

MINUTES

STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS OF SHORTHAND REPORTERS

NOVEMBER 28, 2007

The State Board of Examiners of Shorthand Reporters convened at 8:27 a.m. in Room 117 of the State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106.

Board Members Present: Susan K. Whitt, Shorthand Reporter
Patricia Masi, Shorthand Reporter
William Mangini, Public Member
Cheryl Stern, Public Member

Board Members Absent: John Brandon, Chairperson, Shorthand Reporter
Joseph N. DeFilippo, Attorney

Board Counsel Absent: Jose Rene Martinez, Assistant Attorney General

DCP Staff Present: Nelson Leon, Board Secretary
Vicky Bullock, Administrative Hearings Attorney

Public Present: Les Seligson, Shorthand Reporter and President CCRA

Note: The administrative functions of this Board are carried out by the Department of Consumer Protection, Occupational and Professional Licensing Division. For information call Richard M. Hurlburt, Director, at (860) 713-6135.

Agency Web Site: www.ct.gov/dcp

Susan Whitt, in the absence of Chairperson Brandon, called the meeting to order at 8:27 a.m.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Board members present reviewed and voted unanimously to approve minutes of the August 29, 2007 meeting.

BOARD MEMBER VACANCY

Patricia Masi, CRR, CCP, RDR, LSR, was sworn in by Attorney Bullock as the new member of the Board. Ms. Masi has been a court reporter for the Superior Court for 29 years.

LEGISLATION UPDATE

Les Seligson updated the Board on the pending legislation. Last year, Bill 1298 was submitted to the Senate. The Bill was sponsored by Senator Thomas Colapietro, but was not passed. Mr. Seligson has requested Senator Colapietro resubmit the Bill in the next session in March 2008. He emphasized it is a no cost bill and the language addresses the penalties for violations of the existing regulations. When resubmitted, Section 2 regarding provisional licensure will be deleted.

OLD BUSINESS

A discussion took place regarding the page layout issue. Ms. Whitt believes there should be guidelines in place for reporters working within the State of Connecticut. She noted that other states have such guidelines, as does the State of Connecticut, Office of Superior Court and the National Court Reporters Association. She emphasized that cost per page should not be part of the discussion, but rather the page layout.

Cheryl Stern asked for clarification on the issue, and Ms. Whitt explained that in the past transcripts were produced that were “stretched out” by the reporter. To do so, they would use wider margins, larger fonts, fewer lines per page, and/or fewer characters per line. By conforming to a stricter guideline, the same transcript could be produced with fewer pages.

Ms. Stern then asked if there was a complaint regarding this issue, to which Ms. Whitt informed the group that the complaint was “informal”, since it went to her as opposed to the Board. Attorney Bullock recalled that the investigator for the Department of Consumer Protection contacted the complainant who chose not to file a formal complaint with the Board. Ms. Whitt again reiterated her belief that a 60 character per line guideline would be in line with NCRA and she has seen transcripts produced that had as little as 35 characters per line.

Mr. Seligson then asked to speak on behalf of himself. He said we live in a capitalistic society and free-lance reporters should be allowed to produce transcripts as they see fit. He recognized those working for the state are employed by the state, are salaried, and get benefits. The free-lance reporter is trying to make a living and the Board should not regulate the page layout. Mr. Seligson has been a reporter for many years and has experienced elderly attorneys requesting pages with larger fonts for their ease in reading.

He continued to say that less than 25% of the reporters that are members of the Connecticut Court Reporters Association belong to NCRA, and pointed out that the client has the right to not use the reporter (or agency) that produced a transcript that was unfairly charged. He felt the Board should be dealing with the issue of unlicensed reporters who take work away from the licensed reporters in the state as opposed to regulating page layout.

Ms. Stern asked if the Board has the authority to regulate page layout. Ms. Whitt and Attorney Bullock felt the Board does have such authority, but Mr. Seligson disagreed and finished by saying that, as President of CCRA, he has not seen any evidence of other state’s regulating page layout. Ms. Whitt said she would produce evidence at the Board’s next meeting.

Mr. Seligson asked if the page layout issue was to be tabled, and Ms. Whitt said the issue would be tabled until the next meeting (in January 2008). Ms. Whitt said she preferred to have Mr. Brandon involved in the discussion on this matter. Mr. Seligson said he would like to discuss the issue with the members of CCRA at their next meeting in February 2008.

In other Old Business, Attorney Martinez had suggested at the August meeting that an article be written for well-read legal publications that would direct an unhappy client (regarding cost/transcript layout) to the Board to review the case. Attorney Bullock was not sure the Board should author the article, and did discuss the situation with her supervisor who agreed that the article should be written and submitted with no mention that it came from the Board. The Board would, however, respond to the complaint.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Seligson asked if the Board of Examiners of Shorthand Reporters would endorse the issue of fining unlicensed reporters. The Board felt they could comply with his request. Attorney Bullock asked if all Board members had the language for the Bill, and Mr. Seligson said he would have the Bill to Nelson Leon the week of December 10 for distribution to the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John C. Brandon
Chairperson

The next meeting of this Board is scheduled for Wednesday, January 23, 2008 at 8:15 a.m.