

MINUTES

STATE BAR OF TEXAS PARALEGALS COMMITTEE MEETING OCTOBER 15, 2010 TBLS OFFICE, AUSTIN

ATTENDANCE

Committee

Miguel D. Wise, Chair
Miriam L. Ackels (phone)
Rhonda Brashears (phone)
Gregory Crossett
Darla Fisher
Christopher Howe, Vice Chair (phone)
Suzanne Kiefer
Lynette Maniss (phone)
Rhonda Mates
Andree Rosen
Paul Taparauskas (phone)
Pamela Young
Susan Wilen (Paralegal Division)

Board liaison

Patrick Wolter (phone)

Staff liaison

Judy Marchman

Quorum present

ACTION DISCUSSED

- Chair Miguel D. Wise called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.
- Pam Young reviewed the Texas Forum XXVII, held April 30, 2010 in Dallas. There were 168 attendees, about 50-50 paralegals and attorneys. Two panel discussions were held for 2 1/2 hours of MCLE credit. Young added that perhaps more sponsors could be found for the 2011 Forum. In addition, she

discussed, for new committee members, how the purpose of the Forum had evolved, from looking at defining paralegals as a profession to focusing on how to use paralegals better.

- The committee decided on a date for the 2011 Forum. Texas Forum XXVIII will be held Feb. 25, 2011 in Dallas. Suzie Kiefer will chair the Forum subcommittee. Pam Young, who chaired the previous two Forums, reported that she had contacted the Sheraton Hotel in North Dallas and had gotten a rate of \$65/night lodging, \$50/day for conference room, and buffet for \$15/person. Possible sponsors to pay for speakers were discussed as well.
- Susan Wilen was present to represent the State Bar Paralegal Division in place of Debbie Guerra and to provide a report on the Division's activities, which includes a Paralegal Ethics Handbook, a new membership services coordinator for the Division, and efforts to partner with the State Bar Family Law Section. Committee member Rhonda Brashears is supervising the Division's online CLE library and webinars.
- The Chair reviewed the list of subcommittees and members. New members were asked to join a subcommittee. A list of subcommittees is attached.
- Subcommittee reports: The Brochure subcommittee reported that the brochure ("Why Your Firm Needs a Paralegal") had been approved by the Editorial subcommittee and that when it is finalized, a link could be added to the brochure from the Paralegal Division website. The Guide to Practicing with Paralegals subcommittee reported that the guide is ready to be uploaded to the State Bar Committees web page. The Marketing subcommittee will look for ways to promote the Guide to Practicing with Paralegals and the brochure to local bars and law firms. In addition, the committee discussed ways to market the Division's Paralegal Ethics Handbook, which costs \$65. Andree Rosen proposed marketing the Handbook to paralegal educators throughout the state so they can incorporate it into their textbook buys. Pam Young suggested checking with the State Bar to get a list of paralegal educator programs in the state, and this list was subsequently provided to Ms. Wilen.
- The Texas Forum XXVIII was discussed further as part of new business. Miriam Ackels suggested a "boot camp" to be held the day prior to the Forum. The committee liked the idea and discussed the best approach, whether a basics, nuts-and-bolts seminar or keep to the theme of the Forum (such as ethics). The

Chair suggested that the Paralegal Division could partner with the committee in the boot camp, especially if the subject matter is geared primarily for paralegal education. Ms. Ackels suggested a survey to firms to determine their willingness to send paralegals to the boot camp and whether a half-day or full day would be better. A Boot Camp subcommittee was formed to work on the survey.

- Forum subcommittee Chair Suzie Kiefer discussed several theme ideas: Ethics and the Economy, which would look at how the paralegal profession has been touched in light of recent business scandals and how a shrinking client base may have lawyers and paralegals both taking on work they don't quite understand or may run afoul of the Disciplinary Rules, etc. The Paralegal Ethics Handbook could work as a tie-in as well as for sponsorship opportunities. Other ideas include Social Networking (responsiveness to clients, ethics, affecting the paralegal profession); Offshoring (trend affecting paralegals); and Maximum Value in Cost-Conscious Era. Ms. Kiefer also discussed how all of the above themes could fit under an overall ethics theme.