

Minutes
Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and
Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters
January 24, 2022

The Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters met remotely via Microsoft Teams on January 24, 2022. The meeting was convened by the chair in Courtroom 407 at 1 Court Street, Middletown, Connecticut and live streamed to the public on YouTube.

Those in attendance: Judge Michael Albis (chair); Judge Jennifer Macierowski; Attorney Bryan Cafferelli; Mr. Stephen B. Carragher, Public Health Services Manager, Practitioner Licensing and Investigations Section, Department of Public Health; Attorney Justine Rakich-Kelly; Attorney Susan Hamilton (designated by Attorney Christine Perra Rapillo); Ms. Liza Andrews, Policy Director, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Attorney Danielle S. Rado joined the meeting at 2:39 PM.

Also in attendance were Attorney Michael Bowler, Counsel to the Standing Committee, Attorney Jennifer Gagosz, Assistant Bar Counsel, and Attorney Damon Goldstein from the Judicial Branch's Court Operations Unit.

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 PM by Judge Albis.

I. Review and Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Liza Andrews and seconded by Judge Macierowski to approve the minutes from the meeting held on October 4, 2021. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0 with one member absent.

II. Possible Removal of Individuals from List of Persons Qualified to Serve as a GAL/AMC

At 2:08 PM, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §1-200(6)(a), Bryan Cafferelli moved, and Justine Rakich-Kelly seconded, to enter executive session to discuss complaints for removal of guardians ad litem. The Committee approved going into executive session by a 7-0 vote, with one member absent. Michael Bowler, Jennifer Gagosz, and Damon Goldstein were asked by the Committee to remain present for the executive session.

A motion was made by Susan Hamilton, and seconded by Liza Andrews, to end the executive session. The motion passed by a vote of 6-0 with one member absent. Judge Macierowski left the executive session at 2:12 PM and did not participate in the discussion of Complaint #21-0009 or in the vote to end the executive session. The executive session concluded and the Committee reconvened in open session at 2:15 PM.

a. Complaint 1 (#21-0009)

A motion was made by Bryan Cafferelli and seconded by Liza Andrews to accept the Probable Cause Panel's finding of no probable cause and recommendation of dismissing

the complaint. The motion passed by a 5-0 vote with one member absent and Judge Macierowski and Justine Rakich-Kelly abstaining from the vote. The complaint was dismissed.

b. Complaint 2 (#21-0010)

A motion was made by Justine Rakich-Kelly and seconded by Liza Andrews to accept the Probable Cause Panel's finding of no probable cause and recommendation of dismissing the complaint. The motion passed by a 7-0 vote with one member absent. The complaint was dismissed.

III. Changes to the Active List of Persons Qualified to Serve as a GAL/AMC

Attorney Sheryl Shaughnessy

Attorney Sheryl Shaughnessy was removed from the active list in January 2020 because the Committee did not receive her response to its annual request for updated information. Attorney Shaughnessy emailed a request to be reinstated to the active list on January 5, 2022. Attorney Shaughnessy meets all the requirements of Practice Book Section 25-62(b).

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Justine Rakich-Kelly moved, and Susan Hamilton seconded, that Attorney Shaughnessy be reinstated to the active list. The Committee approved the reinstatement by a 7-0 vote with one member absent.

IV. Consideration and Possible Approval of a Process for Persons to Complete the Required GAL Pre-Service Training by Viewing the Recordings of the Most Recent Training Program

Pre-service training for new guardians ad litem and attorneys for the minor child was offered in June 2021. Due to COVID-19, the live training was conducted remotely via Zoom. The training sessions were recorded.

The Committee members discussed the possibility of using the recordings from the June 2021 training to allow new guardians ad litem and attorneys for the minor child to fulfill their required 20 hours of pre-service training so individuals did not need to wait until the next live training is offered. Individuals taking the training would self-certify that they had completed the curriculum.

Susan Hamilton indicated that the Division of Public Defender Services would not be opposed to the development of a process to conduct pre-service training by using the recordings. The Committee members agreed that the biggest challenge to self-certification is making sure that each individual watches the training sessions in their entirety and completes the reading of all associated materials. Susan Hamilton indicated that she will look into whether there is a way to automate the self-certification process while also ensuring that all training requirements are met. If possible, the Committee members were in agreement that the process of self-certification would be acceptable.

After the discussion by the participating Committee members, Judge Macierowski moved, and Bryan Cafferelli seconded, that the Committee approve the development of a remote training

program to be administered by the Division of Public Defender Services that allows self-certification for the pre-service training for all new guardians ad litem and attorneys for the minor child as required by Practice Book Rule Sections 25-62(b)(4) and 25-62A(b)(4). The Committee approved the development of a remote training program by a 7-0 vote with one member absent.

V. Approval of the List of Persons Qualified to Serve as a GAL/AMC for 2022

Damon Goldstein reported that approximately 185 of the 202 individuals on the active list of persons qualified to serve as a GAL/AMC responded to the Committee's annual request for updated information.

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Susan Hamilton moved, and Bryan Cafferelli seconded, that the active list of persons qualified to serve as a GAL/AMC be approved by the Committee for 2022 pursuant to Practice Book Section 25-61A(b)(4). The Committee approved the active list of persons qualified to serve as a GAL/AMC by an 8-0 vote.

VI. Schedule of Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters will be held April 25, 2022 at 2:00 PM.

VII. Such Other Matters as may Properly Come Before the Standing Committee

No other matters were brought before the Committee.

Judge Macierowski moved, and Liza Andrews seconded, a motion to adjourn the meeting. The Committee approved the motion by an 8-0 vote. Judge Albis adjourned the meeting at 2:43 PM.