of Labor, Motor Vehicles, Revenue Services and the Office of the Secretary of the State.

-- *Members discussed the possibility of recommending that the Jury Master File be updated each year with the acquired source lists rather than created anew as is the current practice. It was agreed that Attorney Berris would report back to the members regarding the pros and cons of maintaining a permanent Master File.*

- Courts annually estimate the number of the number of jurors who will be needed in the coming court year.

- *Judge Ment expressed his concern that the estimates are too high given the percentage of jurors canceled by the court. He emphasized that this is a high priority for the committee because of the negative impact to individuals who must make arrangements with employers or daycare providers in anticipation of jury service, only to learn the night before that they have been canceled. It was agreed that Attorney Berris and Attorney Sadek will examine the procedures and report back to the rest of the committee at the next meeting.*

- The Jury Master File is created and certified by independent auditors.
- The number of summonses printed each year undergoes contiguous adjustment and courts may request modifications.
- Jury Administration qualifies, postpones and confirms juror attendance.
- Scheduled jurors receive a reminder notice and handbook prior to appearance and may confirm their attendance via telephone or the internet.

II. Members received a list of American Bar Association Principles for Juries and Jury Trials, which may serve as a guideline to determine whether Connecticut is utilizing best practices for summoning and managing jurors. While it was noted that the Judicial Branch already follows many of these principles, no demographic data is gathered or maintained by Jury Administration.

-- *Attorney Berris explained that Connecticut statute requires that jurors be summoned in the greatest numbers from cities and towns with the largest population. Judge Ment suggested that that practice could be further enhanced by summoning proportionately within a zip code. Judge Lager sated that any change would need to take into account and preserve the requirement that jurors be selected at random. It was agreed that Attorney Berris would research the implications of refining the summoning process to summon by zip code and report her findings at the next meeting.*

III. In addition to the action items discussed earlier in the meeting, members were presented with a list of focus areas based on the ABA principles. It was agreed that members will also examine publications for plain language and clarity with a goal toward ensuring that jurors are able to easily obtain al of the information they need. The publications to be reviewed and the members reviewing them are:

- The Juror Reminder Notice – Judge Dewey
- The Juror Handbook (JDP-JA-5) – Attorney Sandak
- The Summons – Judge Dewey

At Judge Dewey's recommendation, it was further agreed that Attorney Berris would draft a brochure outlining juror information for military personnel.

IV. The next BCAS meeting was scheduled for Friday, February 6, 2009 via teleconference. It was agreed that members of the public wishing to attend the teleconference may access the meeting at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT.

V. The meeting adjourned at 1:03 p.m.