

MINUTES
Paralegal Standing Committee – State Bar of Texas
October 10, 2008

The meeting, held at the TBLS offices in Austin, was called to order by Miguel Wise, Chairman, at 9:30 a.m.

Committee Members in Attendance:

Michele Boerder
Vicki Brittain
David W. Copeland
Lynn Crossett
Ann Dunkin
Darla Fisher
Robert Freedman
Deborah Gagliardi
Conrad Guthrie
Christopher Howe, Co-Vice Chair, by phone and by proxy
Michele Jura
Rhonda B. Mates
Ann Skowronski
John Strasburger, Co-Vice Chair, by phone
Nancy Thomas, by phone and by proxy
Miguel Wise, Chair
Pam Young

Division Members in Attendance:

Rhonda Brashears, President
Norma Hackler, Executive Director

INTRODUCTIONS

Wise asked each person to share their name and city.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 7, 2008

Motion made by Vicki Brittain to approve minutes; second by Pam Young. Motion passed and minutes approved.

REPORT ON COMMITTEE BUDGET & EXPENSE

Chair Wise indicated that the committee's expense thus far is in line with the budget. The Committee's expense management is on target.

ACTIVITIES REPORT – PARALEGAL DIVISION

Rhonda J. Brashears, President of the Paralegal Division, submitted the Division's fall, 2008 report to the Paralegal Standing Committee.

Ms. Brashears reported on the following highlights:

- Induction of new 2008-09 Board of Directors at the annual meeting held in Houston (June, 2008);
- Annual meeting keynote luncheon speaker, Richard "Racehorse" Haynes presented a lively and very enjoyable program on representing high profile clients;

- The Division hosted three continuing legal education programs during the annual meeting; attendees received up to 3 MCLE hours for these 3 CLE programs;
- TAPS 2008 was held in San Antonio –this year marked the 10th anniversary for presenting TAPS to Texas paralegals. A total of 235 attendees participated in the programs. The Division followed State Bar of Texas guidelines and reimbursed registration fees for those who were affected by the recent Hurricane Ike;
- TAPS 2009 is scheduled in League City on October 14 -16, 2009;
- Division participates in the State Bar's Access to Justice Task Force and Pro Bono Ad Hoc committee;
- Division just released the 2nd edition of the Paralegal Ethics Handbook. Ellen Lockwood, Chair of the PEH publications committee, was honored and recognized during the Division's 2008 annual meeting for her foresight and commitment in coordinating and executing the authorship and publication of the handbook;
- Division continues to publish the Texas Paralegal Journal four times per year;
- Several paralegals and family members traveled to Ireland. The next annual trip includes Greece;
- Current Division President has challenged the Division board to go above and beyond in representing their respective districts including reaching out to non-members in the districts and providing information about the Division;
- Division has created a video profiling the paralegal profession and discussing many important aspects of the profession, including information concentrating on education choices, certification, the roles that paralegals can fulfill in law practice, the benefits and uses of the paralegal standards and case law covering recovery of paralegal fees. The video is approved as a law office management seminar for .50 hours of MCLE;
- Division continues to grow its online CLE library found on its website;
- Division is exploring and planning Webinar programs;
- Other information relating to the ambassador programs (past presidents of the Division) and council of chairs participation.

Chair Wise asked about dues increase opportunities for the Division to increase its revenue. Norma Hackler, Executive Director of the Division, indicated that the \$200,000 budget of the Division is manageable at the current time. She further indicated that SBOT manages the membership database. The current dues for Division members are \$70 per year.

Overall, the members of the Paralegal Standing Committee expressed their recognition to the Division for their continued efforts and diligence in promoting ethics and professionalism among paralegals in the state and continuing to present quality education.

CHAIRPERSON DISCUSSION RE INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS

Chair Wise discussed the current appointments of the committees and the ad hoc projects.

He encouraged the Articles sub-committee chaired by Christopher Howe to write 2-3 articles for the SBOT Bar Journal for submission in the first quarter, 2009.

The Editorial committee, chaired by John Strasburger, will review the articles prior to submission.

Current Committee Assignments:

Editorial Sub-committee:

John Strasburger, Chair
V. Brittain
R. Freedman
A. Dunkin
A. Skowronski

Articles Sub-committee:

Chris Howe, Chair
L. Crossett
C. Guthrie
M. Jura
A. Mihecoby

Guide to Practicing with Paralegals

Pam Young, Chair
Judge X. Rodriguez
M. Wise

Website Sub-committee

Kay Redburn, Chair
R. Vega
A. Mihecoby
M. Ackels
S. Maxwell
M. Boerder
K. Anderson

Texas forum XXVI Planning Committee

Pam Young, Chair
M. Wise
C. Howe
J. Strasburger
L. Crossett
M. Boerder

COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Texas Forum XXVI

Pam Young submitted the report of the Texas Forum XXVI planning committee. Committee members are: Christopher Howe, John Strasburger, Mike Wise, Lynn Crossett, Michele Boerder and Pam Young.

The Texas Forum XXVI will be held on February 27, 2009 at the corporate headquarters of Courtroom Sciences, Inc. in Irving, Texas. The committee recommends a targeted 3-hour CLE event, consisting of two panels and a keynote luncheon speaker for lawyers, paralegals, litigation support professionals and paralegal educators. The recommended theme and subject concentrates on The Paralegal's Role in Shaping Firm and/or Law Department's Protocols and Practices in Electronic Data Discovery and in Electronic Information Systems. The committee's report is attached and presents the proposed program outline for the panel discussions and keynote address.

The Paralegal Standing Committee members discussed the appropriate registration fee for attendance. It was decided that members of the Standing Committee and educators will receive complimentary

registration. All other attendees will pay \$10 and it was decided to have a cut off date of mid February, 2009. Paralegal students will pay \$5 registration. All registration will include the luncheon and free parking. Summer Smith, SBOT liaison to the Standing Committee, will send out all invitations and communications for the Texas Forum XXVI.

b. Brochure project (Why Your Firm Needs a Paralegal?)

It was discussed the brochure is in its final draft version. Kay Redburn will be asked to submit the brochure to the editorial committee for review prior to printing or distribution.

c. Publication project (Attorneys' Guide to Practicing with Paralegals)

As reported by Pam Young, there are several articles and chapters that have been drafted in final form and ready for the editorial committee to submit comments. Ms. Young will resend the chapters and articles to the editorial committee for their comment.

d. Articles Committee (Texas Bar journal and website)

Chair Wise suggested that the Standing Committee website link to the ABA site for additional paralegal information. Additionally, Chair Wise recommended that the history of the Standing Committee be posted on the website. The Articles Committee chaired by Christopher Howe will submit articles in the first quarter, 2009 to the editorial committee for their review.

Lynn Crossett volunteered to write an article for the Bar Journal. Chair Wise indicated it would be a good idea to timely submit articles in the first quarter or first half of 2009 if possible. Chair Wise also suggested that the theme of the articles concentrate on expanding the roles of paralegals.

Pam Young will prepare an article for the Division focusing on the Texas Forum XXVI. She was asked to submit no later than January 15, 2009.

e. Website committee

Discussion proceeded relating to the website link to the ABA site for additional paralegal information. The Standing Committee members additionally discussed articles for posting to the site. The website is housed within the SBOT umbrella and has certain limitations. Summer Smith, SBOT liaison, will be asked to pursue the posting of information and linking to the ABA site. Chair Wise also asked that information be displayed about the paralegal definition efforts of the committee.

f. TBLS Website Corrections

Gary McNeil, TBLS Director, joined the Standing Committee members during this part of the meeting discussion. TBLS has reviewed and considered the name change from legal assistant to paralegal in its certification designation. Mr. McNeil indicated that TBLS considers the paralegal definition as aspirational guidance for paralegals and is concerned about making a statement or a change that would impart certain qualifications or requirements. He indicated that TBLS surveyed paralegals and Division members in the state about the preferred choices and the resulting preferences were practically equal. The survey by TBLS did not include attorneys. Mr. McNeil indicated that TBLS focuses on standards not experience and TBLS cannot be the entity that enforces titles within the lawyer community for its non-lawyer support staff.

The Standing committee members thanked Mr. McNeil for his time and welcomed him to join or submit more information to the committee as he becomes aware, and the committee will do likewise.

CHAIRPERSON PRESENTATION

Chair Wise briefly discussed ideas about joint educational ads by the Division and by the Committee. Educational ads that promote the paralegal profession and encourage awareness to all paralegals in the state.

Chair Wise indicated that he will follow up with Pat Nester about upcoming CLE programs where the Committee can participate and provide brief information about the profession and distribute its brochure and other educational information.

LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES / ARTICLES

Pam Young will contact S.Cardena and follow up. Additionally, Ms. Young suggested that leadership and career development articles for the website would be beneficial for paralegals.

NEW BUSINESS – NEXT STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING

No new business was discussed.

The next Standing Committee meeting will be held in conjunction with the Texas Forum XXVI on February 27, 2009.

No further business discussed and the meeting adjourned at approximately 12:50 p.m.