

Minutes
Public Service and Trust Commission
Jury Committee

The Public Service and Trust Commission, Jury Committee met at the New Britain Superior Court, Jury Room, 20 Franklin Square, New Britain, CT on March 26, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

Present: Hon. Linda K. Lager, Hon. Frank M. D’Addabbo, Hon. Barbara Bellis, Attorney Karen A. Berris, Attorney Michael R. Corsello, Hon. J. Robert Devlin, Jr., Attorney Kyle Harrell, Attorney Ernest J. Mattei, Hon. Aaron Ment, Attorney Ralph Monaco, Hon. Nicola E. Rubinow, Attorney Jay H. Sandak, Dean Brad Saxton, Hon. Carl J. Schuman, Hon. Dan Shaban, Hon. Michael R. Sheldon, Attorney Lawrence Tytla, and Nicholas J. Cimmino, Esq.

Not Present: Attorney Mathew Auger, Attorney Timothy Patrick Brady, Hon. Julia DiCocco Dewey, Attorney Karen A. Goodrow, Hon. Maureen M. Keegan, Attorney Cesar A. Noble, Attorney Daniel E. Ryan III, Attorney William Sadek, Attorney Richard A. Silver, Attorney Jessica Torres, Attorney Michael Walsh, and Mr. David Ward

The meeting was called to order at approximately 2:18 p.m. by Hon. Frank M. D’Addabbo, Jury Committee Co-Chair.

Judge D’Addabbo welcomed committee members to the New Britain JD Courthouse.

1. Upon motion and second, the minutes from the last meeting on December 4, 2008 were unanimously approved.
2. Judge D’Addabbo introduced all the subcommittee chairs and co-chairs and explained that each subcommittee will give an overview of their progress.
3. Attorney Berris, chair of the Before Court Appearance Subcommittee presented what the subcommittee has been working on and provided draft recommendations for the following:
 1. Permanent Jury Master file- researching the availability of more advanced technology.
 2. Improved Juror Utilization.
 3. Improve information provided to jurors.
 4. Change the term from “Jury Duty” to “Jury Service” to be used at all times.
 5. Maintain and update information on the website and other jury publications.

Other changes the subcommittee is working on include the process of summoning by zip codes, changes to the Jury Summons and Handbook, a Military Brochure and the jury orientation videos.

4. Attorney Ralph Monaco, chair and Judge Shaban, co-chair of the Arrival Subcommittee presented an update of the draft recommendations the subcommittee has been working on and provided the following:
 1. Jury Orientation; uniformity within the court system, acknowledge jurors and touch upon the main issues: reluctance to serve, hardships to serve, explain what the process entails, make sure staff are able to assist, and allow for judges to use their own style.
 2. Pre-screening; ask jurors to identify any well recognized excuses as soon as possible.
 3. Internet access; jurors could use internet access during downtime. Wi-Fi should be made available at the court houses.
 4. Orientation Videos; should be updated, combined and shortened.
5. Judge Schuman, chair and Judge Bellis, co-chair of the Voir Dire Subcommittee presented an update of the recommendations the subcommittee has been working on, including:
 1. Judicial pre-screening; all cases civil and criminal, identify hardships/conflicts as soon as possible. Process should be done by judge's discretion, written question or in open court.
 2. Re-using pre-screened jurors; staggering jury selection.
 3. Encourage use of Box Voir Dire, extend this option to criminal cases.
 4. Better use of Alternate Jurors, refrain from telling them they are alternates until time to discharge, allow alternate jurors to participate in deliberations with consent of counsel, amend state statute to allow for the replacement of regular jurors by alternate jurors in civil cases.
 5. Judicial supervision of Voir Dire; more orientation of jurors, all voir dire to be on the record, informal agreements may be permitted.
 6. Juror Comfort; minimize wait time, allow for books and laptops to be brought. If not questioned until the afternoon, allow jurors to leave and return.
 7. Juror Questionnaire; all forms should be collected and stored with a date by which to destroy. Process should be consistent throughout the state.
6. Dean Brad Saxton, chair and Judge Rubinow, co-chair of the Selected Juror Subcommittee presented an update of the recommendations the subcommittee has been working on, including:
 1. Post-selection orientation, revisions to Juror Handbook/Juror Videos.
 2. Procedural aids to assist jurors such as juror note taking and copies of instructions.

3. Post trial procedures including; counseling for jurors in stressful cases, juror “report cards” for judges.
 4. Address inconsistency in statute regarding alternate jurors.
 5. Media coverage of trials, juror privacy and security.
7. Judge Lager pointed out that some recommendations of the subcommittees overlap and suggested that the subcommittee chairs and co-chairs discuss this.
8. Judge Lager reviewed the template process and the structure of the final report. Judge Lager went over the following deadlines for the committee:
 1. April 30, 2009, all subcommittees must have draft recommendations completed in template format for distribution to all committee members via email.
 2. May 14, 2009, the next full jury committee meeting for discussion of all recommendations.
 3. June 4, 2009, all subcommittees must submit final recommendations in template format to Judge Lager and Judge D’Addabbo.
 4. June 15, 2009, Jury Committee final report completed.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:54 p.m.