

**Equal Justice Authority Board
Minutes Board Meeting
February 3, 2025**

The meeting was convened at 3:36 p.m.

The meeting was conducted via Zoom.

Lauren Peach, Matt Baca, Toni-Anne Nunez, AJ Esser, Cesar Jimenez, Charlie Willman, Renzo Reategui, Elisa Overall (Emo) were present.

No members of the public were present.

The minutes of the January 5, 2025 and the January 22, 2025 Board meeting were approved with a change to the January 22, 2025 minutes so that all names of Board members in attendance are listed.

Charlie discussed a due date for Agendas and it was agreed that a Agenda draft would be sent to the Authority Board members by the Friday before the meeting. Charlie also noted that there was a need to develop the Authority's own website so that Agendas, minutes etc were more easily accessible to the public under open records and Emo agreed and said this would get done once the Authority had staff and funds to do this.

Finance update - Charlie indicated he had not been able to meet with Dawn Rojas of Judicial as she had been out last week. They are meeting this Thursday by Webex. Matt had provided judicial with the Access to Justice mailing information for checks to be sent. Charlie also reported that COLTAF had not been able to work with Fortis to get them to be a Prime Partner bank. Charlie said after he spoke to Dawn later this week he would reach out to one or two Prime banks to get a proposal from them and would also reach out to Alpine Bank for the same but telling Alpine that they would need to step up to be a Prime Partner for COLTAF funds as part of proposal. If any Board member had a suggested Prime Partner bank, Charlie asked that they send this to him. Charlie moved that he and the other appropriate officers be authorized to select a bank and also be authorized to execute banking resolutions needed to open the account and to allow the execution of appropriate signature cards. Lauren seconded - all approved.

Staffing agreement update - Lauren noted that they were close to having to final agreement with Equal Access Commission - she and Renzo should have a draft ready for next meeting. Renzo noted we might be need to modify the terms next year after we had some more experience with this agreement.

Legislative update - Emo said we are closer on the license plate funding proposal and that Legal Aid Foundation is actively in support. Matt said we have 2100 signatures of the 3000

needed and it now looks like the bill to authorize these plates might need to wait until next year's session.

Emo reported that with respect to the Legal Defense and Family Violence funds that are currently in judicial department's budget - there was a suggestion by a member of the Joint Budget Committee to cut these funds this year. The JBC seems to have backed away from this after lobbying by Legal Aid and supporting organizations. There is still the possibility that the JBC could move these to the Authority so that the funds do not apply to the Tabor cap. It's too early on this and we should know more in March-April. Matt agreed and said that this is threat to Legal Aid Funding but there is a large percentage chance that nothing happens; a small chance of cuts or a medium possibility that the Funds are moved to the Authority.

Matt said last week was rough week in connection with the Executive Orders. The most concerning is Rocky Mountain Immigration Advocacy Network which lost a large percentage of its funding used to help those needing immigration assistance. There is some talk of looking for injunction to stop this. Matt noted that the LSC is a separate 501(c)(3) entity which is separately funded so it is more insulated. Lots of legal aid providers though get funding through the funds which may be cut including a cut to VOCA funds. Charlie reported that CBA EC looking at these issues at its meeting later this week. Matt noted that funding challenges are not a new thing to CLS.

Open Meetings Law and CORA training, Continued - Lauren - Finalized discussion from last meeting. She noted that there is a Code of Ethics for Public Service which talks of what are conflicts of interest and if there are conflicts this limits participation in matters at issue and only allows participation by the conflicted board member if a quorum is needed; there are also limits on accepting gifts with limit of \$75 per donor per year. If a conflict exists, the Board member must provide prior written disclosure and the board member who had the conflict needs to physically leave the meeting unless needed for quorum as noted above.

A copy of Lauren's Powerpoint presentation from last meeting and this meeting is attached to these minutes.

Timeline - Toni-Anne suggested we discuss a timeline as the need to distribute funds will quickly arise. Charlie noted that the enabling statute required the Authority to establish rules (a) to ensure money received by a recipient from an Authority grant is used for purposes specified under CRS 13-5.7-206 and (b) to establish a funding formula (criteria for this) to use to determine the grant amount to each qualified civil legal aid provider. There are listed criteria in the enabling legislation. The Authority also needs to distribute all monies deposited into their account from the court fees less direct and indirect expenses with 67% provided to CLS and 33% provided to other qualified providers of legal aid services. Finally the Authority must by January 1 of each year file a written report with the House and Senate Judiciary committees

Matt said we needed to establish a time line to get this done so that grants can be made by July 1st. This timeline needs to be brought back by next meeting. Toni-Anne and Cesar agree to connect and to provide the Board with a proposed broad time line including: application deadline, decision deadline, and a time line to approve the two sets of rules noted by Charlie above. Discussion was held regarding public input and/or stakeholder into the process of creating funding criteria and formulas and the timing for this input. Charlie asked who would be engaged in this process and Emo said that she has been working on this. Questions were raised about criteria for rule making and this will be reviewed.

The next meeting will be February 18 at 4 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.



Charles H. Willman, Secretary/Treasurer