

**MINUTES**

**STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS OF SHORTHAND REPORTERS**

**AUGUST 29, 2007**

The meeting was called to order by John C. Brandon, Chairperson at 8:33 a.m. in Room 119 of the State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106.

Board Members Present:            John C. Brandon, Shorthand Reporter, Chairperson  
   Susan K. Whitt, Shorthand Reporter  
   William Mangini, Public Member

Board Member Absent:            Joseph N. DeFilippo, Attorney  
   Cheryl Stern, Public Member

Board Vacancies:                    One Shorthand Reporter, Appointed by the Governor

Board Counsel Present:            Jose Rene Martinez, Assistant Attorney General

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

Public Present:                      Tracy Gow

**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](http://www.ct.gov/dcp)

### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Board voted unanimously to approve minutes of the May 30, 2007 meeting.

### **BOARD MEMBER VACANCY**

No appointment of a Shorthand Reporter to the Board has been made as of yet. Mr. Brandon asked Ms. Gow if she had applied for the position. Ms. Gow said she did send a letter but has not followed up since she thought Robert Miller was appointed. Mr. Brandon suggested Ms. Gow follow up since the vacancy still existed. Mr. Brandon was uncertain as to the status of Patty Masi from Hartford Superior Court, another candidate for the vacancy.

### **LEGISLATION UPDATE**

Mr. Brandon noted there was nothing new with our pending legislation since the last session proved unfruitful. He noted that many bills got rejected due to personal conflicts, etc. Mr. Brandon said he will follow up to insure we are heard in the next session.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Attorney Bullock suggested the Board review its website to insure accuracy. Ms. Gow pointed out that Mr. Hubbard still shows as a member of the Board. It was not determined who would follow up with the website updating.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

A discussion ensued regarding page layout for transcripts. Ms. Whitt distributed guidelines as set by COPE, along with the parameters used by the National Court Reporters Association. Ms. Whitt shared with the Board a transcript that was prepared not using these guidelines, and showed how the consumer may be getting shortchanged by paying extra money when, had the transcript been prepared using the guidelines, would save the consumer money. Mr. Mangini noted that the agency's name and address appeared at the bottom of the transcript, and Attorney Martinez suggested that the agency information should be deleted from transcripts when using them as examples.

Mr. Mangini questioned whether the agency owner sees the transcript before distributed, and Mr. Brandon responded that agency owners do not always see the finished product. Ms. Gow shared that when working for a particular agency, she did not prepare the transcript and would have no way of knowing what the finished product looked like. Ms. Whitt stated she felt the agency owners should have some responsibility for the product their agencies produce.

Ms. Gow asked about penalties for violating the guidelines, and Mr. Brandon wondered if the Board should produce “advisory guidelines” versus regulation. Mr. Brandon pointed out that agency owners do not want to raise prices for transcripts, but instead manipulate the layout which, in effect, yields the same money for the finished product.

Although Mr. Brandon feels this is a consumer protection issue, he asked “If the consumer doesn’t care, is it really an issue?” Mr. Brandon noted there have been very few complaints about the layout of transcripts, and pointed out that some attorneys actually prefer the transcripts with larger fonts and wider margins for ease in reading.

Attorney Martinez pointed out that this issue directly impacts the legal community. Attorney Martinez suggested reaching out to the legal community by submitting an article to well-read publications (such as the Law Tribune) and noting that, if a client is unhappy with the cost/layout of a transcript, they can contact the Board who can review the case. Attorney Martinez feels this issue can translate into significant dollars by the end of any given year. Ms. Whitt feels that part of the problem in attracting people to the profession is money. Attorney Martinez thought an article would force the public to re-think the situation.

Attorney Bullock was not sure the article should be authored by the Board. Although a Board Member could help with the writing of the article, she was not sure it should be noted that it came from the Board. Attorney Bullock cited that the Board can respond to complaints, and said she will check into the proper way to proceed.

Ms. Gow asked if this (producing stretched out transcripts) was the exception to the rule. Mr. Brandon answered that unfortunately it was not; he knows of some agency owners who dictate the format of all transcripts. Ms. Whitt pointed out that, in her experience, there are other agency owners who have no idea of the format of their agency’s finished products. Mr. Brandon mentioned that he has reporters working for him periodically who have their own “style”, and that style does not necessarily conform to his preferences.

A discussion ensued regarding format styles; font size, characters per line, lines per page, margins, etc. Mr. Brandon felt that the guideline should be characters per line and lines per page as opposed to font size. Ms. Whitt believes the guideline should be “not less than  $x$  characters per line”, which would help in the regulating of transcripts. Ms. Whitt pointed out that even larger font sizes can yield transcripts that would conform to the characters per line and lines per page criteria. Ms. Whitt pointed out that a consumer may, in certain instances, pay more for a “per page” transcript than what they would have paid had the agency she works for produced the transcript.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John C. Brandon  
Chairperson

**The next meeting of this Board is scheduled for Wednesday, November 28, 2007 at 8:15 a.m.**