

MINUTES OF MEETING
PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES COMMISSION
APRIL 2, 2024

The meeting of the Public Defender Services Commission was convened at 4:35 p.m., at the Office of Chief Public Defender, Hartford, Connecticut.

Members Present

Honorable Richard N. Palmer, **Chair**

Michael Jefferson, Esq.

Honorable Russell Morin

Honorable Sheila M. Prats

Honorable Elliot N. Solomon

Herman Woodard, Jr., Esq.

Others Present

John R. Day, Acting Chief Public Defender

Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Director, Legal Counsel

Stephen Hunt, Chief Fiscal Officer

Paula Lohr, Acting Director of Human Resources

Andrew O'Shea, Director of Training

David Warner, Supervisory Assistant Public Defender

Geographical Area 14 (Hartford)

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2024 meeting.

A presentation was made by the Director, Legal Counsel, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, regarding a proposed increase in the Income Eligibility Guidelines for the Division.

Director, Legal Counsel, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan further presented an invoice for payment from Shipman & Goodwin of \$4,894.50.

Director, Legal Counsel, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan further presented a request for approval and acceptance of a bequeathment in the amount of \$8,250 to be used by the Connecticut Innocence Project.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve an increase in the Income Eligibility Guidelines for the Division.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the payment of invoice from Shipman & Goodwin for \$4,894.50.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to accept the bequeathment in the amount of \$8,250 to be used by the Connecticut Innocence Project.

Director, Legal Counsel, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan presented information pertaining to subsection (d) of Connecticut General Statutes, Section 51-291, which requires the approval of the Commission to accept certain funds or donations given to the Division of Public Defender Services. Pursuant to a regulation of the Connecticut Treasurer's office, any funds received must be deposited within 24 hours of receipt. This is not possible with the Commission having monthly meetings at which approval can be provided.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to authorize the Chairperson of the Commission, or another Commission member should the Chairperson not be available, the receipt and deposit of such funds or donations upon receipt of such.

A presentation was made by the Chief Fiscal Officer, Stephen Hunt, on the Division's budget. He notified the Commission that the Division is awaiting a legislative vote to approve the requested increase in the Division's position count due to an increase in the income eligibility requirements for appointment of an attorney. He further presented a plan for the efficient use of Division's funds for the fiscal year ending in June 2024.

There was a question-and-answer segment by the Commission regarding the presentation by Chief Fiscal Officer, Stephen Hunt.

A presentation was made by Director of Training, Andrew O'Shea, regarding the plans for trial skills training, as well as an update on the Defender Lab program to be held this summer and the planned use of Assigned Counsel attorneys as faculty.

There was a question-and-answer segment by the Commission regarding the presentation by the Director of Training, Andrew O'Shea.

A presentation was made by Paula Lohr, Acting Director of Human Resources, on the various fellowship programs, the current vacancies of the Division, and the actions being taken to fill them.

Under Public Comments of the agenda, Jacqueline Rodriguez of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority spoke on behalf of the members of her organization in support of Chief Public Defender, TaShun Bowden-Lewis. A prepared statement was read to the Commission members. In addition, she read a letter of support for the Chief Public Defender, dated 2018, from the staff of the Waterbury Judicial District office in support of her application for the Public Defender vacancy in that office. Ms. Rodriguez was thanked for her comments.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to go into Executive Session at 5:21 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 to discuss the following: Authorizations to Incur Expenses; the process and procedures for the upcoming April 16, 2024 hearing regarding the Chief Public Defender; the discussion of outside employment, ratification of appointments; reclassifications, reappointments and permanent statuses; and the investigation into a personnel matter.

The Commission came out of Executive Session at 7:48 p.m.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the following Authorizations to Incur Expenses: 4-2024-01; 4-2024-02; 4-2024-03; 4-2024-04; 4-2024-05; 4-2024-06; and 4-2024-07.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, in accordance with the recommendation of the Acting Chief Public Defender, it was VOTED unanimously to reappoint the following attorney to a new

four-year term: Assistant Public Defender, Dana Kane, Hartford Judicial District, expiring on 04/20/2028.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, in accordance with the recommendation of the Acting Chief Public Defender, it was VOTED unanimously to grant permanent status to Investigator III, Wendy Aguirre, Danbury Judicial District/Geographical Area 3, upon the successful completion of her probationary period.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, in accordance with the recommendation of the Acting Chief Public Defender, it was VOTED unanimously to grant permanent status to part-time, Public Defender Secretary I, Linda Ververis, Windham Judicial District/Geographical Area 11, upon the successful completion of her probationary period.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, in accordance with the recommendation of the Acting Chief Public Defender, it was VOTED unanimously to grant permanent status to Public Defender Secretary 1, Stephanie Mucci, Office of Chief Public Defender, Hartford, upon the successful completion of her probationary period.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Zachary Petrarca to the position of Public Defender Secretary I, Geographical Area 4 (Waterbury).

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the Acting Chief Public Defender, John R. Day, and the Director, Legal Counsel, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, to investigate a complaint filed by an employee of the Division.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John R. Day,
Acting Chief Public Defender

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