

Minutes
Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and
Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters
November 4, 2024

The Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters met on November 4, 2024. The meeting was convened by the Chair in Center Court at 95 Washington Street, Hartford, Connecticut.

Those in attendance: Judge Leo Diana (Chair); Judge Jennifer Macierowski; Attorney Edward Bryan; Attorney Bryan Cafferelli; Attorney Renee Cimino (designated by the Chief Public Defender); Attorney Justine Rakich-Kelly; Attorney Nisa Khan; Ms. Liza Andrews, Policy Director, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Absent: Mr. Stephen B. Carragher, Public Health Services Manager, Practitioner Licensing and Investigations Section, Department of Public Health

Also in attendance were Attorney Grace Palo, Assistant Bar Counsel; Attorney Damon Goldstein and Ms. Nicole Collins from the Judicial Branch's Court Operations Unit.

The meeting was called to order at 2:06 PM by Judge Diana.

I. Review and Approval of Minutes

Justine Rakich-Kelly pointed out a typographical error on agenda item V in the draft minutes dated August 26, 2024. The word "removed" was misspelled. The error will be corrected in the final version of the minutes.

A motion was made by Justine Rakich-Kelly and seconded by Judge Macierowski to approve the minutes from the meeting held on August 26, 2024. The motion passed by a 3-0 vote with Edward Bryan, Nisa Khan and Liza Andrews abstaining and three members absent. Bryan Cafferelli and Renee Cimino were not present when this vote was taken.

II. Possible Removal of Individuals from List of Persons Qualified to Serve as a GAL/AMC

No business was brought before the Committee on this agenda item.

III. Changes to the Active List of Persons Qualified to Serve as a GAL/AMC

a. Attorney Patricia Groves

Attorney Groves was removed from the active list in January 2020 because the committee did not receive her response to its annual request for updated information.

Attorney Groves emailed a request to be reinstated on the active list on September 12, 2024. Attorney Groves meets all requirements of Practice Book Section 25-62(b).

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Liza Andrews moved and Edward Bryan seconded, that Attorney Groves be reinstated to the active list. The Committee approved the reinstatement by a 7-0 vote with two members absent.

b. Attorney Garlinck Dumont

Attorney Dumont was removed from the active list in January 2020 because the committee did not receive her response to its annual request for updated information. Attorney Dumont emailed a request to be reinstated on the active list on October 4, 2024. Attorney Dumont meets all requirements of Practice Book Section 25-62(b).

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Edward Bryan moved and Liza Andrews seconded, that Attorney Dumont be reinstated to the active list. The Committee approved the reinstatement by a 6-0 vote with Justine Rakich-Kelly abstaining and two members absent.

c. Attorney Abigail Bicknell

Attorney Bicknell was removed from the active list in April 2023 because she was relocating and asked to be removed. Attorney Bicknell emailed a request to be reinstated on the active list on October 28, 2024. Attorney Bicknell meets all requirements of Practice Book Section 25-62(b).

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Justine Rakich-Kelly moved and Edward Bryan seconded, that Attorney Bicknell be reinstated to the active list. The Committee approved the reinstatement by a 7-0 vote with two members absent.

IV. GAL Pre-Service Training Update

Justine Rakich-Kelly reported that the live GAL/AMC Pre-Service Training offered in September and October has been completed and was very successful. They have received positive feedback from the participants. The updated training was recorded and remains available online for all new perspective GALs/AMCs.

V. 2024 Request for Updated Information from Individuals on the List of Persons Qualified to Serve as a GAL/AMC

Damon Goldstein reminded everyone that the annual email to individuals who are on the list of persons qualified to serve as a GAL/AMC asking them to recertify their compliance with Practice Book Sections 25-62 and 25-62A will be sent out on November 15th.

VI. Review and Possible Revisions to the Procedures by Which an Individual May be Removed from the List of Those Deemed Eligible for Appointment as a Guardian Ad Litem or Attorney for the Minor Child in Family Matters

Attorney Grace Palo distributed a draft of proposed revisions to the procedures by which an individual may be removed from the active GAL/AMC list to the members of the Committee to review. The proposed revisions involve the handling of complaints contain allegations outside the period of limitations, requests for extensions of time for respondents to answer a complaint, and a procedure whereby a complainant can request to amend their complaint. Members of the Committee reviewed the proposed revisions and had a discussion regarding any suggestions that they had. Subsequent revisions based on the discussion will be made and presented to the Committee at the next meeting.

VII. Schedule of Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters will be held on Monday January 6, 2025 at 2:00 PM.

VIII. Such Other Matters as may Properly Come Before the Standing Committee

Justine Rakich-Kelly informed the members the Committee that she received an inquiry regarding an individual who has completed a post-graduate Child Advocacy & Policy program and is asking if she could serve as a guardian ad litem? After a discussion among the Committee members, it was agreed that Child Advocacy & Policy is not listed as one of the mental health professions currently eligible to serve as a guardians ad litem in family matters pursuant to Practice Book Section 25-62(b)(1). Therefore, those who have completed the Child Advocacy & Policy program cannot serve as guardians ad litem in family matters.

Judge Diana reported that he received a proposal that was submitted to the Rules Committee to amend Practice Book Section 25-62(b)(1) to include behavioral analysts among those mental health professionals who can serve as a GAL in family matters. The proposal will be placed on the agenda for the Committee's next meeting for further discussion.

Justine Rakich-Kelly moved, and Liza Andrews seconded, a motion to adjourn the meeting. The Committee approved the motion by a 8-0 vote with one member absent. Judge Diana adjourned the meeting at 3:07 PM.