

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

The Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Library Advisory Committee met on November 5, 2021 via the remote platform – Microsoft Teams.

Present

Hon. Erika M. Tindill, Chair
Hon. James W. Abrams, Vice Chair
Hon. Melanie L. Cradle
Hon. Robyn S. Johnson
Hon. Glen Pierson
Atty. Michael R. Brandt
Atty. Adam J. Cohen
Jessica de Perio Wittman
Ann DeVeaux
Atty. Eamonn S. Wisneski

Absent

Hon. Kevin C. Doyle
Femi Cadmus
Atty. William H. Clendenen, Jr.

Other Attendees

Deirdre M. McPadden, Director, Judge Support Services
Ms. Ann H. Doherty, Deputy Director, Law Library Services

Judge Tindill chaired and called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

I. Introduction of members

Judge Tindill introduced Femi Cadmus, Yale Law School Library Director (in absentia), newly appointed committee member, to the Law Library Advisory Committee members. Each attendee then introduced themselves.

II. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Judge Tindill to approve the minutes from the November 6, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Judge Johnson and approved unanimously.

III. Law Library Operations

Ann Doherty reported the following in connection with the Law Library Services Unit:

- **Covid-19 Impact** – As reported at the meeting last November, the law libraries closed on March 16, 2020. The law libraries did not reopen to the public for 15 months and have been open to walk-in patrons since June 16, 2021. During the time that the law libraries were closed, staff worked remotely or in the library. The remote email reference services were maintained and the law librarians experienced a remarkable increase in requests for information and guidance. Ann produced graphs that demonstrated that during a five month time period in 2020 more than five times the submissions were received and processed than in the same time period in 2019.
- Law Library Services staff continued to collaborate with External Affairs to publish the online feature - *Frequently Asked Questions - COVID-19 and Court Business* and amended the information as updates and additions were issued. The existing “Law by Subject” pages on the Law Library Services web pages also continued to be updated to include relevant information concerning the mitigation of issues due to COVID-19 orders and protocols.

- In April 2021, the Reopen Planning Committee was formed to plan for the needs, rules, and guidelines to be introduced to assist the law librarians to prepare for the reopening the libraries to walk-in patrons. The committee met several times and issued guidelines that provided protocols and flexible guidelines to be followed, as needed by the local law librarians.
- The final installation of plexiglass partitions for each law librarian’s workstation was completed on June 11, 2021. The law libraries reopened to walk-in patrons on June 16, 2021.
- **FY22 Budget** – In March, 2021, each law library received additional funding to purchase or update print titles that were not included in original budget allocation purchase plans for FY21. In addition, two law libraries were able to replace microfiche reader/printers that were malfunctioning and of such an age that replacement parts were no longer available. It was reported that all courthouse law libraries now have fully functional microfiche reader/printers.
- Also in March, the Law Library Services Unit submitted projections for FY22 expenditures. The FY22 budget allotment provided an increase in funding based on the funds added in FY21.
- **Staffing levels** – On August 20, 2021, three Law Librarian I position openings were posted on the Judicial Branch website. The vacant positions were posted for the law libraries in Bridgeport, New Haven, and Stamford. Thirteen candidates were interviewed over the course of 4 days, using the Microsoft Teams platform. Once the appointments of the selected candidates have been voted on and approved by the Executive Committee of the Superior Court Judges, a final letter will be forwarded to the candidates with information about the start date and orientation programs.
- **Activities** – Law Library Services collaborated with Materials Management in the review and negotiation of two agreements for online legal research subscription services for the Judicial Branch, Superior Court.
- Two law librarians have been selected to serve on two separate American Association of Law Librarians (AALL) committees. The terms of service for each began July 1, 2021.
- Supervising Law Librarian, Jeff Dowd, who is a member of the Judicial Branch Web Board, has been working on a project to consolidate and simplify the Judicial Branch web pages offering “Help”, “How do I”, and “FAQ” information.
- New Britain Law Librarian, Chris Roy, together with two additional members of the Access to Justice Workgroup on Libraries and Access to Justice, conducted a remote training session of the program, “Hands on Legal Research,” for public librarians.
- In April, the two supervising law librarians, together with a staff law librarian, conducted a Pre-bench presentation providing the newly appointed Superior Court Judges with information about the Law Library Services Unit and the library services and resources available to them.
- Supervising Law Librarian Claudia Jalowka, together with two staff librarians, conducted remote Westlaw/ Lexis training sessions to groups of incoming Legal Research Clerks in the Fall 2021.
- A significant renovation project at the Bridgeport Superior Court began at the close of business Friday, August 6th. The project involves the 7th Floor of the courthouse where both the Jury Assembly room and the Law Library are located. Public access to the 7th floor was stopped and the Law Library, therefore, closed. The staff law librarian relocated her workstation to the 4th floor of the courthouse. At this time there is no estimated time for the reopening of the law library.

V. **New business** – No new business was introduced.

VI. **Future meetings and adjournment** – The date for the next meeting is to be determined.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.