

Public Service and Trust Commission
Juror Security Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Juror Security Subcommittee was held at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, January 23, 2015 in Conference Room 133 at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT.

Members Present: Esther Harris (Chair), Melanie Kerr, Robin C. Smith, Roy Smith, Buffy Irizarry, Ines Nieves, Kevin Grosse, Jeffrey Getz, and Kimberly Symmes.

Members Not Present: Attorney Raymond Hassett, Judge Brian Fischer, and Richard Loffredo.

The following issues were discussed by attendees:

1. Reviewed and approved minutes from 11/17/2014.
2. Bob Kilpatrick from facilities attended this meeting to provide feedback and information on suggested ways we may improve parking at the Bridgeport, New Haven, and Waterbury courts.
3. Roy Smith reported that there are currently shuttles at the New Haven and Stamford courthouses. There is an eight passenger shuttle in New Haven that was purchased in 2013 for about \$21,000. There is a twelve passenger shuttle in Stamford that was purchased for \$24,443. Bob Kilpatrick estimates an additional cost of \$1,000 would be added to the past purchase price if a shuttle vehicle was to be purchased today.
4. Robin Smith reported that there is possible parking at the Holiday Inn across from the Bridgeport courthouse. In Waterbury, the city ramp garage continues to be used and they are negotiating a new contract. Jurors selected for complex litigation, criminal, and motor vehicle trials park on the roof of the courthouse garage. First day jurors and jurors for cases heard at 300 Grand Street park at the city owned ramp garage which is about a quarter mile walk. There are limited options for parking near the courthouse.
5. Bob Kilpatrick reports that it takes years to get parking from private parties. There is a chain of command and a long process that must be followed. The state will put a bid out for the private parties to offer parking. There must be a formal lease/contract. We are contract bound to the current parking situations. Bob will find out the expiration for the current leases. Once the leases are up, we may look into other options. Bob will gather information as to what we currently pay for parking, when the leases will expire, when renewal will be made, and how many spaces are being purchased.
6. It was suggested that an evaluation be made of the parking spaces being used for judicial employees. Robin Smith reports that in the past, Hartford has moved spaces around. Spaces not being utilized could be given to jurors that are returning on a panel as they are a smaller number compared to, for example, the daily need of 150 jurors at the Bridgeport court. There are no available parking spaces in Bridgeport or New Haven and an assessment would not be necessary for these courthouses. It is possible to perform an assessment of the parking at the Waterbury courthouse.

7. The first action plan item is developing a Juror Security Manual which seeks to develop procedures for directing jurors during fire alarms and fire drills, and to clarify the role of the TAC and/or Marshals during these exercises and during the jury process. Melanie Kerr reported that there is a branch security manual that was last updated in 2010. It was discussed that a juror security manual would be incorporated into that manual. Every courthouse has an emergency response plan that does not go into detail how every courthouse briefs jurors on emergency evacuation. The protocol for handling jurors in emergency situations should be added to the jury manual. The instruction for this would have to be generic as each location is different. The current jury manual has basic points to go over with jurors. The protocol for handling jurors in emergency situations should be added to the jury manual. Melanie, Robin, and Roy will look at what exists in the manuals and gather information from the clerks on how safety and security is communicated to jurors.
8. The second action plan item is to develop clear directions for parking that is far from the courthouse, a policy for securing parking lots until empty on a daily basis, and to develop standardized procedures for transferring jurors between courthouses. There is currently a Judge's order in place for marshals to secure parking lots until 5:30. There is no marshal present in parking lots or municipal lots that are away from the courthouses. It was reported that in Bridgeport, when there is a Judge's order for a jury panel to be escorted to the parking locations, the Judicial Marshal's comply with the order and conduct the escort. Also, the marshals will give the state police a warning that a high profile case verdict has been made for gang related or murder trials and the state police may escort jurors to their cars located within the jury garage, train, and bus station. If the state police receive an emergency call, they will have to leave. It was suggested by committee members that taking available spaces from employee parking lots and giving them to jurors on high profile cases could alleviate these types of security problems.
9. The third action plan item is to develop a form letter for jurors post-verdict. The letter should inform jurors that they may be contacted by the media or defense attorney after the trial; however, they are not required to speak with them. Esther Harris reported that there is a possible bill against this in legislation. Esther suggested that this be worked on with Judge Fischer for implementing a standard letter that would go out to jurors post-verdict.
10. The meeting adjourned at 3:15 pm.
11. The next meeting date will be emailed to members.