

MINUTES
Paralegal Standing Committee – State Bar of Texas
February 27, 2009

The meeting, held at the facilities of Courtroom Sciences in Irving, was called to order by Miguel Wise, Chairman following Forum XXVI - The Paralegal's Role in Shaping Internal Protocols and Practices – Electronic Data Discovery and ESI Systems.

Committee Members in Attendance:

Miguel Wise, Chair

Christopher Howe, Co-Vice Chair

John Strasburger, Co-Vice Chair

Robert Freedman

Miriam Ackels

Rhonda Bear Mates

Darla Fisher

Kay Redburn

Allen Mihecoby

Pam Young

Lynn Crossett

Deborah Gagliardi

Ann Dunkin

David Copeland (Alt. Board Advisor) by telephone

Conrad Guthrie by telephone

Ann Skowronski by telephone

Nancy Thomas by telephone

State Bar representatives in Attendance:

Summer Smith

Division Members in Attendance:

Norma Hackler, Executive Director

Rhonda Brashears, President

Stephanie Hawkes, President-Elect

Charie Turner, District 1

Connie Nims, District 2

Michele Rayburn, District 3

Michele Flowers-Brooks, District 4

Susan Wilen, District 5

Cheryl Bryan, District 10

Kim Hennessy, District 11

Gloria Porter, District 12

Cindy Powell, District 13

Shannon Watts, District 14

Clara Buckland, District 16

INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Miguel Wise asked each person to introduce themselves to the group.

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

It was determined that a quorum was present in order to conduct the committee's business agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 10, 2008

A motion made by Pam Young and seconded by Kay Redburn to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2008 meeting.

CHAIRPERSON REPORT

Chair Miguel Wise reported that the committee and its sub-committees had been active since the last meeting and that reports of those activities would be presented as the agenda went forward.

ACTIVITIES REPORT – PARALEGAL DIVISION

Rhonda J. Brashears, President of the Paralegal Division, submitted the Division's report to the Paralegal Standing Committee, and a copy of that report is attached to these minutes.

The Paralegal Standing Committee expressed affirmation and appreciation for the work of the Division and for the energy put into the many projects mentioned.

REPORT ON FORUM XXVI

With approximately 140 individuals in attendance that day for Forum XXVI and a full program of outstanding panels/presenters, the Committee declared the event a success. Attendees included students, educators, active paralegals and attorneys. The Courtroom Sciences facilities were very well suited to the day's events, and the Committee expressed great appreciation to Courtroom Sciences for making their facilities available at no cost to the State Bar of Texas or the Division. The subject of e-discovery was expertly presented, approved for TBLS credit, and the information also revealed the possibility of new career paths for paralegals.

Lynn Crossett joined the Committee meeting from having met with the paralegal educators following the Forum sessions and reported feedback from that group. The educators felt that Forum XXVI was the most content-rich of any forums they had attended. The presentations on e-discovery had spurred the educators to determine how appropriate curriculum could be added to their respective programs so that paralegal students would come out of the programs already knowing the basics of e-discovery. The educators also reported that the date and time of Forum XXVI was "perfect" since it allowed them to plan better for attendance.

Suggestions for Forum XXVII included 1) a date of February 26, 2010, perhaps again at Courtroom Sciences if the facility were available again 2) another e-discovery presentation but focused more on small firm utilization, 3) offer a "boot camp" module at the beginning of the session, providing the basics (nuts and bolts) on the chosen topics (or send a webcast ahead of time for attendees to access and educate themselves prior to the Forum), 4) apply again for approval on TBLS credit and 5) Forum Planning Sub-Committee to be chaired again by Pam Young. Miriam Ackels volunteered to present the suggested "boot camp," and Allen Mihecoby offered to assist Miriam.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

Kay Redburn presented two potential brochure formats as well as possible text for the website. Chairman Wise stated that the brochure was now ready to be evaluated by the Editorial Sub-Committee. Darla Fisher volunteered to join other members now serving on the Editorial Sub-committee (John Strasburger, Vickie Brittain, Robert Freedman, Ann Skowronski and Ann Dunkin) in its work on the brochure and article review.

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

Pam Young reported that drafted chapters would be ready for review by the Editorial Sub-Committee in March, 2009. Darla Fisher asked if the committee had considered making the Guide available in print

form as well as digitally online. Miguel Wise replied that in the past that earlier versions of the Guide had been available only in print and that quite a number of those previous volumes did not sell, resulting in a storage issue for the State Bar. The desire to publish the new Guide only in digital form also reflected the desire to save paper and allow readers to access the particular portions that peaked their interest without buying an entire volume. There was some feeling among Committee members that printing a few copies of the Guide might be a good idea.

Kay Redburn suggested that sections of the State Bar be requested to include the Guide on flash drives provided to bar seminar attendees.

d. Articles Sub-Committee (Texas Bar Journal and Website)

Lynn Crossett reported that he had completed an article and that it was ready for review by the Editorial Sub-Committee. Chairman Wise stated that others writing articles should provide them by the first half of 2009 if possible. Chair Wise requested that the Articles Sub-Committee provide completed articles to the Editorial Sub-Committee by April 1, 2009.

e. New Sub-Committees Formed

E-Discovery

It was suggested that the Committee establish a new Sub-Committee entitled Sub-Committee on E-Discovery whose purpose would be to the ongoing education of paralegals on the subject of e-discovery, including contemporary developments in that field. Nancy Thomas volunteered to chair the committee, and Conrad Guthrie as well as Rhonda Bear Mates volunteered to serve on the Sub-Committee. The group was asked to draft a stated purpose for the Sub-Committee and draft articles for the Articles Sub-Committee.

Marketing

A new Sub-Committee was also formed to focus on the matter of marketing. Kay Redburn and Pam Young agreed to serve as co-chairs; and Allen Mihecoy as well as Darla Fisher indicated their willingness to serve on the sub-committee.

f. Standing Committee Website

Kay Redburn asked for ideas of additional links to add to the Committee's website in order to provide more connections to vital information. It was suggested that the website include a link to the video of Forum XXVI. Kay also urged each Committee member to access the website and check their personal contact information to make of its correctness.

PROPOSED INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS

Michele Boerder sent an e-mail to Miguel Wise on February 26 requesting him to report in her absence on an agenda item regarding TBLS examinations. Gary McNeil reported to Michele on the small number of examinees in 2008 and asked for suggestions on how to market and publicize the TBLS paralegal exams.

Michele Boerder proposed a formation of an ad-hoc joint committee with the Division to work with Gary and TBLS to distribute information about the TBLS exams across the state to paralegals. As a result, the Marketing Sub-Committee was formed. A conference call will be held to discuss how to market the exams. Attendees will include Miguel Wise, Gary McNeil, Michele Boerder, Rhonda Brashears, Cheryl Bryan, Kay Redburn, and Stephanie Hawkes.

NEW BUSINESS

Miguel Wise requested all Sub-Committees meet by April 1 to develop six month goals. Chair Miguel Wise and Sub-Committee Chairs will have a conference call on April 3 to discuss each committee's goals.

NEXT STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING

The next meeting of the Standing Committee will be held on October 23, 2009 in Austin at the Texas Law Center.

No further business being brought to the Committee, motion was made by Allen Mihecoby and seconded by Kay Redburn that the meeting be adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

Submitted by Ann E. Dunkin, Acting Secretary
