

Commission on Child Protection
Minutes of September 27, 2006 Monthly Meeting

Commission Members Present: Lazarro, Mack, Chill, Geballe, Stokes

Others Present: Carolyn Signorelli, Chief Child Protection Attorney
Doug Monaghan
Valerie Clark, Fiscal Administration Supervisor

Tony Lazarro chaired the meeting, which began at 5:52 p.m.

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the August meeting, all in favor, motion carried.

I. Report by Chief Child Protection Attorney

a. Meetings with Attorneys

Signorelli reported that she has concluded all of her meetings at the courts with all of the attorneys. She did not hear many complaints and New Haven had the most concerns. The attorneys are pleased with the new system. The bills are being paid much earlier than before, there were limited complaints about billing. CCPA had some minor programmatic glitches with the attorney financial system which had to be re-written to account for the sibling groups. In general they are receiving their payments between 2- 2.5 weeks from when they submit their bills. They have been instructed if after 3 weeks, they don't have payment, to contact CCPA. The turnaround in the past varied by court location and auditing would slow down bills. Timing is a favorable improvement for the most part. Assessment sheet for the courts biggest concerns. They would like a place to interview clients for quality of representation. Judicial is aware of this issue, although Willimantic and Waterford seem to be OK. The CSO in Hartford has told them the use of the office space is grant restricted. Rockville, Waterbury, Danbury and Bridgeport seem to be the most in need of space. The Norwalk court is due for expansion according to Judge Mack.

Attorneys in 2 courts noted the wait time at the courts seems to be extensive. Judge Mack asked Signorelli to get him a list of the courts and he will make sure the procedure will be set in time. Courts vary and he will help once he knows where judges need to stay on schedule. New Britain was a major complaint, although there is an internal change effective Monday, October 1, 2006 which should eliminate the problem.

10-day hearing used as a club as opposed to a benefit for the parents. The CSO says if you don't take 10-day you go to the back of the docket. Judge Mack agreed that not letting a parent waive the 10-day a problem and will dress this with the CSO's with the understanding that the court location may have to change. He also reported that there are 33 judges assigned to juvenile and 24 are part time.

Attorneys would like to be reimbursed for parking. Judge Mack would like to see that on the agenda to discuss with all the court locations to see how much it will cost. A suggestion was made to have a court liaison in contact with CCPA to keep us in touch with issues.

II. Financial Report by Valerie Clark, CCPA

Clark handed out the current FY 07 expenses to date including old judicial bills that are still being paid which are currently up to a little over \$1M. The cut-off for all of those bills is October 31, 2006. The report indicated \$1.8M has been spent through 9/26/06 and was broken down by court location, case type and family verses juvenile. It was noted that the New Haven Attorneys have the most paid to them to date. The budget expansion for FY 08 memo is required by October 10, 2006. She handed out a copy of the proposed budget request that CCPA intends to ask for. After the memo is submitted, there is about a 2-3 week turnaround time to see if the request will be considered. The budget reduction by 10% is also due by early November.

The budget expansion is requesting additional positions and moving to an hourly rate for each case with a cap on an annual basis. The special PD's do not have a cap because there cases are typically wrapped up in 120 days. Lazzaro did indicate that budget expansions will most likely not be accepted. Chill asked if pressure on the Governor could change this.

The CCPA is also proposing a pilot project based upon an Alternative Model of representation.. Once there are more details there will be an adjustment made to the FY 09 budget. Lazzaro moves to explore plan for pilot with OPM representing parents with general funds.

Those present agreed to a Holiday Party after the December meeting. Stokes plans on addressing By-Laws at next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned by Tony Lazzaro at 8:25 p.m..

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Clark
Fiscal Administrative Supervisor