The summer board meeting of Legal Services of North Dakota was called to order by President Gary Ramsey at 1:40 p.m. on July 18.

Gary Ramsey and Alan Lerberg were present in person.

Jodi Colling, Laurel Forsberg, Clyde Houle, Mary Kae Kelsch, Rob Manly, Lisa Tomlinson were present via telephone conference.

Wade Enget, Veronica Kirkaldie, Lenora Kutz, Paul Murphy

Rich LeMay, Kim Kramer, Audrey Solheim, Nadia Javaid were present.

Mikayla Jablonski Jahner, Adele Page, Ed Reinhardt, Steve Simonson were present via telephone conference.

The minutes of the April 2016 board meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Laurel Forsberg and seconded by Mary Kae Kelsch, motion carried.

The minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held on June 22, 2016 were reviewed. Motion to approve those minutes was made by Mary Kay Kelsch, and seconded by Alan Lerberg, motion carried.

There was no action to report on either Regulation 1612 or 1620.

Kim Kramer reviewed the 2015 Audited Financial Statement with the board completed by Brady, Martz and Associates in March. The 2015 audit has two findings. Kramer will be working with a local accounting firm to strengthen internal controls to resolve the first finding and the second finding LSND was found to be in compliance with after the audit.

Motion was made by Alan Lerberg, seconded by Laurel Forsberg to approve the 2015 Audit Report. Motion carried.

Kim recapped the May 2016 Budget to Actual Expense Report. Revenues and expenses are both within expected budget through May 31.
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Amended Budget  Kim presented the proposed 2016 Amended Budget to the board. The most significant change to revenue was the award of the Human Trafficking grant. Personnel expenses were adjusted due to employee turnover the first part of the year. Operating expenses were adjusted to allow for the accounting system to be migrated to the cloud, new copier for Fargo Law Office, and more training for new attorneys hired within the last year, as well as a few other minor adjustments.

Motion was made by Mary Kae, seconded by Alan to approve the budget report and amended budget. Motion carried.

Human Trafficking Report  Rich reported on the Human Trafficking grant. After the grant was awarded, BCI informed us that we needed a political subdivision to use as a pass through for the funding. With the help of board member Wade Enget, the Mountrail County Commission agreed to be that agency. BCI has assured us that it will require a very minimum effort on the part of the Mountrail County Commission.

Rich introduced Nadia Javaid, the attorney who is working under this grant. The trafficking program is getting a slow start. Nadia will be working with “Navigators”, whose job is to help victims find resources to help them break free of trafficking. However, so far LSND had found that most of our clients served by this grant are being identified through our Centralized Intake Office.

LSC RFP  Rich informed the board that both the LSC Base and Native American applications were submitted on June 13. Every three years LSND is required to submit a request which covers the upcoming three years, and this year was the major, in-depth application. In subsequent years, a shorter version of the RFP is required.

Ex Dir Report – At the encouragement of LSC we also submitted an RFP for the Migrant grant. This was sent in on June 13 as well. In the past SMRLS (Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services) has received funding to serve the migrant population of North Dakota as well as Minnesota. After researching the possibility of applying for this grant and finding that are already serving a large number of migrants, and that SMRLS doesn’t appear to be adequately serving the migrants in our state, we determined we should submit our application this round.
Initially LSC planned to do an on-site visit to determine if we could adequately manage this additional service area. A recent communication from them however indicated they would do the visit by telephone instead which will be done this week yet. Rich believes we have as good a chance to receive the award as SMRLS does.

The migrant population has changed, technology used in farming and other things happening in ND are in some cases replacing the Hispanic worker. We are already providing substantial services to this population.

Currently we have migrant cases which include 189 family law applications, 56 were questions about custody and 46 were involving divorce.

The grant for the migrant population would be an additional $118,000 a year. Motion was made by Laurie Forsberg, seconded by Clyde Houle to approve the application for the LSC migrant service area. Motion carried.

Bank of America Settlement

Over a year ago, as a result of a lawsuit settlement regarding mortgage issues, we were informed that there was $232,000 available to LSND as a result of being the only legal services program in the state. Recently, the Director of the ND State Bar Association told us there is an additional $780,000 available from that source, handled by the Bank of America. There will be an RFP to be completed in the next few months. We need to do some planning to make the best use of the funds. This is a one-time fund.

Rich’s first thought is to start a Grand Forks Office of LSND, which could be considered community development which fits into the scope of this funding. Rich asked for direction from the board in how they thought the funds should be spent. The RFP is said to be available the end of July, which would be prior to the next scheduled board meeting.

Discussion took place on maintaining the Grand Forks Office financially after the BOA money is spent. Discussion took place on using Migrant Funding (if we are awarded) and possibly applying for some HUD money to help finance that office.
Laurie indicated she likes the idea of getting more established in eastern North Dakota. She also has a question of how to continue the services when the BOA money is spent.

The directive from the board is to further explore the idea of a Grand Forks Office, and to get back to the board at October meeting, unless the IOLTA committee requires action sooner.

LSC

The folks from LSC are scheduled to be in North Dakota starting the week of August 22. In preparation for this visit we have been working on revising our program manuals to make sure they cover what we are doing and what is required for reporting purposes.

Adele Page, Deputy Director has been working with the Administrative Office staff regarding changes in the Human Resources and Operations Manuals. In doing so she applied changes that agree with basic principles of employment law, what we actually do, including policies regulations.

One change updated the manual to include both regular and part time staff in being able to use Cultural Leave, to make sure it is requested in advance, and there is a cap in the number of hours available each year.

Motion was made by Laurie Forsberg to approve the revised Human Relations Manual. Second to the motion was made by Rob Manly, motion carried.

One of the board members questioned how these updates would be communicated with the staff. Rich said for the short term that will be the responsibility of the local office supervisor, and when we do our December staff training we will make it a point to discuss it further with staff.

In addition we have implemented monthly all staff training by phone and specific items could be discussed during those meetings.

After briefly discussing changes in the revised Operations Manual, a motion was made by Mary Kae, and seconded by Laurie to approve the revised Operations Manual. Motion carried.
Board members Clyde, Lisa and Veronica were contacted regarding another term as board members. Lisa and Veronica agreed to this, and depending on Clyde’s health, he will also continue.

Rich, together with the CI Staff worked on updating the Case Management Manual and the Intake Manual. In some cases there is some redundancy, as some issues addressed in both manuals.

Mission Statement has been revised and needs to be updated in these manuals. The priorities are listed as very broad categories. The wording needs to be made consistent, reflecting reports on priorities submitted.

The resource allocation guidelines are on the pages following the next pages after priorities, including the cases we would look at concentrating our resources on first.

The Intake Manual set up in the order that staff would do the application. Site to the LSC regulation is indicated, if specifically required.

Ethical considerations the intake specialist needs to focus on, for example – how we enter in names – correct spelling, with no all CAPS in the names are covered in the manuals.

Another change is that now all the LSC prohibited cases are located in one place now.

In the future in updating manuals we will give you just the section where the change is made, instead of the entire manual. This will make the process easier to work with.

Lisa Tomlinson moved that both the revised Intake Manual and the Case Management Manual be approved. Mary Kae seconded the motion and the motion carried.

After discussing the new Board Orientation Manual, Laurie moved, seconded by Mary Kay that the Board Orientation Manual be approved. Motion carried.

Ex Dir Report

In addition to the written Executive Director’s report, Rich added information regarding the new Trenno software. It has been installed and the process of scanning continues on. With the new copier in the Fargo office, Minot, Bismarck and Fargo are working at inputting
information. The cases information is fully searchable, and so the Advocate’s Corner on our website as a location for cases is no longer being used for that purpose. The goal is to scan our documents back 6 years.

Medical Legal Partnership

Adele Page gave an update on the Medical Legal Partnership she has been working on. LSC has encouraged us to partner with the medical community. This summer she had the law school interns work 2 afternoons a week on this project. She is keeping track of the pilot study and will continue to assist those with issues of domestic violence, insurance etc. as they apply to those with medical issues.

Next Meeting

Board indicated that weekends for board meetings are not good. We will do a doodle poll to find out availability for the next board meeting. We will look at the 1st part of October, sooner if necessary.

Adjourn

There being no further business on the agenda, Gary declared the meeting adjourned.

Mary Kae Kelsch, Secretary/Treasurer