

**Equal Justice Wyoming
Board of Commissioners Meeting
June 16, 2015 3-5pm*****

Summary

Those in attendance in Cheyenne were: Pat Day and Ronda Munger. Ray Fleming Dinneen, Timothy Beppler, Mark Aronowitz, Mary Johnson, Stacey Obrecht and Jacquelyn Bridgeman joined by phone.

Approval of the May 19, 2015 Minutes. Jacquelyn made a motion to approve the May 19, 2015 minutes. Mary seconded. All who were present approved and no one opposed.

Executive Director's Financial Update. There is nothing out of the ordinary reflected in the financial statements.

Office Space Update. The Park County Commissioners have not yet approved our use of the space available in Cody, however, they are expected to after completion of an MOU. This space would be in an ideal location and there is a potential for more space. There is a meeting scheduled with Marathon to discuss additional space next week.

The Department of Education is setting up a meeting with Construction Management for June 29, 2015 regarding taking the current space Equal Justice Wyoming is in for their use. At the present time Construction Management does not seem to be in agreement with moving Equal Justice Wyoming as they are overloaded with managing the Capitol remodel moves. Chief Justice Burke and Justice Fox have discussed moving the Supreme Court storage out and perhaps having Equal Justice Wyoming create a self-help center in that space. There is an organization who has created a pro bono website and is willing to allow other states to utilize the license for this site free of charge. Clients would be income screened and then could submit a question via this site. A pro bono attorney would then answer said question.

Staff Update. Alisa introduced herself. She is completing the Hot Doc's training at this time.

Chris continues to place pro bono cases and conduct legal advice clinics. He and Angie conducted a CLE in Jackson last week and they will be attending the WTLA convention next and presenting a CLE there sponsored by the Young Lawyers. They have been approved to present a CLE at the State Bar Convention in Sept.

Grant Proposal Discussion. There are four remaining grant proposals requiring final decisions to be made; Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (WCADVSA); the Teton County Access to Justice Center (TCATJC); the Laramie County Community Partnership (LCCP); and the Wyoming Children's Law Center (WCLC). Mark and Angie had a meeting with TCATJC; from this meeting they learned that though the TCATJC would more than likely change to a staff attorney model to keep their funding, they feel that the PAI model is working for them in this area and that they would be taking a step back considering all the work they have presently put into their

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program. It has been the experience of Equal Justice Wyoming and other programs that the PAI model is not economically efficient, but may be working well in Teton County. Angie's concern is the amount of funding (\$95,000.00) and only providing services to one county. Pat is sensitive to the fact that where there was no program at all before there is now something that is working and he is reluctant to back track. Mark feels this program is the exception and that this board should fund them for at least another year with the knowledge that it may not continue unless it can be proven that it is working and that pro bono work is added. Why are they reluctant to go to the staff attorney model? The space for the attorney, buying computers and such, losing involvement from current attorneys and since this is a high cost area to live may not be able to attract an attorney for the amount Equal Justice would fund. Chris commented that it is hard to place pro bono cases when other attorneys are being paid. Tim wanted a feel for the number of people TCATJC is serving versus the number from our Rock Springs office. Last year there were about the same from each program. He also expressed concerns about cash flow problems. Angie assured him that they are doing better however; they still do not have an operating fund. If renewed Tim would like them to know that this board will be looking to ensure this program is working from a financial point. This program does have strong court support. Pat feels it is justifiable to continue to support this program at this time even though as a board it has been decided not to support PAI programs. Stacey, Jacquelyn, Ray and Tim agree and feel that because of the enthusiasm shown by the folks at TCATJC this board should support this program. Pat suggested that before the board takes action on TCATJC that the other requests be discussed. Are there any further cuts that can be taken by the WCADVSA? Angie feels if they try to cut them any more they would not be able to support a Cody office. Tim is concerned about WCADVSA focusing on one segment of the population, though several board members felt strongly about focusing on this segment because these cases are very complex and would not be a good fit for pro bono and Legal Aid of Wyoming, Inc. shies away from these cases. Angie shared the WCADVSA concerns about opening up for general cases as this could cause conflicts which would hinder their representation of victims. How is WCADVSA covering the state at the present time? This program uses the same case management system as the University of Wyoming clinic. The clinic focuses on cases close as they are not allowed to travel and the WCADVSA takes care of the rest of the state. At the present time it is very difficult to cover the Cody and surrounding area because of the travel time. Pat expressed his view regarding having a general office through Legal Aid of Wyoming, Inc. versus WCADVSA in Cody, he does not feel it is the appropriate time to give Legal Aid of Wyoming, Inc. additional funding with the issues that are currently happening. Tim wondered if Equal Justice Wyoming could place someone in Cody directly. At the present time with Equal Justice Wyoming being aligned with the Supreme Court this is not an option, perhaps in the future this board could consider this option. Mark requested a drop dead number for this program with the Cody office included and stated that he was comfortable with waiting another year for a Cody office. Angie has already went back to WCADVSA and requested they bring their proposal down to \$340,000.00 which they have done and feels this is the figure they need. Jacquelyn agrees that coverage is needed in this part of the state but,

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wondered if there was another way besides utilizing Legal Aid of Wyoming, Inc. or WCSDVSA. Angie explained that utilizing an existing program cuts down on the overhead costs for an office. Pat supports the WCADVSA Cody office as does Stacey. At the present time there are two attorneys at the WCADVSA trying to cover the state which hinders them from meeting this need and the Cody area is quite a distance away. Tim did some calculating and determined that approximately \$94,000.00 of the WCSDVSA grant proposal will be spent on the Cody office. After doing some rough calculations Pat suggested if the board drop WCDVSA to \$220,000.00 (their current funding level), there would be sufficient funds to support the LCCP, the wind down for WCLC and TCATJC. Tim is concerned that the LCCP program may bear fruit however; there is already a lot of focus in the southeast corner of the state where this program would also focus when there are other areas that do not have any assistance. The Big Horn area being where the biggest gap in services are at the present time. Pat summed up the conversation. It is a close question, though he would love to fund the LCCP the fact is that boots on the ground representing clients is essential. Supporting the WCSDVSA, the work they do and that they are a good grantee is part of Equal Justice Wyoming's strategic goal. Therefore, he suggests funding WCADVSA at \$340,000.00, the TCATJC at \$95,000.00, the rest to wind down the WCLC program and not fund the LCCP at this time. Stacey agrees. Jacquelyn questioned if the board does this which she agrees should be done, does Equal Justice Wyoming have to fund the Cody office permanently? It is hard to pull back once funding has been granted. Pat confessed a motive to fund WCADVSA, because they are a good partner it makes it easier to go back to the Legislature for more funding. These grants are year to year and there is not a guarantee of funding in the next cycle. It is made clear in each grant cycle that the funding is for a year and not guaranteed in the future. Pat said he would entertain a motion to fund WCADVSA at \$340,00.00 with the understanding that they open a Cody office and that it may not be funded next year, fund the TCATJC at \$95,000.00 without changing their current model and anything left to go to WCLC to wind down the cases they have ongoing from this grant cycle. Tim so moved. Angie stated that she would need an exact dollar figure for the WCLC grant contract. The motion was amended to state the WCLC would be funded at \$20,000.00. Tim so moved again. Stacey seconded. All who were present were in favor and no one opposed. Pat requested members to state their vote individually for the record; Tim-yes, Mark-yes, Ray-yes, Stacey-yes, Mary-yes, Pat-yes. In addition he asked that an email be sent to the voting members who were not present so that they would have their vote on the record. Cathy-yes, Rae Lynn-No

Next Meeting: August 18, 2015, 3-5pm

Meeting adjourned at 5:04pm.

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Interim Board Action: Angie requested an interim board vote to fund the LCCP grant request for \$70,000, increase the Children's Law Center to \$45,000., approve the grant year adjustment for the UW fellowship and fund office space for the WCADVSA office in Cody utilizing unspent grant funding. Tim moved to approve. Stuart seconded. All who responded approved, however; Stacy voted No to an increase for the Children's Law Center.