

Minutes
Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and
Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters
January 29, 2024

The Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters met on January 29, 2024. The meeting was convened by the chair in Courtroom 1 at 95 Washington Street, Hartford, Connecticut.

Those in attendance: Judge Leo Diana (Chair); Judge Jennifer Macierowski; Attorney Justine Rakich-Kelly; Attorney Edward J. Bryan; Attorney Nisa J. Khan; Attorney Bryan Cafferelli; Attorney Renee Cimino (designated by the Chief Public Defender)

Absent: Ms. Liza Andrews, Policy Director, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Mr. Stephen B. Carragher, Public Health Services Manager, Practitioner Licensing, and Investigations Section

Also in attendance were Attorney Damon Goldstein and Ms. Nicole Collins from the Judicial Branch's Court Operations Unit.

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 PM by Judge Diana.

Judge Diana began the meeting by having everyone introduce themselves.

I. Review and Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Justine Rakich-Kelly and seconded by Edward Bryan to approve the minutes from the meeting held on October 23, 2023. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0 vote with Bryan Cafferelli, Nisa Khan, Renee Cimino abstaining, and two members absent.

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

At 2:05 PM, in accordance with the Connecticut General Statutes §1-200(6), Judge Macierowski moved, and Bryan Cafferelli seconded, to enter executive session to discuss complaints for removal of guardians ad litem. The Committee approved of going into executive session by a 7-0 vote with two members absent.

A motion was made by Judge Macierowski and seconded by Bryan Cafferelli to conclude the executive session. The motion passed by a 7-0 vote with two members absent. The Committee reconvened in open session at 2:09 PM.

a. Complaint #23-0009

A motion was made by Bryan Cafferelli and seconded by Edward Bryan to accept the Probable Cause Panel's findings of no probable cause and recommendation of

dismissing the complaint. The motion passed by a 7-0 vote with two members absent. The complaint was dismissed.

b. Complaint #23-0010

A motion was made by Judge Macierowski and seconded by Edward Bryan to accept the Probable Cause Panel's findings of no probable cause and recommendation of dismissing the complaint. The motion passed by a 7-0 vote with two members absent. The complaint was dismissed.

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

a. Attorney Aidan Welsh

Attorney Aidan Welsh was removed from the active list in August 2015 because the committee did not receive her response to the request for updated information. Attorney Welsh emailed a request to be reinstated to the active list on November 30, 2023. Attorney Welsh 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 Edward Bryan seconded, that Attorney Welsh be reinstated to the active list. The Committee approved the reinstatement by a 7-0 vote with two members absent.

b. Attorney Elise Cousineau

Attorney Elise Cousineau was removed from the active list in January 2023 because the committee did not receive her response to its annual request for updated information. Attorney Cousineau emailed a request to be reinstated to the active list on January 8, 2024. Attorney Cousineau 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 Edward Bryan seconded, that Attorney Cousineau be reinstated to the active list. The Committee approved the reinstatement by a 7-0 vote with two members absent.

c. Attorney Ruth Nadeau Dwyer

Attorney Ruth Nadeau Dwyer was removed from the active list in January 2018 because the committee did not receive her response to its annual request for updated information. Attorney Dwyer emailed a request to be reinstated to the active list on January 10, 2024. Attorney Dwyer meets all the requirements of Practice Book Section 25-62(b).

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Edward Bryan moved, and Justine Rakich-Kelly seconded, that Attorney Dwyer be reinstated to the active list. The Committee approved the reinstatement by a 7-0 vote with two members absent.

d. Attorney Lindsay Savona-Donka

Attorney Lindsay Savona-Donka was removed from the active list in January 2018 because the committee did not receive her response to its annual request for updated information. Attorney Savona-Donka emailed a request to be reinstated to the active list on January 23, 2024. Attorney Savona-Donka meets all requirements of Practice Book Section 25-62(b).

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Edward Bryan moved, and Justine Rakich-Kelly seconded, that Attorney Savona-Donka be reinstated to the active list. The Committee approved the reinstatement by a 7-0 vote with two members absent.

IV. GAL Pre-Service Training Update

Renee Cimino reported that 309 individuals have registered for the pre-service training. Out of the 309 individuals, 34 have completed the training and 64 are currently in the process.

After a brief discussion regarding the in-person GAL pre-service training, the members of the Training Subcommittee who were present agreed to schedule a Subcommittee meeting to discuss updates to the pre-service training curriculum.

V. Approval of the List of Persons Qualified to Serve as a GAL/AMC for 2024

Damon Goldstein reported that there are currently 161 individuals on the active list of persons qualified to serve as a GAL/AMC. There were approximately 7 individuals who did not respond to the Committee's annual request for updated information and three who requested to be removed from the list.

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Justine Rakich-Kelly moved, and Judge Macierowski seconded, that the active list of persons qualified to serve as a GAL/AMC be approved by the Committee for 2024 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 a 7-0 vote with two members absent.

VI. Review and Possible Revision to the Procedures by Which an Individual May be Removed from the List of Those Deemed Eligible for Appointment as a Guardian Ad Litem or Attorney for the Minor Child on Family Matters

This agenda item was tabled and will be discussed at the next scheduled meeting.

VII. 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 on Monday, April 22, 2024 at 2:00 PM.

The next meeting of the Training Subcommittee on Guardians Ad Litem for the Minor Child in Family Matters will be held on Monday, March 11, 2024 at 1:00 PM.

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

No other matters were brought before the Committee.

Bryan Cafferelli moved, and Judge Diana seconded, a motion to adjourn the meeting. The Committee approved the motion by a 7-0 vote with two members absent. Judge Diana adjourned the meeting at 3:01.