

**MINUTES – FAMILY LAW SECTION  
COUNCIL MEETING**

**Date: 11/16/2018**

**Place: Suburban Collection Showplace, Novi, Michigan**

**I. Administrative matters**

**A. Call to Order/Quorum and Welcome**

The council was called to order by Robert Treat.

**The following (19) council members were present:**

Sean Blume, Elizabeth Bransdorfer, Matt Catchick, James Chryssikos, Shon Cook, Sahera Housey, Jennifer Johnsen, Shelley Kester, Mathew Kobliska, Peter Kulas-Dominguez, Michelle Letourneau-McAvoy, Vanessa Moss-Wilson, Anthea Papista, Randall Pitler, Steven Reinheimer, Amy Spilman, Kent Weichmann, Donald Wheaton, and Hon. Tina Yost Johnson. Chair: Robert Treat.

**Council Members absent:** Christopher Harrington, Joe Hohler,

**Committee Chairs and Ex-Officios in attendance:** .

Kristen Robinson, Susan Paletz, Stephanie Johnson, lobbyist, Elizabeth Sadowski, Carol Breitmeyer, Randy Velzen, Anne Argiroff, Scott Bassett, Rebecca Shiemke, Barbara Kelly, Ross Stancoti.

**Guests:**

Melissa Heffner, Kelly Schalte, Julie Williams, Rachel Gruetzner, Sandra Glazier, Carol Hogan, Jeff Kirkey, Mark Crane, Alesha Burnash, Saraphoena Koffran, Melissa Baumgartner Umulis, Gary Allen Gardner, Sandy Musser, Kanika Ferency, Kathleen Allen, Ruth Goldner, Sarah Creem, Thekesa Wazniak Jenkins, Tyler Martinez, Jeff Murphy, Shalini Nangia, Liisa Speaker, Lisa Kirsch Satawa.

**Introduction of Attendees**

The Chair invited all in attendance to provide a more detailed introduction and description of their historical and current involvement with council.

**B. Chair Report**

Election to fill council vacancy created by resignation of Kent Weichmann to complete Kent's 1 year remaining term.

Motion to nominate Liisa Speaker by Kent Weichmann. Motion seconded.

Robert Treat made a motion to nominate Steven Heisler who was not in attendance but expressed interest. Motion seconded.

Nominations were closed on motion by Sahera Housey. Motion supported.

Motion passed.

Liisa Speaker was elected to fill the vacancy created for the remainder of Kent Weichmann's one-year term.

**C. Recording Secretary Report/Minutes**

Motion by Shelley Kester to approve the minutes for 9/27/2018. Motion seconded.

Motion approved by unanimous consent.

Motion was made by Shelley Kester to approve the minutes for the 10/13/2018 meeting. Motion seconded.

Motion approved by unanimous consent.

**D. Treasurer's report:**

1. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted within 45 days of the meeting for which they are requested to avoid issuance of a 1099.

**E. Corresponding Secretary Report**

No report.

**II. Key Committee Reports**

**A. Amicus-Ann Argiroff/Gail Towne**

Report by Rebecca Shiemke:

1. The Amicus committee is working on the *Dorko* case, taking the position opposing the Court of Appeal's view that a QDRO is a ministerial act. The COA obtained the correct result for the

incorrect reason. The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers will be asked to join in the Brief. Scott Bassett to review the Brief.

**B. Court Rules-Jenny Johnson/Peter Kulas-Dominguez**

Report by Jenny Johnson:

1. Meeting Information. Court Rules will meet by telephone conference the Tuesday before the Saturday Council meeting, at 1:00 p.m.
2. ADM File 2018-20. The committee recommends deferring to the Children's Law Section re: ADM File 2018-20.
3. ADM File 2002-37. The committee is reviewing the State Bar's proposal concerning e-filing and looking at issues related to timing of service. The proposal is 53 pages in length. The committee will have a more detailed report for the December meeting.
4. Committee is working on tracking positions on pending court rule changes through use of a google docs excel spreadsheet.

**C. Legislation -James Chryssikos/Randy Velzen**

1. **HB 6230, 6231 and 6232.** The committee addressed three bills related to abolishing protections against religious organizations that provide adoption services. The adoption committee would support this legislation if it would allow religious principles to be applied to private adoption referrals that do not receive public funding, and opposes the legislation as written.

Motion by James Chryssikos to support the bill with amendment to allow religious principles to be applied for private referrals to private adoption agencies. Motion was seconded.

Lengthy discussion held.

Motion by Michelle LeTourneau-McAvoy to table motion to December meeting for lack of clarity and challenging acoustics in large room making it difficult to hear discussion. Motion passed unanimously. 19 in favor. 0 opposed.

2. **HB 6316.** This legislation concerns termination of parental rights for parent convicted of certain offenses and convicted of habitual offender, creating a presumption for termination.

Motion by James Chryssikos to oppose the bill. Motion seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 19-0.

3. SB's 1082, 1083 and 1084. Bills to allow for gestational surrogacy contracts for compensation, currently illegal in Michigan.

Motion by James Chryssikos to support the bills with amendments recommended by adoption committee to add language to section 9(3) of 1082 requiring that the State registrar issue an original birth certificate immediately upon birth, with the same amendment in section 11(b). Motion seconded.

Discussion of difference between gestational and genetic. Bill modeled after ABA model bill (modeled on Illinois statutes).

Motion by Sahera Housey to table the bill and form a subcommittee to the Adoption committee to take a look at the bill. Motion seconded.

Motion to table passed, 18 in favor, 1 opposed. Shelley Kester and Michelle Lateurneau-McAvoy volunteered to serve on subcommittee.

4. Name Change Bill. Bill to make name change in a divorce gender neutral. Bill has not yet been introduced but Representative wanted feedback. Committee recommends positive feedback with recommendation the person requesting the name change solely makes the decision to avoid use as a weapon.
5. HB 4691. No update, status unchanged. Stephanie Johnson, Lobbyist reported election has changed voting majorities in the House from 56 to 52, Republican majority, and in the Senate, from 22 to 16, Republican Majority.

Lame Duck session the last week of November and two weeks in December.

Jennifer Johnson departed the meeting.

D. **Alternate Custody Proposal.**

No report.

### **III. Standing Committee Reports**

#### **A. Adoption.**

Dion Roddy referred to the report of the Legislative Committee.

#### **B. Alternate Custody Proposal-Barb Kelly**

No report.

#### **C. Alternative Family-Peter Kulas-Dominguez**

No report.

#### **D. Annual Meeting – Elizabeth Bransdorfer**

No report.

#### **E. CLE/ICLE – Elizabeth Bransdorfer**

No report.

#### **F. Collaborative Law-Randy Pitler Chair**

Randy Pitler gave the report.

The Collaborative Law Committee will be expanded to address limited scope representation and ADR.

#### **G. Domestic Violence-Rebecca Shiemke**

No Report.

#### **H. Family Court Forum-Matthew Kobliska.**

The composition of the Forum is changing in June 2019. The Forum will continue to be by invitation only. Next Forum will be historical in focus rather than educational. New Chair for the event next year.

#### **I. Family Law Journal-Anthea Papista/Amy Spilman**

No report.

**J. Family Law Journal Advertising-Sean Blume.**

Invoices have been sent to advertisers. Payments are coming in.

Bob Treat has placed an ad. Sponsors of Family Law Institute may be called to advertise in Journal.

**K. Family Support-Kent Weichmann/Carlo Martina.**

Report by Kent Weichmann:

The committee has not received much comment. Send comments to Carlo Martina and Kent Weichmann.

**L. Membership-Save Reinheimer**

1. Steven Reinheimer reported 2439 members based upon online record of paid members.
2. Requesting help from all section members of the section to grow membership. Help needed.
3. Recruit every lawyer in your office, recruit legal assistants to the legal assistant section. Members are encouraged to wear section pins to court.
4. 104 who attended Family Law Institute were not members of the section.
5. Email Matt Catchick for names of prospective members who attended Family Law Institute. Liisa Speaker will assist with identification of family law attorneys who are not members of the section. Goal: 50 new members.
6. Dues are due at the end of November 2018.

**M. Mid-Winter/Mid-Summer Seminars-Kristen Robinson/Elizabeth Bransdorfer**

Kristen Robinson gave the report regarding Mid-Winter:

1. Trip to Costa Rica scheduled from February 2-11, 2019. Sold out with 19 attendees. Group size was expanded.
2. Kristen is working on the seminar portion, calling speakers. 8 days instead of 7.

3. Will determine next year's destination by spring 2020. Contact with Kristen with suggestions.

Elizabeth Bransdorfer reported re: Mid-Summer Conference:

1. Traci Rink is arranging for Mid-Summer to be held at Terrace Inn in Petoskey, Michigan, in last two weeks of July. 35 rooms at Terrace Inn.
2. Motion by Elizabeth Bransdorfer to sign contract for Mid Summer conference at Terrace Inn, subject to State Bar approval. Motion was seconded.
3. Motion passed. 16 yes. 1 abstain. 1 member not present during vote.

**N. Political Action Committee-Matt Catchick**

No report.

**O. QDRO/Taxation-Bob Treat/Joe Cunningham**

No report.

**P. Technology/Social Media/Website-Elizabeth Sadowski/Peter Kulas-Dominguez**

No report.

**IV. Ad Hoc Committees**

**A. SCAO Forms Committee-Amy Yu/Gail Towne/Kent Weichmann**

No report.

**B. Twenty Year Review-Richard Halloran/John Schrot/Tina Yost**

Tina Yost Johnson gave report:

1. Committee is discussing revisiting true family court, 1 judge, 1 family.
2. Committee will be meeting before next FLC meeting.

C.     **Announcement/New Business**

1.     Shelley Kester requested committee chairs email committee meeting schedule and details to sak@wilsonkester.com.
2.     Bob Treat requested committee reports be submitted earlier to insure opportunity to review reports in advance of meeting.

Motion to Adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted. Shelley Kester, Recording Secretary

**NEXT MEETINGS**

Saturday, December 1, 2018, Weber's Inn, Ann Arbor, Breakfast 9:00 a.m., Meeting 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, January 5, 2019, Amway Grand Plaza, Grand Rapids, Breakfast 9:00 a.m., Meeting 9:30 a.m.

No February meeting – Mid Winter Conference

Saturday, March 2, 2019, Crowne Plaza, Lansing, Breakfast 9:00 a.m., Meeting 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, April 6, 2019, Weber's Inn, Ann Arbor, Breakfast 9:00 a.m., Meeting 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, May 4, 2019, Suburban Collection Showcase, Novi, Breakfast 9:00 a.m., Meeting 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, June 8, 2019, Weber's Inn, Ann Arbor, Breakfast 9:00 a.m., Meeting 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, Saturday, September 26, 2019 (tentative) Suburban Collection Showcase, Novi, (during SBM NEXT Annual Meeting 2019, which is September 25-27)