

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
SENIOR LAWYERS SECTION
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

June 18, 2019

The meeting was called to order by Chair Brian Comstock. Present were Executive Committee members Al Armstrong, Carole Grayson, Ron Thompson, Dudley Panchot, Steve DeForest, Jeanine Lutzenhiser, Joe Gordon, Eleanor Doermann. Not able to be present were Pat Mead of the WSBA, Kevin Platchy of the WSBA, Jim Riehl, Scott Osborne, and Morrie Shore.

CHAIR'S REPORT

There was some discussion of whether certain members of our Executive Committee were still willing to remain active members of our Executive Committee. To everyone's relief, they all indicated that they will remain on our Committee.

Brian indicated that he would like someone to assume the Chair position. Eleanor indicated that her schedule may not allow for her to chair our Committee. Brian indicated that he had contacted Jim, who also indicated he would be too busy for this position at this time.

Dudley, remarking that we need to broaden our Executive Committee membership to include more representation from outside our metropolitan area, indicated that he had talked to Spokane attorney Tom Culbertson about serving on our Committee. It was agreed to wait until we received a definite acceptance on the part of Mr. Culbertson prior to admitting him by motion. Dudley said he would contact Mr. Culbertson again about this. It was mentioned that Mr. Culbertson had spoken at one of our prior CLEs. Carole said we should all attempt to interest others in joining us on the Committee. Brian noted that we have plenty of room for additional Executive Committee members.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Al's draft of our April Minutes were approved by Motion.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Ron presented two Treasurer's Reports: one covering the fiscal year to March 31, 2019 and one reflecting our financial position up to April 30, 2019. The April 30 report shows our fund balance at \$6,996.22. Ron noted that the lack of expenditures for our newsletter contributed to our relatively rosy monetary position. These Reports were approved by Motion.

The April Treasurer's Report reflects our current Section membership at 239, with Ron noting that this figure is 61 fewer than we had assumed in our annual budget.

Ron also presented us with two alternative versions of our fiscal year 2020 budget proposal—option 1 and option 2. Option 1 assumed a total Section membership of 265, leaving us with a

year-end surplus of \$81.25; option 2 predicted a total Section membership of 245, leaving us with a fiscal year-end deficit of \$325. Option 1 was chosen by the Committee and was adopted by Motion. Relative to both options, Carole questioned whether the anticipated take from our planned mini-cle of \$1,500 (set forth in both options) was realistic. Eleanor (who is currently putting together the Mini-CLE) said she couldn't be sure at this time.

OUR 2019 CLE

Carole, in phone/text/email contact with Kevin, reported that our total attendance was 56 in-person attendance, with 11 more attending by webcast. It was generally agreed that the advent of inexpensive on-line CLEs has made in-person CLEs a much harder sell. Carole said Kevin estimated our loss on the CLE to be \$15,000, although she added that that figure included "direct and "indirect" costs, indirect costs being a subjective concept the exact meaning of which is known but to the WSBA. Carole also said the tape of our seminar would be available for three years at the WSBA CLE store for viewing by additional paying customers, thereby make up for at least part of our loss. Carole stated that our Section would not be responsible for any CLE deficit, as it was in past years.

The discussion turned to our future CLEs. Attendance was an issue. Although we have been featuring great speakers and programs, Brian said we must somehow appeal to the 14,000 or so older attorneys who constitute our target audience. Steve restated his position that we need a new name for our Section. Carole suggested "Master Lawyers" (used by the Michigan state bar) but cautioned that due to WSBA requirements it can be a long process to effect such a change. Dudley mentioned that he still liked the name "Senior Lawyers." Carole said that she would send us all a link to the Michigan Master Lawyers' website.

COMMENTS ABOUT OUR SECTION'S FUTURE

Brian stressed that we need to decide to whom we should be appealing, relative to both a name-change and the goal of increasing membership. Steve and Eleanor noted that with the WSBA in flux, long-range goal settings may be premature. Dudley said we should focus, as a section, on what was originally the purpose of the Senior Lawyers: collegiality and education. He also mentioned that we could operate independently of the Bar, as was the plan initially, years ago. "We could set ourselves up pursuant to 501 C (3), we know how to do that. Then, we could just do what we have always done." Carole mentioned that WSTLA (Washington State Trial Lawyers' Association) is independent of the Bar and yet is a viable organization. Dudley recalled that our group was initially formed without Bar supervision and we should be able to do this again. "The Bar joined us, we didn't join the Bar." Carole mentioned that we must "redefine ourselves" and Brian said he was all for that.

Brian said that our next meeting will look at how several other bar associations have constituted and promoted their respective senior lawyer section equivalents.

Carole mentioned we could implement a mentorship program, but recalled some years ago this was tried, and the feeling then was that young lawyers seemed uncomfortable being mentored by

someone whose been in the practice 40 years; they preferred, for whatever reason, to be advised by those with about 5 years of practical experience.

Carole recalled an attempt, during Barbara Harper's tenure as LAP Director, she had invited her (Carole), Jerry Curtis and some others to participate in what was termed the Senior Lawyers' Initiative. This was an effort to find out what the Bar could do for its older members. But alas, Carole said, Ms. Harper is no longer in that post, and the LAP program has been changed to such an extent that our window of opportunity has probably been lost.

Carole recalled attending a Board of Governor's meeting two years ago in Spokane with Al, at which it was emphasized by some attendees at the meeting of the positive impact of experienced lawyers could have on the younger Bar membership's practice skills, if these older attorneys could effectively share their knowledge and wisdom with these less experienced Bar members. Carole recalled that only three of the BOG members seemed interested.

Brian wondered if we could perhaps make use of our emeritus members' talents. He also noted that other sections are expanding "while we are doing nothing." Carole opined that we may want to "redefine ourselves."

STEVE'S ANNUAL BOOK CONTEST

Each year, prior to each CLE, Steve offers books from his own library to those of us who have made the most contacts urging attendance at our event. This year, the prizes went to Carole (who was first) Joe and Jeanine.

OUR MINI-CLE

Eleanor, our Mini-CLE subcommittee chairperson, indicated that she will be working with members of the subcommittee (Jeanine and Jim) and also Kevin to put together our Fall event. She indicated she had just received the materials from the WSBA to begin setting up the Mini-CLE. The plan is to have the WSBA's Jean Marie Clavere as well as Seattle attorney Stacey Romberg speak at the event as joint presenters. She will get this plan to the Bar as soon as possible. Carole wondered about the fee that attendees would be charged. Brian delegated to Eleanor the power to determine the tuition and make all decisions relative to the planning of the event. Steve moved for Committee approval of this power, and the Motion passed, with Carole's amendment granting the power to Eleanor and her subcommittee. The Mini-CLE will most likely be one or one-and-one-half hours in length. Eleanor will consult with the Bar regarding the tuition to be charged. It was noted that our Section gets to keep any proceeds from the event, minus a \$100 charge for use of the Bar facilities and the \$12 costs of recording CLE credits earned by the attendees.

PUBLICATION QUESTION

Our Publication Subcommittee chairperson, Scott, could not be present at our meeting due to a family funeral. Brian stated we must make a decision as to what direction our publication shall take. Carole indicated we should circulate our publication, in whatever form it may take, via our

list-serve. Eleanor suggested that we should keep each missive very short (to about five minutes of reading time) to ensure that our busy attorney-recipients take the time to read the entire item. Dudley wanted to make sure that there would be no passwords to fuss with when accessing the publication's content, while supporting the idea of a monthly electronic publication. Brian said we would take a look at what publications other bars' "senior lawyer sections" are using. Steve noted that it would take a lot of time to consistently provide copy for the publication. He also solicited opinions any of us may have regarding the form or content of our publication, and supported the idea of regular meetings by a subcommittee

ADJOURNMENT

Brian adjourned the meeting.

The next Executive Committee meeting will take place at the Broadmoor Golf Club at 10:30 am on September 17, 2019.