



**THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION, COMMISSION FOR SENIOR SERVICES, and
COMMISSION ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

JOINT SPECIAL MEETING WITH JUDGE WEXLER

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 1 pm

Attendance:

Human Services Commission

Bass, Beth
Bollert, Lee
Johnson, Diane (CPD & HSC)
Klein, Karen
Klein, Teri (CSS & HSC)
Senturia, Yvonne
Tolan, Abby

Human Services Staff

Elaine Daignault
Kristen Witt
Sibel Yorulmaz
Margaret Pinheiro
Annette D'Augelli
Ryan Balis
Wendy Petty

Other guests:

Paris Looney, Homes with Hope

Commission for Senior Services

Adair, Sarah
Coplen, Claudia
Klein, Terry (CSS & HSC)
~~Kleros, Diana~~
~~Levinson, Doris~~
Spiegel, Merle

**Commission on People with
Disabilities**

~~Anastasi, Joe~~
Curran, Stacie
Johnson, Diane
~~Rifkin, Doug~~
~~Ross, Jim~~
Mahesh, Sharuna
Daniel Maya

**THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION, COMMISSION FOR SENIOR SERVICES, and
COMMISSION ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
JOINT MEETING
WITH
WESTPORT/WESTON PROBATE JUDGE LISA WEXLER**

Tuesday, November 14, 2023 at 1 pm

Three (3) Westport Human Services Commissions met jointly to discuss relevant Human Services topics. The goal is to allow Commissioners to ask questions and discuss collective ways to advocate for the needs of the populations they represent.

- 1:00 pm** **Welcome and Introductions**
- 1:05pm** **Approval of Minutes from the Sept 12th Joint Meeting**
- 1:10pm** **Human Services Report** - Elaine Daignault, Director of Human Services
- Seasonal Programs in full swing
 - Westport Together Annual Mental Health Breakfast is
 - Grant Updates: WCSA ARPA and DOH Gillespie Project
- 1:15 pm** **Guest Speaker – Probate Judge Lisa Wexler**

Lisa is the Probate Judge for the Westport/Weston District in Connecticut, having been elected four times, both as a Democrat and as a Republican. She is an attorney admitted to the Bars in Connecticut and New York and graduated from The Johns Hopkins University and The New York University School of Law. She is also a professional mediator. She also hosts The Lisa Wexler Show, airing weekdays from 10 AM - 12 PM at [AM WICC 600](#) & 107.3FM in the Westchester and Fairfield County regions of Metro New York.

Judge Wexler began by explaining the role of the Probate Judge (see excerpt below),

Connecticut is divided into 54 probate districts, each of which is presided over by a Judge of Probate who is elected to office for a four-year term. The Westport-Weston Probate Court District is a part of the Connecticut State Probate system and is located in Westport Town Hall. Probate Courts have jurisdiction over many matters:

- *Probating wills and the administration of estates*
- *Overseeing testamentary and living trusts*
- *Determining title to real and personal property*
- *Construing the meaning of wills and trusts*
- *Appointing guardians for the intellectually disabled*

- *Appointing conservators of the person and the estate of incapable individuals*
- *Committing those suffering from mental illness to an appropriate facility*
- *Removing unfit parents as guardians of their children*
- *Terminating the parental responsibilities*
- *Granting adoptions*
- *Granting name changes*

Sometimes, the issues presented to the Probate Courts are complex and challenging. Therefore, you must seek competent professional advice to protect your legal rights. The Court can provide pamphlets dealing with many issues of the Probate process. Judge Wexler and the Court staff will happily answer your procedural questions but cannot give you specific legal advice.

Frequently Asked Questions and other information about the Probate Court can be found on the State of Connecticut Probate Court website at the link below.

Judge Wexler spoke about the different types of conservatorship, differentiating between conservatorship of person vs conservator of finances. She also covered voluntary(right to delegate) vs Involuntary(incapable), which requires a medical opinion if no POA or appointed conservator(the conservator or appointed attorney decides for the individual). Judge Wexler stressed the importance of the attorneys she appoints as conservators to support individuals who do not have family who can play the conservatorship role. She takes great care in choosing a good fit, and that person is compensated for their responsibilities.

The Judge provided real-life examples of individuals who have come before her and stressed the importance of making appropriate conservator choices. She also included statistics and facts for individuals suffering from mental health issues and many who require inpatient treatment or a lifetime of medication management.

Judge Wexler explained where to file for conservatorship forms/resources available on the Probate website. See links below:

[State of Connecticut Probate Court](#)

[Lisa's Newsletters](#)

2:15 PM Adjourn