

**West Tennessee Legal Services Board Meeting Minutes**  
**March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**Present:** Laura Keeton, Barbara Hudson, Michael Tate, Cathy Clayton, Nhung Nguyen

Meeting was called to order at 4:31pm

1. First order of business: Cathy noticed a typo in the minutes- the word "motion" was spelled incorrectly under the "first order of business."  
Ms. Keeton motioned to approve the February minutes with the correction noted. Mr. Tate seconded; unanimously approved.
2. Second order of business: Programmatic Update-
  - a. Current LSC budget: Congress has passed the budget for 2022. LSC got a smaller increase than anticipated. We expected an estimated additional \$42,000 in LSC funding for 2022.
  - b. Disaster relief: Work is continuing to be done on the grant application. We applied at the last minute for the 2020-2021 disaster relief funding (NW TN counties affected tornado) and was awarded the funding. We received a follow-up call from LSC to try to give us more money. They suggested budget items such as a mobile unit for remote outreach. We can use this mobile for other purposes when the grant is over. LSC also suggested a chaser car for the mobile unit. Cathy expressed to LSC her concerns of the number of actual cases to be taken under this grant but was told that general outreach and education can be the focus under the grant.
  - c. Planning grant with TALS- Opportunity Act Funding: work is continued to be done on our grant proposal.
  - d. Fair Housing Rescue: We received the award letter for this grant. Next step is to negotiate a budget.
  - e. HIV/ AIDS program: The transition is going on smoothly. A decision on the agency to take over the Ryan White program should be made today.
  - f. LTCO: NWDD agreed to take over the LTCO contract effective immediately. We received recognition from the state for taking on this contract when no one else wanted to.
3. New Business:
  - a. Remote work policy: Currently, we are allowing exempt employees to have the option to request to work from home up to 2 days/week. We would like to extend this option to all employees, as their job duties allow. As gas prices are going up, our support staff are affected due to the higher price, and we want to retain employees and don't want them to start looking for other options closer to home. We can't be competitive in terms of salary, but we wanted to offer this flexibility to our employees. If employees do not perform well, then they'll lose the privilege. Discussion among board members was as follows:  
Ms. Keeton: as long as they don't abuse it  
Mr. Tate: as long as we have controls in place  
Ms. Hudson: as long as they don't abuse it  
Motion to recommend this policy to the board was moved by Ms. Keeton. Mr. Tate seconded; unanimously approved.
  - b. In an effort to retain employee and based on practical realities, Cathy presented recommendation to close WTLS' offices during the week between Christmas and New

Year. LSC already implemented this policy and other legal services are also doing this. It's getting harder and harder to retain employees so this would be an incentive; plus, most of our employees already take this time off. The courts are also closed during this time. She presented this to the committee for discussion with the plan to present to the entire board if the committee was favorably inclined. Discussion:

Ms. Keeton: In her experience, there's not a lot of work being done during that week anyways. Agreed with recommendation.

Mr. Tate: asked if this week will be with or without pay. He was told that the pay remains the same, which is paid. He recommends mentioning that to the employees.

Ms. Hudson: She doesn't have an issue with it. Thinks it's a great idea.

#### 4. Financial Update

Ms. Nguyen explained the decrease in cash in Jan 2022 vs. Jan 2021 and attributed the decrease to the increase in accounts receivable. The increase in receivable was explained as delay in payments for a couple of grants (VOCA, SNAP, etc.) and also due to the higher accounts receivable for housing counseling 4<sup>th</sup> quarter compared with the prior year's amount.

Accounts payable balance remains comparable with 2021. Ms. Nguyen explains that we will start to see the payroll-related liabilities in this year's balance sheet, due to the fact that WTLS moved payroll dates to 5 days later.

Cathy asked if anyone has any questions on the February financials and no question was raised.

Motion to adjourn was moved by Ms. Hudson and seconded by Mr. Tate.

After the meeting was adjourned, it was noted that the Committee did not vote to approve the financial report. Cathy sent out an email on March 14, 2022 to Mr. Tate, Ms. Hudson, and Ms. Keeton asking for them to vote to approve the financials. A motion was moved by Mr. Tate to approve the February financial and seconded by Ms. Keeton. There was no opposition to the motion and the financials were approved.

Approved by:   
Laura Keeton, Board Secretary

Date: 5/10/2022