

Family Law Section Board of Director's Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2010

The first meeting of the Board of Directors for the State Bar of Montana Family Law Section since the adoption of the revised Family Law Section Bylaws in September 2009, was held on March 5, 2010, by telephone conference.

Board Members Present: P. Mars Scott, the current chairperson, District 4; Mark Westveer, District 10; Randy Schwickert, District 11; Corbin Howard, District 13; Steve Dalby, District 19; Natasha Morton, District 22.

Montana Bar Association Staff Members Present: Chris Manos, Executive Director; Jill Diveley, Montana State Bar staff member assigned to the Family Law Section.

CALL TO ORDER:

- The meeting was called to order at 12:11 p.m.

CHAIRPERSON REPORT:

- Mr. Scott discussed the philosophy behind the shift from operating with a traditional three or four officers, to restructuring the section leadership to operate with a larger board of directors to represent a more geographically diverse area. The Section will hopefully have more input on ideas and procedures that meet the Section's goals of improving the practice of family law by professionally resolving disputes that arise out of family relationships in the State of Montana. Further, a more broadly based board should provide greater input for ideas that help standardize the family law practice in Montana, identify current issues that affect family law, and recognize statewide funding needs for projects that could help families involved with the Montana legal system.
- Mr. Scott discussed the fact that the Section's Bylaws allow for one representative from each judicial district. Out of twenty two (22) districts, the Section currently has five (5) representatives. Board members were asked to identify further possible board members for the next meeting. The Board needs to decide how many board members from which judicial districts are optimal.

FINANCIAL REPORT AND FUNDING REQUESTS:

- The Section has approximately \$23,000 in its budget. The Bylaws state that the money can be spent by a majority vote of the board members. The board members discussed the parameters for authorizing the use of the funds. For now, requests shall be presented to all the board members by email who will then vote through the State Bar whether they approve of the funding request. The board will discuss further funding procedures at the next board meeting.

MONTANA BAR STAFF MEMBERS REPORT:

- Mr. Manos discussed generally the operation of the State Bar office in Helena. The Section's contact person for administrative matters is Jill Diveley, jdiveley@montanabar.org 442-7660 ext.1201. The Section's contact person for financial matters is Mary Ann Murray, mamurray@montanabar.org 442-7660 ext.1200.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES:

- The board discussed setting up meetings by using GotoMeetings.com which can accommodate 25 people. Also, the State Bar will explore the possibility of using GotoWebinars.com.
- The Board discussed the Section's web page. There has been positive feedback from the Section members for the summary of the Supreme Court family law cases posted on our Member's Only Website. For the last few months, the family law cases have not been updated because there hasn't been anyone working on the project. However, a third year law student has now been hired by the Section to do the research and the site should be current within the next month.

CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

- The Board members were informed that the first two one hour telephone CLE's this year were a success. Our members like the idea of qualifying for one CLE credit by participating by telephone. The Section will try to set up a telephone CLE once a month. There was a discussion that not everyone knew about the Section's telephone CLE's. Chris Manos will check on implementing procedures to ensure that all Section members know about the upcoming one hour telephone CLE's.
- The Section's Annual meeting will be held in conjunction with the Family Law CLE put on by the State Bar CLE committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Randy Schwickert suggested that the Section members be polled to see who would be willing to act as a mentor in family law matters for new practitioners and that a notation be added to their name.
- The Board discussed the idea of certifying family law practitioners in Montana. A few states have certification processes. A Montana Family Law Certification would indicate to the public a practitioner's interest in the area of family law and would signify that a lawyer has more extensive knowledge and experience in family law than other practitioners. Chris Manos stated that we should read the article in the December 2009 issue of the Montana Lawyer regarding lawyer advertising. Also, approval for the Section

to issue a family law certification would most likely need the Board of Trustee's approval.

ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA:

- 1) How many additional board members
- 2) Who should be nominated to the Board
- 3) Topics for a webinar and telephone CLE to be conducted in October using GotoWebinar.com and GotoMeeting.com
- 4) Identification of any projects to fund
- 5) Procedures for funding projects
- 6) Polling members to see who would be willing to act as a mentor in family law matters for new practitioners and that a notation be added to their name

Signed P. Mars Scott
Chairperson
March 5, 2010