

Wisconsin Association of Worker's Compensation Attorneys

Meeting on September 28, 2012, began at 10:08am

Meeting Minutes

Mark McGillis made a motion to approve the minutes from the past meeting which passed.

Treasurer's Report

Krysta Walsh reported that we have \$25,829.17 as the current balance. We had 84 paid attendees and 11 vendors at the past conference which provided a loss of \$2,600. It was noted that the number of conference attendees is down from the past years. Mark Parman brought up potentially raising the cost of the seminar in the future to generate additional funds so that we do not take a loss. We also sent a flower arrangement to Neil Krueger's funeral and paid for an update to the website which were the only other expenses paid. The scholarships will also be paid to each school in the amount of \$2,500 before the end of the year. We may also want to discuss raising the membership dues for next year.

Spring Seminar

The seminar will be held on Thursday, February 21, 2013, and will be a full day seminar. Doug Selke will be a CLE co-chair along with Joshua Czuta and they have lined up Rick Fortune to speak and will be contacting Aaron Halstead who has expressed interest in speaking. Some people from Liberty Mutual want to discuss the Madison Gas & Electric case. Doug Selke suggested including a topic regarding MSAs and an ethics presentation but is looking for suggestions. Cherie Gon was suggested to speak on MSAs and the thresholds along with potentially Robert Lapota from Protocols.

Tom Landowski suggested a case study on claiming benefits in death cases when parties are involved in a divorce and ultimately agree to waive worker's compensation benefits on a conceded claim through a compromise by showing that no one was prejudiced by the compromise. Some judges may not be willing to approve the compromise in such a situation which could add to the discussion. The possibility of using a three judge panel to debate the topic or approval of compromise agreements in general was also suggested.

The Board approved giving away an I-pad at the Spring Seminar.

Website

Tom Landowski met with a group of people over the weekend (Walter Neta, Patricia Sandoz, a student volunteer/scholarship recipient) to redesign the website so that it is easy to use and the 'go to' website on worker's compensation while advertising our seminars. They set up a template for a new design for a home page which categorizes the information and organizes in a more easy to use format. The group did not eliminate any of the information that is currently on the website, but they did add some things.

Across the top there will be two toolbars which have six tabs consisting of large subject matters, each tab has a drop down menu with a choice for content. There is an area in the center of the home page for the latest news. Along the left side of the screen there will be an internal search mechanism and a link to all of the sponsors who attend the seminars. They kept the worker's compensation guru section which is on the left side. On the right side there are shortcuts to the most popular or useful information on the website, along with information regarding the upcoming seminar, a link for scholarship information and then any advertising we might have. They kept the streaming line to continually advertise our upcoming seminar so that anyone that visits the website will find information quickly regarding the seminar. There are also several spots on the home page to get information as to how to become a member.

They debated whether we wanted people to have to log in to gain access to some of the content on the website. Another issue is whether we want to create a way for people to pay online for seminars and membership. Do we want to expand and offer other services from our website, like a case evaluation clinic to get advice on a worker's compensation case from a panel for a fee? Another suggestion was a link to finding an attorney.

They now plan to sit down with the vendor and show them the schematic and get the vendor's opinions and cost estimate. They will then present several pricing options to the Board.

As far as setting up the website to accept payments, that will make the organization need to accept credit cards which we are not currently able to do. We will need a vendor to help with that but the committee believes it would generate more hits to the website. They will ask the website vendor regarding the cost of setting up payment online. Mark McGillis will look into how difficult it will be to set up acceptance of credit card payments as an organization. Melissa Kirschner noted that her experience through other organizations is that it isn't very difficult to set up online payments on a website.

Regarding potentially logging into the website, we need to find out whether the username and passwords would expire every year to make sure that only paid members are allowed access to the entire content of the website. Tom Niemic brought up that adding a log-in feature may deter many people from visiting the website, especially if they are not members.

The Board agreed that we should leave the website open to the public without a log-in function at this time.

Miscellaneous

Krysta Walsh and Mark McGillis noted that neither of them have received copies of any of the old documents from other members that may have been lost in the fire. Patricia Sandoz stated that she has copies of the by-laws from 2002, 2003 and 2004 when she was the secretary. Krysta Walsh indicated that we do not have much by way of past financial records other than bank statements which can be accessed online.

For future seminars, it was suggested that we may want to move the date to a Friday instead of a Thursday to try to attract more attendees.

Krysta Walsh brought up that she is member of the Wisconsin Kids Chance board of directors and she is asking that a scholarship or donation to the organization be discussed by the Board. Mark McGillis added this topic to the next meeting's agenda and Krysta Walsh will get us more information regarding the organization.

The meeting ended at 11:08am.