A meeting of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Minority Bar Committee was held on Thursday, June 14, 2019.

Calling Meeting to Order
Chair Tyesha Miley called the meeting to order.

I. Introductions of attendees:
   a. Brief introductions of attendees occurred.

II. Action Items & Announcements.
   A. Approval of May 16, 2019 Minutes.

      The minutes of May 16, 2019 were approved as presented. (Tsiwen Law Motion, 2d by Beverly Rampaul). Motion carries unanimously.

   B. Asian Pacific American Bar Association Sponsorship for Ad in Banquet Program.

      Tyesha explained that the MBC traditionally supports the Asian Pacific American Bar Association Banquet with a sponsorship Ad in the program booklet. We have money in our budget and could support a sponsorship of $500. Sharon reminded the Committee that we had sponsored an ad for the Barristers Gala of $500 and that we try to sponsor Pennsylvania Minority Attorney Affinity Bar events. A Motion as made (and seconded by Barbara Ransom) to provide a sponsorship ad in the amount of $500. The motion passed unanimously.
III. Special Presentation – Philip “Phil” Yoon – Chief Staff Attorney Pennsylvania Superior Court – Update on Actions taken at the PBA Annual Meeting.

Phil Yoon is an At-Large PBA Board of Governors Member and is also a Member of the PBA House of Delegates. Phil reported that next year’s slate of PBA Officers were approved: Vice President, Kathleen Wilkinson; Chair, House of Delegates, Kim Morton; Secretary, Beverly Rampaul; and Treasurer, Terry Weiler. Phil also mentioned some of the recommendations that passed the House of Delegates (HOD), including the Recommendations concerning the Risk Assessment Instrument, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Bail Funds. The MBC had taken positions on these recommendations and the House voted in accord with the MBC positions. Two recommendations did not pass the HOD. One was on amending the code of professional conduct with respect to advertising as a specialist (which was reported out of the Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility Committee) and the other was a tuition waiver recommendation from the Children’s Rights Committee. Phil explained to members that one of the arguments regarding voting against the tuition waiver argument concerned an analysis that the bill was going to pass anyway (which we would support) and that PBA taking a position on it could needlessly use our political capital that we might need for other bills/positions where it would matter.

IV. Subcommittee Chair Reports:

A. Minority Attorney Conference – Marisa Lattimore, Gina Thomas & Rhodia Thomas (October 3-4, 2019, Philadelphia)

Marisa Lattimore reported. The Subcommittee held a planning call on May 30th and another call is scheduled for June 25. Phoebe Haden and Tom Kline are the keynote speakers. Panel topics are set, and the Subcommittee is working on speakers. The Conference theme is Communities Under Attack: Leadership Going Forward. The panel topics include immigration, ethics, marijuana reform and impacts on business development, voter suppression, and a judicial panel concerning Batson challenges. Marisa noted the A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. award will be presented at the Conference and she requests members consider nominating individuals for this prestigious award. Unfortunately the Tree of Life Rabbi is not available. Members suggested potential speakers from the Anti-Defamation League, David Amesman and David Storesberger. Tsiwen reminded the Subcommittee to discuss the A. Leon Higginbotham Jr. award nomination.

B. Membership Development – Cherylle Corpuz, Sharon López & Jacqueline Martinez.

Sharon López reported. If anyone is interested in joining the Subcommittee, they hold calls on the 4th Friday of the month. The Subcommittee is working on completing the first phase of the pictorial directory and is focused on members of
the executive council first. They hope to be done with this phase by the end of the summer. The work is a bit like herding cats. Another thing the Subcommittee is doing is designating Ana Paulina Gomez to send welcome emails to new members of the MBC.

C. Diversity Summit – Andrea Farney, Sharon Barney, Anthony Cox, Jay Silberblatt, & Patrice Turenne

Andrea Farney reported. The Subcommittee is having its first planning meeting for the 2020 Diversity Summit on June 27th at noon. Please attend the call and let Louann Bell know if you are interested in joining the Subcommittee. The initial discussion of the Subcommittee will be on (1) Summit location; (2) whether to blend with the Business Forum; and (3) format changes to the program.

D. Minority Law Day – Nigel Scott, Patrice Turenne, Rachel Hadrick, Robert Datorre, Verdell Dean and Imogene Cathey

Patrice Turenne reported. She advised that for Eastern and Central PA, they are going to get together to work on the problem. All groups are are planning to use the same problem.

E. Community Outreach – Raphael Castro & Nego Pile

Sharon López reported for the Subcommittee. She advised that they are looking to recruit about 10 attorneys interested in Youth Court for the Philadelphia area. Raphael Castro is unable to make the call today and he is working on this project with Nego Pile.

F. Government Attorneys – Beverly Rampaul, Nefertiri Sickout, Gina Thomas

Gina Thomas reported. The Subcommittee had a meeting with Beverly and Gina. They are still looking for others to join the Subcommittee. Meanwhile, they are planning a happy hour at the Office of General Counsel (OGC) University which is held in September in Harrisburg. They are looking at being a resource for minority attorneys in the government sector.


Ana Paulina Gomez reported. She works on the First but not the Last article. If anyone has any suggestions for who to feature, please contact her. Arlene Marshall-Hockensmith also reported that she works on the #BlackLivesMatter and #SayHerName column. Members are again advised to contact her for suggestions/input. The deadline for the next newsletter is September 10, 2019.
H. Governance – Rachel Hadrick, Marsha Grayson

No report.

I. Nominations – Henri Marcial & Sharon López

Henri Marcial and Sharon López reported there isn’t anything new at this time.

J. Legislative – Tsiwen Law & Brenda Marrero

Tsiwen reported and ceded the state report to Ashley Murphy of PBA. Ashley reported on HB 1170, The Construction Industry Employee Verification Act, with prime sponsor Rep. MacKenzie. The bill would require construction industry employers to use the E-verify system to check on employee immigration status. This bill has bipartisan support and appears to be moving as it was voted out of committee on June 4th. Henri Marcial asked about the definition of a contractor for purposes of the bill. Ashley is going to add HB 1170 to the MBC legislative matrix. Ashley further explained how situations can arise where representatives learn of positions taken by PBA and then the fact that PBA has a position affects other issues that PBA has an interest in. Until June 30th, the primary state level action will be on the budget.

Tsiwen reported on the Federal Level. The House passed HR 6 which concerns legal status for DREAMERS. It will go to the Senate. The Senate passed a Disaster Aid Bill.

V. New Business.

MBC Member Patrice Turenne selected for YLD Bar Leadership Institute for the 2019-2020 Bar Year. Congratulations to Patrice! Phil Yoon and Stephanie Lattimore are co-chairs of BLI.

VI. Member Comments or Concerns

A. Tsiwen Law reported on an incident where Subcommittee Member Guerline Laurore (Luzerne) was in the news speaking out about a comment made by a Luzerne County Councilman describing Luzerne County as “like the Black child here” when it comes to state funding.
B. Sharon López reported the phrase “geographic diversity” should really be relabeled and referred to as “geographic representation.” For example, one might say that it is important to have geographic representation from all areas of the state in the PBA House of Delegates, i.e. the different Zones. However, when we are talking about Diversity and Inclusion as it relates to diversity and inclusion in our bar membership, we are focused on remedying the historic marginalization of groups of lawyers based on human (and not geographic) differences such as race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion and mental/physical disabilities.

C. Constitutional amendment to change appellate Judges. There was discussion about putting this topic on the agenda for another meeting. This involves HB 196 which would organize the judiciary into geographic representative districts. The PBA supports merit selection of appellate judges. Members would like to track this bill.

D. There is a promotional video of the Minority Bar Committee that we want to have on our section of the PBA web page. It is 13 minutes long and Members are encouraged to look at it and use it as a recruiting membership tool.

VII. Adjournment. Motion made and seconded to adjourn.

Next Executive Council Meeting July 1, 2019.
Next Meeting Date: July 12, 2019

Minutes Submitted by Andrea C. Farney, Secretary.