

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING October 3, 2023

In-person meeting at OCPD, Hartford, Connecticut

Meeting commenced at 4:44 p.m.

Members Present

Hon Richard Palmer (Chair)
Hon Shelia Pratts
Hon Elliot Solomon
Attorney Michael Jefferson
Hon William Dyson

Other Agency Staff

TaShun Bowden-Lewis, Chief Public Defender
John Day, Deputy Chief Public Defender
Steve Hunt, Financial Director
Paula Lohr, Acting Director of Human Resources
Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Director, Legal Counsel
Kymberly Cianci, Administrative Services
Laura Bryll, Hartford JD
Laila Haswell, Union President – Local 381
Anthony Bento, Staff Representative Attorney – Local 381
David Warner, Supervisory Assistant Public Defender, Hartford GA #14
Diana Gomez, GA #5

MM 2nd – Unanimous to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2023, Commission Meeting

Presentation by the CPD on the following:

Requesting that the three organizations proposed to provide training and education services to the agency be scheduled to present at the November Commission meeting:

1. Thought Partner Solutions
2. Dr. Isabel Logan
3. YWCA Greenwich

CPD provided three quotes for agency products intended to enhance recruitment.

Q&A by commission members followed.

MM 2nd – Unanimous to discuss achieving salary parity with the State's Attorneys.

Presentation by Laila Haswell, President Local 381, and Anthony Bento, Representative Attorney's 381, regarding the proposed salary restructuring of the union attorney's pay scale to 15 increment steps from the current increment steps to ensure pay equity with the State's Attorneys' union pay scale.

Discussion among the commission members, the CPD and attorneys Haswell and Bento followed regarding the importance of the implementation of this restructuring as soon as possible in order to put the Division attorneys on the same scale as the State's Attorneys to ensure a level and equal bargaining position for wage reopening discussions in January 2024.

- Justice Palmer highlighted a discussion that occurred between Paula Lohr and Karen Buffkin regarding wage equality and negotiations – though this person is not currently employed by OPM. Justice Palmer went on to report that he and the commission members believe there is no legal barrier to the implementation of these pay scale adjustments, and it should be done now.

Further Q&A followed with Stephen Hunt, Financial Director, regarding the budgetary implications for instituting these pay scale adjustments and the mechanics for doing so. Mr. Hunt reported the following:

- The funds are currently within the fiscal year appropriation to cover the cost.
- It would be accomplished through the transferring of funds between accounts.
- He has already alerted OPM of this budget adjustment, and they are aware.

Additional Q&A between the commission members and the CPD followed.

- Attorney Jefferson requested that the CPD “take the steps to get this restructure accomplished immediately.”
- Justice Palmer commented that the delay in the implementation has been unnecessary.
- Attorney Jefferson requested that Attorney Haswell and the CPD both commit to “get this done in 48 hours” to which both agreed.
- Judge Solomon indicated the need for OCPD to “regain and retain statutory parity with the State's Attorneys.”

Presentation by Deborah Del Prete Sullivan on the following:

- Ongoing efforts regarding the “trial tax” penalty survey project and MOU
- The Risk Protection Orders and new policy
- Request approval to pay a \$5180.00 fee for the cost of a MOU (MM 2nd approved)

A Period of Public Commentary Followed:

- Kymberly Cianci, Administrative Services Officer, announced she had accepted a position at another state agency and read aloud a letter of support for the CPD.
- David Warner, Supervisory Assistant Public Defender, GA#14, commented on the delays in filling positions within his office and frustrations these delays cause due to the caseload burdens that result for the remaining staff.

Q&A by commission members followed.

Attorney Jefferson inquired directly of Paula Lohr regarding the GA#14 hiring delays and was assured that a notice for a new attorney position would be posted tomorrow.

- Attorney Laura Bryll of the Hartford JD commented on the process for receiving approval for hiring experts in cases and the rates paid.
- Attorney Diana Gomez, GA #5, commented on the demands that the Risk Protection Orders are causing and how they are impacting the time available to handle the daily business in her court location – and that her office is currently down one attorney.

MM 2nd – Unanimous **INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:39 p.m.**

Pursuant to C.G.S 1-200 (6) A, B and E

CPD and DCPD excused from 7:16 – 9:54 p.m.

The CPD and Deborah Del Prete Sullivan were brought into the executive session at separate times to meet with commission members.

OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION 9:54 p.m.

MM 2nd unanimous to approve the following Authorizations to Incur Expenses:

1003001
1003002
1003003
1003004
1003005
1003006
1003007

- MM 2nd unanimous to table the following Authorizations to Incur Expenses:

1003008

MM 2nd unanimous to approve the following appointments:

Evelyn O'Regan	GA#10	
Marcus Adorno	OCPD	(ratification)
Justino Sampaio	PRU	(ratification)
Verinda Birdsong	OCPD	(ratification)

MM 2nd unanimous to approve the following reappointments and permanent statuses:

James Streeto	LSU
Ann Marie Kindley	GA #2
Rosanna Cappetta	GA#5
Leslie OBrien	OCPD
Karla White	GA#22
Sulli Williams	GA #7
Brooklyn Campagna	GA #2
Hope Estrella	LSU
Margaret O'Neil	GA #15
Hannah Snow	GA #2
Marissa Wheeler	GA #2

MM 2nd unanimous to table the commission correspondence until the November meeting.

The Chairperson approved the request of the CPD for the expenditure of up to 5K for products to be used in the recruitment process.

MM 2nd unanimous to issue a letter of reprimand to the CPD.

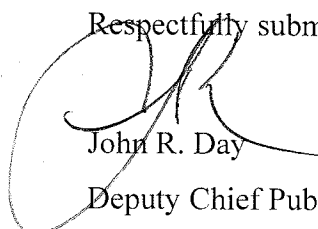
Judge Solomon informed the CPD that, by unanimous vote, the commission was issuing a five-page written reprimand of her for conduct that has been ongoing.

The reprimand clearly outlines steps the commission expects the CPD to take to correct the behavior contained in the letter. In addition, the chair indicated that further review will be done on an ongoing basis.

Judge Solomon made clear that the commission "takes no pleasure" in issuing the aforementioned reprimand and that the members believe that this letter is the "least form of sanction" the commission could take at this time.

MM 2nd Unanimous to Adjourn at 10:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



John R. Day

Deputy Chief Public Defender