

**MINUTES - FAMILY LAW COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING
Date: December 6, 2014
Place: Kellog Center, Lansing**

I. Administrative Matters

A. Chair Rebecca Shiemke called Council to order.
All 21 council members were present: Rebecca Shiemke, Carol Breitmeyer, Dick Halloran, Kent Weichmann, Robert Treat, Elizabeth Bransdorfer, J. Matthew Catchik, Jr., Christopher J. Harrington, Sahera Housey, Mathew Kobliska, Peter Kulas, Colleen Markou, Vanessa Moss-Wilson, Anthea Papista, Kristen Robinson, Amy Spilman, Randall Velzen, Gail Towne, Steven Reinheimer, Daniel Bates, Tina Johnson (Yost)

Absent: None,

Ex-Officios & Former Council Members: Todd Selin, Ross Stancati

Guests: Bill Kandler, Rio Vale, James Chryssikos

- B. All attendees introduced themselves
- C. Chair Report - Rebecca Shiemke reported that there were 620 attendees at the 2014 Family Law Institute and 52 presenters/moderators, and of the 620 attendees there were 50 sponsored new members at reduced rates and 13 scholarship attendees... Also at the Family Law Institute, the Blaine Johnson award had been given to John Mills. Chair Shiemke also issued a reminder of the Family Law Council calendar found at FamilyLawMi@gmail.com, and for which the password is Familylaw.
- D. Recording Secretary: The October and November minutes were approved with it being duly noted that the spelling of Amy Spilman's name should be corrected.
- E. Treasurer's Report/Finance Committee – Chair Halloran moved to adopt the budget. It was suggested that the Council finances are stronger than last year, but the travel expense reimbursement number was questioned. The council approved \$300 annual reimbursement per council member for lodging and travel.

II. Key Committees

- A. Amicus – Gail Towne reported that the committee is working on the Helton case for January and also working on the Final Order court rules the Court Rules committee.

B. Court Rules –

Co-Chair Chris Harrington noted that the video conferencing court rule is now in effect. ADM File No. 2013-18, effective January 1, 2015.

The Committee discussed a possible amendment to either SCAO Form MC 09 or amending MCR 2.504(D), or both. MC 09 is the “Dismissal” form and requires a party or attorney to certify that: “This notice is the first dismissal filed by the plaintiff based upon or including the same claim against the defendant.” MCR 2.504(D) includes the possibility of costs being imposed against a Plaintiff who commences an action “based on or including the same claim against the same defendant.” The Committee believes Domestic Relations cases should be exempted from MCR 2.504(D) altogether because the nature of dismissals & re-filing in Domestic Relations cases is different than general civil cases. However Form MC 09 is not mandatory for dismissals; parties can prepare their own. MCR 2.504(D) is also a “discretionary” rule for the Court on costs. There was council discussion, and council may take up the issue in the future.

There was some discussion on the issue of defining/clarifying “final order” in MCR 7.202(6) as it relates to Domestic Relations cases. The Committee agreed to defer to the Amicus Committee on this issue.

C. Legislation – No Report. It was reported that there are not a lot of new Bills at this time, and no Bills to discuss at this meeting.

III. Standing Committee Reports

- A. Adoption – No Report
- B. Alternative Dispute Resolution – Randy Velzen reported that the committee is working on various projects that may need council’s attention.
- C. Alternative Family – Peter Kulas suggested reading the Stiles v. Flowers case, where Judge Hillary applied the equitable parent doctrine in a same sex marriage.
- D. CLE/ICLE – It was announced that the Annual Family Law Institute will again be at the Suburban collection Showplace in Novi, and the planning for the event will be in March. It was noted that input is requested so content can be market driven.
- E. Domestic Violence – There was discussion about how best to reach out to the State Bar on the laws and rules affecting domestic violence.
- F. Family Court Forum – no report
- G. Family Law Journal – Anthea Papista reported that the focus continues to be on quality and editorial discretion.

- H. Family Law Journal Advertising – Kristin Robinson stated that we continue to seek out advertisers and Great Lakes Honor Roll contributors.
- I. Family Support – Kent Weichmann reported that the committee will be forming in the Spring.
- J. Membership – We are still considering how to go about amending the by-laws at the next annual meeting to make free membership for new attorneys one year instead of two, and to made law student membership free, as voted and approved at the November council meeting.
- K. Mid-Winter/Mid-Summer Seminars
 - a. Mid-Winter – This seminar is all set.
 - b. Mid-Summer – Elizabeth Bransdorfer discussed the possible locations of Boyne, Mission Point, and Grand Traverse, and the Homestead. There was discussion and a lot of support for Boyne.
- L. Political Action Committee – Ross Stancati announced that from Sept. to date there have been 34 contributions totaling \$3,595.
- M. QDRO/Taxation – no report
- N. Technology/Website – no report

IV. Ad Hoc Committees

- A. Social Media Committee – no report
- B. SCAO Forms Committee – no report

V. Announcements/New Business

None.

VI. Future Council Meetings

All council meetings will begin at 9:30 a.m., with a breakfast buffet starting at 9:00 a.m.

January 24, 2015	East Lansing - Kellogg Center
March 7, 2015	Ann Arbor - Weber's Inn
April 11, 2015	Novi – Double Tree Hilton Hotel
May 2, 2015	Grand Rapids – Amway Hotel
June 6, 2015	Ann Arbor - Weber's Inn

VII. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Treat, Recording Secretary
December 6, 2014