

**TEXAS CHAPTER OF AFCC**  
 Annual Report: 1-1-2005 through 1-1-2006  
 Submitted to AFCC

The Honorable Leta Parks, 2005 Texas Chapter of AFCC President

**2005 Chapter Board Members:**

OFFICE	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	E-MAIL	PROFESSION	CITY
President	Honorable Leta	Parks	Leta_Parks@Justex.net	Judge	Houston
President-Elect	Laurie	Nowlin	Inowlin@aikinsnowlin.com	Attorney	Round Rock
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-President	Deborah	Higgs	dchiggs@ev1.net	Therapist	Galveston
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-President	Shelley	Probber	sprobber@aol.com	Psychologist	San Antonio
Treasurer	Scott	Clarke	Scott.d.Clarke@aexp.com	Financial Planner	Hurst
Secretary	Aaron	Robb	Philo_net@yahoo.com	Therapist	Arlington
Past President	Lynelle	Yingling	Lynelle@SystemsMediation.com	Therapist	Rockwall
Board	Mark	Ashworth	Mark.ashworth@co.travis.tx.us	DRO	Austin
Board	Mary	Bullock	Mbullock4@aol.com	Therapist	San Antonio
Board	Mary	Connell	mary@maryconnell.com	Therapist	Fort Worth
Board	William	Connolly	wbc@conlawfirm.com	Attorney	Houston
Board	Rosemary	Garza	RosemaryGarza04@aol.com	Attorney	Houston
Board	Susan	McMillan	drslmcm@aol.com	Psychologist	Austin
Board	Anthony	Neugebauer	aneugebauer@bexar.org	Therapist	San Antonio
Board	Kathy	O'Sullivan	kosullivan@tarrantcounty.com	FCS	Fort Worth
Board	Hattie	Thurlow-Mckinley	hthurlow@aol.com	Therapist	Houston
Board	Trevor	Townes	Trevor_townes@co.harris.tx.us	DRO	Houston

**2006 Chapter Board Members approved by membership electronic vote on 11-15-2005:**

OFFICE	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	E-MAIL	PROFESSION	CITY
President	Laurie	Nowlin	Inowlin@aikinsnowlin.com	Attorney	Round Rock
President-Elect	Aaron	Robb	Philo_net@yahoo.com	Therapist	Arlington
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-President	Shelley	Probber	sprobber@aol.com	Therapist	San Antonio
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-President	Trevor	Townes	Trevor_townes@co.harris.tx.us	DRO	Houston
Treasurer	Scott	Clarke	Scott.d.Clarke@aexp.com	Financial Planner	Hurst
Secretary	Martha	Musselman	mmussel@swbell.net	Attorney	Houston
Past President	Honorable Leta	Parks	Leta_Parks@Justex.net	Judge	Houston
Board	Mark	Ashworth	Mark.ashworth@co.travis.tx.us	DRO	Austin
Board	William	Connolly	wbc@conlawfirm.com	Attorney	Houston
Board	David	Eaker	david@eakerlawfirm.com	Attorney	Rockwall
Board	Rosemary	Garza	RosemaryGarza04@aol.com	Attorney	Houston
Board	Louise	Lee	ldla@sbcglobal.net	Attorney	Houston
Board	Susan	McMillan	drslmcm@aol.com	Therapist	Austin

Board	Anthony	Neugebauer	aneugebauer@bexar.org	Therapist	San Antonio
Board	Mardi	Winder-Adams	Winder_Mardi@hotmail.com	Therapist	Naples
Board	Rocky	Deutscher	rdeutscher@tarrantcounty.com		Fort Worth

### **Board and Membership Meetings**

1. Chapter membership meeting at the Annual Texas Chapter AFCC Conference was held on October 1, 2005 – minutes attached
2. Chapter Board meetings held with minutes attached:
  - a. January 21, 2005 in Houston, Texas 12-3:30pm
  - b. June 17, 2005 Austin, Texas 3:30-5:30 pm
  - c. September 30, 2005 Houston, Texas 10-11:30 am

Attached are the 2005 financial statement and year-end summary from the treasurer

### **Conference:**

The annual conference was held at The Hotel Derek in Houston September 30-October 1, 2005. There were 133 paid registrants plus speakers and volunteers in attendance. The Conference was entitled Co-Parenting Solutions: Tools For Diffusing Conflict. Program Brochure is attached.

### **Membership Events:**

1. An electronic newsletter was distributed each quarter to the membership. Copies are attached
2. Each board member distributed AFCC membership literature at at least one professional meeting they attended during the year.
3. There was considerable advertising and publicity for the annual conference

### **Special Projects:**

1. A new website was developed and met with widespread praise and approval. The Webmaster generously waived his fee for developing the site.
2. A Parenting Plan and Parenting Coordinator statute was enacted by the Texas legislature, which several AFCC members participated in drafting and getting passed.
3. An Education Committee was formed by the Board of the Texas Chapter to provide Texas Chapter sponsored AFCC training programs. The goal of the Committee is to provide training specifically focused on issues pertaining to the work of those involved in helping families resolve conflict. This includes attorneys, judges and mental health professionals. The Education Committee designated its first priority to create a training curriculum to address more complex issues faced by custody evaluators. The goal is to put together a training that will provide both the ‘nuts and bolts’ of ethics, as well as to facilitate discussion of the more issues that those who work in the field often encounter. For example, is it ultimately best for the child to keep parents out of Court? If so, then is it ethical for an evaluator to offer a recommendation that is ‘second best’ for the child, but does keep the parents out of the Courtroom? The goal of the training is to help awareness of the choices and complications inherent in the work we do.

## ATTACHMENTS

### Chapter Membership Meeting Minutes:

1. October 1, 2005

### Chapter Board Meeting Minutes:

1. January 21, 2005
2. June 17, 2005
3. September 30, 2005

12-31-2005 Financial Summary

Current Bylaws as Revised 12-17-2004

September 30 and October 1, 2005 Conference Brochure

**Texas Chapter of AFCC Annual Membership Meeting**  
***October 1, 2005 Hotel Derek, Houston, Texas***  
MINUTES

**1. Meeting called to order at 8:20 a.m.**

**2. Approval of previous minutes.**

Minutes from the general membership meetings on May 14, 2004 (International Conference) and November 12, 2004 (State Conference) were approved by voice vote.

**3. Introduction of Board Members**

Judge Parks, chapter president, introduced the Texas Board of Directors members present.

**4. Recognition of Conference Planning Committee**

Judge Parks also requested the members of the Conference Planning Committee in attendance to stand and be recognized and offered a big “thank you” to everyone who has helped to put the conference together.

**5. Nominating Committee Report**

Mark Ashworth, Nominating Committee chair, introduced the slate of candidates that will go out in the November newsletter, and outlined voting procedures.

**6. Treasurer’s Report**

Scott Clarke reviewed the information that he had previously presented to the Board regarding the current financial status of the Chapter. See attached report.

**7. Update on TFC 153 Subchapter J**

Judge Parks issued a thank you on behalf of Texas AFCC to Harry Tindall for all of his dedicated work on this issue over the past legislative session.

**8. Plans for remainder of 2005**

The Education Committee and hopes for ongoing AFCC sponsored training programs were discussed.

**9. Plans for 2006 Conference**

Laurie Nowlin discussed the upcoming plans for the 2006 conference, which will be located in the Dallas/Ft.Worth area in the Fall of next year.

**10. Next Meeting**

The next meeting in Texas will be at the 2006 Conference.

Texas Chapter of AFCC  
Board of Directors Meeting  
Friday, January 21, 2005, 12:00 Noon – 3:30 p.m.  
515 Louisiana, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fl, Houston, TX

## **I MINUTES**

### **I. Meeting Called to Order 12:08 p.m.**

Officers Present: Leta Parks – President, Laurie Nowlin – President Elect (12:22 p.m.), Deborah Higgs – 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President [Programs] (12:27 p.m.), Shelley Probbler – 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President [Publications], Aaron Robb – Secretary, Lynelle Yingling – Past President

At Large Directors Present: Mark Ashworth, Mary Connell, Rosemary Garza, Susan McMillan (12:22 p.m.), Anthony Neugebauer, Trevor Townes

Special guest, Louise from the conference committee, sitting in.

### **II. Minutes from November 11, 2004 Board Meeting**

Postponed for e-vote due to lack of transcribed minutes.

Also discussed chapter minutes issues (10/25/2003 Chapter Minutes approved at 11/12/2004 Chapter meeting, 5/14/2004 Chapter Minutes still outstanding).

### **III. Financial Report**

Starting Bank Balance(1/1/2004): \$9,976.98  
Total Income: \$16,791.66  
Total Expense: \$15,848.60  
Ending(Accounting Balance): \$10,920.04  
Actual Balance(12/31/2004): \$11,241.09  
Difference: \$321.05

2004 End of Year Summary submitted from Scot Clarke, reproduced above. RG moved to approve, SP second, passed via voice vote.

Returned mid-meeting to budget issues and the 2005 budget. LY circulated print copy and moved to approve. LN seconded, motion passed on voice vote. LY or LP will e-mail Secretary 2005 budget for distribution.

LY reported End of Year Annual report for 2004 is in process and will be submitted to the International office following the Board meeting. The report will be distributed to the board when ready.

## **IV. Review Bylaws**

Revisions were approved by Chapter members via e-vote on 12/17/2004. 24 members responded with 23 in favor.

Further discussion was postponed for review over e-mail if necessary. Secretary will send out electronic copies to all Board members.

## **V. Goals for 2005**

### **A. Board Members individual goals**

LP solicited input from the Board members as to views on goals for the coming year. MC noted priorities for revision of the Model Standards of Practice for Child Custody Evaluations, which is in process through the International office and an increased involvement with Family Attorneys. This sparked discussion regarding membership improvement/recruitment needs.

Members noted there are a number of regional groups (collaborative law, Family Law Bars, divorce recovery programs, others) which board members can hit in order to speak about AFCC and relevant issues. Membership building appeared to be a high priority issue for all BoD members and there was significant discussion as to how to reach groups.

RG suggested another outreach method, creating a video of conference speakers for use with parents in divorce cases. This was suggested to be an hour session that AFCC could produce and distribute on DVD to attorneys or MHPs for use with their clients (perhaps early in the process). Given modern computer editing and production equipment this is something we could do fairly inexpensively. Suggestion was made to look at having the conference session videotaped by a deposition recording firm in order to save on expenses (trading them advertising space). RG and AR will look into this further.

A final major discussion point was about ongoing interdisciplinary education for MHPs who are often reluctant to testify in court or otherwise engage in the adversarial process. It appears that there are some areas of the state where there are a lack of properly trained and prepared practitioners, and that this may be due to unrealistic fears of the adversarial process itself.

### **B. Establish priorities**

In line with the preceding discussion, increased membership was deemed to be a priority area to be addressed through the following:

**Goal:** Each Board member to hit a meeting in each major geographical area. Austin area will contact collaborative lawyer with contacts in El Paso, Judge Parks may also contact El Paso area as well, which is underrepresented in current membership/Board.

**Goal:** AFCC video for attorneys to use with parents. RG & AR will look into feasibility.

**New Education Committee** – LN, MA, RG, SM, AR as members, SP volunteered to chair. Will look at additional ways to provide small training sessions in various areas.

## ***VI. Committee Reports and Assignments***

### **A. Finance**

Discussion on continuing audit and accounting procedures. MC volunteered to help out as backup to SC in order to assist with workload.

### **B. Conference**

Reviewed information in agenda handout.

### **C. Membership**

Problem of membership committee finding a chair. SP mentioned experience with AFCC international level that member building gets subsumed into other committees (as everything we do should help solicit new and continuing member support). Board discussed that there is significant cross over of membership building and other committees.

A major problem, which continues to plague our interactions with the international office is the disconnect regarding international members who not state members and tracking this information. Discussion that this is a problem for other chapters and has been an issue for our chapter for some time. LN will check with national about how to improve this.

### **D. Publications**

SP does not want to be chair ☺ Discussed how to structure this committee. Also discussed need to hire a new webmaster for redesign of Texas AFCC page and ways to maintain and update the page in a timely manner. Discussed need to have a single point of contact for maintaining the web page so that webmaster not overwhelmed or confused with various requests. Also discussed that we have fallen behind on Newsletter duties and that we need to get Newsletters out on a regular basis.

TT agreed to look into contractor for getting web redesign done and liaise with webmaster. AR will assist with technical aspects (uploading, etc.) if needed and continue to coordinate domain and hosting. DH will coordinate and work on newsletter, expect to get requests for information from her. **Please contribute.**

## **E. Regional Groups**

Group is to help get a point person in each major area of the state. LN will coordinate getting these people together and maintaining this listing.

## **F. AFCC Chapter Council Representative**

Discussions about who can/should represent chapter at meeting in Seattle as LP will not be there because of family issue. Clarified as long as Texas Chapter has a designated representative it does not matter who they are, although the President and President-Elect have traditionally served in this role. As decided previously, LN (as president elect) will take over chapter council duties in July to aid in transition toward 2006.

## **G. Nominations**

MA and AN will revise nominations letter and work on broad based recruiting.

## **VII. AFCC and Texas Chapter logo and web site revisions**

Reviewed revisions of international logo. Had previously discussed web site revisions.

## **VIII. Conference Update**

Presentation from Conference Committee regarding location and pricing. Committee met in December for an afternoon and reviewed a number of hotel proposals as well as general direction of conference. Conference Committee has selected a very high-end hotel and secured an exceptionally good deal for room nights and other accommodations. Final details are being worked out and contract should be secured shortly. Main speakers should be contracted soon and program schedule is being formulated. Main change from last year, conference will begin on Friday afternoon September 23<sup>rd</sup>, continue to Saturday September 24<sup>th</sup>, with an after-conference seminar Saturday afternoon. Will have save the date announcement shortly.

*[LATE NOTE: Due to conflict with an AFCC International Office event conference dates have been moved to September 30<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> -AR 2/1/2005]*

## **IX. Chapter Council Update**

Next meeting 2/28

Issues:

- Ongoing State/International membership issue (see previous).
- Recommended that annual report to International include suggestion that “Professional Area” (i.e. Custody Evaluator, Mediator, Ad Litem, etc.) descriptor be returned to member listing.
- Questions still exist about the research fund (promised for how long now?). Need clarification from International office.
- Recommend to International office that they send an AFCC staff or Board representative to each Chapter conference in order to build networks, support, etc.
- LY discussed other issues to recommend changes to the international office, such as how checks from international are generated and tracked, council representative names up on AFCC website, and publishing chapter toolkit.

## ***X. Parent Coordinator Statute Update***

Bill filed, report to Board provided in agenda packet.

## ***XI. New Business***

Discussed the issue of the Board responding to external requests for endorsement of various groups/positions (question arose in response to request from an out of state resident wanting endorsement of legislation in that state similar to Texas codes). Reviewed that while we can educate and discuss issues in relation to how they fit with our stated goals, we cannot endorse specific issues. Additionally it appears unwise to comment on actions in other states, or actions in this state, which have not been fully considered and understood as their may be unintended or unclear implications. A formal policy may be necessary at some point, however it does not appear to be something to focus on at this moment.

Discussed an ongoing concern that the various Mental Health Boards (Psychologist, LPC, LMFT, SW, etc.) do not always appear to understand the issues involved in offering forensic mental health services (assessments, court ordered therapy, etc.). This is an area where we may be able to offer education to our various professional boards. AR will send a proposed draft letter to the Board for comment and distribution.

## ***XII. Next Meeting – Austin – June 24, 2005***

Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 p.m.

AFCC Texas Chapter  
Board of Directors Meeting  
June 17, 2005  
AGENDA

**II I. Meeting Called to Order – 3:35 pm**

Officers Present:

Leta Parks – President, Laurie Nowlin – President Elect, Shelly Propper – Second Vice President,  
Aaron Robb – Secretary, Lynelle Yingling – Past President

At Large Directors Present:

Mark Ashworth, William Connelly, Susan McMillan, Tony Neugebauer

(4:00 p.m. arrival Trevor Townes, Rosemary Garza)

**III II. Minutes from January 21, 2005 Board Meeting**

Reviewed past approval via e-mail. No additional comments.

**III. Financial Report – Scott Clarke (via written report)**

LP distributed 2005 year to date budget and Treasurer Summary. “Wine and Cheese/Brown Bag” listed under 2005 Expected Expenses should be listed as “Membership Building Activity” other than that accepted as is by acclimation.

Starting Bank Balance(1/1/2005): \$11,241.09

Total In: \$5,925.07

Total Out: \$3,719.03

Current Accounting Balance (assuming all deposits and withdrawals have cleared): \$13,447.13

Current Bank Balance(6/15/2005): \$13,052.8

Bank Balance missing: Deposit of \$398 made 6/15/05 and check 2037 in the amount of \$3.67

Accounts 100% balanced. Audit conducted by Meg Walker, former board member, in 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter. All monies 100% accounted for since July 2003.

**IV IV. Update – Parent Coordinator legislation**

Everything looks good to move forward.

**V V. Website and listings – Trevor**

Developer has kindly waived fee as we were so easy to work with and did not pick at him to death ☺. In reviewing the new logo it was noted that the design on the web page (the international logo backed by the Texas flag) was created with low resolution graphics and would need to be re-worked for broader use. Cost would be approximately \$20.00 to formally purchase high quality clip art of the Texas flag, assuming we can get a high quality image from international of the main logo. Web designer has indicated that he would be willing to put this together for us. Board discussed an additional thank you, aside from designer's contact info at the bottom of the web page, and decided on including developer's contact information in the sponsor section of the conference packed. Sponsorship subcommittee will need to follow up on this.

Discussed listings for providers (see below under service providers committee), as well as posting of the conference brochure (delayed due to technical difficulties, 1<sup>st</sup> page too large for sender's e-mail). Brochure should be up shortly and notice will be e-mailed out to various groups.

## **VI VI. AFCC Banners**

International is looking to produce updated banners. LP discussed various prices (based on the number of Chapters which participate) and the proposed graphic design. Little interest was garnered due to high cost to Chapter and lack of buy-in to proposed design. Voted to not pursue further.

This issue prompted discussion about updating our banner with current State logo, as well as getting a design which is more user friendly. Discussion concluded it needs to be portable, as well as easy to set up/display (not just grometed, as this is hard to attach to a table, etc.). Board voted to spend up to \$200 on a new State banner. AR will follow up on with quotes to the board. We will need the new (full size) graphic as well.

## **VII VII. Liability Insurance – Aaron/Mary/Tony**

Unable to get quote due to our size (we're too small). Discussed why international asked us to do this in the first place, and that there has been no follow up since that time. While error and omission insurance might be nice it is unclear what this would protect from, as we do not provide direct services, and how minimally resourced we are to begin with. LN moved to table this issue unless clearer need arises, passed on voice vote.

## **VIII VIII. Committee Reports and Assignments**

### **A. Education - Shelley Probbler**

Discussion regarding ongoing issues identified for CCE ethics training. Discussed forum, type of presentation, target audience, one time vs. different areas, etc. Report originally written with MHPs in mind, but training would really be for any professional group so that they would have a better understanding of basic ethical issues in evaluations.

Discussed developing a curriculum and packets can give out to run seminars in different locations. We can host a train-the-trainer seminar with professionals from around the State and then hold

smaller group sessions in our local areas. Discussed team approach and the idea that while there may be issues we agree to disagree on it was important to try and have as clear a voice as possible and avoid self-contradiction (as an organization) if possible.

Discussion led to a time table for committee to have curriculum development completed by the end of year board meeting, with a preliminary look by conference.

Discussed adding committee members with legal background. WC, others suggested to SP who will follow up.

### **B. Membership - All Board members report on efforts**

Discussed various Board members have had various levels of success getting information out to local groups. Some Board members need to make their initial overtures to groups, while others have been active in pitching at a number of meetings.

### **C. Publications - Debbie Higgs/Aaron Robb**

Need newsletter update. In need of articles for the next issue, including: Conference update (LP), update on education committee (SP), input from members (AR), and other ideas BOD wants to send in.

Will e-mail out next newsletter between 7/15 and 8/1.

### **D. Chapter Council – Leta**

Discussed report LP sent via e-mail earlier. No new info.

### **E. Regional Groups – Laurie**

No new progress. Again the issue if El Paso area practitioners came up, as we seem to have a lack of members and resources in that area. Some suggestions regarding ongoing direct contacts with professionals in that area who are active in other state-wide organizations might be a starting point due to overlapping interests. Per LP's suggestion

LN will be contacting Judge Patricia Macia of the El Paso region to try to spark interest in a regional group in that area.

### **F. Nominations - Tony and Mark**

Will work on having a slate by end of August (30 days prior to end of September member meeting). Will also sort out term issues with changes in at-large Director terms from 1 to 2 years (although Officers have remained 1 year appointments).

## **G. Service models task force**

The Service Models Project [Defining Court-Ordered Legal and Mental Health Support Services to Improve Co-Parenting for Texas Families] approved by the Board 7-1-2004 has made progress on the following goals: (1) national standards of practice and Texas statutory guidelines have been posted on the website for various services; (2) Texas has become the 5<sup>th</sup> state to achieve statutory guidelines for parenting coordination; and (3) members are beginning to plan for desired legislative changes improving guidelines for social studies. However, the goal of providing an online directory of service providers has not yet been achieved.

A new invitation for members to submit service descriptions by August 1<sup>st</sup> will be issued; by September 1<sup>st</sup>, current listings will be replaced with more detailed descriptions of services offered by TX AFCC members and organizational listings. Updates to the website directory will then be made on a scheduled plan, but at least annually. The goal of identifying best practices by comparing descriptions of services offered with standards and statutory guidelines is being pursued on the national level by AAMFT and NCFR in cooperation with AFCC.

Discussed issues with how to list individual providers, groups, etc. LY moved that provider agencies/individuals will be restricted to Texas members. TT second. Passed on voice vote. Group pages, such as TAMFT, TAM, CLI, etc. will still be listed under "links" section.

The Board resolved to provide a listing on our State Chapter web page of those Chapter members who requested to be listed, including professional contact information along with the type(s) of service(s) they provide, regardless of whether their service is court-ordered or not.

## **IX IX. Progress on proposed educational videotape - Rosemary and Aaron**

Discussion of differences between offering tools for professionals vs. offering training materials directly to public. Consensus appeared to be that training materials would be designed for professionals as independent aids or items that they might choose to use with their clients, depending on type of material provided. Discussed recording conferences and making such recordings available via DVD, as well as posting conference materials, etc. on the web site. Regarding posted materials this would be something that would have to be delayed several months so that it was not undermining the conference, but consensus seemed to be that several months later it would be a good resource to make available. Given that we have purchased a CD label printer for this year's conference, and we are going to be putting the material on CD for the conference, it should be easy to post at a future date. Also, discussed how international always records the international conference and then sells audio CDs. This is part of the speaker agreement, and there is no choice presented, recording is mandatory if you agree to speak. Discussed that this would be easy to accomplish if we included it tactfully in our solicitation for speakers next year and made it part of the speaker agreement. Some questions about the technical aspect of taping, but editing and production should not be an issue given some of our members current home computer resources.

Notes should be made in the conference planning guide regarding both of these issues so that they are dealt with up front next year, including appropriate releases and submission of speaker's articles/handouts in electronic format..

## **X X. Conference Update**

Brochure is ready and at the printer. CLE & CEU taken care of, speakers ready, all looks good. Still looking for a possible sponsor of water bottles for the conference goodie/materials bags, in process of contacting Lexis for this. Still open to having other sponsors. Doing quite well with obtaining sponsors to this point. Next conference committee meeting 7/8/05 at LP's office.

## **XI XI. New Business**

### ***A. Next year's conference date and location***

Discussed several possible dates, alternatives to the late September. Conflicts in January with TAMFT, Feb-April bad timing on several fronts, May/June is International conference, July-August vacations and advanced family law, November/December is bad on holidays, etc. No better time in the calendar could be discerned.

Decided needed to have contract set ASAP, at least a year before conference. LN will talk with SC regarding process of contacting the chambers of commerce to request bids from interested hotels. Will hopefully be able to announce contract for next year at this year's conference (ideally).

### ***B. Other new business***

AR brought up the ongoing issue of a lack of basic rules regarding custody evaluations in Texas (although the state had previously adopted the AFCC model standards, that section of the administrative code no longer in effect). Discussed this was an item that to put on long term planning, especially with the current AFCC taskforce on custody evaluation and the revamping of the model guidelines. Suggestion that guidelines were something for the Family Code, similar to Parent Coordinator, Parent Education, and court ordered therapy guidelines. Good discussion regarding specific issues ensued, especially in terms of ethical issues raised by education committee, that are currently unaddressed in Texas.

## **XII. Next Meeting – Houston – September 30 (at the State conference). See you there!**

Texas AFCC Board of Directors Meeting  
September 30, 2005  
Minutes

**1. Meeting called to order – 10:08 a.m.**

Present:

Officers: Leta Parks, President; Laurie Nowlin, President-Elect; Scott Clark, Treasurer; Aaron Robb, Secretary; Lynelle Yingling, Past-President

At Large Directors: Mark Ashworth, Mary Connell, William Connolly, Debbie Higgs, Susan McMillan, Anthony Neugebauer, Rosemary Garza (10:28 a.m.), Hattie Thurlow-McKinley, Trevor Townes

**2. Minutes from June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting**

Approved via e-mail 7/17/2005, no additional corrections

**3. Update on the 2005 conference**

Clarify refund policy in the handbook. There is a \$25 processing fee for refunds that are requested before the conference. There are no refunds after the conference.

**4. Financial report – Scott Clarke**

Current accounting balance: \$30,038.24 (assumes all deposits and checks cleared)

Current bank balance: \$29,366.48 as of 9/29/05

Year to date overview

Starting Balance: \$11,220.04

Income: \$27,262.80

Expenditures: \$8,444.20 (Most conference expenses not yet paid)

This leaves an accounting error of \$0.40, Scott looking into it. Thank you from the rest of the board to Scott for this, we know that the minutia of accountancy can be a headache.

Currently the expected income from conference, after the additional expenses, is \$4,000. This is substantially due to the strong sponsorship support we have received.

**5. Conference planning for 2006**

- a. Ideas for speakers – LN opened up for discussion of possible speakers. Suggestions included Mike Lamb (author on child interviewing), Tim Tippins (attorney who has presented for the international group at child custody symposia), and Jeff Wittman (psychologist who has also presented at child custody symposia for the international group).

- b. Location/hotel – possible ideas: Hilton in Rockwall, Gaylord Texan, Ft. Worth – Worthington/Downtown area, Arlington convention center. There were discussions of the pros and cons of various locations, such as driving distance from airports, cost, and ability to attract both local and statewide participants. LN will check into visitor and convention bureau request form and begin the process for getting bids from the DFW area hotels.
- c. Topics – Several suggestions were fielded, such as
  - upcoming language changes for the Family Code [i.e. H.C.R. No. 153 re-focusing the law not on “custody” (which stems from ownership concepts) but on “parenting time” and rights and responsibilities a la the parenting plan)
  - a financial planning piece so that we can both involve more CDFPs in the conference and educate attorneys, mediators, etc on some of the financial issues of recovery after divorce, etc.
  - forms and formats – application piece of new legislation in Parent Coordination, Parenting Plans, and Child Custody Evaluation
  - “parenting process after divorce”
  - possible role/boundary issues for recommendations made to the court by MHPs
  - enough on ethics for 3 hours of continuing education
- d. Scheduling – Given the past debates on possible dates, other organizations conferences (including the international AFCC), etc. the conference will continue to be scheduled for the end of September or beginning of October. This seems to be both traditional for us now as well as the least bad time for all of our overscheduled calendars.

## 6. Committee Reports

- a. Education – Shelly Probbler, e-mailed report. Still in progress and will have update on issues at next board meeting. MA (committee member) reported that working on a little more than goals, but have framework now. Will work on getting to next BoD meeting (beginning of the year) beginnings of curriculum and packets we can give out to run seminars in different locations. [From the last Board meeting: We can host a train-the-trainer seminar with professionals from around the State and then hold smaller group sessions in our local areas. Discussed team approach and the idea that while there may be issues we agree to disagree on it was important to try and have as clear a voice as possible and avoid self-contradiction (as an organization) if possible.]
- b. Membership – discussed progress with mail outs, getting literature to meetings. Tony will check with El Paso folks regarding their participation with the chapter at the DRO conference. It remains unclear if participation from west Texas is low because of interest, distance, fiscal reasons, or some combination of these factors.
- c. Publications – Debbie Higgs/Aaron Robb. Next submissions due in 2-3 weeks, put out in 3-4 weeks. Will target by publication for November 1<sup>st</sup>.
- d. Chapter Council – Laurie Nowlin, last council scheduled on 7/28, was out on vacation, communication miss on who substitute would be. Will clarify next time.

- e. Nominations – Mark Ashworth presented the following on behalf of the nominations committee as the ballot to go out with the November newsletter:

**President-Elect:** Aaron Robb, MEd, NCC, LPC, Irving

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President:** Shelly Probbler, PsyD, San Antonio

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President:** Trevor Townes, M.A., Houston

**Treasurer:** Scott Clarke, CDP, CFP, Hurst

**Secretary:** Martha Musselman, J.D., Houston

### **At-Large Directors**

Mark Ashworth, LCSW, LMFT, Austin (to complete a 1 year term)

William Connolly, J.D., Houston (to complete a 1 year term)

David Eaker, J.D., Rockwall

Rosemary Garza, J.D., Houston

Louise Lee, J.D., Houston

Susan L. McMillan, Ph.D, Austin

Anthony Neugebauer, MA, LMFT, San Antonio (to complete a 1 year term)

Alisa Sherry, Ph.D., Austin (to complete a 1 year term)

Mardi Winder-Adams, M.Ed., Naples

Rocky Deutscher, LBSW, Fort Worth (to complete a 1 year term)

As a note, the bylaws were restructured last so that at large directors would serve 2 year terms, with half of the directors being elected in any yearly cycle.

## **7. Old Business**

1. Banner – a new banner has been purchased and is on display at the front registration table of the conference.
2. Liability Insurance – after abandoning our search we finally had a company return our contacts. AR will continue to follow up on.
3. Child custody evaluation (social study) rules – Discussed ongoing issue with a lack of rules/qualifications in the family code. AR will e-mail out the previous rules, along with a short history lesson (courtesy of Tony and the Bexar County DRO)
4. Conference planning guide – needs to be updated. SM and LY will look at continuing education update, LN will look at ongoing updates for the guide.

## **8. New Business**

Organizational handbook – With the ongoing changes to the Chapter there is less “institutional memory” and more for each officer and committee chair to know to get “up to speed.” Each officer and standing committee chair will create a short write up of their position’s obligations and timeframes for seeing that items are completed.

## 2005 End of Year Summary

Starting Bank Balance(1/1/2005): \$11,220.04

Total Income: \$31,091.90

Total Expense: \$25,316.76

Ending(Accounting Balance): \$16,995.18

Actual Balance(12/19/2005): \$16,995.18

Difference: \$0

100% Balanced

	Current Income:	2005 Budgeted Amount	Actual
Membership Dues	\$2,400		\$2,306.27
Conference Registration	\$15,500		\$21,997.50
Conference Sponsorship	\$1,500		\$6,650.00
Interest Income	\$100		\$113.13
Miscellaneous Income	0		\$25.00
Total Income:	\$19,500		\$31,091.90
Expected Expenses:			
Conference*	\$16,500		\$23,459.31
AFCC Fundraiser	\$300		\$300.00
Membership Building Activity	\$500		\$574.62
Additional AFCC Advertising	\$0		\$0.00
Research Project	\$0		\$0.00
Board meeting/Travel Exp.	\$1,500		\$833.66
Website Maintenance	\$350		\$0.00
Website/Mailbox Fees	\$150		\$134.35
Miscellaneous	\$0		\$14.82
Travel exp. for rep to conference	\$200		\$0.00
Total Expense:	\$19,500		\$25,316.76
Difference	\$0		<b>\$5,775.14</b>

Conference Details

Brochures(Production and Mailing)	\$2,500	\$4,275.62
Advertising	\$1,500	\$890.93
Food:Paid reg.	\$7,500	\$11,809.89
Speaker's Rooms	\$0	\$694.98
AV	\$750	\$0.00
Speaker + travel	\$2,500	\$2,500.00
Packets	\$1,250	\$595.38
Miscellaneous	\$500	\$2,692.51
<hr/>		
Total:	\$16,500	\$23,459.31

Miscellaneous:		
Nametags		
Other		\$950.09
Refund		\$1,100.00
MDOT Fees(not complete)		\$379.92
MCLE Application Fee		\$262.50
Total		\$2,692.51

**TEXAS CHAPTER OF THE AFCC  
BY-LAWS  
[Approved Revisions 12-17-2004]**

**1. Purposes**

The purposes of the Texas Chapter are:

- A. To provide an interdisciplinary forum for the exchange of ideas and the development of procedures to lessen problems arising from separation or divorce and conservatorship issues;
- B. To encourage the development of courts and court procedures emphasizing constructive methods for resolving family disputes;
- C. To develop and improve counseling, parent education, mediation, custody evaluation and other processes to aid families in resolving their disputes.
- D. To protect the interests of children in relation to all aspects of family law, child protection proceedings and other legal actions affecting children.

**2. Membership**

- A. Membership shall be available only to those individuals and institutions that subscribe to the purposes of the Chapter, are members in good standing with the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts, and have paid the current Texas Chapter membership fee.
- B. A member in good standing is entitled to receive notice of meetings, to vote, to serve on Committees, to receive copies of the Chapter newsletter, and is eligible for election to the Board of Directors and as an officer of the Chapter.
- C. Classes of Membership - There shall be four classes of membership:
  - 1. Individual – available to individuals who do not fall into one of the following groups:
  - 2. Student - available to a person enrolled at an educational institution as a full-time student.
  - 3. Institutional - This membership may be in the name of a court, court system, association or institution, which shall be represented at meetings by a person designated by that organization. It shall be entitled to only one vote, to be exercised by its representative. The representative shall be eligible for office and may serve on committees. This membership shall receive three copies of the Chapter newsletter.
- D. The Board of Directors may from time-to-time set the membership fee for each class of membership.

**3. Officer Titles and Duties**

The officers of the Chapter shall be:

- A. President – The President is the principal executive officer of the Chapter, charged with the general direction, supervision, and management of the offices and operation of the Chapter. The President shall preside at all meetings of the membership and Board of Directors. The President shall prepare an agenda for all meetings. The duties of the President shall be those usually pertaining to the office, including appointment of committees, serving as an ex officio member of all committees, and the preparation of an annual report to the membership for publication in the Chapter newsletter. The President shall keep the President-elect advised of all activities to facilitate an informed continuity of administration.
- B. President-elect – The President-elect shall assume the duties and responsibilities of the President in the absence of the President. The President-elect shall work with the President, First Vice-President and other persons appointed by the President to prepare the program for the annual conference.
- C. First Vice-President – The First Vice-President shall work with the President, President-elect, and other persons appointed by the President to prepare the program for the annual conference. The First Vice-President shall also be responsible for all other programs.
- D. Second Vice-President – The Second Vice-President shall act as the Publications Director and shall be responsible for the publication and distribution of the Chapter newsletter and other publications authorized by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall establish an appropriate budget for the Publications Director.
- E. Secretary – The Secretary shall keep all minutes of the Board of Directors and of the Executive Committee and membership meetings, correspondence, books, records, contracts, and documents, other than those kept by the Treasurer. The Secretary shall perform such other duties the Board of Directors may determine from time to time.
- F. Treasurer – The treasurer shall supervise the custody and responsibility for all funds and securities of the Chapter and shall report the status of the Chapter's treasury at meetings of the Board of Directors and to the membership. The Treasurer shall have a financial statement prepared for audit or financial review each year.
- G. Immediate Past President – The Immediate Past President serves in an honorary and advisory role with the same authority as an officer and member of the Board of Directors.

#### **4. The Board of Directors**

- A. Management - The business of the Chapter shall be managed by the Board of Directors as required by law. It shall initiate programs calculated to achieve the purposes of the Chapter.
- B. Makeup - The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers of the Chapter along with ten At-Large Directors, all of which are entitled to vote at Chapter Board of Director meetings.

- C. Meetings - The Board of Directors shall meet at least once a year at the time of the annual membership meeting and conference, and other times at the call of the President or upon the written request of one-third of the Directors.
- D. Notice - No special notice of the annual Board of Directors meeting is required, but not less than 30 days written notice of the time and place of all other Board of Directors meetings shall be given. The requirement for notice with respect to any meeting of the Directors may be waived if all Directors consent. Written notice may be by facsimile or electronic mail sent to the Director's last known fax number or email address.
- E. Quorum - A quorum shall consist of half of all members of the Board of Directors.
- F. Expenses - Necessary costs of Board of Directors meetings shall be a proper expense of the Chapter, but these expenses shall not include personal food, lodging, or travel expenses, unless the Board decides otherwise.
- G. Votes - All issues shall be determined by a majority of votes except that in the event of a tie the President shall have an additional deciding vote. Voting shall be by voice vote or show of hands unless a secret ballot is directed by the presiding officer or required by a majority of those present. The President may call for a vote of the Board of Directors by facsimile, by electronic mail, by the use of the website or by other internet program when necessary to conduct business between meetings of the Directors.
- H. Rules of Order - Roberts Rules of Order shall govern proceedings of the Board of Directors unless contrary to these by-laws.
- I. Removal - The Board of Directors for good cause may, by a two-thirds majority vote of those present at a meeting of which notice specifying the intention to take such action has been given, remove any officer or director from office.
- J. Term Limits – Directors shall be elected for a term of two years and shall not hold office for more than three consecutive two-year terms.

## **5. Executive Committee**

- A. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers of the Chapter.
- B. It shall carry out decisions and directives of the Board of Directors
- C. It shall act for the Board of Directors, and perform the Board of Directors duties between meetings when communication with the entire Board is not feasible because of the urgency for action.

## **6. Elections of At-Large Board of Directors and Chapter Officers**

- A. Elections shall occur annually and be conducted by vote of the membership. The Board of Directors may also be elected annually by mail or electronic ballot. The outcome of a vote of the

membership will be determined by the majority vote of those members casting ballots by the determined deadline.

- B. The nominating committee shall consider and present to the membership and to the Board of Directors at least thirty days prior to an election a list of nominees for election. The term of office shall coincide with the calendar year.
- C. Any vacancies in Officer or At-Large Board of Directors positions may be filled by appointment of the Executive Committee until the next election.

## **7. Nominating Committee**

- A. The Nominating Committee will be a standing committee of the Chapter.
- B. This committee shall consider and present to the membership and to the Board of Directors at least thirty days prior to an election a list of nominees for election.
- C. The nominating committee shall consider the following criteria among other things in making nominations:
  - 1. Professional achievement and expertise, sincerity of purpose, dedication to the Chapter's purposes, willingness to work, and a continuing interest in and opportunity to attend meetings.
  - 2. Geographical distribution to assure some regional representation, giving weight to total membership in particular areas.
  - 3. Potential as a leader within the Chapter.
  - 4. Advocacy for Chapter goals by establishing or improving a local court, promoting membership, organizing a conference, or educating the Texas legislature and other Texas policy makers about issues of concern to the Chapter.
  - 5. A balance of Board of Directors membership reflecting to some degree the proportions of the several disciplines, genders and races in the total membership.
  - 6. The selection of a person to a vice-presidency shall not necessarily be deemed to be a progression to the office of president-elect.
  - 7. Nominees shall be a member in good standing of AFCC international and the Texas chapter.

## **8. Other Offices and Committees**

- A. The Board of Directors may, from time to time, create other individual administrative offices to conduct the business and fulfill the purposes of the Chapter, with or without a budget.

- B. The President shall appoint such committees as are necessary for the effective administration of the Chapter. Committee members need not be on the Board of Directors.
- C. The Chairperson of each committee shall prepare a written report of the committee's activities and submit it to the President a minimum of ten days prior to meetings of the Board of Directors.
- D. The President may appoint an Advisory Council. The function and purpose of the Advisory Council shall be to advise, support, or assist the Board of Directors on matters relating to the purpose of the organization. Members of the Advisory Council are not Members of the Board of Directors and need not be members of AFCC. The Advisory Council is not required to submit reports to the President.

## **9. Annual Meeting**

- A. Time and Place – An annual meeting of the Chapter membership shall be held at a time and place determined by the Board of Directors.
- B. Notice – Written notice thereof shall be given not less thirty days prior thereto. The notice may be delivered electronically to the member's last known email address, placed in the Chapter newsletter or on the Chapter website.
- C. The annual meeting shall be a plenary meeting and solicit issues of new business for the Board of Directors to consider.
- D. Quorum – The Chapter members present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum.
- E. Proxy – Voting by proxy is not permitted.

## **10. Additional Meetings**

- A. Additional meetings of the Chapter Membership may be held at any time on the call of the President, Executive Committee, or Board of Directors, subject to the same notice, quorum and voting requirements as annual meetings.
- B. Special meetings of the members shall be called upon the written request of one-twentieth of the members entitled to vote. Upon receipt of such a request, the President or Board of Directors shall call a meeting within a reasonable time, giving notice stating the purpose of the meeting.
- C. Meetings Utilizing Electronic Media. - Members of the Board of Directors or members of any committee designated by the Board of Directors may participate in and hold a meeting of that Board or committee, respectively, by means of conference telephone or similar communication equipment, provided that all persons participating in such a meeting shall constitute presence in person at such meeting, except where a person participates in the meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business on the ground that the meeting is not lawfully created.

## **11. Conferences**

- A. An annual conference for educational purposes shall be held in conjunction with each annual meeting.
- B. Regional conferences may be held to serve the special purposes, interests or needs of particular regions
- C. Conferences may be held in conjunction with other organizations having mutual interests.

## **12. Publications**

- A. The Association shall publish the Chapter newsletter in either print or electronic form at least twice annually and at such other times as the Board of Directors decides.
- B. The Chapter Newsletter shall consist of articles and features consistent with the purposes of the Chapter.
- C. The Chapter may publish papers and other material to inform and educate the public on topics related to the purposes of the Chapter.

## **13. Amendments**

These bylaws may be amended by majority vote of the membership if the membership receives written notice of the proposed revisions at least thirty days prior to a vote. Written notice may be by facsimile or electronic mail sent to the member's last known fax number or email address. Approval of amendments to the bylaws shall be determined by the majority vote of those members casting votes by the determined deadline.