



## ENRLS COUNCIL MEETING

May 15, 2019  
Brennan's Restaurant, Houston

### ENRLS MINUTES

#### I. Welcome and Introductions

**Present:** Steve McMillen, Susan Maxwell, David Klein, Buck Benson, Lisa Dyar, Aaron Vargas, Caroline Sweeney, Erin Chancellor, Pete Wahl, Ashleigh Acevedo, Nathan Block

**Via Phone:** Connie Westfall, Mike Dillinger, Kristen Fancher

**Absent:** Mary Mendoza, Rebecca Skiba, Lyn Clancy, Kellie Billings-Ray, Paulina Williams, Walt Shelton, Greg Ellis

Steve McMillen opened the meeting at 11:05 AM. Before beginning the business agenda, Steve introduced Ashleigh Acevedo, incoming Editor in Chief of the Texas Environmental Law Journal. Ashleigh is working with Lyn Clancy on transitioning responsibilities.

#### II. Treasurer's Report

Pete Wahl provided the Treasurer's Report. The SBOT is still working to implement new software and we do not yet have access to the full suite of accounting capabilities. As a result, while we are close to the end of our fiscal year, the accounting for revenue and expenses is running a few weeks behind. This made it impossible to have a complete update of the ENRLS financials before the meeting.

So far, our total YTD expenses are \$223,000 with known outstanding items of approximately \$30,000 for the Buck Wynne scholarship payments, \$10,000 for Superconference scholarships and \$10,000 for the website revamp. We expect revenue of approximately \$294,000 and that is running a small amount less than our projected \$300,000 budget. We have \$335,000 cash on hand.

Budgeting for Superconference was discussed. All revenue and expenses are held in the year of the conference. It was noted that this is important to allow to year over year comparison. There was discussion of making this historical practice into a documented standard practice for

the Section. The timing of finalizing the 2019-2020 budget was then discussed. Steve recommended that we send a draft for comment via e-mail, which Pete will distribute in early June.

### **III. Secretary's Report**

Draft minutes for the meeting held on February 20, 2019 were circulated prior to the meeting. Edits received prior to the meeting were incorporated. There were no corrections or edits offered at the meeting. David Klein moved with Susan Maxwell's second to approve the minutes. The minutes were approved.

### **IV. Nominating Committee**

The Council next discussed nominations for new officers and members of the Executive Committee. The Council discussed what our policy was regarding having more than one person from the same organization. The consensus was that such a practice would be disfavored. There was also a discussion about diversity, both individual (gender, age, race, geographic area, etc.) and type of organization represented (private practice, in-house, government, NGO, etc.). It was noted that we currently have a lack of NGO representation on the Council. Several members agreed to contact individuals to gauge interest in serving. Steve asked that we make these contacts asap so that the slate can be included in the next e-mail bulletin to the membership.

Pete Wahl noted that we have liberalized our policy on reimbursement for travel. We should have a greater ability to help accommodate travel from NGOs and others who need assistance and Pete will consider this further.

### **V. ENRLS Playbooks**

The Law School Committee, Education Committee and Membership Committee have completed their respective draft Playbooks. The Sponsorship Committee has completed a draft version but anticipates revisions after the 2019 Superconference to reflect lessons learned this year. Still pending are Playbooks from the Publications and Communications, Pro Bono, and Website and Technology Committees, and a draft Playbook covering Council functions. It was noted that the Playbooks will become controlled documents with revision histories and document dates added, available on the Council-only portion of the Section's website.

### **VI. Committee Updates and Recommendations**

#### **a. Pro Bono Committee**

Per the Council's decision in February, the Section's charitable contributions this year have been as follows: \$3,500 to Tree Folks, and \$2,500 each to Texas Trees Foundation and Trees for Houston. The contributions were from the 2018-2019 budget and we will consider any 2019-2020 pro bono donations at an upcoming meeting.

The recipient organizations were grateful and two requested to display the ENRLS name / logo to acknowledge our donation. At our level of donation, Tree Folks offers six tickets to their fall fundraising gala. Steve will solicit attendees from the Council.

#### **b. Publications & Communications Committee**

Ashleigh reported on her transition to Editor in Chief. Lyn will support Ashleigh through the completion of Vol. 49. Issue 49.1 is complete and expected to be released in June. 49.2 is being edited now with Lyn and Ashleigh splitting the review responsibility. Ashleigh will take over completely when work begins on Vol. 50. Articles for 50.1 have been submitted and the Journal is soliciting articles for 50.2.

For budgeting purposes, Pete Wahl inquired about the printing schedule in the next fiscal year. Three issues (49.2, and 50.1 and 50.2) should be printed in FY 2019-2020. The recent reduction from three issues per volume down to two issues per volume was discussed. Ashleigh believes it is meeting our needs and wants to continue at that rate a while longer before considering further changes. The potential for shortening the timeline between submission and publication was discussed. Shortening the timeline would help in getting out articles on emerging / hot topics. This in turn may help in soliciting submissions. The possibility of expanding the scope beyond being “Texas-centric” was also discussed. The Council expressed a general preference to maintain the Texas law focus, consistent with serving our members, but expressed an openness to considering revisions to the format, process or publication schedule.

The Council’s new quarterly e-mail bulletin was discussed briefly. Aaron and Steve are still discussing the format but generally prefer a short, focused communication.

#### **c. Law School Committee**

Kristen began by noting that Jon Bull is taking over management of the Buck Wynne scholarship program from Kerry Halliburton. Jon reports that the transition has gone smoothly and has been very easy. Kerry has served on the Law School Committee for many years and the need to provide some recognition for his service was discussed.

Some of the internships for Summer 2019 have already started. The students receive their stipend payment three weeks into the internship and that payment will come from the Section’s 2019-2020 budget.

The Law School Committee suggested St. Mary’s or SMU for the next November Council meeting to support / facilitate a school program there.

#### **d. Education Committee**

Lisa Dyar provided the Education Committee briefing and began by reporting that the program for the 2019 Superconference is nearly complete. This year’s Superconference will have a circus theme.

Lisa raised the question of criteria for using the money being donated by Earth X for scholarships to attend Superconference. Lisa is going to work on the development of a draft set of criteria and will take suggestions from the Council. This led to a discussion about ongoing continuity in the management of the Superconference.

**e. Sponsorship & Membership Committee**

The Committee reported on efforts to secure sponsorships for the Superconference. So far twenty law firms have signed on as sponsors - not all have yet paid. We are still seeking to fill three consultant sponsorships. The Committee is getting feedback from some engineering and consulting firms regarding value from sponsorship, and the Council then discussed the need to better express the value proposition of sponsorships. The conference space at the Four Seasons has a limited area for booths / tables for the sponsors. We may consider revising the economic model and sponsorship levels.

**f. Website & Technology Committee**

Steve reported that the new Section website is complete and all content will soon be migrated from the old to the new. The new site is designed to be easier to navigate. Important program information such as scholarship information is more prominent. Several Council members who have visited the site commented positively. A new Council-only section will be password protected and provide space for storage of Council business documents. A master calendar is anticipated which will be used to schedule the Section's administrative tasks and support leadership transitions.

Steve moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:31 PM; Lisa Dyar seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.