

**Pro Bono Committee, Business Law Section
Minutes for Pro Bono Committee Meeting
September 4, 2015, 4:00-5:30pm
Naples, Florida**

Attendees: John Macdonald, Chair
Judge Laurel Isicoff, Judicial Chair
Marisa Rosen, Vice Chair
Giacomo Bossa, BLS Fellow
Maxine Long
Jennifer Morando
Adina Pollan
Mark Stein
William Van Nortwick

I. Meeting was called to order at approximately 4:05 p.m.

II. Announcements of Business Law Section Executive Council Leadership by Section Chair Alan Howard and Chair-Elect Jon Polenberg

- a. The Florida Bar Foundation, through William Van Nortwick, inquired whether the BLS could make donation to the Foundation. BLS previously made a one-time \$50,000 contribution in 2013. A recommendation comes from Executive Council that the Pro Bono Committee support a motion for a second one-time gift to the Foundation in 2015. Leadership represented that the BLS can well afford to make the contribution. The Executive Council had discussed whether BLS potential should contribute a smaller amount regularly or annually, but decided it was not appropriate at this time because the Foundation's need depends so much on interest rate.
- b. It was asked whether other Florida Bar Sections besides BLS have made contributions. Leadership confirmed that contributions have been made in the past by RPPTL, Family Law (\$50,000), Appellate Law (\$50,000), and Young Lawyers Section (\$100,000), but not by Tax Law.
- c. Mr. Macdonald presented, on behalf of the Pro Bono Committee, a proposed motion for the BLS to make a one-time contribution of \$50,000 to the Foundation. Ms. Long moved, and Mr. Stein seconded; the motion was approved unanimously.

III. Roll Call

- a. Brief introductions by Attendees.
- b. It is planned to circulate a Committee roster as soon as we can confirm the people who are participating members of the Committee.

IV. Reading of Mission Statement

- a. Mr. Macdonald read the Mission Statement of the Pro Bono Committee:
The mission of the Pro Bono Committee is to achieve 100% participation in pro bono service by Business Law Section members and attorneys in their firms.
- b. It is discussed that the Mission Statement of the Pro Bono Committee is supposed to be read at the beginning of all Business Law Section meetings and CLEs. Mr. Macdonald intends to make an announcement during the BLS Executive Council meeting on September 7, 2015, as a reminder to all committees of the expectation that the Mission Statement be read.

V. Old Business

- a. The minutes of the meeting held June 25, 2015, which were prepared by Jennifer Morando, were unanimously approved.

VI. Ongoing Projects

a. National Pro Bono Week, October 25-31, 2015

- i. Judge Isicoff reported on the events being organized for National Pro Bono Week during October 25-31, 2015. Judge Isicoff is coordinating with Broward, Palm Beach, and Miami-Dade on the federal court side, and Judge Salters is her coordination counterpart on the state court side.
- ii. Presence at Minority Mentoring Picnic:
 1. The Week ends on Halloween, the date of the Minority Mentoring Picnic in Hialeah, Florida, which presents an opportunity for a pro bono sign-up sheet at the BLS booth at the Picnic. Judge Isicoff plans to re-order stickers showing "I signed up for pro bono today" to give to anyone who takes on pro bono cases during the Picnic.
 2. A motion was made for the Pro Bono Committee to have a presence at the BLS booth/tent at the Picnic. Mr. Stein proposed a friendly amendment for the purpose of approving Pro Bono Committee funds to be spent on something to attract Picnic attendees to the booth. The Amended Motion is to spend up to \$1000 for an attraction to booth, and for stickers and posters, if necessary (if the Bench & Bar does not pay for them). The Amended Motion was approved unanimously.
 3. It is further suggested that the all of the Picnic booths promoting pro bono work by various entities try to be located near each other.

- iii. Judge Isicoff further encourages the meeting attendees to consider what resources and opportunities we have in our local communities.
- iv. On September 18, 2015, an “all hands” meeting is taking place at the Bar/FAWL meeting to gather to discuss Pro Bono Week activities. Every circuit should send a representative, but supplemental contacts for some circuits are still needed. Judge Moody is organizing the meeting and Cathy Grunewald at Florida Legal Services is helping to coordinate.
- v. Other planned event include:
 - 1. In Jacksonville, the Jacksonville Roundtable is planning a “No Case Left Behind” Project, under which the Roundtable, through its constituent firms' pro bono coordinators, will attempt to place for representation by volunteer attorneys all of the unassigned cases then on the rolls of the local legal aid organizations.
 - 2. In Orlando, the local YLS is throwing a Halloween Party at a women’s and kid’s shelter where the residents will have the opportunity to speak with lawyers. There is no local Roundtable. The strong position of the local Legal Aid Society, and the pro bono requirements to join to Orange County Bar Association, were discussed as potential hurdles to forming a Roundtable.

b. Non-Profit Clinics & Potential Partners

- i. Jacksonville – Mr. Macdonald reported that Jacksonville is planning its 5th Non-Profit Clinic, using the same model as in recent years. It will be held October 27, 2015. It will be coordinated with Legal Aid, and they anticipate student volunteers to assist during the Clinic. In preparation for the Clinic, they are starting to identify potential clients and what needs they have to be met. Over the years, the Clinic has continued to increase in attendance by both attorneys and clients.
- ii. Miami / Statewide – Mr. Stein made a recommendation that United Way may be another partner to help identify clients in need of pro bono services. United Way has a monthly meeting and allow other groups to make presentations, providing outlets for needy individuals to become aware of our services. Mr. Stein presented to United Way in Miami to solicit pro bono clients. It is believed that United Way is set up similarly state-wide.
- iii. Broward County – Broward Chamber of Commerce – Judge Isicoff reported that Broward County Chamber of Commerce really wants to partner with the Pro Bono Committee to do an event. When we are willing

to put on another clinic in Broward County, the Chambers of Commerce may be a potential source of pro bono clients.

- iv. Broward County – Jeffrey Hirsch (not present) submitted a written report prior to the meeting. Mr. Hirsch updated the Committee on progress made following Judge Cathy McEwen's suggestion (at the June 25, 2015 meeting) to investigate the feasibility of creating an entity or an approach to providing clinic services on year-round basis. The example of such approach is the Judge Don Castor Community Law Center in Tampa (<https://www.bals.org/special-programs/judge-don-castor-community-law-center>). Mr. Hirsch and Mr. Anhtony Karrat, Executive Director of Legal Aid Service of Broward County undertook this investigation, and reported:
1. The Judge Don Castor Community Law Center is a good model, but no longer has a full time attorney. A part-time attorney handles the functioning of the Center. It became apparent that, to be successful in meeting the objective of providing an on-going and sustainable program, we needed to look at a model that had a funded full time staff person to both directly provide services and to recruit and coordinate attorneys' pro bono activities. Mr. Karrat is working up specifics of the job description, program structure, and funding needs.
 2. Legal Aid Service of Broward County is well run. Housing it within it would be similar in nature to the approach of the Judge Don Castor Community Law Center, and would be my recommendation.
 3. Some funding might be available from several of the groups that already provide organizational structure and support to non-profits in the community—groups like the Broward Chamber of Non Profits and the United Way. The Association of Corporate Counsel, and some of the other groups that helped sponsor our initial pro bono non-profit program day last year are also potential local supporters. We would also seek support from local firms and the Broward County Bar. If we can get funding—and support—from the Florida Bar that would potentially encourage others to join in the effort. We can profile the Bar as the impetus of this project in all of our communications. Available funding—at least for a year or so –to demonstrate program value and to ensure future funding will be key.
- v. Broward County – Judge Isicoff intends to reach out to the legal aid coordinators in Broward, in order to continue partnership.

- vi. Tampa – The local legal aid organization took over primary operation of the clinic.
- vii. Miami-Dade – There is no clinic in Miami-Dade County currently. Mr. Stein intends to work with Karen Ladis of Dade Legal Aid and Put Something Back to try to organize a clinic for next year. A few names were discussed who work in the area and may assist in organizing an event (Peter Kelly, Russell Landy of Damian & Valori, or an associate at Berger Singerman or Shutts & Bowen).
- viii. Orlando – Tracey Eller is parsing out a list of members in Orange County from the Florida Bar membership list. Ms. Morando and Ms. Rosen discussed exploring a partnership with Rollins College Business Non-profit Institute. To get the ball rolling on a clinic or new partnership, Judge McEwen and Judge Scriven might be willing to send a letter encouraging participation.
- ix. Tallahassee – Tallahassee has a clinic and it is doing well, so they will “keep doing what they are doing.”
- x. West Palm Beach – Palm Beach County area is unrepresented and does not offer a clinic. West Palm Beach has an active Legal Aid Society, so it was discussed to ask Larry Rochefort at Akerman in WPB if he has a recommendation for who may wish to get involve in investigation opportunities for a clinic or legal aid partnership.

c. Florida Justice Technology Center

- i. In response to the Florida Bar Foundation’s request that the Pro Bono Committee identify or solicit experienced attorneys to assist in the creation and organization of the new entity, the Florida Justice Technology Center, Ms. Rosen and Amanda Perry (not present) prepared a “sign-up” sheet that would solicit volunteering information and catalog it for reference as the new entity needs different types of legal assistance.
- ii. In order to get immediate help, we recommend that the sign-up sheet be forgone for solicitation of individuals through the firms represented on the Executive Council or Pro Bono Committee. At this juncture, the entity has been formed and will soon need help with preparing/reviewing/executing contracts and protecting or assessing intellectual property matters.
- iii. The sign-up sheet form will be set aside to be modified for future use, if appropriate. The sign-up sheet auto-populates a spreadsheet maintained by a Google Doc in a Gmail account set up specifically for this purpose: probono.bls@gmail.com. Ms. Rosen has the account name and password.

d. Tracking BLS Member Participation in Pro Bono

- i. An open discussion took place regarding how we can track member participation and thus measure the success of our mission of getting full participation? What steps can we take that will attract member's attention and encourage them to report their pro bono involvement without alienating them? Ideas that were suggested included:
 - 1. Create a Business Law Section "honor roll" for volunteers.
 - 2. Send a blast email to BLS section with a list of volunteers.
 - 3. Solicit self-reporting by email, or as part of Section renewal.
 - 4. Honor Florida Bar Foundation supporters.
 - 5. Publish a Pro Bono Story of the Month on the BLS website.
 - 6. Ask for names of volunteers from local clinics.
 - 7. Use social media by providing volunteers a visual accolade, like a star on LinkedIn, that could be added to a social media profile which is seen by people outside of the legal community
 - 8. Ask Florida Bar News or Florida Bar Journal to run a story on attorneys who have participated or about participation generally.

e. Tear Sheets in Courthouses

- i. We have not moved forward on preparing or ordering tear sheets for courthouses (judges and clerk's offices), which would contain information about the locally-available pro bono and legal aid resources. Mindy, who was working on this initiative earlier, had not made progress and was looking for some other help. It was discussed with the Pro Bono Committee still wants to pursue this project, as it is a significant undertaking and will require frequent updating.
- ii. Judge Isicoff offered to raise this potential project at the September 17, 2015 Judges' Committee Meeting to see whether the state Judges' Committee may be interested, and she will follow-up with Judge McEwen and Judge Moody about whether this could be organized through that group.

VII. New Business

a. Florida Bar Foundation Donation

- i. Motion passed as described above.

b. Florida Bar Foundation Fellows

- i. Ms. Long raised that the threshold to become a Foundation Fellow is not significant – \$1000 over 5 or 10 years. How can we encourage BLS

members to become Foundation Fellows? We may keep track of new Fellow names and include them in the Pro Bono Committee report to Executive Council or to publish the names during the Retreat or Annual Bar Meetings. It was also suggested we could use ribbons on name tags for new Fellows. No decision was made.

c. No Case Left Behind

- i. “No Case Left Behind” is an initiative to make sure all cases in the local legal aid organizations' portfolios in which pro bono assistance is needed or requested have been assigned to pro bono counsel. It will be utilized during National Pro Bono Week, as noted above.

d. BLS Website Content

- i. Due to the recent roll-out of a new BLS website, there has been prompting for new content and to ensure each committee’s materials are easily accessible and up-to-date. The Committee discussed how to modify the layout to make the Best Practices Guide more readily accessible. It was also suggested that new content could be added on a regular basis to identify an “honor roll” of BLS members who were participating in pro bono clinics or who had become Foundation Fellows.
- ii. Mr. Bossa, a BLS Fellow, offered to help add content to the Pro Bono page and how to do so. Ms. Rosen will follow-up with him.

e. Best Practices Guide

- i. There is continuing frustration that the Best Practices Guide, which this Committee gave much time and attention, has not reached a wider audience. It was suggested that we could promote the Best Practices Guide by loading a copy of the Guide on a USB. Then the USBs could be branded with the BLS Pro Bono Committee name and freely given out for promotional purposes at various events. Notably, they could be given out at the Annual Bar Meetings, View from the Bench, Judicial Roundtables, etc.
- ii. Ms. Pollan volunteered to supervise this potential project, including exploring the concept, pricing, availability, and timing of making the loaded and branded USBs available. It is estimated the USBs may cost around \$.50 each in bulk.

VIII. Meeting was adjourned at 5:30pm.

IX. The next meeting will be held on January 28, 2015, in Orlando, Florida.