

Member Status Workgroup – Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2024, 2:00PM– 3:00PM

Members Present

- Kari Petrasek, Chair
- Francis Adewale, WSBA Treasurer
- Steve Crossland, Active Member from the Senior Lawyers Section
- Kathleen Pierce (inactive), Inactive/Judicial or Honorary Member
- Althea Paulson, Pro Bono Member
- P.J. Grabicki, At-Large Member

WSBA Liaisons and Staff Present

- Renata de Carvalho Garcia, RSD Director
- Bobby Henry, RSD Associate Director
- Anne Trent, RSD Paralegal

Call to Order

Kari called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

Approve April 1, 2024 Meeting Minutes

The April 1, 2024 Meeting Minutes were approved.

Member Survey Results

Renata presented the results of the member survey. A total of 805 members responded to the survey. About 15% of respondents were not aware of the currently available license statuses available which means that the survey itself was a way to share important information with members.

About 44% of the 550 members who responded to an open-ended question seeking input on what could be changed support the creation of a retired status as “voluntary resigned” carries a negative connotation. An additional 20% of respondents advocate for a “retired plus” status that would allow retired members to be able to handle pro bono cases or represent family and friends. Some respondents did raise public protection concerns as it relates to allowing retired members to practice law.

Some respondents commented that the inactive license fee is too expensive and that the eligibility for the honorary status is too onerous. There was also some mention that the pro bono status is too restrictive. After discussing the existing safeguards in place for the pro bono status, the workgroup decided not to propose any changes to the retired status at this time; instead, the workgroup would like to promote pro bono status so members are aware of the option.

“Retired Plus” Analysis

Renata provided a risk analysis assessment of the “retired plus” option. She explained that a license status like this one would need to be very well defined to be enforceable and to protect the public. The

workgroup also identified other considerations, including potential changes to the Rules of Professional Conduct and discipline rules, availability of malpractice insurance, out-of-state practice, as well as license fees and Client Protection Fund assessment.

The fiscal impact associated with the creation or change of any license status and the need for a comprehensive fiscal analysis were also raised.

Next Meeting

- Consider reducing the number of years required for honorary status;
- Assess the fiscal impact of reducing the license fees for members over 65 or 70 years old with certain number of years of experience; and
- Discuss potential changes with these considerations in mind.

Meeting Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 3:21 p.m.