

**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
**PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES COMMISSION**  
**JUNE 1, 2021**

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The meeting of the Public Defender Services Commission was convened at 4:33 p.m. via Zoom.

**Members Present**

Thomas J. Rechen, Esq., **Chair**

G. Kenneth Bernhard, Esq.

Aimee Golbert, LCSW

Attorney Ramona Mercado-Espinoza

Honorable Hillary B. Strackbein

**Others Present**

Christine Perra Rapillo, Chief Public Defender

John R. Day, Deputy Chief Public Defender

Diane M. Fitzpatrick, Director of Human Resources

Stephen Hunt, Financial Director

Bradford Buchta, Assistant Public Defender

Fairfield Judicial District

James M. Lamontagne, Senior Assistant Public Defender

Danbury Judicial District

Jared J. Millbrandt, Assistant Public Defender

Fairfield Judicial District

Bevin Salmon, Supervisory Assistant Public Defender

Geographical Area 23 (New Haven)

John T. Walkley, Public Defender

Milford Judicial District/Geographical Area 22

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 4, 2021 meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to go into Executive Session at 4:35 p.m. The reason for convening in Executive Session was in accordance with Section 1-200(6)(A) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Commission came out of Executive Session at 6:01 p.m.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to appoint Attorney James M. Lamontagne to the position of Public Defender, Danbury Judicial District/Geographical Area 3.

APPOINTMENT OF ATTY.  
JAMES M. LAMONTAGNE

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to appoint Attorney Jennifer B. Smith to the position of Assistant Public Defender, Legal Services Unit, Office of Chief Public Defender, Waterbury.

APPOINTMENT OF ATTY.  
JENNIFER B. SMITH

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to appoint Attorney Ashley Miller to the position of Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Milford Judicial District/Geographical Area 22.

APPOINTMENT OF ATTY.  
ASHLEY MILLER

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to appoint Attorney Jessica Skowronek to the position of Deputy Assistant Public Defender, New Britain Judicial District/Geographical Area 15.

APPOINTMENT OF ATTY.  
JESSICA SKOWRONEK

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to appoint Attorney Freeman Demirjian to the position of Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Geographical Area 23 (New Haven).

APPOINTMENT OF ATTY.  
FREEMAN DEMIRJIAN

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Audrey F. Gilzene to the position of Public Defender Administrative Assistant, Assigned Counsel Unit, Office of Chief Public Defender, Hartford.

RATIFICATION OF  
APPOINTMENT

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Bridget Girch to the position of Public Defender Secretary II, Geographical Area 21 (Norwich).

RATIFICATION OF  
APPOINTMENT

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Marjorie E. Farley to the position of Public Defender Secretary II, Torrington Judicial District/Geographical Area 18.

RATIFICATION OF  
APPOINTMENT

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve a 2.5% salary increase for the Division's Managers and Exempt employees, retroactive to January 1, 2021.

APPROVAL OF SALARY  
INCREASE

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to go back into Executive Session at 6:06 p.m. The reason for convening in Executive Session was in accordance with Section 1-200(6)(A) and Section 1-210(b)(10) of the Connecticut General Statutes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Commission came out of Executive Session at 6:17 p.m.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED to approve the following Authorizations to Incur Expenses: 6-2021-01, 6-2021-04, 6-2021-05 and 6-2021-06. Honorable Hillary B. Strackbein abstained from the vote in Authorization 6-2021-05.

APPROVAL OF EXPENSES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the following Authorization to Incur Expenses for a reduced amount of \$5,000: 6-2021-03.

APPROVAL OF EXPENSES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to withdraw Authorization 6-2021-02.

WITHDRAWAL OF EXPENSES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Public Defender, it was VOTED unanimously to reclassify the following attorneys to the position of Senior Assistant Public Defender: Assistant Public Defender, Benjamin Aponte, Geographical Area 1 (Stamford); Assistant Public Defender, Cynthia Barlow, Tolland Judicial District/Geographical Area 19; Assistant Public Defender, Bradford Buchta, Fairfield Judicial District; Assistant Public Defender, Johanna Canning, Geographical Area 14 (Hartford); Assistant Public Defender, Sandra Crowell, New Britain Judicial District; Assistant Public Defender, Anne Kindley, Geographical Area 2 (Bridgeport); Assistant Public Defender, James Pastore, Fairfield Judicial District; Assistant Public Defender, Victoria Pells, Geographical Area 14 (Hartford); Assistant Public Defender, Abra Rice, Geographical Area 23 (New Haven); Assistant Public Defender, Amelia Ruggeri, Geographical Area 1 (Stamford); Assistant Public Defender, Lisa Samuelson, New Haven Juvenile Matters; Assistant Public Defender, Robyn Smith, Geographical Area 23 (New Haven); Assistant Public Defender, John Stawicki, Hartford Judicial District; Assistant Public Defender,

ATTORNEY  
RECLASSIFICATIONS

James B. Streeto, Legal Services Unit, Office of Chief Public Defender, Waterbury; and Assistant Public Defender, Erica Wardle, Waterbury Juvenile Matters.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Public Defender, it was VOTED unanimously to grant permanent status to Public Defender Secretary I, Nia Clemons, Geographical Area 23 (New Haven).

PERMANENT STATUS

Upon motion duly made and seconded, in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Public Defender, it was VOTED unanimously to reappoint the following attorneys to a new four-year term: Assistant Public Defender, Paul Shae, Geographical Area 10 (New London), expiring on 6/13/2025; Senior Assistant Public Defender, Tanisha Williams, Geographical Area 2 (Bridgeport), expiring on 6/13/2025; Director, Robert J. Meredith, Connecticut Innocence Project/Post-Conviction Unit, Office of Chief Public Defender, Hartford, expiring on 6/29/2025; and Senior Assistant Public Defender, Rosemary Montesi, Geographical Area 4 (Waterbury), expiring on 6/29/2025.

ATTORNEY  
REAPPOINTMENTS

The Chief Public Defender will provide a job description for the proposed position of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity to Commission members prior to the July meeting.

The Chief Public Defender proposed having the members of the Commission approve retirement proclamations for those retiring in the coming months.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the outside employment request of Senior Assistant Public Defender, John Cizik, Waterbury Judicial District.

APPROVAL OF OUTSIDE  
EMPLOYMENT REQUEST

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the outside employment request of Supervisory Assistant Public Defender, Cynthia Clancy, New Britain Juvenile Matters.

APPROVAL OF OUTSIDE  
EMPLOYMENT REQUEST

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the outside employment request of Social Worker I, Rachel Sponzo, Windham Judicial District/Geographical Area 11.

APPROVAL OF OUTSIDE  
EMPLOYMENT REQUEST

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John R. Day  
Deputy Chief Public Defender