

Chief Child Protection Commission
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, November 29, 2007

The meeting was commenced by the Chair at 5:40 PM

Present: Carolyn Signorelli; Anthony Lazzaro; Judge John Turner; Judge Michael Mack; John Kelley; Gregory Stokes; Paul Chill; (Shelley Geballe) was available by phone
Public: Doug Monaghan

1.a. Certification:

CAS: The Legal Specialization committee still needs to approve the NACC application. Judge Quinn has offered to call Attorney DePiano to make sure it stays on track. Once application approved we will hold the certification orientation on February 12 or February 18th. Judge Mack wants a copy of names on committee.

1.b. Pilot Project:

Pilot is moving ahead. Enough money in budget to do it. OPM approved flexible use of our funds. The goal is to have the RFP up by January and a proposer chosen in time to enter into a contract before June 08. The RFP Screening committee met November 16. Kidsvoice was here in an advisory capacity. CAS taking comments reviewing other RFP's in other states.

SG: Put aside \$50K for an independent evaluation would make assessment of data from pilot more credible. CAS: MOA with UCONN for evaluation.

1.c. Database:

Kidsvoice met with staff for 3 days to design the database; met with attorneys to talk about process and what's helpful to them. They are designing the product. Security being addressed.

1.d. Family Matters:

Formed two subcommittees: one for training, it is planning for a 2-3 day training during Judge's Institute; the other is creating qualification process. Under statute, we need to provide list of "qualified" attorneys. Judicial is not agreeing that all attorneys as AMC/GAL need to be qualified, including private hires. This may need to be dealt with legislatively.

2.a. Compensation:

Big ticket items rejected, initially staff was rejected.

CAS called Bob Genuario; he agreed to permit a request for a director of family matters and 2 staff attorneys.

AL: Can you shave a legislative liaison? Deb Sullivan from the PD's office gives us a heads up when things are happening legislatively.

A copy of the annual report was handed out. It will be ready in two weeks to go to the General Assembly and Governor. Created fact cards on "You Have a Lawyer". DCF has agreed to have all sw's to give to kids and foster homes.

PDF e-mail to Shelley for list serve. Getting printed on better paper. Doug Monaghan suggested that we do a card that reads "I am Your Attorney" for the attorneys to hand out to their clients.

December 17th training on GAL/DEL with annual meeting afterwards.

3. New Business:

SG: How many kept the flat rate? CAS: All but 5

SG: require all attorneys to bill hourly? CAS: large cadre of experienced attorneys with established income flow would leave at \$40/hour.

DM: Attorneys calculated numbers based on what they were doing, they would make less money. Prisoner day 1 hour on case vs. mom with 3 kids

GS: how accountable are we making things. Legislature would be concerned. Flat fee may bite us and attorneys not meeting with kids.

CAS: \$40/hr lowest in country and state paid. Carolyn asked for personnel to get into field and investigate these types of complaints. She does not have the ability to confirm these allegations and take action against these attorneys. CAS is making an effort to weed out problem attorneys.

GS: Randomly audit contract attorneys and document auditing practices.

CAS: Accountants are scrutinizing bills for lack of activities and lack of client contact.

JT: We need to demonstrate that the quality of representation is getting better. How do you measure the quality?

CAS: Database and hourly rate will help us to see improvement in efforts on behalf of clients. If she could get into court more could evaluate, but does not have time; did observe a trial and was impressed. Some signs and anecdotal feedback that things are changing slowly.

JT: Evaluations.

CAS: Surveys, Applications, Calls to references and investigation of complaints used to assess attorneys.

MM: 3 lawyers need to be at court observing. Most lawyers are good. Going toward hourly evaluators in field. This is what we are doing toward quality. Day to day need quality assurance if Legislature is not giving us the money for staff attorneys, we can't assess whether hourly rate is improving things.

JT: Do they need to be full-time?

CAS: Thinking about contracting with someone to do work in courts.

JT: Report is a great report – next year should be one step further. Helped to enhance specific things, measured stats.

Approval of minutes for July/September: Paul Chill made motion to accept; all accepted.
Meeting adjourned 7:10 PM