

Family Law Section Meeting
May 12, 2017

Chair – Wendy Powell

Attendees: (by phone) Melissa Luna, Weston Davis, Jennifer Schindele, (in person) Nikeela Abrams, Richard Pinol, Jill Musser, Renee Karel, Regan Charlton, Debra Alsaker-Burker, Larry Dunn, Merritt Dublin, Chuck Bauer, Josh Taylor, Margie Cleverdon, Denise Penton, Wendy Powell, Doug Leavitt

1. Call to order by Wendy Powell.
2. Roll Call.
3. Review of Minutes from April Planning Meeting. Moved to approve by Doug Leavitt; seconded by Margie Cleverdon. Unanimously approved.
4. Review of Financials. Moved to approve by Merritt Dublin; seconded by Doug Leavitt. Unanimously approved.
5. Committee Reports

Seat 1. National Conferences. Wendy Powell reported that Merritt Dublin and Sarah Mello are going to the Boston Conference, with the understanding that they will provide a report when they return.

Seat 2. October CLE. Wendy Powell reported that a date will be picked soon.

Seat 3. Other CLEs. Regan Charlton reported that they are working on more lunch CLEs.

Seat 4. Legislative Update. Nothing to report, but note that there is a 5/17 CLE on legislative session.

Seat 5. Publications. No report.

Seat 6. Technology. No report.

Seat 7. District Support. No report.

Seat 8. Resources. No report.

Seat 9. Special Projects and Awards. Jennifer Schindele reported that there will be a presentation at ISB Annual Meeting.

Seat 10. Community Service. No report.

6. New Business. Jennifer Schindele brought to our attention that a recent Court of Appeals case discussed the issue of child support and fringe benefits,

specifically whether health insurance premiums paid for by an employer should be included in gross income. Short answer is no. *Valentine v. Valentine*, issued 4/4/17.

7. ISB Practice Section Council Meeting, update from 5/8/17.

Report by Renee Karel. Bar is encouraging attorneys to participate in the Access to Justice Fund Run, held 6/3. Also encouraging attendance at upcoming annual meeting, held in Moscow for the first time since 1931. Look for information on Leadership Academy, a networking and leadership skill-building program for lawyers with 5 years in practice, or at least 5 years in some other profession. Meets monthly from September to May. Finally, discussed whether we should consider sponsoring an *Advocate* issue, as this section has not done so in quite some time.

8. CLE – Nikeela Abrams. “Mediation Preparation: Do’s and Don’ts”

Preparing Clients for Mediation

Presented by: Nikeela R. Abrams

“Do’s”:

- Do consider your audience – Mediator selection
- Do have your client bring appropriate documentation;
- Do discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your client’s case and a realistic analysis of their chances should the matter go to trial;
- Do coach clients on how to participate in mediation (i.e. don’t need to present their case, they need to present concerns and develop solutions);
- Do discuss what an appropriate division of assets/debts, custody schedule, or spousal support is;
- Do keep mediators informed, if the case settles, parties reconcile, etc.
- Do tell your clients to call the mediator to schedule an appointment; and
- Do be engaged in the mediation process. I am here to help. If there is something I can do to help resolve the matter, let me know!

“Don’ts”

- Don’t set the mediator up for failure (If a case is not appropriate for mediation, don’t send it).
- Don’t tell clients not to discuss a subject (i.e. Property and Debts / Child Custody). If the client agrees to something they shouldn't, no harm done because the attorney is going to review before signature anyway.