

MINUTES

LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTHWEST MINNESOTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MOORHEAD, MINNESOTA VIA TEAMS

February 15, 2023
5:00 p.m.

I.

ROLL CALL, INTRODUCTIONS, WELCOME

The Board of Directors of Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota (LSNM) met via Teams due to a winter storm, on February 15, 2023, at 5 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Blatti at 5 p.m. In addition, the following members were present: Jeff Hane, Missy Becker-Cook, Sheila Korby, Kristine Goddard-Anderson, Eman Yassin, Joe Glasrud, David Frank, Cindy Gabbert, Christel Croxen, and Leigh Nelson.

The following staff members were present: Anne Hoefgen, Gregg Trautwein, and Ruth Ruch.

Leigh Nelson introduced herself as a newly appointed Board member appointed by Someplace Safe. She is a crime victim advocate.

II.

2022 LITIGATION REPORT AND UPDATE (HEIDI)

Heidi gave an update on how many cases were closed in 2022 by staff and compared the case numbers to those closed in 2021. She also explained what is meant by cases closed as advice and those that are full representation cases. She explained that the newly formed Housing Court in several districts has increased not only LSNM's visibility to low-income households but has also helped hundreds of people from homelessness by defending unlawful evictions or negotiating settlement agreements for tenants. Heidi then left the meeting.

III.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 16, 2022, BOARD MEETING

The minutes from the Board meeting of November 16, 2022, were presented for approval. Dave made a motion to approve the Minutes. The motion was seconded by Missy. There being no objection, motion carried.

IV.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

Gregg and Anne explained the auditors were in the Moorhead office last week in January and we are still waiting for a report as they are not finished with compliance testing, however, Anne and Gregg were told there were no issues of major concern. Bob asked that this agenda item be

tabled until the next Board meeting when the auditors are available to give a thorough report.

V.
STATISTICS/FINANCIAL REPORT

a. 2022 Final Stats. Since Heidi gave an update on the statistics for 2022, Gregg asked if there were additional questions on the handout he provided. There were none.

b. Financial Statements 2022 wrap-up and Year-To-Date. Gregg then reviewed the financial statements. He went over the Balance Sheet explaining there is a new line item Right of Use Asset and Right of Use Accumulated Depreciation that is now required to track leased office equipment. Then he went over the Total Program Revenue and Expenses explaining Personnel Expense is at 105% and the ending fund balance for 2022 was \$976,372. Next, he moved on to the Projected Revenue spreadsheet and said this shows where we've been and where we're going. He said Anne has been working hard on getting MN Legislative funding increased. Gregg asked if there were any questions on the spreadsheets. There were none.

c. New Credit card account – close previous account. Gregg asked the board for a motion to close the Capital One/Spark Visa Account which includes both his and Anne's names as authorized purchasers. Also, Wells Fargo needs a Board motion to apply for a corporate credit card with Anne Hoefgen and Heidi Uecker as authorized signers. Stacy Tschida and Dawn Wheeler will also be given the same corporate credit cards with a \$500 limit. Missy made a motion to close the Capital One/Spark Visa account a few weeks after the new credit cards was received to allow for the automatic payments to be transferred to the new card (at management's discretion) and to apply for a Wells Fargo Corporate Credit Card. Jeff asked if there needed to be an effective date of the new application. Gregg said there did not. Dave seconded the motion. There being no objection, motion carried.

Gregg then asked the Board to skip to agenda item 9.c. regarding the fee waiver request by Judicare attorney Crystal Lemmer for LSNM #20-0274122. He explained that the case was opened in 2020 and the rate per hour for Judicare cases at that time was \$70/hour. However, he noted most of the work was done in 2022 when cases were approved at \$90/hour and asked that the Board consider granting the waiver based on that. Bob noted the lowest time increment was .20 hours when generally firms start charging at .10. The board decided to discuss setting a standard for Judicare attorneys to start billing at .10 later. Dave made a motion to approve the fee waiver request and payment of an additional \$3,547 for work done on the case. Jeff seconded the motion. There being no objection, motion carried.

Bob pointed out that this is Gregg's last Board meeting with LSNM and thanked him for many years of dedicated and impeccable service to the program and clients. Gregg said with the combination of Anishinabe Legal Services meetings and LSNM's, he has attended 230 Board meetings.

VI.
LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

- a. OCE Report and Follow Up. Anne sent the link to the LSC OCE's report. Anne said the OCE team reviewed 335 cases and some had minor flaws but nothing significant to note. Anne is working on a draft response and will share that with the Board when she is done.

b. 2023 Eligibility Guidelines. Anne proposed LSNM adopt the updated eligibility guidelines set by the Department of Human Services for 2023 that were emailed out to Board members. Kristine moved to approve the guidelines retroactive to January 20, 2023. The motion was seconded by Dave. There being no objection, motion carried.

c. Self-Inspection. Anne reviewed with the Board the self-inspection report that is done annually for LSC. Anne reported there were two minor errors out of 150 cases sampled and staff will be re-trained to watch for errors.

d. Report on Non-Priority Cases. Anne reported on two (2) non-priority cases, LSNM #22-0283739 and #22-0293725.

VII.
DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. 2022 Overview. Anne said the handout the Board received "LSNM Year in Review 2022" was developed by Kelly.

b. Proposal for Gregg's Retainer. Anne proposed paying Gregg for the full pay period through March 10, 2023, for Gregg's retainer. His last day of work is March 3, but this would compensate him for questions that will arise after he departs. The Board felt this was more of an operational issue did not require a motion, and all were in favor of it.

c. Strategic Planning Update and next steps. Anne thanked all that made it to the last Strategic Planning Meeting and reported the group was able to produce a Mission Statement and a Vision Statement. Anne will send out a poll via email to find the best date for the next meeting.

VIII.
CLIENT ISSUES

There were none.

IX.
BOARD ISSUES

a. District Bar Awards. Anne read the proposed list of attorneys to be awarded LSNM's District Bar Winners in the 7th and 14th District. She also would like to give Nicole Tabbut of the Pemberton Firm a Special Services Award for her work as a Judicare attorney as well as doing mediations for LSNM clients at a reduced rate. There were no objections to winners.

X.
OTHER BUSINESS

With no other business, Dave made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Kristine. There being no objection, motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Missy Becker-Cook, Secretary-Treasurer