

Minutes of the Telephone Conference Meeting
Board of Directors
Judicial Section, State Bar of Texas
October 16, 2011

1. Chair Liz Lang-Miers called the meeting to order. All members were present on the telephone conference call except Steve Smith, Patrick Garcia, Robert Kern, Penny Roberts, and Texas Center liaison Todd Blomerth.
2. Chair's Report. The Chair asked Secretary-Treasurer Tom Bacus to give an update on current Judicial Section finances.
3. Judge Tom Bacus reviewed the current financial reports and advised that we are still below membership and revenue estimates, but expenditures are below budget projections for now. We need to push memberships and get more judges involved since dues are our primary source of funds for our committee work.
4. Chair Lang-Miers advised that Judge Kelly Moore has been appointed Chair of the Membership Committee, and that she would take up his report first since it relates to the reduced membership and revenue issues being discussed. Judge Moore advised that he has discussed the issue with Tracy Nuckols of the SBOT Sections Department with a view to developing strategies to correct the problems. He hopes to present a firm proposal to the Board at the January meeting so that changes can be made in time to send out statements in April. Areas to be addressed include the following:
 - a. Find the best way to get an accurate list of potential members. Tracy will try to get a current list from the Texas Center. She will also lists from the Texas Ethics Commission and the SBOT Attorney Occupation Tax list of exempt judges.
 - b. Get the accurate list to Tracy in time for them to correct billing and insure that all eligible judges receive an invitation to join. We already know that some are not being contacted (such as federal judges and former judges who are still members of the State Bar of Texas).
 - c. Consider additional ways to bill judges individually, since some still do not understand the Bar dues collection process.
 - d. Develop best ways to follow up, such as a possible mail out from the State Bar after the dues deadline is past, to insure that all eligible potential members are contacted. We also might consider a phone number contact point which could give them an e-mail link to an application which can be completed on line.
 - e. Develop bullet points to sell the merits of Section membership to potential members. We may need to explore any needed Bylaw amendments which may be necessary to implement the above.

Tracy Nuckols advised that the year we switched our administrative collection process to the State Bar our roll dropped by about 100. Each year since, we dropped about 40. E-mail contacts were sent and most answered that they

thought they had paid with their SBOT dues. Kelly reminded the Board that there has been a huge turnover in the judiciary with lots of new judges coming on board in the last couple of election cycles. We will attempt to address membership at the College for New Judges next month. Since the Boards voted to separate the Chairs of the Section and the Texas Center, the Judicial Section have not been there. Tracy added that it would be helpful if the Texas Center would make sure they give her a list of the new judges scheduled to attend the College so that she can contact them about the Section and the benefits of membership.

Chair Lang-Miers advised that all Board members have been appointed to committees, with some as liaisons to committees. The liaison is to give guidance to their committee and are to contact the Chair of the committee that they relate to. They are to set up conference calls to work on goals for the committees. Alfonso Charles as Section Chair Elect will serve as Chair over all of the legislative committees to ensure that they are meeting, functioning, and coordinating their efforts.

5. Legislative Committees. Alfonso Charles advised that we may need a possible Bylaw change providing for Legislative Committee membership with specific numbers representing each type of judge or justice, as well as subcommittees relating to each type of interest area, such as Criminal Justice or Juvenile. Committee activities will be focused on protection of Fund 540 to be sure that it is used properly. Other areas of concern will be focused on judicial retirement, judicial compensation, uniform jurisdiction of statutory courts, judicial selection, and visiting judges. They will be meeting with Representative Lewis and Senator Duncan to develop legislative charges to work on areas affecting the judiciary. A progress report will be given at the January Board meeting. A key player list will be developed with judges identified who have quick access to those persons. Efforts will be made to coordinate all parts of the judiciary so that all concerns can be addressed. We will ask other judicial groups to furnish liaisons to be a part of our coordinated program. We will coordinate closely with the lobbyist for the Alliance for Judicial Funding, as well as the Sections of the SBOT. KaLyn Laney and her team at the State Bar have been great to work with. It was brought up by the Board that the Chairman of the Retired Judges Association should be included as a liaison. More details will be discussed at the January Board meeting.
6. Membership Committee. This item was discussed in item 4 above.
7. Future meeting dates are as follows: January 27, 2012 (afternoon-time pending), JW Marriott, San Antonio; March 2, 2012, 10:30-2:30, Texas Law Center-Austin; June 14, 2012, 2:00-4:00, George R. Brown Convention Center-Houston.
8. New Business. Tracy Nuckols advised that she has a staff of 4 in the Sections Department. When the Board contacts the various committee chairs, advise them of our meeting schedule. They can help them schedule and set up any conference calls or

live meetings they may need to have. They can also do e-blasts to the Section members. Chair Lang-Miers advised all to give Tracy plenty of lead time to calendar such meetings. Judge Kelly Moore ask to clarify that the Section can pay for meetings of committees to address special issues. He advised that the Board may need to ask for another ethics opinion on social media use by judges. Judge Mike Keasler suggested that the John Newell presentation at the National Judicial College would be a good source. He will check to see if we if can get it linked to our website. Judge Moore will get with Paul Davis about scheduling a committee meeting.

Chair Lang-Miers advised that Board Liaisons are voting members of thte committees to which they are assigned. We may need a bylaw amendment next year to clear up these assignments and the work that they do on behalf of the Section. Tommy Proctor, Liaison to the State Bar Board, advised that he and Sylvia Cardona will be available to present Section issues to the State Bar Board. They will work with our Chair to coordinate these efforts. KaLyn will coordinate our legislative efforts within the limits of State Bar rules.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Tom Bacus
Secretary-Treasurer
Judicial Section
State Bar of Texas