

**Minutes**  
**Public Service and Trust Commission**  
**Self-represented Parties Workgroup**  
**December 29, 2009**

The Self-represented Parties Workgroup met on Tuesday, December 29, 2009, 9:00am via teleconference at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT.

Those in attendance: Hon. Raymond R. Norko (Chair), Hon. Elizabeth A. Bozzuto (Chair), Hon. Henry S. Cohn, Attorney Bruce Loudon, Attorney Johanna Greenfield and Ms. Krista Hess.

The meeting was called to order at 9:05am.

1. The minutes of November 17, 2009 meeting were approved.

2. **Foreclosure unbundling pilot project.**

A discussion was held on proposed changes to Practice Book sections 1.2(c) and 6.5. The Workgroup received input from Judicial Branch Legal Services regarding amendments to these sections as well as sections 3.9 and 3.10. The Workgroup agreed that the comment in Rule 1.2 (c) could be amended to say “rules shall not prohibit the Superior Court by vote of the judges from establishing specific programs for limited scope representation.” This language may be added to either the rule or comment. Judge Cohn will draft a letter to Justice Zarella, chair of the Rules Committee and will circulate the draft letter to the Workgroup for comment.

3. **Advice Days pilot project.**

The Advice Day pilot program will begin on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010. The Workgroup will distribute attorney questionnaires to all of the interested volunteer attorneys to establish qualifications and a regular schedule of volunteers. In addition, this schedule will be distributed to the Marshals at 80 and 90 Washington Street, as well as to the Family casflow coordinator at 90 Washington Street.

A suggestion was made to change the language of the questionnaire to include “number of years in practice” and “number of years in family law”. These questions would be helpful in screening the potential volunteer attorneys before approving their participation.

Attorney Greenfield inquired about malpractice insurance for the volunteer attorneys. Ms. Hess reported that for this pilot program the attorneys will utilize their own malpractice insurance. The Workgroup is collaborating with the Legislative Affairs division of External Affairs in an effort to revisit failed proposed legislation which provided immunity for volunteer attorneys.

Attorney Greenfield suggested that a focus group be held with the volunteer attorneys after the pilot program has been in up and running for a period of time to discuss any concerns or issues the attorneys may have.

Ms. Hess asked if there were any comments about the forms drafted for the Advice Day pilot program. Attorney Loudon made some grammatical changes in two of the forms.

**4. Status of remaining recommendations.**

*a. Courthouse Greeter*

Pilot starts January 5<sup>th</sup> in the New Haven Court on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 to 10:00am. Greeter will be a veteran employee of the Clerk's Office.

*b. Dedicated Docket Pilot Program*

The biggest obstacle is finding space. The Workgroup discussed utilizing Waterbury as the pilot site. Judge Bozzuto will connect with Administrative Judge William Cremins about finding space for the pilot. The dedicated docket would be held once a week on Thursdays, the uncontested and case management day in Waterbury. Judge Norko suggested that Ms. Hess go to Waterbury on a Thursday to observe the volume and flow of business. This implementation deadline for this recommendation is June, 2010.

*c. Family Support Magistrate Video of Advisement of Rights.* The Workgroup discussed possibilities for pilot sites for this recommendation. Judge Norko suggested the Bridgeport Judicial District as a possibility. The English version of the Advisement of Rights has been completed, but the Spanish version needs to be re-recorded.

*d. Additional recommendations – mediation*

Create plain language publications about ADR. Also create a marketing program on ADR for self-representatives. Ms. Hess suggested contacting Roberta Palmer, Manager of ADR programs for Court Operations to begin discussions about how to best approach this recommendation.

**Other Items already in progress:**

1. Web project with legal services
2. Expanding Court Service Centers
3. Unbundling pilot project in family
4. Practice Book in plain language
5. How to videos – Court Service Center staff are currently writing draft scripts to be reviewed by the Workgroup and Family Chief Administrative Judge Lynda Munro.
6. Grouping of family forms – Court Service Center staff are currently writing instructions for all the grouping categories. Judicial Branch Legal Services will review and approve the instructions.

**5. Meeting adjourned at 9:35am.**