

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING
PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES COMMISSION
DECEMBER 9, 2025

The special meeting of the Public Defender Services Commission was convened at 4:47 p.m., at the Office of Chief Public Defender, Rooms 1008/1011, Hartford, Connecticut.

Members Present

Honorable Richard N. Palmer, **Chair**

Michael Jefferson, Esq.

Honorable Elliot N. Solomon

Herman Woodard, Jr., Esq.

Others Present

John R. Day, Acting Chief Public Defender

Deborah Del Present Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director

Erin M. Ryan, Director of Human Resources

John DelBarba, Assistant Legal Counsel

Stephen Hunt, Chief Fiscal Officer

Jared Millbrandt, Public Defender

Stamford Judicial District/Geographical Area 1

Thomas J. Paoletta, Supervisory Assistant Public Defender

Geographical Area 2 (Bridgeport)

David Warner, Supervisory Assistant Public Defender

Geographical Area 14 (Hartford)

Attorney Alice Osedach-Powers

Kirschbaum Law Group, LLC

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the minutes of the November 4, 2025, meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chief Fiscal Officer, Stephen Hunt, provided a budget update summary for FY 26.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to go into Executive Session at 4:50 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: Commission Correspondence, Authorizations to Incur Expenses, Appointments, Reclassifications, Reappointments & Permanent Statuses, Outside Employment Requests, Educational Leave Requests, Strategy and Negotiations with Respect to Collective Bargaining, and Litigation Involving the Commission.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Other attendees included the Acting Chief Public Defender, John R. Day; Legal Counsel, Director, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan; Assistant Legal Counsel, John DelBarba; Director of Human Resources, Erin M. Ryan; Public Defender, Jared Millbrandt, Stamford Judicial District/Geographical Area 1; Supervisory Assistant Public Defender, Thomas J. Paoletta, Geographical Area 2 (Bridgeport); Supervisory Assistant Public Defender, David Warner, Geographical Area 14 (Hartford); and Attorney Alice Osedach-Powers, Kirschbaum Law Group, LLC.

The Commission came out of Executive Session at 8:28 p.m.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the following Authorizations to Incur Expenses: 12-2025-01; 12-2025-02; 12-2025-03; 12-2025-04; 12-2025-05; 12-2025-06; 12-2025-07; 12-2025-08; 12-2025-09 (approved with changes); 12-2025-11; 12-2025-12 (final approval); 12-2025-13; 12-2025-15 (final approval); and 12-2025-16.

APPROVAL OF EXPENSES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to deny the following Authorizations to Incur Expenses: 12-2025-10 and 12-2025-17.

DENIAL OF EXPENSES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to table the following Authorization to Incur Expenses: 12-2025-14.

TABLING OF EXPENSES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the following Authorizations to Incur Expenses: 12-2025-18; 12-2025-19; 12-2025-20; and 12-2025-21.

RATIFICATION OF EXPENSES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to appoint Attorney Ryan Scopelliti to the position of Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Geographical Area 2 (Bridgeport).

APPOINTMENT OF ATTY.
RYAN SCOPELLITI

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to appoint Attorney Taylor Shawver to the position of Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Geographical Area 1 (Stamford).

APPOINTMENT OF ATTY.
TAYLOR SHAWVER

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the outside employment request of Public Defender, Molly Arabolos, New Haven Judicial District.

APPROVAL OF OUTSIDE
EMPLOYMENT REQUEST

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the outside employment request of Senior Assistant Public Defender, John Cizik, Geographical Area 7 (Meriden).

APPROVAL OF OUTSIDE
EMPLOYMENT REQUEST

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the outside employment request of Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Joyce Lopes, Geographical Area 23 (New Haven).

APPROVAL OF OUTSIDE
EMPLOYMENT REQUEST

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to table the outside employment requests of Public Defender, Jennifer Bourn, Legal Services Unit, Office of Chief Public Defender, Hartford, pending additional information.

TABLING OF OUTSIDE
EMPLOYMENT REQUESTS

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 attorneys to a new four-year term: Assistant Public Defender, Richard Gudis, Middletown Judicial District/Geographical Area 9, expiring on 12/3/2029; Assistant Public Defender, Albert Unger, Geographical Area 1 (Stamford), expiring on 12/3/2029; Assistant Public Defender, April Zalenski, Geographical Area 1 (Stamford), expiring on 12/3/2029; and Supervisory Assistant Public Defender, Sean Kelly, Geographical Area 10 (New London), expiring on 12/14/2029.

ATTORNEY
REAPPOINTMENTS

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 Supervisory Assistant Public Defender, Brian Pear, Geographical Area 7

PERMANENT STATUS

(Meriden), upon the successful completion of his 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 Supervisory Assistant Public Defender, Erica Wardle, Waterford/New London Juvenile Matters, upon the successful completion of her probationary period.

PERMANENT STATUS

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 II, Omar Jones, Hartford Juvenile Matters, upon the successful completion of his probationary period.

PERMANENT STATUS

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 Secretary I, Rebecca Fernandez, Middletown Judicial District/Geographical Area 9, upon the successful completion of her probationary period.

PERMANENT STATUS

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 Secretary I, Tashyra Long, Geographical Area 14 (Hartford), upon the successful completion of her probationary period.

PERMANENT STATUS

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 Secretary I,

PERMANENT STATUS

Chelsea Zapata, Ansonia/Milford Judicial District/Geographical Area 22, 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 Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Jennifer Buckler, Tolland/Rockville Judicial District, upon the successful completion of her probationary period.

PERMANENT STATUS

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 Payroll Officer, Willisha Charlemagne, Financial Unit, Office of Chief Public Defender, Hartford, upon the successful completion of her probationary period.

PERMANENT STATUS

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 Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Amanda Caron, Geographical Area 14 (Hartford), upon the successful completion of her probationary period.

PERMANENT STATUS

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to table the tuition reimbursement request of Administrative Services Assistant, Megan A. Morgan, Office of Chief Public Defender, Hartford.

TABLING OF TUITION
REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to schedule a special meeting on January 20, 2026, for interviews for the position of Chief Public Defender.

SCHEDULING OF SPECIAL
MEETING ON
JANUARY 20, 2026

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to provide a written response to the Commission correspondence received from Mr. Malcolm Ashley and Assistant Public Defender, Freesia Waldron, Geographical Area 23 (New Haven).

MOTION TO PROVIDE A
WRITTEN RESPONSE TO
COMMISSION
CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

The Acting Chief Public Defender presented on his report of the Division.

REPORT OF ACTING CHIEF
PUBLIC DEFENDER

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the 2026 Commission Meeting Dates.

APPROVAL OF
2026 COMMISSION MEETING
DATES

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John R. Day
Acting Chief Public Defender