

MINUTES
Connecticut Judicial Branch
Law Library Advisory Committee
April 21, 2011

(Approved by Law Library Advisory Committee at January 18, 2012 meeting.)

The Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Library Advisory Committee met on Thursday, April 21, 2011 at the Quinnipiac University School of Law Library, 275 Mount Carmel Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut in the law library conference room, LL241.

Present:

Hon. James W. Abrams
Hon. William J. Lavery
Atty. William H. Clendenen, Jr.
Atty. Adam J. Cohen
Ms. Ann DeVeaux
Atty. Virginia C. Foreman
Mr. Blair Kauffman
Ms. Darcy Kirk
Atty. William P. Yelenak

Absent:

Hon. Douglas C. Mintz, Chair
Hon. Jon C. Blue
Hon. William H. Bright, Jr.
Hon. Theodore R. Tyma

Other Attendees

Ms. Faith P. Arkin
Mr. Robert F. Shea, Jr.
Mr. Jonathan Stock
Ms. Maureen D. Well

Judge Lavery chaired the meeting in the absence of Judge Mintz and called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

I. Approval of Minutes.

Minutes from the December 3, 2010 Law Library Advisory Committee meeting were approved.

II. Budget and Personnel Update.

Judge Lavery asked Maureen Well if she had learned what budget amount had been requested for the law libraries in Fiscal Year 2011-2012. She responded that she was told that \$2,028,000 had been requested for all publications used by the Supreme Court, Appellate Court and the law libraries in the Superior Court. A discussion then ensued regarding the status of the state budget in the General Assembly's finance and appropriations committees, whether an agreement had been reached with the governor, and the role that union concessions would play in this process.

Maureen Well announced that Mary Fuller, Supervising Law Librarian in Waterbury, was retiring as of July 1, 2011. Judge Lavery asked if she would be replaced. Faith Arkin explained that there was a hiring freeze in place which made that prospect unlikely. Judge Lavery asked if any library would be unstaffed. Maureen Well replied that the three libraries which Mary Fuller oversees all have a law librarian assigned to them; provided these librarians do not retire or resign, the libraries will be staffed. Oversight of the libraries will be reassigned to other supervisors.

Maureen Well mentioned that both she and Faith Arkin had been appointed by the Chief Justice to the new Access to Justice Commission.

III. Surveys Completed by Attorneys, Self-Represented Parties and Members of the General Public.

Maureen Well provided a summary of the survey results. Bill Yelenak suggested that the statistics for the attorney surveys be revised to exclude those responding who live out of state and no longer practice in Connecticut; Maureen Well said that she would do so.

Bill Clendenen commented that the law libraries are a bedrock foundation for our system of justice. He added that through the courthouse law libraries, everyone has access to the law; that this access to justice is a fundamental right which needs to be preserved.

Maureen Well said that the survey results reinforced Bill Clendenen's comments about access to the law. In particular, she noted that the surveys indicated that courthouse libraries were particularly critical to the needs of self-represented parties. Both a summary and a detailed compilation of the survey results from attorneys, self-represented parties and members of the general public had been sent to committee members prior to the meeting.

Judge Lavery mentioned that when a new question of law comes before the Supreme Court, the justices often turn to *Restatement of the Law*. It is the courthouse law libraries who maintain this multi-volume publication, which is costly and generally not accessible to solo practitioners or small law firms. In Connecticut, the law libraries offer the same playing field of information to everyone.

Judge Lavery then asked if having legal information available on a Kindle or other e-book reader was part of the future of law libraries. Blair Kauffman responded that the content is not there yet. A discussion ensued on this subject, as well as the accuracy of digital information and the process for correction of memorandum of decisions with electronic vendors.

Judge Lavery suggested that at the next committee meeting there be a presentation about the future of law libraries. Even though we are in the midst of serious fiscal difficulties at the state level and elsewhere, he felt that it was important to plan because the economy will eventually turn around, and the courthouse libraries should be in a position to be headed in the right direction.

Blair Kauffman mentioned that he will be attending a meeting at Harvard in June which will address this topic. He agreed to report back to the committee about the Harvard gathering. Additionally, the law librarians on the committee will meet to share their thoughts about the future of law libraries in preparation for the Law Library Advisory Committee meeting on June 24th.

Darcy Kirk brought up the need for authentication of state produced online legal resources. Judge Lavery asked Darcy to provide information to the committee on this topic and requested that it be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Bill Yelenak inquired about the feasibility of providing wireless access in the courthouse libraries. He suggested that the bar might be able to pay for routers. It was agreed that someone from the Judicial Branch's Information Technology division be invited to attend the committee's next meeting to talk about wireless access in Connecticut courthouses.

IV. Law Library Minimum Collection Standards.

Maureen Well explained that with budget reductions the Law Library Minimum Collection Standards could not be achieved and that in the committee's packet was a draft proposal to amend the standards. Bill Clendenen suggested that instead of revising the standards, perhaps the committee should recommend that they be suspended until the economy improves. He asked that a history of the evolution of the standards be provided at the next meeting.

Judge Lavery said that the Connecticut State Library's budget for legal materials had recently been cut by \$300,000. He asked Maureen Well if she could find out which titles were being eliminated from their collection. Comments were then made about how interconnected law libraries are, whether they be academic, law firm or government.

It was agreed that a discussion of revising or suspending the Law Library Minimum Collection Standards would be deferred to the next meeting. Bill Clendenen added that these are terrible times for lawyers, particularly those who are new to the profession. He said that young attorneys can't afford law books. Their primary access to the law is through the courthouse libraries.

V. Future Meetings and Adjournment.

The next meeting of the committee was scheduled for Friday, June 24, 2011. The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maureen D. Well
Secretary