

FLNB Board of Advisors Meeting Summary

May 14, 2013 – 2:30pm Eastern/1:30 pm Central
Tallahassee Division Bankruptcy Courthouse 2nd Floor Conference Room

Attendees

Traci Abrams (Summary), Melissa McClure, Tracy Strom, Steve Jurnovoy and Jeffrey Dollinger

Updates re Old Business

Newsletter Articles by Board Members

- The next edition is scheduled for publication by the end of June. A Board article would need to be submitted no later than the second week of June.
- Philip Bates volunteered to write an article later in the year. Board members were encouraged to submit articles to Traci Abrams if they discover a topic of interest to the Bar.

Chapter 13 Streamlining Effort

- The *ad hoc* committee led by Kathryn Hathaway includes Allen Turnage, Sharon Sperling and Martin Lewis. The work of the committee has been on hold as all committee members are currently working with Judge Specie to finalize the Mortgage Modification Mediation program for the Northern District of Florida.

Mortgage Modification Mediation

- The program has been finalized for the most part, and information will be published on the Website by the end of this week. A list of qualified mediators will also be published.
- The revised start date for the program is June 1, 2013. Mediators certified under the FLMB's program will be permitted to participate in the FLNB's program until December 31, 2013. By that date, they will need to comply with specific FLNB mediator requirements.
- Thanks goes to everyone who helped with this effort including Clerk's Office staff members Melissa McClure and Julie Gibson who worked on the forms and internal processes involved and Bill Blevins who helped to keep the project on track.

Local Rules Committee

- The committee includes the following personnel: Bill Miller, Brian Rich, Rick Savage, Michael Moody, Jeff Childers, Karin Garvin, Roland Kiehn, and Sharon Sperling.

- The committee met with Judge Specie, Law Clerk Courtney McCormick and Traci Abrams on May 7, 2013 to discuss proposals for amendments, assignments, and scheduling. Significant progress was made. Draft language was provided to the committee by Michael Moody the same day.

New Judgeship

- The Judicial Conference has agreed to recommend our district to Congress for an additional bankruptcy judge.

FY2014 Budget Outlook

- Collectively, Bankruptcy court budgets are depressed necessitating an unprecedented number of reductions in force (RIFs) and furloughs across the nation.
- In the FLNB, the current plan is to meet our budget requirements for FY14 through a position abolishment and a retirement buyout offer. As a result, staffing will be reduced from 18 to 16 for two manned divisional offices.

New Business

Acting Clerk in Place

- Traci Abrams was asked by Chief Judge Karen Specie to serve as Acting Clerk after Bill Blevins announced his transfer to the Eastern District of Louisiana District Court as their new Clerk. The Acting position began as of May 4, 2013. The duration of the position is dependent on the Clerk hiring process.

FY2015 Budget Outlook

- FY2015 will bring further budget reductions. Strategies are currently being contemplated in order to anticipate the lower funding while still being able to meet a possible increase in filings which could occur in or around September 2013.

Board Member Feedback and Open Forum

- Tracy Strom asked why sequentially filed cases receive 341 meeting dates at different times and on different weeks with the same trustee. The matter was discussed as far as how the Clerk's Office perceived the assignment system in CM/ECF to be working, and it was concluded that the system requires review to ensure that it is indeed working as expected. It was also noted that Trustee assignments must continue to be randomized per the U.S. Trustee's Office.
 - Addendum: CM/ECF was reviewed and is working properly as designed.