

Minutes
Public Service and Trust Commission
Pro Bono Committee
November 15, 2011

The Pro Bono Committee met on Tuesday, November 15, 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 Dwight Merriam, Attorney Mark Nordstrom, Attorney David Ryan, Attorney Livia Barndollar, Attorney Barry Hawkins, Attorney Ian Lodovice and Attorney Amy Haberman participated telephonically.

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

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

1. The Committee voted to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2011 meeting. Attorneys Barndollar and Hawkins abstained.

2. Judge Bright welcomed two new members of the Pro Bono Committee – Attorney David Ryan and Attorney Catherine Teitell. Judge Bright then thanked all of the members of the Committee for their hard work and participation in making the October 5th Pro Bono Summit such a success. He reported that the feedback on the Summit speakers and presenters was very positive and he was very thankful for the help of everyone on the Committee for their part in making the event so successful. Attorney Eppler-Epstein commented that the legal services providers were very impressed with not only the number of attendees, but the quality of the representation from the various firms and corporations.

Judge Bright directed the Committee members to the preliminary results of the Summit evaluation that were distributed at the beginning of the meeting. With one exception, the evaluations were very positive and insightful. To increase the rate of response for future summits, a suggestion was made to administer and collect the evaluations from attendees before they leave the event.

Attorney Eppler-Epstein reported that the legal service providers have seen a steady increase in the number of attorneys who have made commitments to perform pro bono legal services since the October Summit. In addition, they have noted an increase in general inquiries from attorneys regarding pro bono service and they hope that these inquiries will eventually turn into firm commitments. Similarly, Attorney Barndollar reported that shortly after the Summit, there was a Family Law Section meeting where

the Section voted to create a traveling program of family lawyers to train corporate attorneys who are interested in performing pro bono work in the area of family law.

Attorney Eppler-Epstein also reported to the Committee about the recent CBA/CBF sponsored symposium on Limited Scope Representation and the Committee discussed some of the pros and cons of LSR and the next steps in the proposal to implement it in Connecticut.

A discussion was had regarding the issue of in-house attorneys performing pro bono work. Judge Bright updated the Committee on the status of this issue as it pertains to the proposed rule change and reported that the Rules Committee accepted the Delaware version of the rule which permits in-house counsel to work under an admitted Connecticut attorney to perform pro bono legal services.

The Committee also discussed the next steps for furthering the cause of pro bono service. A suggestion was made that a presentation by the Pro Bono Partnership would be helpful to talk about how easy it is to sign up for "turn-key pro bono programs. In addition, the committee discussed conducting a "road show" with Chief Justice Rogers and members of the Committee that would target firms and/or corporations to determine if they have a "signature project" that they're interested in participating in. A suggestion was made to install a link to the Pro Bono Portal on the firm desktops during the "road show" by contacting the IT department at the firm for assistance in rolling the link out.

The Committee then discussed how retired attorneys can be identified and encouraged to do pro bono work. Attorneys Teitell and Ryan will form an informal subcommittee to target this demographic. Suggestions were made to contact large firms for their databases of retired attorneys and also the CBA for their list of senior attorneys.

The Committee then discussed the use of law school students as an additional resource for pro bono work. Attorney Merriam informed the Committee about an initiative being conducted by Pace Law School which involved creating a law school law firm which would help teach recent graduates about opening their own practices. Judge Bright suggested the formation of an informal subcommittee consisting of Attorneys Merriam, Johnston and Janes to further explore how best to incorporate the law schools into the pro bono movement.

Next, a discussion was had regarding what incentives can be offered by the Judicial Branch to support pro bono contributions such as priority in scheduling or offers of recognition. Judge Bright agreed that recognition of pro bono service by attorneys is very important and he indicated that he would discuss this issue at the next statewide meeting of the Administrative Judges to consider developing uniform incentives to encourage pro bono service by attorneys.

Attorney Barry Hawkins announced that he would be stepping down as a member of the Pro Bono Committee and incoming vice-president and chair of the CBA's Pro Bono

Committee, Attorney Kimberly Knox would be taking his place. Judge Bright thanked Attorney Hawkins for his service on the Committee and welcomed Attorney Knox.

Lastly, Judge Bright talked about the issue of pro bono reporting and explained that when attorneys register for e-services in January, they would be presented with a few general questions regarding their pro bono service during the prior year. The questions were not mandatory, but Judge Bright explained that this was a good starting point to establish a baseline for pro bono reporting. The proposed language for the E-Services website was distributed to the Committee for input and comment. The language was revised according to suggestions made by the Committee.

3. The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 p.m.
4. The next meeting of the Pro Bono Committee is scheduled for January 10, 2012 at 2:30p.m.