

GENERAL PRACTICE MEETING MINUTES – October 15, 2009

Meeting called to Order.

Present: William Cataldo, Maury Klein, Clark Davis, Lynn Carlino, William Roy, Freddie Sackllah, Lynn Carlino, Elizabeth Silverman, Richard White. All absences excused.

Chairman's Report: Motion made to continue to have GP Section meetings remain for the foreseeable future at the Sea Grille Restaurant. Motion Seconded by Maury Klein. Motion was unanimously approved. Clark Davis suggested the monthly meetings continue to be on the third Thursday of each month. Approved.

Treasurer's Report: Maury Klein. For several years, despite dropping enrollment numbers, the Section has been able to maintain an appropriate carryover to prevent going into the red. The revenue for 2009 was \$2800 less this year. This does not include the \$2000 ICLE Scholarship Program. Overall, the Section lost approximately \$5000.00 last year. If we assume the membership remains the same, in the near future we will zero out our budget at our current rate of expenditures. Becky Hunter from the state bar verified our actual budget is \$5355.00.

General discussions were conducted on how to trim the budget. Raising the annual dues from \$20 to \$25 was discussed as a way to make up for lost revenue. Chair Dick White reported that membership in all bar association sections has fallen. The trend results from Michigan's current economic climate.

The discussion also included how and what expenses could be cut to maintain a positive monetary balance. Should the council meet fewer times? Should we reduce council member seminars and travel? Should we reduce the number of issues of the newsletter? Should we reconsider our contribution to the ICLE program? It was also learned the GP Section has faced less of a loss than some other comparable sections.

How should we attract new members? Is being a general practice attorney a dying breed? How can we attract new lawyers? We used to give them a free membership for one year and send them the newsletter. Should we do that again?

A long discussion was conducted on how to offer the newsletter by email only, or with an option to receive only the printed copy.

After several suggestions, Maury Klein moved to table further discussions to raise dues until next year. Freddie seconded the Motion. It passed on a 5-2-1 (abstention) vote.

Newsletter Report: Maury Klein indicated he is still waiting for articles from Clark Davis, Freddie Sackllah, Chris Carlson and Richard White from their recent trips.

Name Change: If the Section's effort to change its name, the statutory references needed for publication were incorrect. The Chair appointed a committee to restart the process because of the prior problems. William Roy and Clark Davis will head up that committee. The official name will be: General Practice – Solo and Small Firm Section.

Miscellaneous: William Cataldo moved to drop the term "person" from all titles associated with the Section. Lynn Carlino seconded. The motion passed on a 6 to 1 vote.

A final discussion was held to ask the question, "How do we reinvent ourselves?" How can we again be relevant for our members? Maybe, our newsletter should focus on the very reason we are experiencing lower revenues: How to profitably market a law firm. Publishing articles in conjunction with the ICLE program would provide needed information on how to make money in a tough market and keep people interested in remaining Section members.

Chair Dick White set up an exploration committee of Freddie Sackllah, Clark Davis and Richard White. The Chair also was going to open communication with judges.

Meeting adjourned until November 19, 2009.