

DRAFT MINUTES, NOT YET APPROVED
Connecticut Judicial Branch
Law Library Advisory Committee

The Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Library Advisory Committee met on December 6, 2024, via the remote platform – Microsoft Teams.

Present

Hon. Erika M. Tindill, Chair
Hon. William F. Clark
Hon. Barbara A. Hoffman
Hon. Robyn Stewart Johnson
Hon. W. Glen Pierson
Atty. William H. Clendenen, Jr
Atty. Adam J. Cohen
Atty. Eamonn S. Wisneski
Prof. Jordan Jefferson
Prof. Jessica de Perio Wittman

Absent

Hon. Lisa Grasso Egan, Vice Chair
Atty. Michael R. Brandt
Prof. Femi Cadmus

Other Attendees

Ms. Deirdre M. McPadden, Director, Judge Support Services
Ms. Claudia Jalowka, Deputy Director, Law Library Services
Ms. Emily Oumano, Law Librarian II, Law Library Services
Mr. Michael Snyder, Court Planner, External Affairs

Judge Tindill chaired and called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

I. Introductory Remarks

Judge Tindill introduced and welcomed the Committee members to the meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion was requested by Judge Tindill to approve the minutes from the December 1, 2023, meeting. The motion was made by Atty. Clendenen, seconded by Judge Clark, and approved unanimously.

III. Law Library Operations

Claudia Jalowka reported the following in connection with the Law Library Services Unit:

The Law Library Budget –

- In April, each library and the administrative office prepared projections based on the FY24 allocations and expenditures for print materials and electronic services, calculating contractual obligations and anticipated increases. In FY25 Unit received an inflation adjusted budget.

Staffing –

- Since the last meeting of the Law Library Advisory Committee in December 2023, the Law Library Services Unit has had the following staffing changes:
 - Putnam Law Library -
 - On January 5, 2024, the Putnam Law Librarian resigned.

- On March 8, Amara Johnson joined the Law Library Services Unit as the new Putnam Law Librarian.
- In September, Law Librarians from Bridgeport and Putnam requested to swap duty stations and the transfer became effective on November 1.
- Staff retirements since the last meeting -
 - On August 30, Supervising Law Librarian Jeffrey Dowd, retired after 28+ years with Law Library Services. Jeff leaves behind a notable legacy that positively impacts the Law Library Services Unit and the Branch. He was the first chair of the Law Library Services' Web Page Committee and oversaw the development of the LLS's Website. He also served on the Judicial Branch's Web Board and had significant impact on the content and appearance of the Branch's website.
 - On September 30, New Haven Librarian Astoria Ridley retired after 18 years with Law Library Services.
- Staff promotions since the last meeting -
 - Two law librarians completed their probationary periods during the past year and were promoted to Law Librarian II, they were Emily Berardino, New Britain Law Library, and Rebecca Greenlee, Danbury Law Library.
 - Following a recruitment, Emily Oumano, Rockville Law Librarian, was approved for promotion to the position of Supervising Law Librarian. Emily will assume the role on December 13.
- Hartford Law Library –
 - On December 2, approval was received to hire an additional law librarian for the Hartford Law Library.

Status of Libraries –

- Currently, all Judicial Branch Law Libraries are open on a Monday – Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. schedule. Any temporary changes to a specific library's schedule are posted on the Law Library Services' website and NewsLog.
- For Fiscal Year 2024, In-Library usage increased 11% from Fiscal Year 2023, with usage by Self-Represented Parties up 23%. Correspondingly, Computer use increased 20% and use of print resources increased 15%.
- In Fiscal Year 2024, Group Purchasing saved a total of \$19,565.36 for the libraries, with an average discount of 22%. So far in Fiscal Year 2025, it has saved \$ 1,478.00, with an average discount of 15%.
- In February, the LLS' Management Team and the Director of Materials Management began negotiations with LexisNexis regarding renewal of the Superior Court contract. In June, an agreement for Lexis+ was signed. Supervising Law Librarian Chris Roy worked with the vendor to facilitate the smooth transition to the new platform and provided technical and training support as needed.

- In June, several librarians, including the Supervising Law Librarians, tested a new patron access computer desktop interface that the Jude Support Services IT Unit and Information Technology Division created. Starting in August, the new interface was rolled out to each law. The project was completed in October.
- On July 29, LLS' Management Team and the Director of Materials Management met with representatives of Thomson Reuters/Westlaw to begin the discussion for renegotiating the LLS' Patron Access Westlaw contract. In September, a new 5-year agreement was signed.
- In late July and August, the LLS' Management Team met with the Deputy Director Materials Management and her staff to review the law libraries' new FY2024 Check-in Ledgers. The ledgers were reviewed and additional adjustments to the FY2025 Check-in Ledgers were made.
- Several Law Librarians were featured in the Kudos section of the Superior Court Operations Unit's Water Cooler newsletter.

Activities –

- On December 15, 2023, and again on February 3, 2024, the New Britain Law Library hosted students for regional high school mock trials.
- At the beginning of the new year, the Judicial Branch Law Libraries were invited to participate in a program at the Connecticut Library Association's annual meeting on Legal Research Support: Navigating Questions with CT's Law Libraries, along with librarians from the Connecticut State Library and the University of Connecticut School of Law Library. On April 30, Chris Roy participated on behalf of LLS in the program in Groton.
- In February 2024, Torrington Law Librarian Taryn Agati was accepted into the EEDU LEED training program, offered through Franklin Covey, and Emily Oumano was accepted into the SEED training program.
- In April, Jeff Dowd and New Haven Law Librarian Danielle Bean reviewed the headers on all 129 Law by Subject pages and corrected them to ensure that all pages have the same three key elements in the header.
- In April, Christopher Roy and Jeffrey Dowd, together with Law Librarians, Michael Beetham, and Taryn Agati, conducted a Pre-bench presentation providing the 21 newly appointed 2024 Superior Court Judges with information about the Law Library Services Unit and the library services and resources available to them.
- In April, Deputy Director Claudia Jalowka participated in a regional roundtable discussion on Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Law Libraries held at the Suffolk University Law School in Boston, MA.
- In May, a Judicial Branch Summer Intern from Seton Hall University School of Law, commenced working in the New Haven Law Library. The intern assisted the librarians with reference research, performed link checks, shelf reading, and created a new law by subject page on Drones. The internship ended in August.

- On June 10, as Deputy Director, I was appointed to the revised Access to Justice Commission for the Judicial Branch. Several Law librarians have been appointed to the following Subcommittees for the Commission: Law Libraries/Law Schools Subcommittee – Claudia Jalowka, Chris Roy, Mollie Steinmetz, and Karen Townsend; Self-Represented/Access Issues Subcommittee – Taryn Agati; Legal Aid Subcommittee – Claudia Jalowka, Sean Carey, Rebecca Greenlee, and Emily Oumano.
- On July 25, as Deputy Director, I was appointed to the Branch’s Committee on Artificial Intelligence in the Connecticut Legal System. This is a one-year appointment.
- On August 1, Stamford Law Librarian Mollie Steinmetz was appointed to the State Library’s Advisory Council for Library Planning and Development (ACLPD). This is a two-years appointment. A prior LLS’ representative, Middletown Law Librarian Karen Townsend, ended her two-term appointment in June.
- On August 20, Jeff Dowd and Judge Support Services Attorney Adam Harvey delivered a program on Basic Connecticut Civil Procedure for all the librarians.
- Chris Roy, Mike Beetham, Taryn Agati, and Emily Berardino, New Britain Law Librarian, provided two orientation trainings to incoming Superior Court Law Clerks.
- As more titles produced by legal publisher change from supplemented bound volumes to paperback volumes reprinted each year as updated editions, our libraries are struggling with questions regarding purchase and retention of these titles. As a result, we have formed the Connecticut Titles Archive Workgroup to look at this issue for the Connecticut specific practice titles to which our libraries subscribe. Waterbury Law Librarian Janet Zigadto is the lead for the Workgroup; other members are Peter Jenkins, Karen Townsend, Mike Beetham, and Anna Dauphinee.
- In September, Mike Beetham, Taryn Agati, and Emily Berardino provided orientation training to incoming Supreme and Appellate Court Law Clerks.
- In October, Rebecca Greenlee was appointed to the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section’s Access to Justice Best Practices Committee for 2024-2025.
- Chris Roy and Hartford Law Librarian Sean Carey provided an overview of the law libraries’ services to self-represented parties and access to justice to a University of Connecticut School of Law Access to Justice class on October 1.
- In October, New London Law Librarian Peter Jenkins hosted a visit of librarians from the Connecticut General Assembly’s Legislative Library within the Office of Legislative Research.
- On October 25, Karen Townsend attended the Law Librarians of New England’s (LLNE) annual conference held at the McKernan Center in South Portland, ME. The topic of conference was “The Role of Law Libraries in the Age of AI”
- In November, Rebecca Greenlee was appointed to the Standing Committee on Service to Prisoners within the Social Responsibilities Special Interest Section of AALL

- On November 1, Christopher Roy was appointed to the Judicial Branch Web Board. This is a three-year appointment.

Committee Activities –

- Education Sub-Committee
 - Since December 1, 2023, the law librarians have received a total of 339 hours of training and delivered a total of 81.5 hours.
 - On May 2, the Committee coordinated a webinar program on *Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace* for the unit librarians. The program was offered by the EAP.
 - On June 10, the Unit's Annual Staff Development Meeting was held over Teams. The two-hours program, entitled *Criminal Erasure and Sealing of Criminal Records*, was presented by Ralph Dagostine and Caroline Fargeorge, Deputy Directors for Criminal Matters, and Toby Padegenis, Program Manager, Criminal Matters. The Committee selected this topic due to recent statutory changes regarding automatic erasure of certain criminal records and the increase of questions regarding this matter being received in the libraries.
 - On June 20 and 26, Luke Matyi, Assistant Appellate Clerk, presented training sessions on the *Appellate Filing Process* for the librarians over Teams. Attorney Matyi offered the program to update the librarians on the rule changes affecting filing Appeals. The presentation provided the librarians with the information and tools needed to assist people in starting the Appeals process and in providing accurate referrals to the Appellate Court.
- Marketing Committee
 - In early March, the Committee collaborated with the Judicial Branch Graphic Designer to create this year's Law Day poster. This theme this year was "Voices of Democracy." The final poster included the ABA theme and a graphic encouraging voting.
 - The Committee produced and distributed the annual Law Libraries calendar for 2025-2026. A total of 3,716 calendars were distributed in November.
 - The Committee prepared notices providing information on selected services or resources which were sent to the ConnTech listserv.
- Outreach & Training Committee
 - In February, the Committee completed the instruction/information videos for both the Law by Subject pages and the Research Guides. The videos were placed on the Judicial Branch YouTube page, with announcements being made on the Judicial Branch's homepage and via its X account.
 - In November, the Committee submitted a proposal for a program for the April 2025 Connecticut Library Association's Annual Conference. The proposal was accepted.
- Cataloging & Original Cataloging Committee
 - In February, the Committee initiated the Nutshell Conversion Project in which all libraries changed their catalog records for their Nutshell titles into serial records. The project was completed on May 30, and condensed 695 records to 175.
 - On September 4, the Committee restarted Phase I of the cataloging project. Phase I consists of a shelf read of all titles listed in the catalog for each library. Librarians will

remove holdings that are no longer in their library and add titles that are in the library but that do not appear in the catalog.

- Inmate Correspondence Service
 - Since the last meeting, a total of 201 written requests for material were received from inmates, with 2,997 pages of information being sent.
- Intranet & Internal Librarian Blog Committee
 - There were 93 blog entries posted on the librarians' internal blog in the past year covering staff development opportunities, educational articles, Branch announcements, agency notices, and general information of interest for the librarians.
 - During the month of April, the Committee worked with the Information Technology Division's Web Group to move the internal blog to the SharePoint Online platform.
- Interlibrary Loan
 - During this period, the libraries requested eight items from other libraries or institutions. One of the requests was from a research clerk in the Supreme Court and the item was cited in the footnote of a decision.
- Legal Research Guide Committee
 - The Committee updated 47 guides since the last meeting, which amounts to 1,922 pages reviewed.
 - Emily Oumano created a new criminal Research Guide on Petition for New Trial. This expands our criminal guide offerings to four.
- Newslog Committee
 - As of the end of September, the NewsLog had 955 subscribers. This is an increase of 59 subscribers since December 2023.
- Remote Reference Committee
 - During the past year, the law librarians responded to 1,052 email questions submitted through the Ask a Librarian service, and 1,628 email questions submitted through the Judicial Branch Web Feedback service.
 - The law librarians engaged in 220 live chat sessions, which generated 39 follow-up email interactions.
 - The Committee revised the remote reference policies to include all librarians being assigned to the role of "backup" on a rotating basis. The Committee also consulted with the Information Technology Division to develop guidelines for assessing the risks of opening patron sent attachments which are becoming more common. Additionally, the Committee obtained a Spanish translation for the template responses for obtaining a copy of a divorce decree.
- Training Sub-Committee
 - The Sub-committee members provided 40.0 hours of formal training, which included pre-bench training for twenty-two new Superior Court Judges and a Family Support Magistrate, training for Superior Court Legal Research Clerks and Appellate Court Law Clerks, and Judicial Branch Legal Services staff
- Self-Represented Info. Committee

- The Committee Chair created guidelines for reviewing and updating existing videos and palm cards. All videos are currently under review with two in the production stage.
- On December 11, 2023, a new Self-Represented Party Information Series video was published titled Connecticut Civil Lawsuit – Residential Summary Process (Eviction) – Landlord.
- Web Page Committee
 - Since December 2023, The Law Libraries' Website has had 5,228,464 hits, from 591,913 visitors.
 - On April 4, members of the Committee and other link checkers were trained by an Information Technology Analyst on how to use Visual Studios for web editing.

Discussion –

- Judge Tindill thanked all the Law Library Services librarians for their hard work.
- Judge Tindill asked what type of training was included in the total hours of training delivered by librarians?
 - Deputy Director Jalowka explained that this included all formal training provided by the librarians, this did not include informal patron instruction in the libraries.
- Judge Tindill asked if the five million plus website hits related to and included the number of patrons accessing the patron access Westlaw and Lexis services.
 - Deputy Director Jalowka replied that the five million plus was for accessing the Law Library Services' website only. Patrons access Westlaw and Lexis through the E-Research Portal, which is accessible only from within the law libraries.
- Judge Tindill commented that in the prior meeting Attorney Clendenen and Professor de Perio Wittman had questions and concerns about the online research databases. Attorney Clendenen stated he was concerned about the cost of research databases and wondered if small firm and solo attorneys were using our Westlaw and Lexis services. He inquired if we are tracking how many of the patrons using these services were attorneys and if their use has an impact on our budget.
 - Deputy Director Jalowka replied that the libraries do not inquire of patrons using the services if they are attorneys, users are allowed to keep their anonymity.
 - She also stated that the greatest cost impact is the number of licenses. As long as the number of licenses is meeting the demand, and there is no denial of service due to a demand exceeding the number of licenses, then the number of licenses is the biggest consideration and impact on the contract negotiations and costs.
- Judge Tindill asked what some of the most common types of questions are received through the Ask a Librarian service.
 - Deputy Director Jalowka and Law Librarian Emily Oumano replied that questions about traffic tickets, how to obtain court records, how to reschedule a hearing, custody, and writing a motion were common questions.
 - Judge Tindill commented that she thought questions about family law would be common.
 - Deputy Director Jalowka said questions about civil matters, including family, were common as well.

V. New business –

- Judge Johnson stated that she is on the Judge's Association's Wellness Committee and requested if the members of the Law Library Advisory Committee could assist with her work on that Committee and asked if the members know of any Connecticut judges who authored books. Her Committee is seeking judges who have written books that are not about legal procedure, but rather works regarding legal history or works fiction.

- Several Advisory Committee members mentioned Judges Cohn, Blue, Moukawsher, Necci, and Shay as having published.
- Attorney Wisneski asked a follow-up question to Judge Johnson's question. He asked if the law libraries had any programs to support wellness of patrons and court personnel?
 - Deputy Director Jalowka replied that all court users and staff were welcome to use the law libraries as quiet, contemplative space, but the law libraries are too small to use the space for more than legal research, they are not appropriate spaces for holding such programs.
 - Information was also provided about both the Employee Education and Development Unit and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), both within the Administrative Services Division, which provide services, programming, and support for court employee wellness.
 - Deputy Director Jalowka invited Committee members to share any suggestions about how the law libraries could collaborate with Administrative Services Division on wellness initiatives.
 - Attorney Wisneski said the idea came to him through his involvement with the Russell Library in Middletown where they are offering some programming, but he emphasized that the Russell Library is a public community library.

VI. Adjournment –

- Motion to adjourn by Atty. Wisneski, seconded by Judges Clark and Pierson.
- The meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.