

**Neighborhood Legal Services Program**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**January 16, 2024 at 6:30 pm via Zoom**  
MINUTES

A. Call to order.

The meeting was called to order at 6:34pm

B. Introduction of attendees and guests.

Members of the Board of Directors present were Eric Humes, Amy Neuhardt, Melissa Felder Zappala, Maureen Browne, Will Mudge, Tyra Matthews, Anne Ford, Cheryl Ziegler, Vanessa Hayes, Lyzka DeLaCruz, Sara Rearden, and Paula Scott.

NLSP staff members present were Kathy Hollins Fields, Cecilia Barber, Mary-Elizabeth Pratt, Cassidy Waskowicz, Caren Bright-Webb, and Karen Newton Cole.

New Board members Melissa Felder Zappala and Maureen “Mo” Browne were recognized and introduced. The board and staff in attendance introduced themselves.

C. Approval of the minutes

Amy Neuhardt moved to approve the November 2023 Minutes, Sara Rearden seconded the motion. The motion passed with Lyzka DeLaCruz, Mo Browne, and Melissa Felder abstaining due to not participating in the November meeting.

D. Financial Report – Kathy Hollins Fields.

Kathy Hollins Fields presented the preliminary end of year financials. She noted that NLSP is working to close the financials for the year in preparation for the 2024 audit.

LSC permits funded organizations to carry over 10% of our Basic Grant funds each year and we will likely carry that amount over from 2023. DCBF has approved roughly \$97,000 CLCPP funds to be carry over to the first quarter of to be spend down in the first quarter of 2024. The Grant Adjustment Reports have been submitted and DCBF has indicated that they will approve those changes. The carry over will cover some of the funding that DCBF did not fulfill on the new budget requests.

E. Development Report – Will Mudge and Cassidy Waskowicz.

Will introduced the six-bucket chart to show the 2022 revenue compared to 2023 budgeted and committed revenue. NLSP received substantially more than budgeted for both Legal Services Corporation and DC Bar Foundation grants. NLSP also received more in grants from other foundations than budgeted.

DCBF responded to proposals for 8 grants and NLSP received increased funding for 7 of those 8 grants compared to 2023. We received less than proposed for three grants although more than awarded the year before. However, there was a decrease of approximately \$95,000 in the

Stabilizing Communities. Overall, there is an increase of more than \$150,000 in DCBF funding. We do not yet know the reason for the decrease for the Stabilizing grant. Newton Cole and Waskowicz will meet with DCBF soon regarding the reason for the decreased funding. Cover activities related to eviction prevention were expanded a couple of years ago. Therefore, Stabilizing staff work under the CLCPP award and spend down the first quarter carrying over.

In 2024 we are celebrating NLSP's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This should be a bigger year both in celebration and in donations for our annual fundraiser, Jazz for Justice. We're in the process of finding an honoree for this year's event and are looking at five criteria – pro bono commitment, community impact, fundraising potential, direct involvement with NLSP (optional), and someone within our network.

With those criteria in mind, we have identified Halimah Delaine-Prado, General Counsel of Google; Wanje Walcott, General Counsel at Pinterest; and Brian Ellis, Senior Vice President and General Counsel at Danaher. If any board member knows any the candidates that we are considering, or anyone that may fit the honoree criteria, please reach out to Cassidy, Will, and/or Karen..

Halimah Delaine-Prado was approached last year to be the honoree, but she turned us down because Google did not want to commit to donating to our organization. She donated \$1,000 even though she declined to be honored. Newton Cole will be approaching her again about this year's event.

A keynote speaker and lifetime achievement awards are options for the event as well, but NLSP is focusing on outreach for the honoree first.

F. Strategic Plan – Karen Newton Cole.

NLSP has chosen Spur Local, formerly known as Catalog for Philanthropy, to head the new strategic planning effort. Spur Local was well-priced and is very familiar with Washington, DC area. The kickoff meeting is this week, and NLSP will start the new strategic plan effort.

G. Board Elections.

We need to vote for co-chairs, vice-chair, and other positions of the board. The board can do this a later date, but Karen was unable to bring it up to the Executive Board last week. All current executive committee members agreed to serve another term. The slate was Anne Ford and Amy Neuhardt as co-chairs, Will Mudge as Vice Chair, Sara Rearden as Secretary, Cheryl Ziegler as treasurer, and Eric Humes as Lay Director.

Paula Scott moved to approve all Executive Committee members for another term, Vanessa Hayes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

H. Vote on Proposed New Board Member – Amy Neuhardt and Anne Ford.

Anne Ford's granddaughter, Kira Ford, is a candidate for a client-eligible board member position. She is interested in the board along with the responsibilities it entails. She has two children, including a son with autism, and lives in Ward 8.

After discussion regarding the requirements for board participation, Cheryl Ziegler moved to add Kira Ford to the NLSP Board of Directors. Rearden seconded. The motion passed with Ford abstaining due to her personal relationship with the new board member.

Mary-Elizabeth Pratt will determine the length of time left in the term that Kira Ford is taking over from Dwight Ausbrooks.

At the last board meeting Newton Cole recommended expanding the board by two members and suggested that NLSP bring on last year's Jazz for Justice honoree, Dorothy Capers. Capers expressed interest in volunteering. She has previous experience on a legal services organization's board.

Will Mudge asked why we need to vote on expansion of the board if we are not changing anything within the lines stated in the bylaws. He was not against voting, simply making sure we are voting appropriately.

After discussion regarding the by-laws regarding the size of the Board of Directors, Neuhardt moved to expand the number of directors from 18 to 20. Rearden seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The board agreed Newton Cole will reach out April Williams to confirm Capers interest and secure her agreement to serve on the board. Williams has an existing relationship with Capers. In order to meet the Board composition requirements, the Board will seek another client-eligible board member.

I. Case Report – Caren Bright-Webb.

We met all our case goals for 2023 except for the Housing Cooperative Preservation Initiative (HCPI) grant. Several of our grants also exceeded their deliverables. Even though we were off with our goal numbers regarding HCPI because of a lack of a Pro Bono director on staff, we still exceeded our overall goal to 110%. FPP is currently on target for the grant year, which follows the Fiscal Year of October 1<sup>st</sup> to September 30<sup>th</sup>.

HCPI currently represents 14 housing cooperatives for which we provide legal services under this grant, and this is generally a grant that works closely with the Director of Private Attorney Involvement, a position that has been vacant since March 2023. HCPI case deliverable numbers are based on outreach, where other grant deliverables are based on more traditional intake cases.

J. Approval of Executive Director's Reimbursement – None.

K. Upcoming Dates or Events.

- Next Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting – March 19, 2024
  - William Blair, our endowment fund firm, will make a presentation at the next Board Meeting.
  - There will be a presentation from one of the practice areas at the next meeting.

- We will be reaching out to Board Members to participate in the development of the strategic plan. It is anticipated that it will be finalized by July 1, 2024.

L. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02pm.