

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING  
PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES COMMISSION  
OCTOBER 8, 2024**

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The special meeting of the Public Defender Services Commission was convened at 4:44 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 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

Erin M. Ryan, Director of Human Resources

Colleen Valentine, Assistant Attorney General

Robert Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Public Defender

Geographical Area 14 (Hartford)

Leonie Campbell, Executive Assistant to the Commission

Daryl McGraw, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Matthew Dyer, Esq.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 10, 2024 meeting. Honorable Russell Morin abstained from the vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commission members noted the submitted FY 25 Budget Summary.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to go into Executive Session at 4:47 p.m. The reason for convening in Executive Session was in accordance with Section 1-200(6)(B) and Section 1-210(b)(10) of the Connecticut General Statutes to discuss litigation involving the Commission, and Authorizations to Incur Expenses.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Other attendees included the Acting Chief Public Defender, John R. Day; Director, Legal Counsel, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan; Assistant Attorney General, Colleen Valentine; and Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Robert Fontaine, Geographical Area 14 (Hartford).

The Commission came out of Executive Session at 6:09 p.m.

Commission member, Judge Solomon, wanted the record to be clear that any discussion in the Executive Session was limited to matters not concerning Mr. Daryl McGraw.

STATEMENT BY  
COMMISSION MEMBER,  
JUDGE SOLOMON

Commission Chairman, Justice Palmer, made a brief statement regarding the Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Daryl McGraw, indicating there would be a report provided by the Acting Chief Public Defender, John R. Day, to the Commission with recommendations regarding the matter. The statement is attached.

BRIEF STATEMENT BY  
COMMISSION CHAIRMAN,  
JUSTICE PALMER

The Acting Chief Public Defender reported on the status of the Division.

REPORT OF ACTING  
CHIEF PUBLIC DEFENDER

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to go back into Executive Session at 6:18 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, Appointments, Reclassifications, Reappointments & Permanent Statuses, Outside Employment Requests, and Educational Leave Requests.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Other attendees included the Acting Chief Public Defender, John R. Day; and Director, Legal Counsel, Deborah Del Prete Sullivan.

The Commission came out of Executive Session at 8:02 p.m.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the following Authorizations to Incur Expenses: 10-2024-01; 10-2024-02; 10-2024-03; 10-2024-04; 10-2024-05; 10-2024-06; and 10-2024-07.

APPROVAL OF EXPENSES

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Attorney Theodore J. Johnson to the position of Assistant Public Defender, Hartford Community Court.

RATIFICATION OF ATTY.  
THEODORE J. JOHNSON

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Attorney Nora G. McNeil to the position of Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Geographical Area 12 (Manchester).

RATIFICATION OF ATTY.  
NORA G. MCNEIL

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Attorney Tyrese M. Ford to the position of Deputy Assistant Public Defender, New Haven Juvenile Matters.

RATIFICATION OF ATTY.  
TYRESE M. FORD

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Attorney Ruth Burke to the position of Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Legal Services Unit, Office of Chief Public Defender, Hartford.

RATIFICATION OF ATTY.  
RUTH BURKE

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Dyllan Leonard to the position of Investigator II, Connecticut Innocence Project/Post Conviction Unit, Office of Chief Public Defender, Hartford.

RATIFICATION OF  
DYLLAN LEONARD

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Attorney Jennifer Buckler to the position of Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Tolland Judicial District/Geographical Area 19.

RATIFICATION OF ATTY.  
JENNIFER BUCKLER

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Attorney Grace Teardo to the position of Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Torrington Judicial District/Geographical Area 18.

RATIFICATION OF ATTY.  
GRACE TEARDO

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Stacey Yuchniuk to the position of Investigator I, Geographical Area 21 (Norwich).

RATIFICATION OF  
STACEY YUCHNIUK

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to ratify the appointment of Kimberly Huot to the position of Public Defender Secretary I, New Haven Judicial District.

RATIFICATION OF  
KIMBERLY HUOT

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, Kevin Semataska, Connecticut Valley Hospital, Middletown, expiring on 10/8/2028.

ATTORNEY  
REAPPOINTMENT

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 I, Brittany Franco, 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 Deputy Assistant Public Defender, Evelyn O'Regan, Geographical Area 10 (New London), 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 Public Defender Administrative Assistant, Verinda Birdsong, Training Unit, Office of Chief Public Defender, Hartford, upon the successful completion of her probationary period.

PERMANENT STATUS

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED unanimously to approve the outside employment request of Senior

APPROVAL OF OUTSIDE  
EMPLOYMENT REQUEST

Assistant Public Defender, John Cizik, Geographical Area 7 (Meriden).

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was VOTED by majority of the Commission to approve the tuition reimbursement request of Public Defender Administrative Assistant, Verinda Birdsong, Training Unit, Office of Chief Public Defender, Hartford, in accordance with Commission policies and procedures. Two Commission members voted no.

APPROVAL OF  
TUITION REIMBURSEMENT  
REQUEST

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John R. Day  
Acting Chief Public Defender

Statement by Commission Chair, Justice Palmer  
October 8, 2024

The next matter for consideration by the Commission is the matter of Mr. Daryl McGraw.

Ordinarily, because it pertains to a personnel matter, the Commission's discussion of Mr. McGraw's matter ordinarily would be conducted in executive session. However, Mr. McGraw, as is his right, has requested that the matter be discussed by the Commission publicly. In accordance with that request, the Commission will consider the matter in public session.

During the period that Mr. McGraw has been on leave with pay, the Division has been investigating certain allegations of improper or inappropriate conduct by Mr. McGraw. This includes conduct in addition to that which originally resulted in his being placed on leave - that is, conduct that he allegedly engaged in following his placement on leave - including a complaint against him by a fellow employee and, more recently, information that Mr. McGraw has received significant pay for work outside the Division that he did without prior notice to and permission of the Acting Chief Public Defender as required by Division rule. In addition to the investigatory steps that have been undertaken, the Division has made efforts to reach a possible resolution of Mr. McGraw's matters with his counsel. However, these efforts have proven to be unproductive, and Mr. McGraw, through counsel, has demanded that he be immediately reinstated to the position of DEI Director.

Consequently, the Acting Chief Public Defender will make whatever recommendations to the Commission he deems appropriate for any action to be taken by the Commission with respect to the issues concerning Mr. McGraw. The Commission will then proceed expeditiously in response to any such recommendations by the Acting Chief Public Defender.