

Member Status Workgroup – Meeting Minutes

May 29, 2024, 4:00PM– 5:00PM

Members Present

- Kari Petrasek, Chair
- Francis Adewale, WSBA Treasurer
- Steve Crossland, Active Member from the Senior Lawyers Section
- Kathleen Pierce (inactive), Inactive/Judicial or Honorary Member
- Althea Paulson, Pro Bono Member
- P.J. Grabicki, At-Large Member

WSBA Liaisons and Staff Present

- Renata de Carvalho Garcia, RSD Director
- Bobby Henry, RSD Associate Director
- Anne Trent, RSD Paralegal
- Tom Ahearne, BOG Liaison

Call to Order

Kari called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

Approve May 6, 2024 Meeting Minutes

The May 6, 2024 Meeting Minutes were approved.

Pro Bono Incentive Initiative

Renata shared that the Pro Bono and Public Service Committee is exploring a potential license fee discount for members who make the Pro Bono Honor Roll to promote pro bono service.

Feedback from Senior Lawyers Section

Steve shared that the Executive Committee of the Senior Lawyers Section seems supportive of the changes, including 1) giving members the option to choose “retired” rather than resigned, 2) offering some type of reduction of license fees for senior lawyers, and 3) allowing senior lawyers to join WSBA board and committees.

Review and Discussion of Status Scenarios

Bobby went over revised scenarios based on the feedback received at the last meeting. The workgroup approved the following recommendations by consensus:

1. Add a “retired” option so members leaving the profession can choose either voluntarily resigned or retired as the status in the WSBA Legal Directory. However, for official purposes, the member status will continue to be voluntarily resigned;
2. Change the honorary status eligibility from 50 years or more as an active or judicial member of the WSBA to 40 years or more as an active or judicial member of the WSBA or the bar of any U.S. jurisdiction;
3. Expand eligibility for judicial status to include pro tempore judges, commissioners or magistrates

who are at least 65 years old or have been a member of the WSBA for at least 40 years;

4. Allow inactive members to be appointed to serve on any committee, board, panel, council, task force, or other bar entity; and
5. Create a license fee reduction due to financial hardship for senior members. This option is to be available for active members who are 65 years old or have been admitted to the practice of law in Washington for at least 40 years and whose annual household income is equal to or less than 400% of the federal poverty level. If granted, the license fee will be reduced to the amount of that of the inactive license fee. Requests for reduction of the active license fee will need to be made before February 1st and will only apply to one calendar year but there is no limit on the number of times a member can apply for this license fee reduction.

The workgroup discussed the potential fiscal impact of these changes as prepared by staff and determined that the assumptions used in terms of number of impacted members were too high. There was also support for assessing the impact of these changes in a couple of years.

Next Steps

- Staff will reevaluate the potential fiscal impact of the recommendations based on membership data and feedback from members of the workgroup.
- Staff will draft proposed bylaw amendments for the workgroup to review at the next meeting.

Meeting Adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 5:26 p.m.