Pennsylvania Bar Association
Minority Bar Committee
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 19, 2020

Attendees: Anthony Cox, Jr. (Meeting Chair), Tyesha Miley (Chair), Tony Thompson (Vice-Chair), LaToya Winfield Bellamy (Secretary), David Trevaskis (PBA Staff), Rodney Akers, Julie Auerbach, Sharon Barney, Laurie Besden (LCL), Laurie Carroll, Jimmy Chong, Adriane Davis, Thadeus Edwards, Jennifer Ellis, Andrea Farney, Bridget Gillespie, Donald Hahn, Trent Hargrove, Carlton Johnson, Stephanie Latimore, Marisa Lattimore, Tsiwen Law, Sarah Lloyd, Kristen Long, Sharon Lopez, Henri Marcial, Lynn Marks, Lisette “Mimi” McCormick, Michael McDonald, Wesley Payne, Beverly Rampaul, Michael Sand, David Schwager (PBA President), Dolly Shuster, Jay Silberblatt, Jessie Smith, Gina Thomas, Rhodia Thomas, Lori Whitfield and Philip Yoon.

A remote meeting of the Pennsylvania Bar Association (PBA) Minority Bar Committee (MBC) was held on Thursday, November 19, 2020 during Committee/Section Day.

Anthony Cox, Jr. called the meeting to order at 11:02 p.m.

I. Welcome and roll call.
   A. Moment of sharing and remembrance of Amber Racine, Esq.

II. Action Items.
   A. Approval of the October 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes on motion by Dolly Shuster and second by Wesley Payne.

III. Subcommittee Chair Reports:

   A. Newsletter – Anthony Cox, Jr. informed that a strong issue of Houston’s Legacy Newsletter was circulated.

   B. Legislative – Presented by Tsiwen Law.

       The U.S. House of Representatives passed a Clean Energy Bill that includes an "environmental justice" fund to help racial minority communities address pollution concerns. The U.S. House of Representatives passed a clean energy bill.

   C. Minority Attorney Conference – Presented by Gina Thomas.

       The Subcommittee has been meeting to plan the conference scheduled for October 7-8, 2021 to be held at the Crowne Plaza, Harrisburg. They are considering topics such as climate change, social justice, judicial reform, selection of a keynote speaker and focusing on the Honorable A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr. Award. The Subcommittee would appreciate hearing from anyone that has contacts with the Commonwealth's Lieutenant Governor, John Fetterman and...
Second Lady – Giselle Fetterman or the Commonwealth’s Secretary of Health – Dr. Rachel Levine.

D. Membership – Presented by Sharon Lopez.

It was announced that profile information is still being accepted to update the PBA MBC website.

IV. Liaison Reports

A. YLD – Presented by Anthony Cox, Jr.

Chair Brandon Jordan has reached out to law schools for interest. There is a plan to collaborate with Widener Commonwealth Law School’s Black Law Students Association on a virtual networking event. The ultimate plan is that each law school will identify a PBA MBC liaison.

B. PBA Diversity Team – Presented by Michael Sand.

An update on the Diversity Team’s program was provided and particularly the Inclusive Leadership and Decision-making program. The importance of sponsoring young minority leaders was highlighted.

C. Education – Presented by Dolly Shuster.

A call was put out for interested members to join the educational efforts.

D. Rising Star Award – Presented by Anthony Cox, Jr.

Per Maraleen Shields, the timeline for nominations to receive the Rising Star Award is as follows: Nomination Form Release, 2/1/21; Nomination Submission Deadline, 3/26/21; Announcement of Awardee, 4/23/21; and Presentation of Award, 5/20/21.

V. New Business

A. Anthony Cox, Jr. shared that Laurie Besden of Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers (LCL) is interested in partnering with MBC to recruit for volunteers to help diversify LCL’s volunteer base. Laurie encouraged members to reach out to her at Laurie@lclpa.org and share her contact information with colleagues who might be interested in volunteering. They need is in the area of lawyers and judges who have gone through mental health and/or addiction issues and are willing to do peer support.
B. Mimi McCormick on behalf of the PBA Civil and Equal Rights Committee (CERC) is putting together a subcommittee on mental health and police reform response. This is in response to the recent police fatal shooting of Walter Wallace, Jr. in late October 2020 and Ricardo Muñoz in September 2020. If anyone from MBC is interested in being part of this subcommittee, please let her know.

C. President Schwager joined the meeting and wished the MBC well and offered congratulations on its good work. He noted the awards luncheon would follow our meeting and he encouraged members to attend the Bar Foundation Night out. President Schwager was recognized for his excellent interview of Chief Judge Sánchez at the Diversity Summit.

VI. Member Comments or Concerns

A. Mike Sand requested a follow up on the Executive Order dated September 22, 2020 prohibiting diversity and inclusion, implicit bias and other training offered to combat systemic racism in federal government and those contracting with the federal government. Andrea Farney commented that a WIP subcommittee was working with some MBC members on how to respond and also suggested that the President Schwager send a letter to President-Elect Biden’s Transition Team. Lynn Marks, Mimi McCormick and Rhodia Thomas offered additional comments on action by other PBA committees as well as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. Mimi McCormick added demographics on diversity citing the Interbranch Commission. Jessie Smith included her knowledge of steps taken by the Office of Attorney General back in the 1980s and Donald Hahn spoke about the importance of mentoring.

B. Lynn Marks advised the Committee that the WIP Quality of Life Committee is putting on a virtual pot luck on 12/16/20 at 5:00 pm. The idea is to have diverse foods and the Committee may end up putting together a cook book of the recipes. She also advised members that there is a Virtual Mindfulness Walk scheduled for 3:00 p.m. on 11/20/20 lead by President-Elect Kathleen Wilkinson.

C. Wes Payne advised members that our MBC Recommendation that the PBA Board of Governors make the Minority Governor and Women Governor positions permanent positions would be on the House of Delegates agenda on Friday, November 20, 2020 for a vote.

VII. Adjournment.

Next Executive Council Meeting – November 30, 2020 at 12:00 p.m.
Next Committee Meeting Date: December 11, 2020 at 12 p.m.

Minutes submitted by LaToya Winfield Bellamy, Secretary.