

ENRLS Council Q2 Meeting Minutes – May 25, 2022 – 10:30 a.m.
Zoom Meeting

I. Welcome, Introductions, & Recognitions – Nathan Block

Block opened the meeting at 10:33 a.m. and proceeded with roll call:

A. ENRLS Council and Committee Co-Chairs Present via Zoom:

Nathan Block, Pete Wahl, Erin Chancellor, Mike Dillinger, Lisa Dyar, David Klein, Ashleigh Myers, Amber Ahmed, James McGuire, Steve McMillen, Mary Mendoza, Walt Shelton, Anne Austin, Marcella Burke, Ty’Meka Reeves-Sobers

B. ENRLS Council and Committee Co-Chairs Absent:

Heather Palmer, Kristen Fancher, Paul Sarahan, Alia Vinson, Buck Benson, Chris Schlag

II. Secretary’s Report – Lisa Dyar

A. Approval of minutes of the ENRLS Council Q1 Meeting

Dyar circulated draft minutes for the ENRLS Council Q1 Meeting, held virtually on February 17, 2022, prior to the meeting. Edits received prior to the meeting were incorporated. No further corrections or edits were offered at the meeting. Austin moved to approve the minutes, Block seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

III. Treasurer’s Report – Mike Dillinger

A. Review latest financial reports

Dillinger reported that as of April 30, 2022, ENRLS had ~\$410k in assets, ~\$49k in liabilities, and a fund balance of ~\$361k. During 2021, ENRLS had ~\$337k in assets, ~\$17k in liabilities, and a fund balance of ~\$320k. As a result, the Section is in better financial health by ~\$41k compared to last year. While the Council is still working through the revenue and expenses for the 2022 Climate Change Symposium in the financial statements, this status appears to be largely attributable to the Section’s sustained commitment to maintain financial discipline and actively seeking ways to increase sponsorships for conferences.

B. Discuss Proposed FY 2022-2023 Budget including consideration of statement required by SBOT for compliance with *Keller v. State Bar of California*

The Council discussed the following statement: “We reaffirm that the Financial Policies and Procedures on file with the State Bar Accounting Department are still



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current and in effect for the 2022-2023 Bar year’ with the exception of adding a clause that says, ‘The section will not make any contributions, donations, grants or payments for activities that violate the tenets of *Keller v State Bar of California* or *McDonald v Firth*.’”

Wahl provided background regarding caselaw related to mandatory bar dues and the bar’s obligations with respect to divisive and ideological issues. Block shared his perspective that the Section is compliant with *Keller* because the Section has not engaged in any lobbying or direct political activities. The Section’s pro bono funding has supported groups (e.g., Tree Folks) that have a primary ‘work’/service component. Wahl moved to implement the reaffirmation with the additional clause ‘The section will not make any contributions, donations, grants, or payments for activities that violate the tenets of *Keller v State Bar of California* or *McDonald v Firth*’ to the Section’s financial controls document, Block seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

The Council discussed the proposed FY 2022-2023 budget that will result in a ~\$15k deficit. Discussion included clarifying assignment of specific budget codes by the State Bar of Texas. The budget includes an additional \$28k in budgeted costs for total educational and training expenses to account for Climate Change Symposium costs, inflation, facility costs for educational programs, and law school program internship stipends. Block moved to adopt the proposed FY 2022-2023 budget, Wahl seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

C. Revisit/discuss ENRLS membership fee adjustment

Block reported that he asked SBOT for data related to Section dues. Other SBOT section dues range from \$25-40. A \$5 increase in current Section dues would raise ~\$5-7k per year, which will help keep pace with inflation. With a \$5 increase, the Section will maintain overall financial health and still not be the most expensive section of the Bar. Notice will be required in January 2023 for an increase to be effective for next year’s cycle. Klein moved to increase the Section’s annual dues to \$35 from \$30, McGuire seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

IV. Committee Updates & Recommendations

A. Education Committee – Amber Ahmed & Alia Vinson, Co-Chairs

1. 2022 Superconference update

Planning Update (Amber Ahmed & Mary Mendoza)

Mendoza reported that the Superconference program is mostly complete, including a Wednesday evening program on permitting. This year will be a



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return to full capacity and will incorporate a space odyssey theme. The Four Seasons is including a significant discount on rooms, and Mendoza should receive the draft contract for next year soon. McMillan reported that the website is almost ready to launch registration. McMillan's efforts have led to improvements in the registration setup that should improve overall functionality of the registration process.

Sponsorships Update (Mike Dillinger & Heather Palmer)

Dillinger reported that top tier sponsorships are back for the second year and remain popular. Securing consultant sponsorships has been more difficult, but the committee is on track to hit its target.

2. 2022 Changing Face of Water Rights Conference update (Alia Vinson)

No update.

3. 2022 Climate Change Symposium update and potential for future symposiums (Nathan Block)

Block reported that, from a budgetary standpoint, the Section nearly broke even. Feedback from attendees and presenters has been positive, but it may be beneficial to revisit the timing of the event, to which the Council agreed. Considerations for changing the date include the ability of a Texas Environmental Law Journal issue to coincide with the event, timing of other CLE events, holidays, and the amount of effort needed to execute a successful event.

B. Diversity, Engagement, and Inclusion Committee – Ty'Meka Reeves-Sobers & Amber Ahmed, Co-Chairs

Reeves-Sobers reported that she plans to circulate recommendations and ideas from the committee to the Council.

C. Law School Programs Committee – Walt Shelton & Kristen Fancher, Co-Chairs

Shelton reported that Fancher had reached out to GLO to discuss its participation in the internship program but did not receive a response. Fancher plans to continue communication efforts before the Council's next meeting and make a recommendation on how to proceed moving forward.

Shelton suggested the Council discuss at its Q3 meeting a potential law school location to hold a joint Q4 Council meeting and law school program. The



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committee is considering the Houston area to hold a combined event with all three Houston-area law schools.

D. Publications & Communications Committee – Ashleigh Myers & Anne Austin, Co-Chairs

Texas Environmental Law Journal (TELJ)

Myers reported that final edits for the second issue of the year are underway. A firm pulled out at the last minute, so the issue will not be as full as a normal publication. Myers is soliciting articles for future publications. The new editorial board at UT Law is in place for the upcoming 2022-2023 school year.

E. Pro Bono & Community Outreach Committee – Buck Benson and Chris Schlag, Co-Chairs

No update.

F. Sponsorship & Membership Committee – Heather Palmer & Paul Sarahan, Co-Chairs

No update.

G. Website & Technology Committee – Steve McMillen & Paul Sarahan, Co-Chairs

McMillen reported the website is ready for Superconference registration once he receives the brochure, CLE form, and logo information. McMillen resolved a recent hack to the website. Sarahan has been adding TELJ information to the website. The committee plans to increase focus to develop the law school program section of the website, including photos from the Section's sponsored events. The committee further plans to update the daily news feed that appears on the website. McMillen continues to encourage Council and committee members to submit website content.

H. Social Media Committee – David Klein, Chair

Klein reported that the current arrangement with Workhorse is a month-to-month agreement and that the Section does not generate enough content to warrant the regular expenses by Workhorse. After discussion, the Council decided to discontinue use of Workhorse's services. Chancellor volunteered to send social media updates on behalf of the Section.

I. Nominating Committee – Nathan Block and David Klein, Co-Chairs





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Block is working to assemble this year's Nominating Committee. Sober-Reeves, Deborah Trejo and Tammy Mitchell will participate along with one other Section member. Block is reviewing and will consider the information received from Council and committee members.

V. Other / New Business

None.

VI. Adjourn

Wahl moved to adjourn the Q2 meeting, Dyar seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

