

**MINUTES OF THE NORTHAMPTON COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING**

June 3, 2020

The Board of Governors meeting was held on Wednesday, June 3, 2020, via a Zoom Meeting due to the COVID-19 stay at home orders. The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. by President Eyer. An Agenda for the meeting was circulated to the Members of the Board of Governors prior to the meeting. Members of the Board of Governors in attendance at the meeting were as follows:

ATTENDEES (as marked):

Officers:

- X Robert Eyer, President
- X Maura Zajac McGuire, President-Elect
- X Paul J. Harak, Vice President
- X Steven B. Molder, Treasurer
- X Jeremy Clark, Secretary
- X Lisa Spitale, Past President

Board Members:

- X David M. Backenstoe
- X Richard Santee
- X Scott Wilhelm
- X Douglas Tkacik
- X Erika Farkas
- X Jill McComsey
- X Joshua Fulmer

Executive Director:

- X Mary Beth Leeson

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the previous meeting held on May 6, 2020 were circulated for review. McComsey made a motion to approve the minutes and Backenstoe seconded. The

motion passed unanimously.

II. PRESIDENT'S REPORT/COMMUNICATIONS

Robert Eyer, President, reported on:

Correspondence –

- A. One recipient (of the three) of the paralegal program award sent a letter of thanks to the Association for the award and recognition. It was noted that this recipient learned from our own McGuire.
- B. Thank you letter from Christmas City Spirits for the Association's donation to support their manufacture of the hand sanitizer and as recognition of their willingness to participate in the Foundation event.

III. TREASURER'S REPORT

Steven Molder, Treasurer, reported on two reports. Newest balance as of May 31st again shows a drop in the overall balance but the funds have not been impacted too severely. The reports are ready to submit for audit.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director Leeson reported on the following matters:

- A. ARIS Meeting – Harak summarized two ideas from the committee meeting. First raise the fee for users from \$30 to \$35 dollars and require the fee be paid to the association when the appointment is booked. The increased fee is in part due to the fees associated with collecting of the funds at the time of booking the appointment (i.e. administrative costs and credit card fees). Also, requiring payment up front will hopefully address the number of no-shows. The second idea was to cut this year's fee for lawyers to join the program in half. Thinking this may increase overall participation. Wilhelm supported both ideas and noted that in NJ users pay \$75 up front and Lehigh charges \$35. **MOTION:** Harak then made a motion to raise the fee to \$35 and the NCBA collects when the appointment is made. Also to reduce by 50%, for the 2020-2021 year only, the fees for attorney membership. Wilhlem seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- B. New directory at the printer and should be mailed by the end of the month.

- C. Malpractice Avoidance seminar is scheduled for June 9th from 9-10:30 to be conducted virtually. More information is available on PBI's website.
- D. MBL is considering re-opening the office on Monday to staff only. MBL wanted feedback on whether or not to allow members into the building or only open it to the employees. There was discussion about what other bar associations are doing. Eyer felt that the plan of opening just to employees was wise. Fulmer also mentioned the issue about sick-days and symptoms and MBL stated that anyone feeling ill will be allowed to continue to work remotely without use of sick or vacation days. MBL also stated she was not inclined to force anyone to come into work if they felt uncomfortable doing so.
- E. Association distance learning program is continuing.
- F. Sentencing commission program was very successful.
- G. Association is not participating in naturalization court, which will still move forward, but there will not be any social events.
- H. Discussion about healthcare coverage/insurance for Patti. Since the passing of her husband she is now off his insurance. There was discussion about options available. MBL said she would look into a group plan for the Association employees.

V. PROGRAMS

Vice President Paul Harak, reported, via his daughter's iPhone, that there were no programs planned at the moment.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Foundation update by MBL, no report.
- B. Bench Bar Conf. Eyer reported the update the Hotel will cancel the 2020 event and reschedule the event there (but unclear if we were obligated to do so) for the 2021 year. The Hotel also agreed to waive any penalty associated with the cancelation. The plan to reschedule in DC and at that Hotel was generally supported (date pending). McComsey suggested we reevaluate the termination clause of the contract given how things unfolded this year. Farkas wanted to discuss potentially rescheduling another event in place of the Bench Bar. The group agreed that 2020 was probably a wash for social events.
- C. COVID-19 committee update by Santee. Noted the success of the distance learning CLEs. Four paid CLEs all of which averaged attendance at 20 per program. The association is now permanently

accredited for distance learning CLEs. Clark will conduct a Master Hearing event in August. MBL wants to hold more of these as they generate funds for the Association. There was also brief discussion about the coming waive of foreclosure/evictions. Next week will be the last weekly COVID-19 committee email pending special events/needs as the purpose for the committee has been served.

- D. Summer Outing. No update. Question was posed by MBL that if Northampton County goes to “green” status do we then advertise for the event? Will people even show? There was some discussion about an abbreviated event just for the evening. It was agreed that an abbreviated event, perhaps just quitois at 4PM and then dinner around 6PM would be the best we could hope for this year given the circumstances.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Evictions. There is concern over the coming wave of evictions and foreclosures due to the lockdown. Eyer discussed referring this issue to the Pro Bono or Service to the Public committees. MBL discussed how CACLV and member Kovacs handled the mortgage foreclosure program and perhaps they would be handling this. Eyer thought we should look to the mortgage deviation program and he would discuss with Kovacs.
- B. Accepting of new members. There were two applications for the March meeting, and two other requests to be admitted to the county bar. Suggestion was made to simply let people join the Association then whenever we can have meetings again, have them formally voted in at that point. Attorneys wishing for admittance to the county bar may appear in Motions Court with a sponsor.
- C. Next meeting. Member Scheer noticed that Monroe was planning to hold a meeting in July and asked Eyer when NCBA planned to hold its next meeting. Eyer asked if there was any serious need to hold a virtual meeting prior to our ability to hold a traditional in-person meeting. It was concluded that there was no pressing need for a meeting.
- D. Member Giordano has requested a ADR Committee, again. It was discussed that Eyer could establish an ad hoc committee but a permanent committee would require amendment to the by-laws. No formal action was taken.
- E. Dues. Eyer stated he was approached by members questioning if a process is in place for members who cannot pay the dues due to financial hardship. MBL stated there is a mechanism in the by-laws to account for this situation. Also, that most members have already paid.
- F. Clark raised the issue of the limitation of virtual/video teleconference as

established by the county to Skype for Business and Polycom and that the systems are less than effective. Questions were raised about who to speak to (the Court Administrator, the President Judge, or the County Executive). Fulmer will have a discussion with the Court Administrator and report back to the Board.

VIII ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Backenstoe. The motion was seconded by Spitale. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted:



Jeremy Clark, Secretary