

LSND Board of Directors Meeting
Webinar 11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.
Webinar
September 25, 2018

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- Call to Order The September meeting of the LSND Board of Directors was opened by President Laurel Forsberg at 11:45 a.m.
- Roll Call: The board members present were: Wade Enget, Laurel Forsberg, Mary Kae Kelsch, Tracy Laaveg, Rob Manly, Paul Murphy, James Wang.
- Board members absent were: Lenora Kutz, Shanice Lambert, Gary Ramsey, Lisa Tomlinson and Bob Woods.
- Staff Present The following staff were also on the call: Adele Page, Annique Lockard, Audrey Solheim, Brad Peterson, Breezy Schmidt, Ed Reinhardt, Jane Sportiello, Kim Kramer, Rich LeMay, Shanda Fisher, and Steve Simonson.
- Minutes A motion to approve minutes of the June 13, 2018 meeting was made by Mary Kae Kelsch with Tracy Laaveg making the second. Motion carried.
- Reg 1612-1620 Audrey reported there had been no activity in either 1612 or 1620 since the previous meeting.
- Fiscal Report Kim reported on the July 2018 Budget-to-Actual fiscal information. Wade questioned the local revenue amount due to the net loss reported. Kim explained that not all local revenue has been received that affects this period such as Bank of America, IOLTA and SBAND funding. Insurance and advertising costs are over budget, otherwise other expenses are within budget for this reporting period.
- Preliminary
Budget for 2017 Kim presented the 2019 Preliminary Budget and reported that some changes have been made since the budget was sent to the board. Kim explained each line item of revenue if estimated or actually awarded, and which contracts/grants end in 2019. LSND was not awarded a NARF Civil award for 2018 and currently has a NARF Criminal award that ends 9/30/2019. This preliminary projection will give us a \$2.1 million budget revenue for 2019.
- Expenses Personnel Expenses included 2 new attorneys, but now needs to be revised to 1 attorney and 1 paralegal. This amount in personnel expenses includes the step increases for those qualifying staff members. Blue Cross/Blue Shield is budgeted for a 5% increase,

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which is generally what is reflected each year. Operating expenses were based on 2018 expenses with a 3% increase.

Bismarck Law Office is moving to a lower suite in the same building to save money on lease expense which will be about \$19,000 a year savings. The New Town Law Office's landlord has renewed our lease with no increase. Discussion took place on other ways to reduce costs for 2019. The Preliminary Budget currently projects a net loss of \$8,000.

Audit and Finance Mary Kae, chair of the Audit and Finance Committee had no report this time. The committee will meet prior to the next board meeting to review the 2019 Budget.

Executive Comm Shanice Lambert was appointed as a client board member a year ago. She has never attended a board meeting and generally has not been accessible, even by phone. Laurie will write her a letter requesting her resignation. It is important to have active members on our board of directors.

Nominating Committee The following were appointed to the Nominating Committee: Paul Murphy, Chair with members Gary Ramsey, and Bob Woods. Election will be in December. Currently the following hold a position on the executive committee:
Laurel Forsberg, President
Wade Enget, Vice President
Mary Kae Kelsch, Secretary/Treasurer
Bob Wood, At Large Representative

Public Relations Wade Enget, chair of the Public Relations committee reported he has had contact with Chief Justice VandeWalle, Tony Weiler, SBAND Executive Director and several legislators regarding increasing our financial status. The answer from the Chief he is supportive of our program, but not to the extent of providing support to the legislature for funding. He is responsible to fund the increasing costs of court services and would not be able give his support outside of this venue.

Tony Weiler indicated he would bring the issue of increasing funding for LSND before the next Board of Governors meeting; however no response has been received from Tony or the committee following their recent meeting.

The legislators who Wade spoke to indicated there are so many cuts proposed in state government by the governor that it is unlikely that the legislature would fund a group not currently being funded. It would mean some agency currently funded would have to give up a portion of their funding to provide money for LSND.

The conversation then moved to removing or raising the \$650,000 cap the amount of the filing fees that may be deposited in the civil legal services fund. If we could increase this fund by raising the filing fees to \$100, this money would then come from the plaintiff rather than the state coffers. These fees have been the same for many years, and are much lower than other nearby states.

The State Bar Board of Governors is supportive of raising filing fees rather than raising their own license fee by \$100.

We would need the support of the State Bar, if they take a no stance there would be no chance of having it pass the legislative bodies. We need to have people outside our own circle support us or non-compliance won't bode well.

Discussion took place on grants and limits they have. Discussion also took place on a new attorney salary wage and that LSND cannot compete with the state, Montana Dakota Utilities, etc.

Rich suggested that if board members have contacts with house and senate members, they should visit with them and let them know Rich is willing to go and talk to them, provide them information, and then let them decide our importance.

Rob offered to contact Tony Weiler and Zack Pelham (SBAND Pres) as he has a good relationship with both of them. His goal would be to convince them that increasing the filing fee will not deny access to the judicial system. Increasing the filing fee isn't a deterrent for filing cases – people will pay the fee and waivers are available for those who can't afford to pay them. The filing fee hasn't been raised in a number of years. It is time to make this change.

Rob encouraged Rich and Adele to continue and not be resigned to the fact that nothing can be done. We need a strategy, implement it and trust it will work. Laurie reiterated that it would be great for Rob and Tracy to help.

Jim indicated he feels that more support from the local area is necessary. It would be a good point to make that support of legal services is helpful to keep the courts unclogged. Rob suggested someone should attend the local bar association meetings and inform them of the needs.

Jim reminded folks that the types of cases LSND handles have a lot of baggage that goes along with them including drug recovery. It is like what we have learned with the MLP program. It is easier to deal with legal problems when you are healthy and hard to recover if you don't have a roof over your head.

Jim asked if there were statistics available that we could use in providing information to groups. Rich assured Jim that there are many statistics, and an analysis of them has been done so this information is easy to retrieve

Executive Director's
Report on LSND Office

Bismarck: Offices plan to move downstairs to decrease the cost of rent.

Fargo: Paulette Arrison, who has been with legal services since before there was a program, is retiring the end of October. Since 1997 Paulette has taken 3,911 applications, 670 social security cases 202 with agency decision where the ALJ made a decision. We are grateful for her many years of dedicated service in the area of administrative law. She will be truly missed.

Grand Forks: This office is seeing an increase in the number of people they are helping; it is also doing outreach in Grafton.

Minot is still looking for an attorney, Rich has been taking over the caseload of the attorney who resigned, but there is also much administrative work that needs to be done. CI took 550 applications over last year so are kept busy.

Native American Offices – Resignations have been received from Ashley from Belcourt and Joelle in New Town. They were temporary staff during tax season and had continued on until recently.

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December Workshop: December 5th and 6th is when staff will come into Bismarck to participate in human resources, staff training, and leadership training.


On the 7th of December LSND will have a CLE based on these topics: disciplinary board; consumer fraud, child support enforcement including the new guidelines which start January 1. Adele and Shanda will also speak about the MLP and how does it benefits clients. Maybe Ed will talk about Native American issues as well.

December

Next Board Meeting will be the evening of December 6th at the Bismarck office conference room.

Adjourn

Rob moved to adjourn, Mary Kae seconded the motion, meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.



Mary Kae Kelsch
Secretary/Treasurer