

Volunteer Advocates in Juvenile Matters Advisory Board

Minutes

September 20, 2011

The Advisory Board meeting was called to order on Tuesday September 20, 2011 at 2:05 pm at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield.

Attendance: Honorable Barbara Quinn, Honorable Christine Keller, Honorable Peter Brown, Honorable Mary Sommer, Cynthia Cunningham, Esq., Jill Bicks, Esq., Martha Stone, Esq., Tom DeMatteo, Esq. for Barbara Claire, Esq., Chris Rapillo, Esq., Benjamin Zivyon, Esq. for Susan Pearlman, Esq., Cynthia Bernard, Esq., Gene Marchand, Deb Fuller, Emily Nicholson

Staff: Michele Massores, Marilou Giovannucci

Materials distributed:

- Minutes of the May 3, 2011 meeting
- CAC Statistics
- CAC Redacted Monitor Report

Minutes of May 3, 2011 meeting:

Minutes of the May 3, 2011 meeting were also approved unanimously.

CAC Update

Attorney Bicks reported that the Monitor program in Stamford & Danbury is progressing. The Notice of Appointment was drafted since the last meeting and approved. Since the beginning, CAC volunteers have been involved with 57 children (35 as GAL and 22 as monitor). Attorney Bicks stated that 74 volunteers have been trained. Attorneys Bicks and Bernard reported on a case where the monitor was able to assist the parent in a protective supervision case.

Judge Keller asks if there have been any complaints from the lawyers. Attorney Bicks reported that Danbury is more receptive than Stamford which is more of a work in progress.

Attorney Rapillo mentions that some attorneys have mentioned that they would like a clarification of the monitor role. Attorney Bicks is open to dialogue if there are concerns.

Attorney Stone asks for clarification as to the monitor role based on reviewing the report and also requests that the appointment order is shared with the group. Attorney Stone also asked that the revised "Order for Appointment of Volunteer Monitor" for the CAC Program be provided to members of the Advisory Group.

Judge Keller & Attorney DeMatteo complimented the report provided by CAC. Attorney Bernard explains that there is very close supervision of volunteers by the supervisors. Attorney Bicks complements Attorney Bernard worked very hard with the volunteer to draft the report.

Miscellaneous - Zero to Three (ZTT) Pilot Program

Marilou reported that Ebony Miller has been gathered information from other ZTT programs that use volunteers in connection with their program. There is a question as to the funding of the program. Marilou would like to wait until there is some indication if funding will be available before proceeding with a discussion about how CASA volunteer might be used in connection with ZTT.

Miscellaneous

Judge Quinn asked Attorney Rapillo to report to the group about how the Office of the Chief Public Defender assumed the duties of CCPA. Attorney Rapillo reports that there have been changes to the attorney compensation package. There has been also been minimal disruption in representation during the changeover. Attorney Rapillo has held meetings with attorneys and is planning on conducting trainings in the future. Attorney Rapillo is exploring the possible benefit of using volunteers as GALs since attorneys are now being appointed as attorneys and not in the dual role of attorney/GAL.

Attorney Stone would like to see a quality assurance aspect of the programs. Judge Sommer agrees that the goal is to make program better in order to improve outcomes for children.

Judge Keller reports that there is a new CIP coordinator in Hartford but there have not been many appointments. Judge Brown also reports there haven't been as many appointments in New Haven but the quality of the reports is good overall.

Judge Quinn believes that it would be appropriate to invite Attorney Mildred Doody from New Haven Legal Services to be a member of the advisory board. Judge Quinn also requests that Attorney Rapillo provide suggestions for replacement for Attorney Borrino. Attorney Zivyon suggests a children's attorney and a parent's attorney.

Judge Quinn also reports the Open Access Pilot Program has ended.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on November 29, 2011 at 2:00PM, location to be determined. Items for the agenda may be submitted.