**New Mexico Civil Legal Services Commission**

Via Google Meets

December 19, 2024

New Mexico Civil Legal Services Commission Meeting Minutes

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call:**

Mark Fidel called the meeting to order at 1:35 pm, Tuesday December 19, 2024. Commissioners present: Commissioner John Arango, Commissioner Mary Smith, Commissioner Kristina Bogardus, Commissioner Liz McGrath and Chairman Mark Fidel. Chairman Mark Fidel informed the commission that this would be Commissioner Kristina Bogardus’s last meeting, and he thank her for service to the commission. A quorum was established

1. **Approval of Agenda:**

Commissioner John Arango made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Liz McGrath seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

1. **Approval of Meeting Minutes of August 8, 2024, Commission Meeting:**

Commissioner Smith asked for the minutes to contain more information. Also, she would like minutes placed on the DFA website. Commissioner Mary Smith made a motion to approve August 8, 2024, minutes. Commissioner John Arango seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

1. **Approval of CLS Open Meeting Resolution No. 24:**

Commissioner Mary Smith informed the commission that agencies are not required to place a legal in a newspaper. Notice of the meeting is required in the way that is best for the commission. Chairman Mark Fidel asked for an edit of the resolution which was on the last line the date of December 19th be used instead of the original date of December 12th. Also, on the third line paragraph five, we need to strike that we need to place an ad in newspaper. Commissioner Mary Smith emailed her changes to the Open Meeting Resolution No. 24 to Commissioner Mark Fidel, brought them up for all to see. He will save changes, sign and send them to DFA. Commissioner Mark Fidel made a motion to adopt the Open Meeting Resolution No. 24 as edited, Commissioner Kristina Bogardus seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

1. **Introduction of Guests:**

Blaine Moffat, New Mexico Department of Justice, serving as council to the Civil Legal Services Commission; Karen Meyers, New Mexico Legal Aid; Bette Fleishman, Pegasus Legal Services for Children; Brwyn Downing, Senior Citizens’ Law Office;

Diana Dorn-Jones, United South Broadway Corporation; Gary Housepian, Disability Rights New Mexico; Jennifer Landau, New Mexico Immigrant Law Center; Lisa DiDomenico, Administrative Office of the Court; Rudy Sanchez, DNA People Legal Services; Sandra Ortega, DFA; Sireesha Manne, New Mexico Center on Law and Poverty; Sonya Bellafant, New Mexico Legal Aid; Jennifer Paulsen, Southwest Women’s Law Center; Therese Yanan, Native American Disability Law Center; Tesha Henderson, Office of the Courts.

1. **Update from non-profit legal service providers (5 minute/provider):**

The presentations were provided in the introduction of Guests.

1. **Review of FY2026 Budget:**

Commissioner John Arango stated that there are three budgets to be concerned with. There is the budget that was originally developed by the Commission and recommended to DFA, the budget that DFA prepared and sent to the Governor and is not issued as the executive budget, and the forthcoming LFC budget. Both the Commission and DFA agree with the amount requested of $8.1 million dollars. They also agreed on the appropriation from the general fund on the amount of projected filing fees to be collected. In FY26, and the amount that will be drawn from CLS fund as a component of the budget. They only disagree on the $860,000.00 needed to close the gap and the $8.1 million dollars. The Commission, in its original budget, asked that the $860,000.00 be provided as an increase in the general fund versus a one-time appropriation. In the executive budget it shows that $860,000.00 as a special appropriation. We don’t know where the LFC stands. Commissioner John Arango believes we need to focus on the $860,000.00 if they agree with us, that would be a 3% increase in contract amounts for the providers if not it would be a 1.75% cut in amounts to contractors. Commissioner Mary Smith stated we need to figure out a way to get the funds that are needed this year, and do you have any ideas on how we go about doing that. Commissioner John Arango said we need to contact individual legislators.

1. **Other business – discussion only:**

Gary Housepian, Disability Rights New Mexico had received emails that were compromised, which had some costly consequences. Gary Housepian discussed with Chaiman Mark Fidel what things could be done about this. Chairman Mark Fidel stated he could do some awareness training. Commissioner Mary Smith suggested that they go through The Attorney General’s office for any conflict between CLS business and individual business.

Jeannette Gallegos stated how CLS can get the $860.000.00 and $8.1 million is included in the executive budget. The $860,000.00 was a supplemental to the flat general fund. DFA didn’t just leave CLS flat and did a supplemental to get the CLS the $8.1 million request. CLS should work with LFC to ensure that they are aware CLS needs to get $8.1 million and try to get LFC to mirror the executive budget that would guarantee the CLS budget.

Timing on the next RFP. We should start working on it this year 2025. The next RFP is due in 2026. Depending on how things go this year, there may be a possibility of 2025 RFP.

1. **Date for next Commission Meeting:**

The Commission agreed the next meeting will be held following the legislative session, April 17th, from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm meeting.

1. **Adjournment:**

Commissioner Liz Mcgrath made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mary Smith seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:31 pm.