

Southeastern Archaeological Conference
Consideration of Attorney/Legal Services for SEAC
14 December 2021

In (remote) attendance: Maureen Meyers, Kandi Hollenbach, Patrick Livingood, Lindsay Bloch, Asa Randall, Karen Stevens, Carol Colaninno, Shane Miller, Megan Kassabaum, Robert Allen Barlow, Autumn Melby, Ramie Gougeon

[R Gougeon, reporting]

M Meyers reported that she, K Hollenbach, and C Colaninno met with Jeff Tennenbaum (attorney) and forwarded information about the firm and legal team to the EC. Among other clients, Mr. Tennenbaum and his two associates are counsel for the Archaeological Institute of American (AIA). Neisha Thakker would be SEAC's point person for hotel contracts and Julie Kulovits would take the lead on sexual harassment issues. They are offering a 20% discount to their rates of \$560/hr (Tennenbaum) and \$376/hr (associates). They also have numerous 'canned' forms and resources they can make available to SEAC. They see no conflicts or issues with SEAC's incorporation in the State of Tennessee.

A general discussion about costs per consultation followed, beginning with a quasi-hypothetical situation. Tennenbaum was asked about the recent SHARP case at the 2021 SEAC annual meeting. Tennenbaum noted that while he could have been called in to consult about the case, he would have recommended following procedures. Following procedures, he noted, keeps one out of the courts. Further, in this scenario, a call (and specifically NOT an email) to Tennenbaum would first be fielded by an associated and only escalated to him (and his higher hourly rate) if necessary.

The EC also discussed other scenarios that may require legal consultation. For instance, if a respondent's or complainant's attorney contacted the SEAC, Tennenbaum recommended letting the firm respond. This firm might review SEAC's indemnification clause as well as the sexual harassment policy. (If they are asked to review the latter, they should be informed that Terry Ona has previously reviewed it.) One EC member made a quick estimate of costs associated with quick consultations – two :20 calls might cost \$100.

Lastly, Meyers noted that beyond sexual harassment policies and procedures, contracts for conferences are becoming especially complicated. It would be useful for SEAC to have on-call legal services to help review conference contracts and other legal entanglements. For instance, while the SEAC EC had recently approved going forward with negotiations for an upcoming annual meeting in Chattanooga, the hotel agreements had not yet been signed. There will also be a need for back-up hotels, all of which will come with legal agreements that could be reviewed by our legal consultants.

P Livingood suggested that, for budgetary purposes, the SEAC EC consider legal expenses of less than \$1000 to be manageable, but any anticipated expenses above \$5,000 would require an increase in dues, for instance, or other other cost saving/revenue increasing measures.

M Meyers will email a call for a vote on retaining legal counsel. A future meeting will need to consider who is authorized to retain the services of our legal counsel should the measure pass.