

**Minutes**  
**Public Service and Trust Commission**  
**Pro Bono Committee**  
**September 14, 2011**

The Pro Bono Committee met on Wednesday, September 14, 2011, at 2:30pm in the Attorney's Conference Room, 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT.

Those in attendance: Hon William Bright, Chair, Attorney Timothy Johnston, Attorney Steve Eppler-Epstein, Attorney Norman Janes, Attorney Gregg Benson, Attorney Jeffrey Eglash, Attorney Ed Heath, Attorney Jan Chiaretto, Attorney Dwight Merriam, Attorney Alfred Casella, Attorney Mark Nordstrom, and Attorney Ian Lodovico.

Attorney Denise Poncini from Judicial Branch Legal Services attended in place of Attorney Daniel Horwitch.

There was one member of the public in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 2:33 pm.

1. The Committee voted to unanimously approve the minutes of the August 17, 2011 meeting.
2. The Committee discussed the progress of the Pro Bono Summit on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Attorney Heath updated the Committee on the development of questions for the law firm panelists. Attorney Heath indicated that he will schedule a practice run with the panelists and Judge Bright expressed an interest in attending if his schedule permits.

Judge Bright and Attorney Janes updated the Committee on the questions for the panel of Chief Administrative Judges. Judge Bright has contacted each of the Chief Administrative Judges to discuss the purpose and scope of the panel discussions. Judge Bright reported that Judge Munro, Chief Administrative Judge for Family matters recently orchestrated a GAL (Guardian Ad Litem) training in conjunction with the Bar for attorneys who wish to serve as GAL's in family cases. Judge Lager, Chief Administrative Judge for Civil matters, will discuss the Judicial Branch's Volunteer Attorney Program in foreclosure as well as the growing numbers of self-represented parties in civil cases.

Judge Bright reported that all of the speakers for the Summit have been confirmed including the Chief Justice and Governor Malloy. Judge Bright and Steve Eppler-Epstein will conduct a trial run of the audio-visual equipment at the Legislative Office Building on Tuesday, October 4<sup>th</sup> to be sure everything is in working order for the Summit.

To date, there are 99 confirmed attendees for the Summit. Judge Bright circulated the list of invitees who have not yet responded and asked that the Committee members contact

those with whom they may have a connection to find out if they will be attending the Summit.

The Committee discussed the status of providing breakfast and lunch to the Summit attendees and discussed several viable options for providing both.

Judge Bright updated the Committee on the issue of mandatory pro bono reporting and the status of Rule 2-27. Judge Bright is a member of the Rules Committee and he indicated that the Rules Committee suggested that language be added to Rule 2-27 which said, "other information requested," so as to include pro bono reporting. The next Rules Committee meeting is on Monday, September 19, 2011 which means the judges would not vote on any proposed changes until June and any changes would not be implemented until January 2013.

As an alternative, Judge Bright explained, the attorneys can voluntarily report their pro bono service through the annual attorney registration. Additional information for the attorneys including FAQs would be created to address concerns regarding whether the voluntary reporting was anonymous and whether it was the first step towards mandatory reporting. This voluntary process through the attorney registration could be implemented as soon as June 2012. The Committee discussed whether voluntary reporting would capture reliable data since it is likely that attorneys who are performing pro bono work would be more inclined to report it than those who are not.

Attorney Steve Eppler-Epstein provided a demonstration of the pro bono portal for the Committee. A link to the portal will be created so that an icon can display on the desktop of any computer. The user will type in the web address: [CTlawhelp.org](http://CTlawhelp.org) and can create a shortcut for the portal on their computer. The portal will display 5 rotating welcome messages that will each contain excerpts from the pro bono catalog. In addition, an electronic searchable copy of the catalog will be posted on the portal site with a link to the "become a volunteer" sign up form.

The portal will also display recent news and articles about pro bono and may in the future contain such features as chat forums or a workable, searchable brief bank. Also, for future consideration for the portal is a pro bono newsletter that will feature a different organization each time so each entity can have a turn being the lead article.

The Committee discussed a few outstanding logistical issues concerning the Summit. The Pro Bono Catalog will be emailed to all of the attendees and hard copies will be available at the Summit. Two versions of the program agenda have been created – one for the attendees and a more detailed agenda for the program participants.

Judge Bright thanked the Committee for all of their hard work and time and their dedication to the cause of pro bono service.

3. The meeting was adjourned at 3:35p.m.