

FLNB Board of Advisors Meeting Summary

May 22, 2014 – 2:30pm Eastern/1:30 pm Central
Tallahassee Division Bankruptcy Courthouse 2nd Floor Conference Room

Attendees

Traci Abrams (Summary), William Miller, Robert Bruner, Kathryn Hathaway, Tracy Strom, Philip Bates, Steve Jurnovoy, Mary W. Colón and Jeffrey Dollinger

Updates re Old Business

Chapter 13 *Ad Hoc* Committee re Process Streamlining Effort

- National Mandatory Ch. 13 Plan.
 - Many judges have expressed a desire for the plan to be optional. The most pushback has originated in districts where significant work was put into developing locally beneficial and acceptable plan documents.

2014 Newsletter Articles by Board Members

- Articles are encouraged and can be submitted at any time to Julie Gibson at Julie_Gibson@flnb.uscourts.gov for publication in the next available newsletter.

Northern District of Florida Bankruptcy Bar Association Seminar

- Trustee Q&A session
 - Judge Specie had asked Board members to reach out to members of the Bar about the inclusion of a trustee Q&A session on the agenda. Discussion of feedback received.

Clerk's Office and Chambers re Efficiencies

- CHAP Update
 - The Chambers Automation Program (CHAP) developed by the District of Utah continues to be tested and compared to current processes in order to foster a smooth transition to the new calendaring (and more) software. Outside users will not experience any changes except in court efficiencies.
- Sample Orders on Internet Site
 - Judge Specie has posted several sample orders on the "Sample and Form Orders" page located at <http://www.flnb.uscourts.gov/forms#sampleOrd>. If Board members have examples they have used in other districts, please provide copies or links to Traci Abrams.

Digital Court Reporting (DCR)

- Testing continues with DCR running side by side with a court reporter. Once testing and training has been completed, DCR will become the primary method of court recording.
- It has not yet been decided if court recordings will be posted to the docket in CM/ECF. However, audio copies will be made available through the Clerk's Office. The court's Website will be updated with procedural information in that regard.

Local Rules Committee

- Committee members include Bill Miller (Chair), Brian Rich, Rick Savage, Michael Moody, Jeff Childers, Karin Garvin, Roland Kiehn, and Sharon Sperling.
- Judge Karen Specie has requested a committee meeting to be scheduled so that she has at least five days prior to the meeting to review the committee's final draft. Meeting dates are being discussed.

New Business

FY2014 Budget Outlook re Courtroom Technology and Staffing Changes

- Tallahassee courtroom audio/visual refurbishment project:
 - The analogue system is 10 years old and requires replacement. This project is underway.
- Monica Broussard:
 - Transferred to the district court. A replacement will be hired this fiscal year.
- The FY14 budget:
 - Remains viable with the only concern being our ability to carry over funds to FY15 in the Capital Investment Fund (CIF) account which will be depleted this fiscal year by the courtroom technology project.

FY2015 Budget Outlook

- Current budget estimate: 9.5% decrease over FY14 final funding.
- Authorized Work Unit (AWU) reduction: The number, which is based on caseload and other factors, will be reduced by 5.69%. That change will result in an overall reduction in court funding.
- Based on the 9.5% reduction, the AWU reduction, the use of "bare bones" estimates of resource needs, an assumption that we will continue to receive additional funding (the "additive") for supporting the Alabama Southern bankruptcy judges with their administration of the Pensacola caseload, an assumption that our caseload will remain flat, and the recent change in staffing, Clerk's Office funding will remain in the positive. If we do not receive the additive, then we may be negative by approximately \$16,000.
- Note that it is still too early to tell if this will be the final picture as further budget adjustments will be made as figures become more concrete.

Mortgage Modification Mediation (MMM) Program Statewide Agreement

- Available on the court's Website at http://www.flnb.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/announcements/mmm_memo_state_wide_procedures.pdf.
- Feedback submitted by Kathryn Hathaway on the behalf of the Chapter 13 *ad hoc* committee was presented to Judge Specie by Traci on May 19, 2014.
- The Florida MMM Chapter 13 Trustee Committee is expected to supply the judges with a draft uniform order.
- Case participants will be expected to use a document portal to communicate and share documents with creditors, debtors and attorneys. The court will have no contact with and will not promote any particular portal service.

CM/ECF Server Centralization Project

- The Administrative Office of U.S. Courts required all court unit CM/ECF servers to be centralized before courts could participate in the upgrade to CM/ECF NextGen software. Our server centralization process will begin this month. The anticipated release of NextGen is February 2015.

NextGen re Case Opening Fees

- NextGen is a revision of the existing CM/ECF software which will be introduced in modular form within the CM/ECF environment. Each version will include optional tools that courts are to evaluate prior to implementation. One option is to require case filing fee payments before the completion of a case opening event.
- Fee payment prior to case opening completion is standard in district courts that allow attorneys to open cases remotely. It is not currently the standard in bankruptcy courts. As a result, court staff must take the time to pursue fee payments after the fact through administrative means and court orders.
- Discussed the pros and cons of implementing this option.

Board Member Feedback and Open Forum

Meeting Adjourned