

PRO BONO COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
MINUTES of MEETING
September 28, 2023 @ 4:30 p.m.– Zoom Meeting

ROLL CALL

Present

- Hon. Mindy Mora (Judicial Chair)
- Hon. Laurel Isicoff (Former Judicial Chair)
- Peter Kelly (Lay Chair)
- Nadine White-Boyd (Secretary)
- Matthew Bayard (Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc.)
- Joe Falzone (Clerk of Court)
- Karen Ladis (Dade Legal Aid)
- Jerry Leakey, Esq. (Legal Aid of PBC)
- Tom Messana (practitioner and BBA Foundation)
- Patricia Redmond (UM Law School Professor)
- Kim Rommel Enright (Legal Aid of PBC)
- Heather Ries (BBA)

Absent

- Steven Newburgh (Practitioner)
- Sheena Robinson (FRLS)
- Maria Gonzalez (Legal Aid Service of Broward County)
- Jon Martin (Martin County Bar Association)
- Kristina Gonzalez (practitioner)
- Ariel Sagre (practitioner)
- Joey M. Grant (BBA ProBono Fort Lauderdale)
- Britt Berg (Florida Rural Legal Services – Pro Bono manager)
- Amy McCaffrey Florida Rural Legal Services Attorney Berg's administrative assistant)
- Agnes Lambert (Florida Rural Legal Services Fort Pierce – Indian River, Martin County, Okeechobee and St. Lucie)
- Cassandra Paniagua (Florida Rural Legal Services- WPB pro bono coordinator)
- Charles Vercillo (Florida Rural Legal Services additional support/coverage to WPB pro bono)
- Carlos Sardi (BBA President 2023 – 2024)

- I. Approval of Minutes of May 24, 2023 Meeting. Motion to approve minutes by Tom Messana. Seconded by Jerry Leakey.
- II. Updated FLSB and National Filing Statistics – Filings are increasing. The need for pro bono services is even more apparent because of the increased filings.

- III. Low Bono Guidelines. Steve Newburgh sent an update via email that draft guidelines will be sent to the subcommittee.
- IV. Pro Bono Assistance Intake – Discussion of possible procedures/standardization for challenging situations; consideration of email blast of available cases similar to FLSD pro bono case notifications.
- V. Sub-Committee Reports and Discussion of Pending Projects
 - a. Pro Se Clinics
 - i. Monthly Pro Se Clinics continue to operate. The virtual version continues to be successful and allows for attendance by outside the district. Working on ensuring that attendees are humans and not technology logging in.
 - ii. Evaluation of Middle District’s pro se clinic’s website/app (developed by Judge Brown: <https://www.bankruptcyproseclinic.com>) and creation of program for Southern District
Joey Grant is working with David Berkowitz of Netprofession on the process for attorneys to register and be assigned to pro se matters. It’s a grid system. The Bar Foundation approved payment to Netprofession.
 - b. Help Desks
 - i. Working on centralized email address for pro se litigants.
 - c. Law School Programs. Patricia Redmond reported that:
 - i. University of Miami’s bankruptcy clinic has 10 students in the program with each student assigned to a case and a mentor. The students successfully handled a student loan discharge case.
 - ii. FIU’s program is in the start-up process.
 - iii. St. Thomas’s clinic will begin in the spring.
 - iv. Nova Southeastern’s clinic will hopefully start in the spring.
 - d. Website Review – Joe Falzone reported that no updates have been requested to be made to the website.
 - e. Veterans’ Programs – Matt Bayard reported that the Literacy Project is scheduled for 11/4/2023 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for the Southern District. To date, 35 attorneys volunteered to attend/participate. The attorneys will be paired with veterans. CLE will be available. Palm Beach, Broward and Martin Counties will also participate. The program will likely be live streamed and Matt will confirm. The project will also take place in Jacksonville and Tampa. Legal Aid providers are also participating. Discussion occurred as to whether additional attorneys are needed as having too many attorneys signing up but not enough veterans could result in attorneys being discouraged about volunteering.
 - f. Pro Bono Week – Karen Ladis reported that pro bono week is scheduled for October 22nd to 28th. Demystifying pro bono presentation will be done on 10/25/2023. There will be a pro bono honor roll showcasing the attorneys who handled pro bono cases and pro bono heroes will be recognized. Dade Bar YLD agreed to be a sponsor. There will be a virtual 5k from 10/22 to 10/28 to raise funds.

- g. Elder Affairs Subcommittee. The information with links of resources for attorneys to share with their clients will be placed on the Court's website. Joe will check links to ensure they are functional before posting.
 - h. Fresh Start Subcommittee (f/k/a Dress For Success) – The information was sent out to Chapter 7 and 13 trustees and consumer practitioners in Palm Beach County. Contact has been made with Broward County representative, and the flyer will be revised for Broward County. We are awaiting a reply from a representative in Miami-Dade County.
 - i. Student Loan Issues Subcommittee – Patricia Redmond reported that committee met to discuss what can be placed on the court's website.
- VI. Committee Interface with Legal Aid organizations – Reports from all Legal Aid Providers Concerning Improvement of Referral Systems
- a. Dade County Legal Aid. Put Something Back – 12 pro bono cases referred to attorneys.
 - b. Palm Beach County Legal Aid – Jerry Leakey reported that the process used to assign cases works.
- VII. Next meeting scheduled for January 25, 2024 at 4:30pm
- VIII. Meeting adjourned at 5:56pm