

**Pro Bono Committee of the Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of
Florida
Minutes of Meeting –
February 3, 2021 @ 5:00 P.M.**

Meeting called to order by Judge M. Mora 5:10p.m.

Present:

Chief Judge Laurel Isicoff- LMIsicoff@flsb.uscourts.gov
Judge Mindy Mora (Committee Chair)
Steve Newburgh (Lay Chair) - snewburgh@mclaughlinstern.com
Joe Falzone Joe_Falzone@flsb.uscourts.gov
Nadine White-Boyd nadine@wblawpa.com
Patricia Redmond PRedmond@stearnsweaver.com
Thomas Messana tmessana@messana-law.com
Grace Robson grobson@mrthlaw.com
Matthew Bayard mbayard@legalservicesmiami.org
Kim Enright kenright@legalaidpbc.org
Kristina Gonzalez kgp@miamibankruptcy.com
Peter Kelly pkelly@pwkpa.com
Karen Ladis ladis@dadelegalaid.org
Jon L. Martin jlm@jonlmartinlaw.com
Ariel Sagre law@sagrelawfirm.com
Eric Silver esilver@stearnsweaver.com
James Heaton jheaton@LegalAid.org
Carolyn Fabrizio Carolyn.Fabrizio@Frls.org

Absent:

Chanel A. Winter - apologies received from Chanel Winter;
Sheena Robinson sheena.robinson@frls.org
Megan Root megan.root@frls.org (left Fla. Rural Legal Services)

I. Welcome and Introduction of New Members. Judge Mora welcomed the committee members and requested that members introduce themselves.

1. James Heaton - Representative of Legal Aid Services of Broward County, probono coordinator
2. Eric Silver – BBA representative. Worked on the bylaws. Raised the issue that the bylaws do not require a quorum.
3. Patricia Redmond – Representative of law school clinics - Miami School of Law, Nova, and with Put Something Back

4. Jon Martin – Works with the pro se program at the Martin County library. Jon has served on the committee since its inception at Judge Isicoff's request. Jon reported that he is close to retirement, he provides pro bono services and financial education to veterans and since COVID-19, no services are being provided through the library.
5. Thomas Messana - Representative of the Bankruptcy Bar Foundation and member of pro bono committee since inception. The Bankruptcy Bar Foundation of Florida funds the clinical programs.
6. Nadine White-Boyd – co-chair of the Palm Beach County Bar Association, Bankruptcy CLE Committee working to get attendees to volunteer.
7. Joe Falzone - Clerk of Court. Handles all website requests and helps wherever needed.
8. Peter Kelly – co-chair SD Bar Association pro bono committee, handles intake at the clinics, and assists with intakes at Legal Aid of Miami
9. Ariel Sagre – assists at Help Desk with Peter Kelly. Noted that he is bilingual which is an asset with working with the pro bono committee and for pro bono referrals
10. Carolyn Fabrizio – Representative of Florida Rural Legal Services. It serves 13 counties throughout South and Central Florida
11. Matthew Bayard - Legal Services of Greater Miami.
12. Karen Ladis – Dade Legal Aid/Put Something Back. They screen and assign cases to pro bono attorneys. Referred over 200 pro bono cases over the last year.
13. Kim Rommel-Enright - Supervising attorney for pro bono cases at Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County.
14. Steve Newburgh – Lay chair of the committee. Steve welcomed all members and thanked committee members for their commitment.

II. Review of Purpose and Role of the Committees. Judge Isicoff provided background of the beginning of the committee. The idea was to provide pro bono services and to provide these services in an even handed manner to ensure that counties with less resources will have pro bono access. Task forces such as “low” bono started with Leslie Cloyd and the website committee chaired by Joe Falzone to provide information as to how to get pro bono/low bono attorneys. The purpose is to develop and implement programs, get and share ideas, each subcommittee help each other and be consistent with ensuring that pro bono services are available to all who need it. The court is not the initiator of the program and cannot create programs. The court works to encourage dialogue which will accomplish the purpose of providing evenhanded pro bono services.

III. Approval of By-Laws. Judge Mora presented the version of the by-laws that was sent in advance of the meeting to committee members and requested comments prior to voting on the approval of the by-laws. Judge Isicoff noted that the by-laws must be approved by all the Judges of the Southern District Bankruptcy Court. Comments and changes were recommended and discussion held as follows:

1. Steve Newburgh recommended a provision for calling of “Special Meetings”. Judge Mora noted that Article III Section III includes provision for Special Meetings called by the Judicial Chair which satisfies this recommendation. Grace Robson agreed with Judge Mora and requested language to clarify that a committee member may request that a Special Meeting be called by contacting and communicating with the Judicial Chair the basis for requesting a special meeting.
2. Grace Robson requested change/addition of “sub” to Article IV section 4 (last sentence) to read as follows: “The Standing Subcommittees are...”
3. Carolyn Fabrizio requested that Article II section 2(b) include Martin County Legal Aid Society as one of the organizations represented on the Pro Bono Committee. Carolyn will contact Martin County Legal Aid to confirm that they are being added to the pro bono committee. Jon Martin provides pro bono services through Martin County Legal Aid; therefore, with Jon’s membership, it satisfies the requirement to have a representative on the committee.
4. Joe Falzone recommended posting the by-laws and minutes on the Court’s website. Joe recommended changing the name of the committee to Pro Bono Advisory Committee. The name will be changed in Article I Section 1. Joe Falzone will draft the administrative order to provide for the name change.

Judge Mora will provide a redlined version to Nadine White-Boyd to confirm all changes. After all changes confirmed, Judge Mora will provide the redlined version to committee members to vote on approval of the bylaws.

IV. Formation of Subcommittees

1. Pro se Clinics – Grace Robson (chair), Steve Newburgh
2. Help Desks – Peter Kelly (chair) Ariel Sagre, Grace Robson, Kristina Gonzalez
3. Law School Programs – Patricia Redmond (chair), Eric Silver, Peter Kelly
4. Website Review – Joe Falzone (chair), Grace Robson, Ariel Sagre
5. Veterans’ Programs – Carolyn Fabrizio, James Heaton (chair)

6. Pro Bono Week – Karen Ladis (chair), Grace Robson, Kim Enright, Nadine White-Boyd, James Heaton, Tom Messana,

V. What is happening around the District (Reports from all providers)

1. Karen Ladis – Dade Legal Aid/ Put Something is now back on line. Prior to COVID-19, the client base (low income) were walk ins. Clients are now sent to their website for help. Referrals to Put Something Back are made by the court, the clerks' office and primarily word of mouth/friends.
2. Carolyn Fabrizio – Martin County is not doing clinics. They have in-house staff screening the clients for services needed. They are considering doing remote zoom to let clients know to be screened for services. They have not had any bankruptcy screenings.
3. Matthew Bayard – Legal Services of Greater Miami. Intakes are now being done on-line and by phone. They also have a virtual receptionist set up in their lobby primarily for emergency.
4. Kim Rommel-Enright – Intakes are done by telephone. Encountering issues with clients being referred by the Circuit and County courts to their office while their office is closed to the public and they are not seeing walk-ins. These individuals go to the office and wait at the door hoping to find someone to speak to. Suggestions made as to how to handle include contacting the court (Judge Samantha Feuer) to request that the clerk's office notify them that the office is closed and provide contact information for Legal Aid on a sheet. All providers to provide Joe Falzone with contact information so that they can be added to Bankruptcy court's website.

VI. Scheduling Meetings. Meetings will be held quarterly. Committee confirmed that 5:00 p.m. is a convenient time for future meetings. Next Meeting – May 4, 2021 at 5pm. Other meetings will be scheduled at the end of each meeting.

VII. Old Business. No old business.

VIII. New Business

1. Judge Isicoff – As Immediate Past President of the National Conference of Bankruptcy Judges Judge Isicoff included at the 2020 conference a pro bono program with the Veterans' Village conducting a clinic with discussion of veterans' affairs and financial issues presented by Joseph Hasting (??) , Chuck Walker, Brigadier General in Kentucky Air Force at the program. This was a successful presentation and The Florida Bar Business Law standing committee will be using it as a model to create

a presentation and tailoring it for Florida. Judge Isicoff recommended that the Veterans Programs subcommittee work with the Florida Bar's business law section, Carlos Sardi, to get the program presented to veterans.

2. Peter Kelly said that he received a message from committee member Kristina Gonzalez that she had technical difficulties and apologized for dropping off the meeting. She will join the Help Desk committee.

IX. Motion to adjourn made by Thomas Messana, seconded by James Heaton.