Pennsylvania Bar Association
Minority Bar Committee
Meeting Minutes
Friday January 10, 2020

Attendees: Tyesha Miley (Chair), Tony Thompson (Vice-Chair), Andrea Farney (Secretary), Louann Bell (PBA), Sharon Barney, Fred Cabell Jr. (PBA Legislative Director), Jenn Coatsworth, Anthony Cox, Sam Encarnacion, Rachel Hadrick, Trent Hargrove (PBA Diversity Officer), Stephanie Latimore, Tsiwen Law, Marisa Lattimore, Sharon López, Brenda Marrero, Arlene Marshall Hockensmith, Michael McDonald, Maria Nucci, Wes Payne (PBA Zone 1 Governor), Nego Pile, Beverly Rampaul (PBA Secretary), Michael Sand, Jay Silberblatt, David Trevaskis (PBA Pro Bono Coordinator).

A meeting of the Pennsylvania Bar Association Minority Bar Committee was held on Friday, January 10, 2020.

Chair Tyesha Miley called the meeting to order.

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

II. Action Items.
   A. Approval of December 13, 2019 Meeting Minutes.

      The December 13, 2019 Minutes were approved with the following amendments: Section IV B, “She was” to “The Co-chairs were”; IV C, adding a semi-colon after “racism”; IV F, adding a comma after “in” adding the word “clause” after pre-clearance, capitalizing Voting Rights Act, and adding County v. Holder to Shelby; VI 3, changing “May” to “March.”

III. Subcommittee Chair Reports:
   A. Diversity Summit – Andrea Farney, Sharon Barney, Anthony Cox, Jay Silberblatt & Patrice Turenne

      Andrea Farney reported. As previously reported the Summit will be held in Montgomery County and the Montgomery County Bar Association is collaborating with us. The Subcommittee is still working on the precise date in October and the specific hotel venue. We have had some difficulty nailing down the date and an appropriate venue, but the Subcommittee hopes to have this done.
soon. The Subcommittee meets on the 3d Friday of each month @ 10:00 am and the next meeting is Friday, January 17 @ 10:00 am.

B. Nominations – Henri Marcial

Sharon López reported for Henri. The following PBA award nominations are being accepted: Civil & Equal Rights Champion Award, David M. Rosenblum GLBT Public Policy Award, Award for Outstanding Leadership in Diversity and Inclusion. The PBA Women in the Profession is also seeking nominations for Officer positions. There will be more openings on the Supreme Court Disciplinary Board.

C. Community Outreach – Raphael Castro, Nego Pile

Nego Pile reported. There is an event at Shiloh Baptist Church in Philadelphia (on Christian Street) following the Barristers’ Breakfast on MLK Day, January 20, 2020. It will be from approximately 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. Various topics will be covered, including voting rights, real estate, and bankruptcy. Please consider attending/volunteering.

D. Newsletter – Arlene Marshall-Hockensmith

Arlene Marshall-Hockensmith reported. The next deadline for Houston’s Legacy is March 9th and the publication is slated for April 22, 2020. Arlene advised members to contact the Newsletter Subcommittee editors if interested in submitting an article. She is going to send out a listing of the editors by their column to the MBC listserv. Feel free to reach out to them directly.

E. Legislative – Tsiwen Law & Brenda Marrero

Tsiwen Law reported. There isn’t anything new on the state side and budget hearings will occur when they are back in session. HB 196 (Seeking to Regionalize Appellate Court Judge Elections) passed the House. See below further discussion Section V.C.

IV. YLD Liaison Report – Anthony Cox

Anthony Cox reported. The YLD is interested in working with the Black Law Student Association Chapters at the various law schools, e.g. Widener, Dickenson, Temple, Villanova, Pitt.

V. New Business

1. Meeting dates consolidation (April & March, 2020)?
Tyesha explained the April meeting would fall on Good Friday. We do have a meeting scheduled for March 26 (Committee & Section Day). It was decided to cancel the April meeting and consolidate it with the March 26th meeting.

2. Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on PBA Policy

Members should refer to the following documents distributed prior to, and available at, the meeting: (1) Report and Recommendation of the Task Force on PBA Policy; (2) PBA Bylaws Committee Report Concerning Task Force on PBA Policy Report and Recommendations; (3) Bylaws Committee Minority Report Addressing Matter Raised by the PBA Task Force on PBA Policy Report and Recommendations and (4) PBA Women in the Profession Position Concerning Task Force on PBA Policy Report and Recommendations.

Various members gave their views in opposition to various aspects of the Report and Recommendation of the Task Force on PBA Policy. This included Sharon López and Wes Payne discussing their views of the Task Force Report and Recommendation. Jenn Coatesworth described the PBA Women in the Profession Position Concerning the Task Force Report as outlined in the written document (4) above. Sharon López moved the MBC support the PBA WIP Position and Wes Payne 2d. The Motion passed unanimously.

3. House Bill 196 – PA House Passes bill seeking to regionalize appellate court judges.

The Committee discussed HB 196 which would divide up the state into voting districts for purposes of electing appellate court judges (and Supreme Court Justices) from these representative districts. This is a very partisan bill that passed the House. The PBA has a policy position on support merit selection of appellate judges. Merit selection of appellate judges is not compatible with a regional election scheme. Also, members discussed concerns on how the regional proposal would negatively impact minorities and individuals of color. It was noted that other committees within PBA are considering positions on HB 196. There is also a concern that this type of set up would lead to judicial gerrymandering and we would oppose that type of selection scheme. Nego Pile and Sharon López are going to gather more information on the bill and the committee anticipates possibly taking a position on this bill at our March meeting.

VI. Member comments or concerns

Sam Encarnacion requested members keep Puerto Rico in their thoughts and prayers as recent severe weather has made many people homeless there. There is an organization in Philadelphia that is collecting resources for people.

VII. Adjournment
Next MBC Meeting Date - February 14, 2020
Next Executive Council Meeting – February 3, 2020 @ 12:00 pm

Minutes Submitted by Andrea C. Farney, Secretary.