

**Minutes**  
**Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and**  
**Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters**  
**April 25, 2022**

The Standing Committee on Guardians Ad Litem and Attorneys for the Minor Child in Family Matters met remotely via Microsoft Teams on April 25, 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; Attorney Nisa J. Khan; Attorney Danielle S. Rado; Attorney Justine Rakich-Kelly; Attorney Susan Hamilton (designated by the Chief Public Defender); Ms. Liza Andrews, Policy Director, CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Absent: Mr. Stephen B. Carragher, Public Health Services Manager, Practitioner Licensing and Investigations Section, Department of Public Health

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

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 PM by Judge Albis.

**I. Review and Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Liza Andrews and seconded by Justine Rakich-Kelly to approve the minutes from the meeting held on January 24, 2022. The motion passed by a vote of 7-0 with Bryan Cafferelli abstaining and one member absent.

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

At 2:10 PM, in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes §1-200(6)(a), Susan Hamilton moved, and Liza Andrews seconded, to enter executive session to discuss complaints for removal of guardians ad litem. The Committee approved going into executive session by an 8-0 vote, with one member absent. Michael Bowler, Jennifer Gagosz, Damon Goldstein, and Alexandra Rice were asked by the Committee to remain present for the executive session. The executive session concluded and the Committee reconvened in open session at 2:16 PM.

**a. Complaint #22-0001**

A motion was made by Danielle Rado and seconded by Bryan Cafferelli to accept the Probable Cause Panel's finding of no probable cause and recommendation of dismissing the complaint. The motion passed by an 8-0 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 Michelle Sigfridson**

Attorney Michelle Sigfridson 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 Sigfridson emailed a request to be reinstated to the active list on April 20, 2022. Attorney Sigfridson meets all the requirements of Practice Book Section 25-62(b).

After a brief discussion by the participating Committee members, Judge Macierowski moved, and Liza Andrews seconded, that Attorney Sigfridson be reinstated to the active list. The Committee approved the reinstatement by an 8-0 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**

Building on the discussion that began at the January 24 meeting, Susan Hamilton reported that an outline of the process for the remote viewing of the pre-service training has been developed. The Division of Public Defender Services would post a registration form on its website in the same way it has for prior trainings. Qualified registrants would then be sent a link to the recordings that comprise the training. The outstanding issue remains how to verify that someone taking the pre-service training has viewed the recordings in their entirety. Participants can self-certify that they have completed the training, but some sort of an additional verification process is preferable.

There was a discussion among the members of the Committee of ways to verify completion of the training through technology and/or software. Susan Hamilton will check with the IT department at the Division of Public Defender Services to see what is feasible.

Attorney Hamilton would like to be able to post notice of registration next month. The consensus of the Committee is that pre-service training should be offered in-person as a general rule, but that remote viewing of the recordings of last year's training should be offered this summer, and at other times when the need arises, if this summer's training proves successful.

After the discussion by the participating Committee members, Judge Macierowski moved, and Justine Rakich-Kelly seconded, that the Division of Public Defender Services proceed with a video-based pre-service training program to be offered this summer 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 training will allow participants to self-certify their participation and will utilize a verification process if one can be made available. The results of the training will be reviewed by the Committee at its next scheduled meeting. The Committee approved the motion to proceed with a remote training program by a 8-0 vote with one member absent.

### **V. 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 October 3, 2022 at 2:00 PM.

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

No other matters were brought before the Committee.

Bryan Cafferelli 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 2:52 PM.