

PRO BONO COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
MINUTES of May 23, 2024 @ 4:30 p.m.– Zoom Meeting

Present:

- Hon. Mindy Mora (Judicial Chair)
- Peter Kelly (Lay Chair)
- Steven Newburgh (Practitioner)
- Nadine White-Boyd (Secretary)
- Joe Falzone (Clerk of Court)
- Karen Ladis (Dade Legal Aid)
- Jerry Leakey, Esq. (Legal Aid of PBC)
- Matthew Bayard (Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc.)
- Patricia Redmond (UM Law School Professor)
- Ariel Sagre (practitioner)
- Tom Messana (practitioner and BBA Foundation)
- Joey M. Grant (BBA ProBono Fort Lauderdale)
- Heather Ries (BBA Coordinator West Palm Beach)
- Britt Berg (Florida Rural Legal Services – Pro Bono manager)
- Amy McCaffrey (Florida Rural Legal Services Attorney Berg's administrative assistant)
- Agnes Lambert (Florida Rural Legal Services Fort Pierce – Indian River, Martin County, Okeechobee and St. Lucie)
- Carlos Sardi (BBA President 2023 – 2024)
- Tara Trevorrow

Absent

- Hon. Laurel Isicoff (Former Judicial Chair)
- Jon Martin (Martin County Bar Association)
- Maria Gonzalez (Legal Aid Service of Broward County)
- Kim Rommel Enright (Legal Aid of PBC) - absent

No longer a member

- Kristina Gonzalez (Practitioner)

- X. Meeting called to order at 4:35 pm Welcome by Hon. Mindy A. Mora and roll call by Peter Kelly.
- XI. Approval of Minutes of January 25, 2024, meeting – Tom Messana made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Carlos Sardi. Minutes approved with no opposition raised by any members.
- XII. Updated FLSB and National Filing Statistics – Joe Falzone provided an update, explaining that historic pro se filings were generally 12% of all filings in the Southern District, and that they presently were at 7% of total filings in the District but are

showing as increasing. He indicated it may be possible to track statistics on cases filed to address student loans, and he will look into this.

- XIII. Committee Interface with legal Aid Organizations – Agnes Lambert and Britt Berg provided an update regarding activities with Florida Rural Legal Services, including that their pro se email box is terminating. Karen Ladis explained that intake in Miami is going well, with many cases coordinated for assistance with the law school bankruptcy clinics. Suggestion was made by Heather Ries to look into potential free services available from Bestcase to help facilitate pro bono efforts; Peter Kelly to investigate this. No representative was present for Broward County.
- XIV. Low Bono Guidelines – Steve Newburgh explained he would provide latest draft of guidelines to Joe Grant, Heather Ries, and Peter Kelly so that the group can push to finalize them.
- XV. Pro Bono Assistance Intake – Posters/information available in courthouses. Joe Falzone explained he would look into availability of sign-up lists in courtrooms. It was also explained that Judge Russin has a large case in which pro bono assistance may be welcome.
- XVI. Sub-Committee Reports and Discussion of Pending Projects

Joe Grant provided an update regarding the online clinic webpage program, explaining that the software developer has prepared the sample website. He posted a link to trial design at bankruptcyproceclinesfl.com. He asked for any comments to be provided within the following week and discussed notifying the chapter 7 and chapter 13 trustees that they are anticipating the program to go live/online very soon.

- a. Student Loan Issues Subcommittee – Patricia Redmond, Matthew Bayard, Nadine White-Boyd, Ariel Sagre, Peter Kelly. *No report.*
- b. Fresh Start Subcommittee (f/k/a Dress For Success) – Heather Ries, Judge Mora, Joe Grant, Tara Trevorrow. Update was provided that donations have been made to the organization, and that the program works best when appointments are scheduled with the organization in advance. Peter to add this recommendation (re: advance appointments) to next email blasts.
- c. Elder Affairs Sub Committee – Judge Mindy Mora, Nadine White-Boyd, Peter Kelly, Ariel Sagre. *No report.*
- d. Pro Bono Week – Karen Ladis (chair), Joe Grant, Kim Enright, Nadine White-Boyd, Tom Messana. Karen Ladis announced she would not be chairing these efforts this year, and Peter Kelly requested individuals contact him if interested in participating.

- e. Veterans' Programs – Judge Isicoff, Matt Bayard. Attorney Amanda Klopp was given credit for preparing related information which could be utilized with these efforts.
- f. Website Review – Joe Falzone (chair), Joe Grant, Ariel Sagre. *No report.*
- g. Law School Programs – Patricia Redmond (chair), Peter Kelly. Patricia Redmond provided an update that Nova, St Thomas and UM clinics were great in the Spring, and that the UM clinic would begin again on August 20, with a need for approximately 18 cases to start. The UM Clinic is open to cases from Broward & Palm Beach areas as well as Miami.
- h. Help Desks – Peter Kelly (chair) Ariel Sagre, Joe Grant, Kristina Gonzalez. *No report.*
- i. Pro se Clinics – Steve Newburgh (chair), Joe Grant. Peter Kelly explained the program continues to operate, with attendance having increased somewhat (and registration by “bots” eliminated via IT efforts).

XVII. New Business

- i. Hon. Mindy A. Mora and Peter Kelly expressed gratitude for members Nadine-White Boyd and her amazing work as Committee Secretary, and Kristina Gonzalez and her incredible work as co-coordinator in Miami-Dade. Both Nadine and Kristina transitioned away from their formal roles within the Committee but both explained they would continue to assist informally whenever possible. Request was made for any member interested in serving as Secretary to contact Judge Mora and Peter.
- ii. Use of Artificial Intelligence for assistance of pro se parties. Possible website portal for access; website links; possible informational program explaining benefits and pitfalls. This topic was tabled to subsequent meeting due to time constraints.

XVIII. Next Meeting tentatively scheduled for September 26, 2024 at 4:30 pm via ZOOM

Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.