



ARKANSAS ACCESS TO JUSTICE
REPRESENTING HOPE

425 W Capitol Ave, Suite 480 · Little Rock, AR 72201 · 501.492.7175 · arkansasjustice.org

Arkansas Access to Justice Foundation Board Meeting
February 9, 2024 via Zoom

Foundation Board Members: Cliff McKinney – President, Hillis Schild – Treasurer, Brian Clary – Secretary, Kyle Burton, Judge Amy Dunn Johnson, Deepali Lal, Tabitha Lee, Harry Light, Kristin Pawlik, Gwendolyn Rucker

Unavailable: Sainabou Sonko – Vice President, Aaron Brooks, Victoria Smith, Eddie H. Walker, Jr., John Thomas Shepherd

Guests: Kendall Lewellen & Caroline Sykes (Center for Arkansas Legal Aid), Lee Richardson (Executive Director, Legal Aid of Arkansas)

Staff: Abby Brenneman, Tameka Parker, Edith Chavez De Oseguera, & Autumn Ballard

Welcome and Introductions – Mr. Cliff McKinney

- Mr. McKinney called the meeting to order and took a moment to welcome Ms. Brenneman as the Foundation and Commission’s new Executive Director.

Business Items

- A quorum was present for the meeting.
- **Approval of November 2023 Minutes** – Mr. McKinney asked for a motion to accept the November 2023 minutes. Mr. Light made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Clary seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed.
- **Correction to August 2023 Minutes** – Mr. McKinney noted an error in the August 2023 Foundation Meeting minutes that was brought forward for correction. The error was a misreport of Ms. Lal being re-elected to the Foundation Board when her position was an appointment. This was intended to be a term renewal for Ms. Sonko as Vice President. Mr. McKinney asked for a motion to approve the correction to the August 2023 minutes. Mr. Burton made a motion to accept the correction. Mr. Clary seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion passed.
- **Executive Committee Action** – Mr. McKinney reported that the Executive Committee signed a resolution to add Ms. Brenneman to all bank accounts and remove Jordan Bates-Rogers. The committee also approved the purchase of a CD and invested more



ARKANSAS ACCESS TO JUSTICE
REPRESENTING HOPE

425 W Capitol Ave, Suite 480 · Little Rock, AR 72201 · 501.492.7175 · arkansasjustice.org

funds at in mixed Assets, through Stephens bank. There was no further discussion of these actions.

- **Approval of December 2023 Financial Report** – Ms. Schild noted that until after the 2023 Audit, December 2023 financials would remain in draft form. She reported a record year in 2023 with actual income at almost \$2 million. The Foundation initially budgeted \$901,750 for expenses for 2023, but came in under budget at \$732,882.
- **Motion** – Mr. McKinney asked for a motion to approve the December 2023 financial report. Judge Johnson motioned to approve. Ms. Schild seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed.
- **Approval of October-November 2023 Financial Report** – Ms. Schild noted that the Finance Committee already reviewed and accepted the October-November 2023 financials with no large variances or questions to report.
- **Motion** – Mr. McKinney asked for a second to approve the Finance Committee’s motion to accept the October 2023 financial report as written. Mr. Clary seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed.
- **Motion** – Mr. McKinney asked for a second to approve the Finance Committee’s motion to accept the November 2023 financial report as written. Ms. Lee seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed.
- **January 2024 Finance Committee Meeting** – Ms. Schild reported that the Finance Committee reviewed account and budget information to make sure it met compliance standards. The committee reviewed Low Risk, Moderate Risk, and High Risk portfolios, as well as the Target Reserve fund, Mixed Asset fund, and the Arkansas Community Foundation Endowment Statement. All portfolios and funds were within compliance regulations. As this report was for informational purposes, no motion was needed to accept.

Executive Director’s Report – Ms. Abby Brenneman

- **Courthouse Kiosks** – Ms. Brenneman reported that there were 16 counties left to cover in the Arkansas Courthouse Kiosk project. She noted Sevier and Monroe counties were next to be installed. Ms. Brenneman also reported that the Foundation was utilizing an IT company to service kiosk issues on-site, paid hourly, as a satisfactory service contract had not yet been found. Google Analytics showed about 14,000 kiosk users in the past 30 days.
- **Program Coordinator Position** – Ms. Brenneman reported that she interviewed seven candidates for the Program Coordinator position opening and had narrowed the pool to



ARKANSAS ACCESS TO JUSTICE

REPRESENTING HOPE

425 W Capitol Ave, Suite 480 · Little Rock, AR 72201 · 501.492.7175 · arkansasjustice.org

two candidates, pending second interviews. Judge Johnson offered to assist with second interviews.

- **Joint Board Retreat** – Ms. Brenneman noted that this year, the Joint Board Retreat and Power Act CLE would be combined into one event on May 16-17, 2024, at the Marshall Museum in Forth Smith. Ms. Brenneman pointed out a sign-up sheet for planning committee volunteers and asked board members to also fill out a questionnaire of biographical information for potential trivia at the event.

IOLTA Report – Ms. Tameka Parker

- Ms. Parker reported that from last year to this year, IOLTA doubled and nearly tripled – in 2022, the Foundation was averaging about \$50,000 monthly, with that figure now up to about \$180,000. Ms. Parker noted that there were currently 46 Preferred IOLTA Banks.
- Judge Johnson brought up a discussion to consider increasing the rate required for banks to become Preferred IOLTA Banks. Discussion included a historical desire to increase the rate, creating an index or benchmark to have banks paying up to 2-2.8%, and allowing the Finance Committee to gather more information and make a recommendation for increasing the rate to the board.
- **Motion** – Judge Johnson made a motion to authorize the Finance Committee to increase the Preferred Banks rate. Mr. Light seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed.

Project Reports – Ms. Edith Chavez De Oseguera

- **Language Justice Project** – Ms. Chavez De Oseguera reported 90 completed translations performed so far for various district and circuit courts around the state and that the project was still inviting judges and clerks to participate. Translations included Spanish, Karen, and Marshallese. Ms. Chavez De Oseguera highlighted partnerships with the Marshallese Educational Initiative, the Customary Law and Language Commission from the Marshall Islands, and the National Center for State Courts in effort to increase the number of Marshallese interpreters. Ms. Chavez De Oseguera also reported the planned creation of plain English videos to explain basic legal concepts that will also be translated into other languages.
- **Free Legal Answers** – Ms. Chavez De Oseguera reported wanting to expand the reach of the FLA program by placing flyers and information in public libraries and other community areas, especially in underserved counties. She noted 21 virtual clinics scheduled for 2024. In-person clinics included a partnership with Entergy, with others in the works. Additional funding was awarded by the Arkansas Bar Foundation to use for



ARKANSAS ACCESS TO JUSTICE

REPRESENTING HOPE

425 W Capitol Ave, Suite 480 · Little Rock, AR 72201 · 501.492.7175 · arkansasjustice.org

the program. The number of volunteer attorneys was down, and Ms. Chavez De Oseguera encouraged board members to sign up.

Partner Organization Updates – Mr. Lee Richardson, Ms. Kendall Lewellen & Caroline Sykes

- **Center for Arkansas Legal Services** – Mr. Richardson highlighted the Language Access project that Ms. Chavez De Oseguera mentioned and spoke about the dire need for more translation services. Mr. Richardson reported a record year in case closures for CALS, and noted their main caseload topics: Family Law, Housing, Criminal Record Sealing. He also highlighted Divorce, Orders of Protection, and Landlord/Tenant cases.
- **Legal Aid of Arkansas** – Ms. Lewellen and Ms. Sykes shared a slide presentation with updates at Legal Aid, and discussed focusing on outcomes, solving problems, and realizing change. They gave a summary of Legal Aid’s services (relating to family law, housing, consumer protection, among others), and noted receiving traffic from individual websites as well as the Courthouse Kiosks. They discussed VOCALS, the need for more attorneys in Arkansas, and outreach at both in-person and virtual events. They reported serving over 200,000 Arkansans.

Grants Report – Ms. Gwen Rucker

- Ms. Rucker reported that the Grants Committee met on January 22, 2024 to discuss grants funding distribution for the year. With an approved budget of \$500,000, the committee chose to allocate \$425,000 to legal aid agencies with \$75,000 left to go toward grant applications. Ms. Rucker spoke about the historical grant disbursement between the legal aid organizations – 60/40 – and reminded the board that last year, the committee moved forward with a 50/50 split instead after consideration of cases closed and resources used by each organization. At the January 22 meeting, the Grants Committee decided to make a formal recommendation to the board to keep the 50/50 disbursement split. Mr. McKinney asked for a second to approve the Grants Committee’s recommendation. Judge Johnson seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed.

Next Meeting Date – May 16-17, 2024 – Joint Board Retreat – Fort Smith, Arkansas

Meeting Adjournment – Mr. McKinney asked for a motion to adjourn after no new business was brought forward. Ms. Schild motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Burton seconded. With no further discussion, the motion passed.