

Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council

July 12, 2012

Capital Newspapers Auditorium

- 1) Call to order. Meeting was called to order at 2:06 p.m. In attendance were Dee Hall, Andy Hall, Mary Callen, Bob Dreps, Gina Duwe, Sean Dwyer, Tom Bier, Michelle Vetterkind, Mark Pitsch, Michael Buelow, Chris Hardie, Roger Schneider, Dave Zweifel, George Stanley, Bob Drechsel, Steve Lovejoy, Christa Westerberg and Bill Lueders.
- 2) Approval of minutes from 4/19/12 meeting. Members approved the minutes.
- 4) (out of order) President's report:
 - a) National Freedom of Information Coalition and Wisconsin Watchdog dinner. Lueders reported that both events were great successes. About 100 people attended the national FOIC meeting at the Concourse, and Wisconsin was well represented.
 - b) Executive board actions: Lueders reported that the council joined WNA and WBA in filing an amicus brief in a Juneau County open case and that Wis FOIC has lent its name to bill sponsored by Rep. Richards seeking transparency in legal defense funds.
 - c) \$5,000 Evjue Foundation grant. Lueders said the council was very grateful for the grant, \$2,000 of which will be shared with the local SPJ professional chapter.
 - d) Lueders announced he has been appointed to an advisory committee of the State Bar of Wisconsin to create educational materials and programs for adults.
- 5) Comments of AG Van Hollen at FOIC conference. Lueders followed up with statements made by Van Hollen at the conference, where he stated that more clarity is needed on prohibiting public officials from texting or emailing each other during meetings to avoid scrutiny. Also, no response from Van Hollen to the Council's request to reconsider an AG's opinion saying courts can charge for photos made of public records.
- 6) Old business:
 - a) Rule requiring taping of closed sessions in on WNA calendar for September. Rep. Richards has drafted a bill requiring such taping.
 - b) A proposal was made to tape Your Right to Know columns. Bier said the columns would need to be rewritten for broadcast. Also, the columns could be posted as-in on broadcast websites. Dwyer suggested doing more social media promotion of the issues, including possibly live chats.
- 7) Concerns about DOA compliance: Lueders said reporters have been complaining that it takes weeks and months to get records from the state Department of Administration that should just take hours. Council members debated the best response, including gathering examples of poor responsiveness by DOA or other state agencies. No decision was made.
- 8) Milwaukee Journal Sentinel vs. Milwaukee police: Stanley reported about the

struggles between the newspaper and the police department in response to investigations

being done by the newspaper. He said the department appears to be retaliating against the Journal Sentinel, although access had improved since the Wisconsin Supreme Court ruled in the newspaper's favor when it ruled against requiring requesters to pay for the time spent redacting records. The newspaper also won in its battle to force MPD to turn over a list of complaints against an officer.

9) Legal update. Several cases were discussed as listed in the packet, including the win on the redaction case; the attorney general's "unfriendly" amicus brief in the Juneau County case on legal bills currently before the Supreme Court revolving around to what extent contractors' records are subject to the open-records law .

3) Treasurer's report. (out of order) Lueders reported that the council, WNA and WBA will split the \$5,000 cost of the amicus brief. Drechsel said the council was in better shape than usual because of the Evjue grant and all dues-paying members were up to date.

10) Review of various news articles about open-records and open-meetings issues. Lovejoy recounted the battle his newspaper was fighting to get information about a "confidential" settlement of taxpayer funds involving the Racine mayor.

11) Website: Duwe reported the council has 100 "likes" on Facebook.

12) Your Right to Know column.: Various ideas for upcoming columns were discussed including efforts by public officials to use electronic communication during board or council meetings, the cost of records, even when the requester photographs them him- or herself; and using a Gene Policinski column.

13) Other business including next meeting. The next meeting was set for 2 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 11.

14) Meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.