

David C. Schopp
Chief Executive Officer

Michele M. Finn
Chief Administrator



Rocco Lucente II
President

James J. Rooney
First Vice President

Howard G. Foster
Second Vice President

Lisa M. Patterson
Secretary

Raymond P. Reichert
Treasurer

October 3, 2016

Karen M. McCarthy, Clerk
Erie County Legislature
92 Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202

Dear Ms. McCarthy:

Pursuant to Article 13 of the agreement with the County of Erie, attached please find the minutes of the annual Board of Directors meeting held on September 22, 2016.

If there are any questions or further information is required, please contact me at extension 501.

Very truly yours,

MICHELE M. FINN
Chief Administrator

MMF/map

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
THE LEGAL AID BUREAU OF BUFFALO, INC.
September 22, 2016

PRESENT:

Irving A. Barrett, Jr.
William F. Coughlin
Howard G. Foster
Bernard B. Freedman
John T. Kolaga
Rocco Lucente II
James L. Magavern
Charles C. Martorana
Frank B. Mesiah
Lisa M. Patterson
James J. Rooney
Alan Williams
David C. Schopp, Chief Executive Officer
Michele M. Finn, Chief Administrator

NOT ATTENDING:

Patrick Brown
George Baba Eng
Michael J. Hecker
Salvatore R. Martoche
Cheryl Meyers-Buth
Athena Mutua
Raymond P. Reichert
Allison Stravino
Valerie Watson

President Rocco Lucente called the meeting to order.

Mr. Lucente asked for a motion to approve the minutes from June 23, 2016. A motion was made by Frank Mesiah, seconded by Irving Barrett and unanimously passed.

David Schopp introduced Joint Chief Attorney Paul Curtin. Mr. Curtin spoke of the need for civil legal providers in our area to collaborate with each other more effectively. Federal funders expect collaboration and this area has lost funding due in part to the lack of collaboration between legal services offices. (At this time James Rooney arrived.) Mr. Curtin spoke of service gaps in surrounding areas. For example: There are landlord tenant issues in Cheektowaga, Tonawanda, and Lackawanna where people do not have access to help/representation. Mr. Schopp gave examples of how most civil legal services agencies are competing for the same funding and duplicating services. In order to help

meet the need for collaboration, a suggestion for the possibility for a group of LAB's Board of Directors to meet with other civil service agencies' Board members. (At this time Lisa Patterson arrived.) The need for a Development Director to facilitate funding, grant applications and marketing/PR was also discussed. A discussion arose and it was determined to further discuss this at the Planning & Development Committee meeting and at the next Strategic Planning meeting in November.

Reports of Committees

Nominating Committee

Mr. Lucente stated that Board Member Bernard Freedman decided not to renew his three year term. Nominating Committee chair, James Rooney stated the committee has met and have one candidate at this time to recommend. (Joseph Passafiume resume was distributed through email and at the meeting.). If any Board member has other potential candidates to recommend, please contact James Rooney or Rocco Lucente.

Planning and Development Committee

Committee Chairperson Rocco Lucente spoke briefly on June 23, 2016 Grand Opening Celebration. There is a Planning and Development Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday, October 4th at 4:00 p.m.

Reports of Officers

Treasurer's Report

- 2016-17 funding for the Attorneys for Children Unit is \$2,724,268. This is a \$40,260 (1.5%) increase from the prior year grant of \$2,684,008.
- The Attorney General 2016-17 grant is \$199,104 which is the same as the previous year.
- The September 7th, 2016 Erie County grant application was submitted requesting a \$111,732 (2.88%) increase from prior year of \$3,878,213 for \$3,989,945. This request includes expenses for a criminal investigator and two (2) paralegals.
- The Judiciary funding contract starting January 1, 2017 is \$1,367,913. The current contract ends 12/31/16. The increase includes funding for three and one-half (3.5) additional attorneys and three (3) additional paralegals. Although the award is for five years, the Bureau must apply every year.
- The Bureau was awarded \$56,119 from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services for 2016-17. The award includes funding for Legal Aid in the amount of \$30,305 and Legal Services for the Elderly for \$25,814.

- The Bureau was awarded \$255,000 from the IOLA Bank Settlement grant for the Mortgage Foreclosure Prevention Project for a two year period (12/1/16-11/30/18).
- The Aid to Defense contract for 10/1/16-9/30/17 is the same as the prior year at \$73,700.
- Ms. Finn stated there is a tentative agreement with the Attorneys Union and an executed agreement with the Support Staff Union for a new health insurance plan as of December 31, 2016. The Bureau was forced to move from an experience rated plan to community rated plans.
- An IOLA grant application for approximately \$650,000 will be submitted September 29, 2016.
- At this time the Bureau has a loan balance of \$460,000. Accounts receivable vouchers sent out as of 9/22/16 is \$2,027,670.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Funding

- *The Civil Legal Services Unit has been awarded a 73% increase in funding from the Judiciary Civil Legal Services Funds for 2017. The award totaling \$1,367,913 is \$578,976 more than last year's amount. We intend to create 3.5 additional attorney positions and three paralegal positions with this increase. The additional staff will be focused in three areas: Housing, Family, Bankruptcy, and Education Law.*
- *Oishei Foundation funding for the CRLS project has concluded, but we are continuing the project on a limited basis while we seek for alternative funding.*
- *We are pursuing a possible grant from Erie County to assist individuals who are unable to access benefits or secure jobs due to legal impediment. The proposal was developed by Jan Barrett and Joe Passafiume.*
- *Our Erie County 2017 funding application has been submitted. I have been informed by the County Budget Office that we should not expect a significant increase.*

Personnel

- *We have recently posted three new positions in the Criminal Defense Unit. Funding for the positions resulted from the retirement of two staff attorneys in*

April. In addition to a new attorney, we will have two paralegals whose primary responsibility will be the eligibility screening of prospective clients pursuant to the new eligibility guidelines established by the Indigent Legal Services Office. We are hoping to fully implement the new guidelines and procedures by December 1st.

- *Ileah Welch, an attorney in the AFC is leaving for a similar position in Washington D.C., and we have hired two "temporary" attorneys in that Unit to cover for an attorney who is on a disability leave and another on maternity leave.*

Old Business –

In order to complete the Strategic Planning process, another meeting is scheduled for November 5th from 8:30-12:00 (noon).

New Business – As stated earlier, Board member Bernard Freedman chose not to renew the option for another three-year term. A motion to elect Joseph Passafiume to a three-year term ending in 2019 was made by Charles Martorana, seconded by James Magavern was unanimously approved.

A motion to elect the following Board members to a three-year term expiring 2019: James Magavern, Charles Martorana Frank Mesiah, Support Staff Representative Valerie Watson, and Allison Stravino was made by Bernard Freedman, seconded by Charles Martorana and was unanimously approved.

Mr. Rooney requested a motion to elect to the 2016-17 Executive Committee:
Rocco Lucente II, President
James J. Rooney, First Vice-President
Howard Foster, Second Vice-President
Lisa M. Patterson, Secretary
Raymond P. Reichert, Treasurer
Salvatore Martoche

A motion to approve the 2016-17 Executive Committee was made and unanimously approved. This was followed by an approved motion to move into Executive Session.

(At this time William Coughlin and Alan Williams left.)

Respectfully submitted,



David C. Schopp
Assistant Secretary