

Asheville Area Paralegal Association
Annual Retreat
February 6, 2010

Office of Pisgah Legal Services

The meeting was called to order at approximately 9:15 a.m. by President Lawrel Banks. Those present in addition to President Banks were:

Candice Blakeslee, Vice President
Beth Stallings, Secretary
Carol Rogers, Treasurer
Aundry Freeman, Asst. Treasurer
Jenny Iaquinto, Chair, Publicity Committee
Tory Townley, Chair, Fundraising Committee
Melanie Miller, Chair, Membership Committee
Carolyn Timmons, Chair, Scholarship Committee

Minutes of the January Board meeting having been previously distributed to Board members, Tory Townley moved that the minutes be approved, Aundry Freeman seconded the motion. A vote was taken and all in attendance approved the motion.

Programs Committee – Tory Townley reported on the January Round Table meeting regarding real estate.

It was discussed that in order to ensure some responsibility on the part of members, AAPA shall require attendees to pay for their meals. A Round Table may be sponsored by a person or company providing services related to a particular month's topic, however, the sponsor shall not be allowed to pay for attendees meals, but may pay for the group leader's/facilitator's meal. This arrangement may also help to avoid any potential conflicts of interest related to sponsorship. If an AAPA annual sponsor attends a Round Table meeting and speaks at that meeting about their business, said attendance shall count towards the sponsor's benefits in accordance with its sponsorship package.

Chair Blakeslee reported that the Programs Committee has discontinued the Mix n Mingle type seating arrangement at monthly meetings because of negative feedback received from a few members. Several members expressed their strong dislike of this arrangement. President Banks admonished the Board not to sit with each other at monthly meetings, but to spread out and sit with other members.

Attendance costs for the Spring Seminar were discussed and as previously, attendees may choose to register either for a full day or a half day session. The Board decided to provide and include the cost of lunch in attendees' full day registration fees. Chair Blakeslee shall research options for lunch, whether that is holding it at a nearby restaurant or having a boxed lunch catered. The registration fees equal \$15 per credit hour of CPE.

Registration Fees:		
Full Day	\$90 Members	\$150 Non-Members
Half-Day	\$45 Members	\$70 Non-Members

\$20 late registration charge

Speakers have been arranged for the Spring Seminar; however, we are lacking one speaker in order to provide 6 hours of CPE. Chair Blakeslee suggested that future seminar topics be based on a uniform theme; i.e. relate to a specific area of law. It was noted that NC certified paralegals require at least 1 hour of ethics to maintain their certification and therefore the Spring Seminar should include 1 hour of ethics. A Board member proposed that the ethics discussion be presented in the format of role-playing such that, one or two members will act out practical every day situations and then the audience will be asked whether the paralegals in the scenario acted ethically or not and why. An attorney would then comment on the scenario and state whether the depicted conduct was ethical or not in accordance with the Rules of Professional Conduct and/or other guidance.

A Congressional candidate recently requested of Chair Blakeslee to attend the AAPA monthly meeting and pass out materials/information about his candidacy and to speak for a very short time to our members. Chair Blakeslee declined this request, but suggested that perhaps in the future AAPA may host a “Meet the Candidates” type of meeting where many candidates for public office could speak to our members about their candidacy.

President Banks determined that AAPA shall not host a Meet the Candidates event for a number of reasons, one of which being that she feels our members are likely among some of the most informed voters. She also did not feel that hosting political discussions is appropriate for our organization and could potentially cause a lot of disagreement and conflict among the members.

Publicity Committee – Chair Iaquinto submitted a written report, however, the report was not reviewed as it was not deemed necessary. The report is attached to these minutes.

Fundraising Committee – Chair Townley briefly discussed sending solicitations for new sponsors for the upcoming year and confirmed that such solicitations shall be transmitted by no later than mid March. Members Erica Hartrick and Christine Wallace have joined the Fundraising Committee.

Scholarship Committee – Chair Timmons discussed the Scholarship Committee report. She observed that the committee has received only 1 response from a high school student within the last year and questioned whether the committee is targeting the right area. Chair Timmons sought input about other means of getting the word out about the availability of the scholarship.

She noted that while the standards to qualify for the scholarship are high, she does not suggest changing the standards. A discussion ensued about changing the requirements that candidates attend an “accredited” paralegal program and whether the term “accredited” is defined any where within the Scholarship Application. It was suggested that perhaps the requirements should be adjusted such that candidates enrolled in on-line paralegal programs could qualify for the scholarship due to the lack of available brick and mortar colleges in Western North Carolina that provide a paralegal program.

Discussion about certification of paralegals in general and AAPA’s role or lack thereof in that process ensued. Chair Timmons stated that currently the NC State Bar does not recognize on-line paralegal programs for the purposes of paralegal certification. After much discussion, President Banks observed that it is the goal of AAPA to ensure that future paralegals receive an adequate paralegal education, not necessarily that they become certified paralegals. President Banks referred the issue back to the Scholarship Committee to convene and provide recommendations to the Board on this issue.

Chair Timmons again mentioned that she was concerned about the outreach of the committee to potential candidates and sought feedback on how to better promote the scholarship and reach more potential candidates. Jenny Iaquinto suggested that the scholarship be promoted in the e-news. After discussion, it was decided that the Publicity Committee shall include notices about the scholarship in the e-news during the months of July and December each year. It was also noted that mention of the Scholarship could be included in the upcoming March presentation about Certification that the Programs Committee is planning.

Membership Committee – Chair Miller observed that AAPA now has a total of 51 members. Many members still have not returned their renewal applications and dues yet. Committee member Joan Vogt will send a reminder next week to members that it is time to renew their memberships.

Governance Committee – The Governance Committee did not submit a report and there were no topics for discussion by the committee.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

President Banks proposed that AAPA implement the office of **President-Elect** beginning at the Annual Meeting in April, 2010 such that the office would be effective on May 1.

President Banks noted that many organizations, including the NC Bar Paralegal Division, North Carolina Advocates for Justice, etc. provide for the office of President-Elect within their organizations. Discussion about the purpose and effect of the office ensued; it was noted that the President-Elect is afforded an opportunity to learn about the governing process and operation of the organization prior to having any actual responsibility for the same. The provision of this office makes for a smoother transition of officers each year and allows for better goal planning for upcoming years.

A vote was taken amongst the Board members and it was unanimously approved that AAPA add the office of President-Elect the slate of candidates for office to be presented to members prior to the election at the Annual Meeting.

It shall be necessary to amend the AAPA Bylaws to reflect this new office and this task shall be the responsibility of the Governance Committee.

Committee Chairs – A discussion of AAPA policy regarding appointment and succession of Committee chairs began. It was noted that there is not an official policy, but it has been a *de facto* policy that each committee's members choose the Chair of their committee.

President Banks proposed that the Board implement a policy whereby the President will appoint the Chair of each committee and suggested that this policy will make Committee Chairs accountable to the President. Additionally, the President would have the authority to remove any Chair who was not performing his/her duties. Discussion ensued about whether to require the Board to approve the President's appointments. President Banks observed that a President-Elect would have an entire year to choose who they would like to serve as Committee Chairs upon their becoming President.

President Banks also recommended that the Treasurer be a member of the Membership Committee because the Treasurer should have input on membership renewals in relation to outstanding balances owed by members. Fundraising Chair Townley noted that she believes it would be beneficial to have the Treasurer as a member of the Fundraising Committee also because of the necessity for communication about receipt of sponsor funds, etc. Secretary Stallings observed that appointing the Treasurer to Membership and Fundraising Committees combined with the Treasurer's regular duties might be too much responsibility. She suggested alternatively that the Treasurer communicate and/or prepare reports for the Membership and Fundraising Committees relative to financial matters pertinent to each committee, for instance outstanding member balances owed.

A vote was taken and the Board members unanimously approved a new policy whereby the President appoints each Committee Chair to be effective at the commencement of the new President's term. It was also decided that the Treasurer shall not be required to be a member of Membership nor Fundraising Committees, but shall prepare appropriate reports for such committees.

Monthly Meetings – a discussion of AAPA policy and difficulties with regard to monthly meetings ensued.

Late RSVPs – Chair Blakeslee observed that Posana Restaurant requires a 3 day advance notice of AAPA's menu orders for the monthly meetings. She is experiencing difficulty with members regularly submitting their orders to her after the stated deadline in the meeting notice. It is understood that plans may change on short

notice and some allowance for variance should be given, however, providing late rsvps is a regular occurrence on the part of some members.

Chair Blakeslee asked for suggestions on how to handle this problem, while not discouraging members from attending meetings. After much discussion, it was decided that members who rsvp for the meeting after the deadline, may attend, but if they wish to order they shall be responsible for placing their order themselves upon arrival at the restaurant and shall be directed to place the order at the restaurant's bar so as not to disrupt or interfere with the meal service to the other members.

No Show Meal Fees – It was also noted that members' cancellation of rsvps and/or simply not showing up for the meeting after rsvping and placing an order has become a regular occurrence. After discussion, it was decided that cancellation of rsvps must be given by no later than the deadline stated in the meeting notice for rsvps in order for a member to avoid being charged for their meal order. Chair Blakeslee presently notifies members of charges due from them in connection with missed/cancelled attendance at meetings (after the notice deadline), however, some members simply fail to respond and pay the outstanding charges.

President Banks directed Chair Blakeslee to copy herself, Treasurer Rogers and Membership Chair Miller with all notices to members regarding charges due from such members in connection with a cancelled and/or no show for meeting. Treasurer Rogers shall promptly send an invoice to any such member owing monies to AAPA and shall copy President Banks, Programs Chair Blakeslee and Membership Chair Miller with such invoice.

The Board determined that as a means of requiring members to pay for costs associated with cancelled/no show meeting attendance, that any member who has an outstanding balance due the Association for cancelled meal charges or for any other reason, may not be eligible to renew his/her membership until such outstanding charges are paid to AAPA. The Board may make exceptions to this policy on a case by case basis upon written request of the affected member. This policy shall be included in the Member Manual.

APPOINTMENTS

Nominating Committee – President Banks proposed that the Immediate Past President be the Chair of the Nominating Committee. A vote was taken and the Board unanimously approved this policy.

President Banks then opened the floor for volunteers to serve on the Nominating Committee. Board members Jenny Iaquinto, Tory Townley and Candice Blakeslee volunteered to so serve.

A discussion of past operation of the Nominating Committee ensued and it was observed that the committee generally has communicated with current Board members to

determine whether such members have any interest in continuing to serve in their present positions or any other position before opening the nominations process to the membership.

Board members were asked whether they had any interest in serving again. President Banks stated that she desires to seek re-election as President this year, and Vice President Candice Blakeslee likewise desires to seek election as President-Elect.

Any member nominated for office will be notified of such nomination and given an opportunity to decline or accept said nomination. After all nominations have been received the membership is notified of the slate of candidates for office.

Featured Charities Contacts – President Banks requested volunteers from the Board to act as contacts and be responsible for collections and/or donations of items for the selected charities for the remainder of this year.

Selected charities and volunteers are as noted:

2nd Quarter – April through June

United Way's School Supply Drive

Candice will be responsible for all 3 months. She observed that 2 restaurants have already agreed to assist us with a collection drive whereby members may receive a free meal for donating supplies to the collection drive.

3rd Quarter – July through September / Manna Food Bank

July Beth Stallings

August Melanie Miller

September Jenny Iaquinto

4th Quarter – October through December / Salvation Army

October Tory Townley

November Aundry Freeman

December Jenny Iaquinto

2011 Charities – A discussion ensued about selection of charities for the 2011 year and Publicity Chair Iaquinto observed that it is very important that such a selection be made well in advance so that it may be publicized in the e-news, etc. After much discussion amongst the members, it was decided that the Nominating Committee shall select (from a diverse group of charities) a number of charities for presentation to the membership for a vote at the Annual Meeting upon which charities AAPA shall support during 2011. Nominating Committee shall be responsible for preparing an appropriate ballot for said vote and presenting the same to the membership.

A discussion began about how or whether AAPA keeps any type of record of the overall donations of our members to each charity during the year. It was observed that it is important to acknowledge and thank our members for their contributions and/or

donations. A recommendation was made and approved that the membership be provided with a recap at the end of each quarter as to the donations collected for the selected charity for the quarter and that with regard to tangible donations, a photograph be taken of the items collected and published in the e-news at the end of the quarter.

Discussion about AAPA matching members' donations to selected charities ensued. It was observed that the Association budget includes an amount for donation to charity each year. After discussion about AAPA's financial status and its ability to contribute in this manner, Carolyn Timmons made a MOTION that AAPA match the amount of any monetary donations made by its members to selected charities each month on a dollar for dollar basis. The motion was SECONDED by Aundry Freeman. A vote was taken and the Board unanimously approved the motion.

Any funds donated by AAPA to match members' donations shall be counted toward the charity amount budgeted. At this time, there will not be a maximum cap placed on the amount of matching donations. The Board will monitor the level of matching donations required and may make changes or adjustments to cap the amount as necessary in accordance with the Association budget.

A Board member questioned the basis upon which the charities for the 2010 year were selected and it was stated that the selections were made largely on the basis of charities to which tangible donations, such as canned food to Manna, could be made as the member response to said charities was better than to other charities requiring less tangible donations.

DOCUMENTS

Membership Manual – President Banks previously provided all Board members with a draft Membership Manual for review. She requested any comments and suggestions from members as to the draft manual provided; no comments or suggestions or were given.

Secretary Stallings observed that the history of the Association needs to be updated to include highlights of Association accomplishments from 2006 forward to the present date. She volunteered to collect that information and provide it to the Board at a subsequent monthly meeting.

In keeping with the Board's earlier decision to provide for the office of President-Elect commencing with the year 2010-2011, a section for the description of the office of President-Elect is included in the manual. President Banks called for recommendations on completing the duties and responsibilities of this office and Secretary Stallings volunteered to provide such information at a future Board meeting.

The description of Treasurer's duties shall be revised to reflect the additional duties approved earlier in this Board meeting.

The policy for establishment of Committee Chairs shall be included in accordance with the Board's decision to authorize the President to appoint Committee Chairs at the beginning of the President's term of office.

A sponsorship package detail list shall be added to and included with the Fundraising Committee description and the duties shall be revised to reflect that the committee is also responsible for ensuring that sponsors receive benefits in accordance with their designated sponsorship package.

Publicity Committee duties shall be updated to reflect that meeting notices are no longer distributed to courthouse boxes.

Nominating Committee description shall be revised to reflect the Board's decision to appoint the Immediate Past President as Chair of this committee and changes to the timing of selection of the committee by the President.

Under the Continuing Education section, Monthly Meetings subheading, appropriate revisions to reflect policy as decided by the Board during this meeting shall be made. A new subheading of Pro Bono and Community Support shall be added under the Community Activities heading to reflect Association members participation in activities such as the Wills for Heroes event, Mock Trial, etc. and members support for various charities each month.

Topics suggested to be included under the Frequently Asked Questions section include, the requirements for membership, costs of membership, whether one must be a paralegal to join, the educational opportunities offered to members, etc.

President Banks shall be responsible for making the necessary revisions and presenting the Board with an updated draft of the manual for review.

2010 Budget

The proposed budget as attached was unanimously approved and shall be presented to the membership for vote at the Annual Meeting.

Brochure

A draft brochure was reviewed by the Board and a few minor revisions were suggested, such as the addition of the phrase "Established in 2004" to the title page of the document, updating the Leadership section to reflect addition of the President-Elect office and otherwise as shown on the draft attached hereto.

Salary Survey

President Banks appointed Candice Blakeslee, Jenny Iaquinto and Beth Stallings to this committee. Candice shall serve as Chair of the committee.

A question was presented as to whether this year's salary survey may be set up to coordinate salaries reported by those responding to the responder's years of experience, practice area, education, etc. It was noted that the free survey software that the Association has used in the past likely does not have this capability. Jenny Iaquinto observed that Constant Contact which the Association is using to distribute the e-news has a survey feature option available at an additional cost of approximately \$5 per month.

A vote was taken and the Board unanimously approved the implementation of the survey feature on Constant Contact at the additional cost for one year with the provision that at the end of the year, the Board will review the usefulness or lack thereof of the survey feature during the past year.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Mentorships

Secretary Stallings observed that last year the Board approved a program for Association members to act as mentors to paralegal students, new paralegals and/or paralegals who have moved into this area from another state. The only criteria established was that members have a minimum of 5 years experience. Despite approving this program, it has not been implemented to date.

After much discussion, the Board members determined that AAPA should facilitate the mentor – mentee relationship, but that the actual parameters or guidelines upon the relationship should be left to the discretion of the mentors.

It was decided that the requirement that mentors have a minimum of 5 years experience be refined to indicate that the 5 years of experience must be in North Carolina. Additionally, mentors should be provided with an application to complete before being allowed to volunteer for service in this role.

Publicity Committee Chair Iaquinto shall publish a request for mentor volunteers to the Association website and in the e-news. Any members who volunteer to act as mentors, upon completion and approval of their application by the Board may be listed on the AAPA website as a mentor who is available to any mentee.

Finally, the Board decided that any published list of mentors should include a disclaimer by AAPA indicating that AAPA is solely facilitating the relationship, but is not responsible for the actions of either mentors or mentees in connection therewith.

Our Voice Mentorships

Secretary Stallings submitted a notice to the Board about the availability of a program for mentors to young women through the nonprofit Our Voice. She noted that it was her intention solely to publicize this opportunity to the Board members and potentially to the

Association members, not for the Association to participate in the project in any official manner. President Banks approved distribution of the notice to Association members through the e-news.

2010 Projects

Projects suggested for Association participation and involvement are as follows:

Women Build – Habitat for Humanity

Rotarians against Hunger Food Drive on 4/24 – they will be collecting boxed meals to send to Haiti. President Banks will provide more information about this event later.’

Manna Food Bank – box food for distribution to area food banks.

It was suggested that projects be discussed on an ongoing basis at monthly Board meetings, as projects come to the attention of Board members. Candice Blakeslee also recommended that members make an effort to wear an AAPA t-shirt or polo shirt to events in which they participate as an effort to inform the community in general about AAPA’s involvement in legal and community affairs/events.

Involvement in Legal Community

A very brief discussion began regarding ways to increase Association involvement in the legal community. Candice Blakeslee suggested that the Association partner with the 28th Judicial District Bar to participate in the annual Asheville Holiday Parade. Several members observed that they were aware that some attorneys and/or others in the community looked upon the holiday parade in a negative manner (specific reasons for the negative viewpoint were not indicated). President Banks vetoed this idea.

Further discussion of this topic was deferred to future monthly Board meetings.

EVENTS

Leader Retreat

This topic was deferred for discussion at the February Board meeting.

Bele Chere

The Association has been approved to staff two (2) satellite beverage booths at Bele Chere. It was decided that 2 members will be necessary to act as supervisors and be responsible for the satellite booths each day of the festival (7/24/10 and 7/25/10). The supervisor shifts shall be divided into half day shifts.

A schedule of shifts of approximately 2 hours each shall be prepared for each day of the festival and it will be necessary for the Association to provide a minimum of 2 members for each shift at each booth. So for each 2 hour shift, it will be necessary to have a minimum of 4 volunteers, plus the supervisor for the day.

Melanie Miller has a template of a staffing schedule that was used the last time the Association participated in Bele Chere and she will send the template to President Banks. President Banks shall be responsible for obtaining the necessary number of volunteers for the booths.

Candice Blakeslee has aprons members previously used during this event and Linda Johnson has possession of the Association's handcart.

There are training sessions that supervisors (?) must attend on 3/9 at 11:00 a.m. or 3/11 at 4:00 p.m. Additionally, **all** volunteers who will staff a booth are required to attend an ALE training session on 7/13 at 6:00 p.m. or else participate in an online training session.

Social / Holiday Events

Candice Blakeslee encouraged the Board to increase social events for our members. President Banks suggested that discussion about this topic occur on an ongoing basis as events come up.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.