



Minutes of March Meeting of Women and the Law Section
State Bar of Texas
March 26, 2020
Teleconference

Nikki Chargois-Allen, Chair, called the March board meeting of the Women and the Law Section to order at 11:59 A.M. after it was determined that a quorum was present.

Council members in attendance via telephone: Nikki Chargois-Allen, Kirby Drake, Deborah Race, Leigh Hunt Goodson, Summer Olmos, Judy Ney, Natasha Martinez, Denise Alex, Deborah Cordova, Danae Benton, Teresa Schiller, Ellis Iverson, Tuhina Sharma and Sharon Hemphill.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES/SECRETARY'S REPORT

The minutes of the February 13, 2020 teleconference which had been previously emailed to the Council for review were presented. Deborah Race moved to approve the minutes with the correction of including Deborah Cordova as in attendance, with a second by Teresa Schiller. The minutes were approved as presented unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Judy Ney was not present for this portion of the meeting, but there was not much change in Financials from February. Reimbursements from the McAllen mixer were approved. Denise Alex moved to accept the Treasurer's Report with a second by Danae Benton. There is a new reimbursement form for 2020. Council members need to contact Nikki to obtain the new form. The Treasurer's report was approved unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership. Deborah Race requested an update on membership from Lindsey but has not received any new information yet. She will circulate the updated membership information when she gets that.

Further discussion was held regarding the empty spot on the Board to replace Jo-Ann S. De Hoyos. Her term ends at the end of the year, but Nikki would like to fill that spot with a short-term member. She has nominated Nadia Medrano. Deborah Cordova moved to approve Nadia as a member on the Board, with a second by Deborah Race.

CLE Report. Kirby Drake reported that the February CLE went well. The next CLE is scheduled April 14th and is on track. The CLE will discuss IP issues in contracts.

Nikki encouraged members to send Kirby ideas and speaker suggestions for future CLEs.

Awards Committee. Deborah Race reports two nominations for the “Sarah T. Hughes Award”. SBOT had said they would send an email blast out about it, but no one seems to have received the email. Teresa Schiller reported an email was sent out in February and circulated it to the Council.

The “Louise Raggio Award” still has no nominations.

The Board discussed using the previous year’s nominees as they are eligible for nomination for 3 years. SBOT does not need the names of the winners of the awards until May, so the Board discussed extending the nomination deadline. Deborah Race moved to extend the deadline for nominations for both awards to May 1st, with a second by Danae Benton. The motion was unanimously approved. A new email blast will be sent out with the new deadline.

Judy also mentioned that in the SBOT building there is a large plaque listing the winners of the Sarah T. Hughes Award that has not been updated since 2015. Natasha Martinez will coordinate with Judy Ney and Deborah Race to obtain the list of the 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019 winners and Nikki will contact SBOT to have the plaque updated.

Newsletter/Website. Danae Benton reported that the newsletter will be going out next week. She would like to include a message from the Board discussing how they are able to help during the COVID-19 outbreak. She would also like to include a piece offering advice or tips regarding working from home or remotely. She encouraged members to email information to her or Nikki to include in the article. Danae says she hopes to have the website updated by the next meeting.

Deborah Cordova will send pictures from the recent reception and CLE.

Social Media. Itzel Martinez was not present for the meeting.

Scholarship Program. Teresa reported that a 1st and 2nd place winner has been chosen for the writing competition. The 1st place winner is Khyra Kolidakis, student at The University of Houston Law School, for a piece titled “Maternal Mortality and Domestic Violence: The Intersectionality of Pregnancy and Violence”. She will receive an award and \$1,000.00 scholarship. The 2nd place winner is Tara Bush, student at The University of North Texas Dallas Law School, for a piece titled “#metoo #timesup: Social Media and Law Converge”. She will receive an award and \$500.00 scholarship. We did not have as many submissions as last year, but the essays submitted were excellent. Deborah Race moved to approve the awarding of the scholarship money to the winners, with a second by Deborah Cordova. The motion passed unanimously.

After the essays are vetted for accuracy Nikki would like to have either the essays or a link to the essays published in the newsletter and on the website. Danae believes we can publish with no issue since they are WAL submissions. Teresa agreed and reported a disclaimer for publishing had been included in the scholarship announcement. A press release will be sent to SBOT to announce the winners and to possibly publish the essays as well.

Fall/Spring Networking. The Texas Women Lawyers CLE and the reception had a very good turn out with high attendance. Deborah Cordova, Summer Olmos, Teresa Schiller, Natasha Martinez and Elizabeth Cantu attended on behalf of the Council. Deborah Cordova and Nikki reached out to the incoming President of the Houston Women Lawyers Board to discuss an event in Houston. They haven't heard back yet but would still like to plan the event in the Houston area. More details will be given when available.

Ideas for Annual CLE. The annual meeting will be held as scheduled until decided otherwise. Nikki encouraged everyone who is thinking of attending to go ahead and reserve their rooms. Rooms tend to go quickly but there may be a lull this year with the pandemic. The Council will reimburse attending members for travel and hotel costs. The Council will not reimburse for CLE.

The idea of a taco bar or hors d'oeuvres and free wine before the dinner was discussed. Nikki would still like to have some music but is waiting until closer to the event to book anything.

Chronologist. Natasha is working on a chronology PowerPoint and asks Council to send information on past events, presidents, board members, etc. to her. Nikki is going to contact Lyndsey at SBOT for assistance or direction.

Pro Bono Workgroup. No report. Nikki would like to continue the collaboration with the Law Related Education Committee with Teresa as Chair next year.

Upcoming Meeting Dates and Events. The next meeting will be held on April 16, 2020 via teleconference.

Old Business. No old business.

New Business. Anyone desiring to nominate a new Council member or to remain on the Board after term expiration or moving up to an officer role please reach out to Nikki or Teresa.

Next meeting is April 16, 2020 via teleconference.

Sharon Hemphill moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second by Denise Alex. No further business was declared and the meeting was adjourned at 12:56 p.m.