The September 30 meeting was opened by President Laurel Forsberg.

Absent members of the board were Rob Manly and Alan Lerberg.


The following representatives from the Legal Services Corporation were also in attendance at the meeting: Grayce Wiggins, LSC Program Counsel; William Sulik, Office of Compliance and Enforcement, and Janice Fontell, Fiscal Compliance Analyst.

President James Sandman welcomed the group prior to the board meeting, but he had to catch a flight so did not stay for the actual board meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 13 meeting was made by Tracy Laaverg, seconded by Mary Kae Kelsch, motion carried.

There was no activity to report regarding Regulation 1612 on Legislative Administrative Advocacy or on Regulation 1620 on Emergency Non Priority cases.

Wade Enget, Mary Kae Kelsch, and Gary Ramsey have each agreed to serve another 3 year term on the board of directors; Long time board member Alan Lerberg indicated he will be resigning after his term expires at the end of this year. Contact has been made with the State Bar regarding these reappointments and the replacement.

Leona Kutz, who is also completing her term, has also agreed to another term, and a sponsoring agency will be contacted.
Brad Peterson is working on finding a replacement for our Native American Board member from the United Tribes Technical College.

Committee Appointments

Bob Wood was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Personnel Committee.

A new Public Relations Committee consisting of Mary Kae Kelsch, chair; Wade Enget and Lenora Kutz were appointed.

Fiscal Report

Kim presented the August 2017 Budget to Actual Financial Report and discussed variances over the budget in certain line items. Wade questioned the Equipment line item. Rich explained that Gale was in the process of replacing computers that needed to be updated. Overall LSND is within budget for the month ending August 31, 2017.

Kim presented a Grant Update Worksheet to the board so they are aware of where LSND is at with the different funding sources. Laurel asked Kim to go over the grant funding sources as there were new board members in attendance. Much discussion ensued.

Various discussions took place with each funding source such as NARF Criminal. Rhonda Belgarde-Baker explained the reasons we are struggling to spend that grant out is based on the politics on the reservation. Rhonda also explained the VITA Grant to the board and different issues with spending that grant. The two domestic violence grants were discussed and the restrictions that hinder spending down the STOP Grant. Kim explained where we are with certain grants such as Title II Aging Services, Human Trafficking Grant and others. Rich discussed the Surcharge Filing Fee funding and the percentage allocated to LSND.

Preliminary Budget

Kim presented the 2018 Preliminary Budget to the board with an estimated $2.2 million in revenue. The budget plans for a .7% reduction in LSC funding, as programs were previously notified of this reduction via e-mail.

Grayce asked if we have a contingency budget, but the answer is no we don’t. The obvious question then was what happens if we receive less funding – what will that mean for our program? Discussion took place regarding other possible funding sources.
Personnel Costs – All employees will receive a step increase according to the grid in the Salary Administration Plan. There is included a 5% Blue Cross increase built into this budget. The Blue Cross/Blue Shield anniversary date for open enrollment is the end of November.

Do we get a break on Lexis? Wade said the county receives a break and he will send us information. We also need to check with NLADA for a possible break in costs.

Wade made a motion, seconded by Paul, that the budget be approved as submitted. Roll call vote indicated unanimous approval.

Pending grant applications were discussed including a grant for training on disability issues. We will plan to send someone to the NOSSCR Disability Law Conference.

LSND had applied for the LAV (Legal Assistance for Victims) grant and were recently denied funding. We can re-apply again in a year.

Breezy discussed the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. CDBG is a housing-related grant available in the major entitlement cities. Paul moved to approve the fiscal report, seconded by Lisa. Roll call vote indicated unanimous approval.

**PAI Plan**

The PAI Plan was completely reviewed for the first time in several years. There was a question from the floor on how we decide which cases are in-house via those being contracted to PAI? Rich indicated he currently makes that decision but is looking at doing a review of this process. There are some of things that need to be reviewed and updated.

PAI contracts are used in areas where we don’t have staff attorneys that can do the cases either because of the location of the client or our staff attorneys have a full caseload.

**Bylaws Committee**

Gary Ramsey, Bylaw Committee Chair, reported that the board had recently amended its bylaws and a copy of the amended bylaws is in each board member’s packet.
Wade expressed thanks to Gary and Paul of the Bylaws Committee for providing suggestions to update the bylaws, which were ultimately passed at a recent board meeting.

Audit and Finance Committee

Mary Kae Kelsch, Audit and Finance Committee Chairman reported that she reviews and signs fiscal matters about once a week. The entire committee has not met recently.

Our auditors, Brady, Martz are currently being audited by an outside firm.

One of the representatives from LSC asked if the LSND board has anyone who is a financial expert; that is, someone with an understanding of financial statements to verify the reports. Laurie responded that she has an undergraduate accounting degree.

Fidelity Bond Requirement is followed and all people with signature responsibilities are covered by our insurance policy.

It was suggested that as new board members are recruited, part of that recruitment should be based on gaps in skill set. A person with strong financial management/fiscal compliance person would be desirable, but that person doesn’t need to be a CPA. A budgeting background is helpful to make certain best practices are used.

Deputy Director

Adele Page has made an effort to hire an attorney for the Medical Legal Partnership in Fargo. It takes a person with definite areas of expertise. So far that person has not been identified.

Civil legal needs assessment surveys were sent out to all members of the bar, a years worth of clients who had email addresses in our system, as well as members of the community. About 550 survey responses were received. The offices are continuing to collect surveys with walk in clients. This data is being used for strategic planning and also priority setting.

The compiled data indicated the three highest ranked areas of need were family law, housing, and domestic abuse.

This information will also be used for future funding, indicating the need in our state for these programs.
We are reviving the newsletter and the next one should be out in early November. We will be highlighting new staff; there are three new attorneys and two new law clerks on staff.

Brad has written an article for the newsletter on Marcy’s Law with the hope for some changes in civil representation.

MLP Bush innovative grant is a Medical Legal Partnership collaboration with Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota and family Healthcare. The grant from Bush is a total of $208,000, with $8000 reserved from program related travel expenses. The funding will last for two years and then we need to identify sustainable sources; however, we have three years from the date of the award to spend the money out. Key to the success of the project is identifying outcome data that will assist with sustainable funding from organizations such as hospitals. We may be able to obtain assistance from the local universities to evaluate the outcome data.

Rich talked about the new MLP grant. It is exciting news, because we are now on the cutting edge of legal services!

The recently opened Grand Forks Office is planning an open house on Wednesday November 1. If anybody is in the area they are invited to stop by for cookies. Law students will have a chance to do an office externship starting next semester.

There will be 6 externs needed for the 1st semester maybe 8 after that.

Looking ahead we have scheduled staff training for Nov 29-30. The board meeting will be in the evening of the 30th, with the annual CLE on Dec 1, the next day. Topic for the CLE includes elder abuse which goes along with the topic on guardianship.

Rich expressed thanks to the board and staff who participated in the strategic planning session. The strategic plan will be a good roadmap to follow – things we can do including having each office prepare a workplan.

Jim Sandman provided inspiration to us, enforcing the fact that somebody is up there fighting for us to keep the money coming.
Scheduling for next year’s board meetings was discussed. Board members will check their schedules and bring that information to the November meeting so the 2018 board dates can be set.

Mary Kae Kelsch moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Lisa Tomlinson. The chair declared the meeting adjourned.

Mary Kae Kelsch, Secretary/Treasurer