President Richard Spier called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. on July 24, 2015. The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m. Members present from the Board of Governors were Jim Chaney, Guy Greco, Theresa Kohlhoff, Vanessa Nordyke, Ramón A. Pagán, Kathleen Rastetter, Kerry Sharp, Michael Levelle, Tim Williams and Elisabeth Zinser. Not present was Ray Heysell, John Mansfield, Audrey Matsumonji, Per Ramfjord, Travis Prestwich, Josh Ross and Charles Wilhoite. Staff present were Sylvia Stevens, Susan Grabe, Dawn Evans, Amber Hollister, Jennifer Walton, Paul Nickell and Camille Greene. Also present was: PLF BOD Member Robert Newell and PLF Director of Administration Jeff Crawford; Legal Heritage Interest Group representatives Janet Kreft, Katherine O’Neil, Mary Anne Anderson and Rachel Hull; and OWLs members Elizabeth Milesnick, Maya Crawford and Heather Weigler.

1. Call to Order

Mr. Spier called the meeting to order and welcomed new BOG member Michael Levelle. There was no quorum.

2. Member’s Room at OSB Center

Mr. Spier welcomed feedback from several members regarding the plan to repurpose the Member’s Room to accommodate the needs of nursing mothers who visit the OSB Center. Ms. Kreft and Ms. Hull asked the board to keep the current Members Room intact and let the Legal Heritage Interest Group work with the Executive Director to find a mutually agreeable solution. Ms. Milesnick, Ms. Crawford and Ms. Weigler presented arguments in support of a proper lactation room at the bar center stating it would be used frequently.

Motion: Ms. Kohlhoff moved, Mr. Sharp seconded, that the bar remodel the Members’ Room to accommodate nursing mothers, but keep the current furniture. After discussion by the board, Ms. Kohlhoff withdrew her motion and Mr. Sharp agreed.

Motion: Mr. Pagán moved, Mr. Cheney seconded, that the bar work with the Legal Heritage Interest Group to repurpose the room while maintaining the “traditional office” feel of the room. The vote, for presentation and possible ratification at the September 11, 2015 board meeting, passed 6-5. Voting in favor: Theresa Kohlhoff, Vanessa Nordyke, Jim Cheney, Kathleen Rastetter, Ramón A. Pagán and Tim Williams. Opposed: Rich Spier, Guy Greco, Elizabeth Zinser, Michael Levelle and Kerry Sharp.

3. New Executive Director’s Contract

Mr. Spier presented the draft contract and asked the board for approval to change the term to two years from one year and to offer severance pay for termination without cause of six months or for the remaining term of the contract, whichever is less. Ms. Zinser stated that salary increases should be determined by the board and not quantified in the contract.
No motion was made. Mr. Spier and Ms. Stevens will present the contract to Ms. Hierschbiel and will report to the board at the September 11, 2015 board meeting.

4. Budget Discussion

Ms. Kohlhoff led the discussion regarding the 2016, and subsequent budgets, and the need to either raise fees or reduce programs and services. She urged the board to undertake a professional poll to determine what programs members’ value and would be willing to pay more to keep. After considerable discussion, the board agreed that its consideration of the polling would be assisted by seeing what data the bar already has regarding program utilization. Ms. Stevens will also work with Ms. Kohlhoff to identify appropriate polling services.

5. Approve Co-Sponsorship of CEJ Call to Action

Ms. Stevens presented the CEJ’s request that the BOG sign on to CEJ’s Call to Action. [Exhibit A]

Motion: Mr. Cheney moved, Ms. Rastetter seconded, and the board voted unanimously to sign on to the CEJ’s Call to Action. The vote will be presented and possibly ratified at the September 11, 2015 board meeting.
Legal aid estimates that it has resources to meet about 15 percent of the civil legal needs of Oregon’s poor—down from 20% at the beginning of the recession. The single best way to increase the number of people who receive help accessing the system is to commit resources to hiring more lawyers.

OWLs members were generous supporters of the Campaign for Equal Justice again in this year’s fund drive! Over 34% of members donated to CEJ, contributing $186,000. OWLs members challenged each other and used the mighty OWLs listserv to encourage participation.

Way to go, OWLs!

Emily

At the time legal aid met Emily, she and her three young daughters were staying in a nearby shelter. Emily’s husband was physically and emotionally abusive and the violence had been escalating: he had recently tried to choke Emily in front of the children and made threats to kill her. He also had a gun that he had hidden from her. The children were afraid of him. Advocates from the domestic violence community helped Emily apply for a restraining order, but when her husband challenged the order, the advocates set her up for an appointment with a legal aid lawyer. They knew it would be difficult for Emily to stand up to her abuser in court without a lawyer. Her legal aid lawyer helped her prepare for the hearing and represented her at the hearing. The judge upheld the order, keeping the restraining order in place and providing for safe, supervised parenting time. With the constant threat of violence out of the way, the family feels safer and able to find more stable housing.

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