

MINUTES
Connecticut Judicial Branch
Law Library Advisory Committee
May 31, 2013

The Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Library Advisory Committee met on May 31, 2013 at the Quinnipiac University School of Law, 275 Mount Carmel Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut, in the law library conference room LL241.

Present

Hon. Douglas C. Mintz, Chair
Hon. James W. Abrams
Hon. William J. Lavery
Atty. William H. Clendenen, Jr.
Atty. Adam J. Cohen
Ms. Ann DeVeaux
Ms. Darcy Kirk
Mr. Blair Kauffman

Absent

Hon. Jon C. Blue
Hon. William H. Bright, Jr.
Hon. Theodore R. Tyma
Atty. Virginia C. Foreman
Atty. William P. Yelenak

Other Attendees

Atty. Deirdre M. McPadden
Ms. Ann H. Doherty

Judge Mintz chaired and called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

I. Welcome

Judge Mintz introduced Deirdre McPadden, recently appointed Director of Judge Support Services.

II. Approval of Minutes.

The minutes from the May 23, 2012 Law Library Advisory Committee meeting were approved.

III. Law Library Operations

Ann Doherty reported that the law librarians projected the FY14 expenditures for their respective libraries based on the FY13 budget allotment. Adjustments will be made, if necessary, once funds for FY14 are allocated to the law libraries. Ann reported that since the last law library meeting in May 2012, two law librarians were hired, one in Stamford and one in New Haven. She also reported that the Litchfield Courthouse law librarian retired as of November 30, 2012. Ann noted that in order to maintain patron access to the existing courthouse law libraries, while Law Library Services is facing a staff shortage, some libraries operate on a curtailed schedule.

IV. Focus Group Discussions

Ann reported that, at the direction of the Law Library Advisory Committee, focus group discussions with the staff law librarians were held on July 11, 2012. Two reports were written reviewing the broad-based themes that emerged from the group discussions. Ann outlined the recommendations contained in the reports, both those initiatives that have been undertaken and those recommendations that are planned for the future.

V. The Future of the Law Libraries

Judge Mintz opened the discussion concerning the information and recommended first steps contained in the report on the future of the law libraries. Judge Lavery stated that one of the report recommendations was to create a depository of legal research materials. He suggested the committee recommend that a study be undertaken by the Judicial Branch Law Libraries, the State Library, and the University of Connecticut, School of Law Library, to consider the feasibility of establishing such a depository. The following motion was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous vote:

“The Law Library Advisory Committee recommends that the Connecticut Judicial Branch, Law Library Services, the Connecticut State Library, and the University of Connecticut School of Law Library, form a committee to study the feasibility of creating and of collaboratively supporting and managing a central depository of legal research materials”

Judge Mintz stated that the Judicial Branch Law Library Minimum Collection Standards need to be reviewed by the committee in order to reflect the current state of library collections. He requested that the law librarians be involved in the initial review of the Standards and the appended civil and criminal bibliographies. In addition, Judge Mintz suggested that a survey of bar members may also be useful in determining what materials should be included in the final recommendations for the Minimum Collection Standards. The committee will discuss the law librarians’ review of the Minimum Collection Standards and survey results at the next meeting.

In her report concerning the operations of the law libraries, Ann stressed the fact that the ability of Law Library Services to adequately serve patrons and operate a system that fully utilizes staff’s talents, experience, and knowledge is severely hampered by lack of staff. The committee discussed the severity of the staff shortage, and its impact on both the fulfillment of the Judicial Branch mission and the ability of the Branch to provide equal access to justice for all Connecticut citizens. A motion was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous vote to forward to the Chief Justice the following recommendation:

“To ensure equal access to justice for all Connecticut citizens, and to assist the Connecticut Judicial Branch in fulfilling its mission to serve the interests of justice and the public by resolving matters brought before it in a fair, timely, efficient, and open manner, the Law Library Advisory Committee strongly recommends, as our number one priority, that a minimum of four law librarian positions be filled as soon as possible.”

VI. Future Meetings and Adjournment

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Friday, September 27, 2013 at 2:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ann H. Doherty
Secretary