

Licensed Paralegal Practitioner Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2022

Zoom Meeting

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Judge Mettler, presiding

Attendees:

Judge Amber Mettler, Chair

Susan Morandy, LPP,

Recording Secretary

Leslie Staples, LPP

Tonya Wright, LPP

Matthew Page

Steve Johnson

Monte Sleight

Carolynn Clark

Staff: Scotti Hill, Utah State Bar

A.J. Torres, Utah State Bar

Chairperson Judge Amber Mettler called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

1. Action—Welcome and approval of the draft meeting minutes: *(Judge Mettler)*

Judge Mettler welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for approval of the minutes.

Several corrections were made to the draft minutes. Steve Johnson moved to approve the March 15, 2022 minutes with changes. Tonya Wright seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

2. Discussion—Update from the Bar.

Scotti Hill introduced A.J. Torres as the new LPP and New Lawyer Administrator to the committee members. Introduction of committee members. Scotti Hill advised that she plans to attend a couple more meetings then she will graciously bow out.

3. LPPs on current casework and projects.

Leslie Staples advised that she volunteered on Commissioner Sagers pro se calendar and it was a great experience. She was given three cases to assist with and has further volunteered on Commissioner Luhn's pro se calendar. Susan Morandy advised that she volunteered with the Pro Bono Initiative which is run through the U of U law school. She sat in a pro bono clinic with two other law students and assisted as needed giving legal

advise and direction. She has also been very busy with work and advised that the only cases she has been taking are those that need help with the OCAP forms.

Tonya Wright advised that she has also been slammed with work and that she had her third successful debt collection settlement negotiation that ended with a good result. She felt she was being treated well by opposing counsels. She is also doing a few family law cases. Tonya asked that Matt Page check on the Bar's website links to UVU courses because the links are not working.

4. Discussion—Update from LPP Innovation Subcommittee. (Scotti Hill)

Scotti Hill advised that she is basically acting as a go-between between the I4J people and the Bar and that the I4J people are looking at working with the Sandbox.

5. Discussion—Update from Bar. (Scotti Hill)

Matt Page introduced himself to A.J. Torres and advised that he had updated the links to the UVU information on the Bar's website. Matt shared a link to Scotti's appearance on Good Things Utah and advised that it had been viewed about 4,800 times.

*Matt Page reported that in 2019, the Utah Bar Foundation (UBF), in conjunction with the Utah Foundation, commissioned an unmet legal needs study that was completed in February 2020. The final report from that study, titled *The Justice Gap: Addressing the Unmet Legal Needs of Lower-Income Utahns*, was released in April 2020. That report showed that some of the highest unmet legal needs in Utah center around debt collection, in both District and Justice Courts, as well as the eviction process, handled in District Court. Most concerning was that the majority of plaintiffs have attorney representation in the eviction and debt collection matters, while less than 5% of defendants (renters and/or debtors) had attorney representation. The Utah Bar Foundation wanted to take a deeper look into ways to improve this legal system for all parties involved.*

A report was created by the Utah Bar Foundation and the Washington, DC-based Pew Research Center, using data from Utah courts.

The link to the report is here. It shows the vital need for LPPs in the debt collection and landlord-tenant areas.

<https://www.utahbarfoundation.org/static/media/UBF2022.912d30c10e5681bf5f8c.pdf>

Steve Johnson asked if there was anything new regarding the suggestion to change 14-802 from unlawful detainer to landlord tenant? Scotti Hill advised that there has not been any further conversations. It was suggested to present forms to the Forms Committee to approve to help the process proceed faster. Discussion on Notice of Deficiencies and making it into a form.

Scotti Hill advised that the Bar is changing the format of the LPP licensing examination. At the outset, the exam was configured as follows: a) Mandatory 50 multiple choice ethics exam, plus Practice area exam, which includes: a) Multiple choice section b) Essay section c) Practical section (fact pattern with 1-2 forms the candidates fill out)

The Bar proposes changing this format, so the practical section is incorporated into the essay section. This will not require a rule change.

*Recently, Scotti has received feedback from applicants about issues with the **national paralegal certification**. The issues are: a) Tech problems with the administration of the exams. This has held up a few applicants who already passed the LPP exam. b) Delay between passing the LPP exam and completing national certification. The amendment to Rule 15-707 just delays the waiting game.*

*“Paralegal studies” associates and bachelor’s degree programs in Rule 15-703 and 15-701. The bar is increasingly seeing applicants and receiving inquiries from interested individuals who have non “paralegal studies” degrees and the rule language may not be entirely helpful in determining if the applicant qualifies. For example, Rule 15-701(bb) states, “(bb) **“Paralegal Studies”** and **“Paralegal Studies Degree”** mean course work that prepares a holder to work as a paralegal.” In the past, the Bar has allowed “legal studies” degrees that have a paralegal emphasis to qualify, but Scotti is thinking we should take another look at this rule language.*

Scotti Hill advised that during the March exam there were a couple of technological issues. One candidate failed, but the Bar will be admitting five more LPPs next month. Three will be licensed in Family Law, one in Debt Collection and Landlord Tenant, and one in Debt Collection.

Discussion on HB107 that passed and the small claims amount to increase in May of this year.

6. Discussion—Update on rural outreach: (Steve Johnson)

None. Steve Johnson noted that Snow College changed the hierarchy and he has not been able to get anything going but will try again in the fall.

7. Discussion—Update on outreach efforts: (Monte Sleight)

No update.

8. Discussion - Other Business:

None.

9. Adjournment and next meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 4:52 p.m. The next meeting will be held on May 17, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.