

ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE OFFICE OF THE VICTIM ADVOCATE

MINUTES

FOR

Tuesday, June 17, 2014 4:00 p.m. Meeting

State Capitol Room 310, Hartford, Connecticut

[This meeting was relocated from Room 410, State Capitol due to access problems related to a malfunctioning elevator. Notice was posted on the door of Room 410 indicating the room change]

Members Present: Mike Lawlor, Emily Landers, Len Suzio, Brenda Jones-Barnes.

Members Absent: Dawn Luddy, Cathy Malloy

Chairman Lawlor convened the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Mike Lawlor indicated that Dawn Luddy said she would attend, but that Cathy Malloy had chosen to step down due to work related commitments over the next few months.

Mike Lawlor distributed the draft minutes from the last meeting of the Committee that was held on December 12, 2012, a copy of the relevant statutes related to the OVA Advisory Committee, a copy of Garvin Ambrose's letter to Governor Malloy and the agenda for the meeting.

Mike Lawlor briefly explained the process to be followed in the event of a vacancy in office for the State Victim Advocate pursuant to CGS Sec. 46a-13b (a). He pointed out that Garvin Ambrose plans to resign effective July 18, 2014, and that the Committee would have 60 days from that date to provide the Governor with a list of not less than 5 nor more than 7 candidates to be considered for appointment.

Emily Landers made a motion to approve the Draft minutes of the December 12, 2012 meeting, and was seconded by Brenda Jones-Barnes. There was not discussion and the motion passed unanimously. Len Suzio abstained, indicating that he had not been appointed at the time of that meeting.

Len Suzio raised a point of order regarding the eligibility of Mike Lawlor to serve as a member of the Committee light of the language of CGS Sec 46a-13h and his current position of Under Secretary for Criminal Justice Policy and Planning within the Office of Policy and Management. Emily Landers and Brenda Jones-Barnes indicated that Mike Lawlor had been fair during the 2012 deliberations of the Committee and that he had not attempted to influence the decisions of the other members in any way. Mike Lawlor indicated that the statute stipulates that persons who provide direct services to victims of crime are ineligible for appointment and that his office does not provide direct services.

Mike Lawlor indicated that Garvin Ambrose had suggested that the Committee meet directly with the staff at the OVA in order to get their input regarding the type of person best able to run the office. Len Suzio suggested meeting with crime victim groups to get their input as well. The members agreed that both would be a good idea. Mike Lawlor indicated that he would explore dates for such a meeting and report back to the Committee.

Len Suzio asked about how the Committee conducted background checks on candidates during the 2012 search. Mike Lawlor said that the Governor's office does extensive background checks on finalists for the position. He also said that he and other members were free to do whatever type of inquiries regarding candidates that they felt appropriate.

Mike Lawlor introduced two guests attending the Committee meeting: Martin Anderson, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Administrative Services and Joe Olender, Human Resources Specialist with the Office of Government Accountability.

Martin Anderson explained the process used in 2012 for advertising the position and the process for receiving applications and providing those to the Committee. He said he would provide the Committee with the job advertisement from the 2012 search and with any other materials that would be helpful.

Len Suzio asked whether applicants must be admitted to practice law in Connecticut. Mike Lawlor explained that no, they do not as long as they apply to be admitted in Connecticut at the time of their appointment. He also said that the current and previous victim advocates were not admitted in Connecticut at the time of their appointment.

Joe Olender suggested three ideas for consideration of the Committee: forming a search subcommittee; reaching out to candidates on the previous list of finalists and examining what worked and did not work during the 2012 search.

The Committee members also discussed whether the pending election for Governor would discourage applicants in light of the fact that any appointment made this year would be on an interim basis subject to re-nomination by the Governor in 2015 and confirmation by the General Assembly during the 2015 session. Mike Lawlor said that, given the timelines set out in statute, it was unlikely that the Governor would be making an appointment prior to the election.

The members briefly discussed next steps.

Mike Lawlor said that he would assemble as much information as possible and would notify the members regarding a next meeting. It was agreed that it would be advisable to begin the search prior to the vacancy takes place.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:14 p.m.