



## TYLER AREA ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS DECEMBER, 2020 NEWSLETTER

### *President's Message*

Leatha Kopech, PP, PLS

Dear TAALP Members:

Can you believe it is already December and just two weeks away from Christmas? It's crazy how time flies! This is my favorite time of year, my house is all decorated and I love seeing all the Christmas decorations as we are out and about. However, this year has been so crazy that I am ready for the new year and praying it will be better for all of us! Although the year has been crazy, we should all remember that this time of year is a time to celebrate the true reason for the season, which is the birth of our Savior. This year may be a bit different in our celebration of His birth, however, what better way to show our faith amid all the craziness than to continue to count the many blessings He has provided!!!! I encourage you all to take some time to think about how truly blessed you are. Make a list of your blessings and reflect on them regularly. I also challenge you, as you rush through this Christmas season, to take time to notice the people around you and spread some Christmas cheer every chance you get. Whether you spread the cheer through making a donation to your favorite charity, picking someone from an Angel Tree, bake something and/or buy a cozy throw for an elderly neighbor or nursing home resident. I promise, whichever you choose, you and your family will be the ones who truly receive the blessing. In spite of all the craziness, we can all be a blessing to someone else.

The last few years we had so much fun with our ornament exchange at our December meeting, so we decided to do it again. This year, we will be dining at Potpourri House, and we will play the ornament exchange game again, so mark your calendar for **December 10, 2020, at noon at Potpourri House** for this fun and festive event. Be sure to bring a WRAPPED or GIFT SACKED Christmas ornament (\$10 limit) if you wish to participate in the ornament exchange game. We love new folks, so bring a guest/co-worker with you...just be sure they bring an ornament, too, for the exchange game! We want to say **THANK YOU** to **Lexitas and Epic Office Solutions** for sponsoring our meeting this month!

Your generosity in donating to the East Texas Food Bank which was our Thanksgiving community service project was greatly appreciated. We collected a total of \$348 and some food items. This provided a total of 2,748 meals to needy families. You guys ROCK!!!!

In December we will have two community service projects. One was this past Saturday, we rang the Salvation Army Bell at Hobby Lobby. I'd like to send a special thank you out to Candice Dillon, Hanna Scirto, Paul Clarkston, and Carla Hemphill for ringing the bell. It was a wonderful experience, and a fun time was had by all. I can't wait to hear how much money we collected. We will also be collecting unwrapped toys during our December meeting, so that some special children will have presents on Christmas morning. Bring your donations to our December meeting and make some child very happy for Christmas. Contact Candice Dillon at [Candice.Dillon@lgbs.com](mailto:Candice.Dillon@lgbs.com) or call her at 903-597-2897 to make arrangements to get your donations to her, if you are unable to bring them to the meeting Thursday.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I ask that you all keep our members and their families in your prayers. We have had several members and their family members contract COVID. Let's remember each other in our prayers. Please take necessary precautions and do your best to stay safe.

I sincerely wish each of you and your families a **Very Merry and Blessed Christmas** and a **Happy and Safe New Year too!**

Leatha Kopech

**TAALP can help get your name out to our members!**

**For more information, email:**

**[brandit@brownbaumsmith.com](mailto:brandit@brownbaumsmith.com)**

**Transcript Ad Rates (Per Month):**

**Business Card - \$10.00**

**Quarter Page - \$20.00**

**Half Page - \$30.00**

**Full Page - \$50.00**

### **NOTICES:**

The price of lunch is \$15.00, which covers an hour of CLE and a full course meal (salad, entrée, drink and dessert). Feel free to bring your own lunch with you should you chose not to eat the catered meal.

When responding to your evite, please note whether you will attend and whether or not you will eat so an accurate count can be provided to the caterer. If an RSVP is made with a notation that a meal will be paid for and you do not attend the meeting, you will still be responsible for the cost of that meal. Those with extenuating circumstances will be taken under advisement.

Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

**TYLER AREA ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS  
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 2, 2020 BOARD MEETING**

By: Laura Brownlow, Recording Secretary

The executive Board met at Texas Music City Grill on Wednesday, December 2, 2020 for the December monthly board meeting. The following board members were present: Leatha Kopech, President; Jo Ruth Hancock, President-Elect; Tina Knighton, Second Vice President; Brandi Turchi, Corresponding Secretary; Laura Brownlow, Recording Secretary; Lisa Betts, Treasurer; Helen Koch, Parliamentarian; and Carrie King, Executive Advisor

Absent: Melissa Wallace, First Vice President

Leatha Kopech called the meeting to order at 12:12pm.

**LEATHA KOPECH, President:**

**Old Business:**

- November meeting attendance 24

**New Business:**

- \* Christmas Luncheon – Potpourri House tentatively reserved. We will do the ornament exchange like we’ve done the last couple of years (\$10 limit).
- \* Christmas Community Service – Salvation Army bell ringing Saturday 12/05/2020 from 10:00am – 8:00pm.
- \* Christmas Community Service - Toys for Tots – bring unwrapped child’s gift to Membership Meeting, Thursday, 12/10/2020
- \* December Sponsorship: Lexitas and Epic Office Solutions

**JO RUTH HANCOCK, President-Elect:**

- NALA Mid-Year Report – due December 1, 2020

**MELISSA WALLACE, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: - Absent**

- 2020-21 Renewal Membership total to date 90 as of December 1, 2020
- Evite for December 10, 2020 membership meeting – send evite Friday December 4, 2020 with a couple of reminders; RSVP Tuesday, December 8, 2020 by noon.  
Location – Potpourri House  
Menu – choice of Honey Mustard Chicken or Sliced Roast Beef w/Port Wine and Fresh Mushroom Sauce w/mashed potatoes, green beans, roll and house salad; or Soup, Salad, and Potato Bar

**TINA KNIGHTON, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

December	<u>No Speaker – Ornament Exchange</u>
January	<u>Neal Smith – TBD</u>
February	<u>Javan Johnson (ethics)</u>
March	<u>Kline Pillow – TBD</u>
April	<u>Matt Rowan – TBD (evening meeting)</u>
May	<u>Doug Ritcheson - TBD</u>

**LAURA BROWNLOW, Recording Secretary:**

- Board Meeting Minutes

Laura Brownlow moved that the Minutes of the November, 2020, board meeting be approved, as reported in the Transcript. The motion was seconded, and it carried.

**BRANDI TURCHI, Corresponding Secretary:**

- Publish the newsletter by Wednesday, December 9, 2020. **Deadline** to get your information to Brandi is **Friday, December 4, 2020, by 5:00 pm.**
- December spotlight member: Update from the North Pole
- January Spotlight: Joanna Field

**LISA BETTS, Treasurer:**

- November 2020 Treasurer's Report

Lisa Betts moved that the Treasurer's Report for November, 2020, be filed for audit. The motion was seconded, and it carried.

**CARRIE KING, Executive Advisor:**

**HELEN KOCH, Parliamentarian:**

**Next Regular Meeting:**

**December 10, 2020 – Potpourri House**

**Next Board Meeting:**

**January 6, 2020 – Texas Music City Grill**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm.

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Laura Brownlow  
Recording Secretary

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Leatha Kopech, President

EMPLOYMENT – DECEMBER 2020

*Contact: Lisa Betts  
TAALP Job Bank Coordinator  
903.534.0200 or [lisa@sscfirm.com](mailto:lisa@sscfirm.com)*








Position	Practice Areas/Job Description	Location
1. Legal Assistant	Full-time legal assistant needed for solo Practitioner with guardianship and probate experience	Tyler
2. Real Estate Closing Asst	<p>Real Estate Closing Assistant Full-time position with 401k, health insurance, and vacation. Required: Minimum of two years' experience working in one of the following areas: 1) real estate law; 2) title company; or 3) lending institution. Must qualify to be licensed as a Notary Public.</p> <p>Job description to include but not limited to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Back-up Settlement Agent for closings;</li><li>2) Preparing HUD-1 Statements and Closing Disclosures;</li><li>3) Preparing files for closing, including title curative;</li><li>4) Ordering and tracking title orders for real estate closings;</li><li>5) Ordering and handling payoffs, HOA letters, etc.; and</li><li>6) Back-up legal document preparation;</li></ol>	Tyler
3. Paralegal	<p>Litigation – This candidate should have a minimum of three to five years of experience as a paralegal in litigation. Candidate should have a strong work ethic and be able to work both independently and as a team member. Responsibilities for this position includes, but is not limited to, managing the attorneys dockets, scheduling, calendaring, client interviews, drafting pleadings, preparing and answering to discovery, review of medical records and preparing medical chronologies, review of employment records and preparing summaries, and preparation for and attend trials.</p> <p>The firm offers competitive compensation and benefit plan. Compensation will be based upon the candidate's experience.</p>	Tyler

NOTE: Job postings are for TAALP members. If you share with a friend/co-worker, please advise them that they have to be a member in order for the job bank to be shared or their resume forwarded.






**TAALP would like to thank all of the following for your membership:**

<b>Amaya, Lia</b>	<b>Earls, Kristen</b>	<b>King, Carrie</b>	<b>Rex, Renda</b>
<b>Avery, Jacqueline</b>	<b>East Texas Crisis Center</b>	<b>Kirby, Cindy</b>	<b>Scirto, Hannah</b>
<b>Berrum, Melissa</b>	<b>Epic Office Solutions</b>	<b>Knighton, Tina</b>	<b>Sepmoree, Tina</b>
<b>Betts, Lisa</b>	<b>Evans, Karen S.</b>	<b>Koch, Helen</b>	<b>Sherrill, Sharon</b>
<b>Blair, Erin</b>	<b>Field, Joanna</b>	<b>Kopech, Leatha</b>	<b>Shipp, Kelsey</b>
<b>Boynton, Gaye</b>	<b>Freeman, Tabitha</b>	<b>Kramer, Jackie</b>	<b>Shirley, Racheal</b>
<b>Brooks, Bonnie</b>	<b>Godwin, Carol</b>	<b>Langston, Denise</b>	<b>Skeen, Barbara</b>
<b>Brotherton-Pyatt, Margaret</b>	<b>Goley, Carol</b>	<b>Lexitas</b>	<b>Slayter, Linda</b>
<b>Brownlow, Laura</b>	<b>Hall, Carrie</b>	<b>Liska, Rhonda</b>	<b>Sparks, Rhonda</b>
<b>Buchanan, Ann</b>	<b>Hancock, Jo Ruth</b>	<b>Luker, Kayla</b>	<b>Starcher, Darcy</b>
<b>Carter, Kimberly</b>	<b>Hankins, Melanie</b>	<b>Mapes, Sarah</b>	<b>Starkey, Emily</b>
<b>Clarkston, Paul</b>	<b>Hayati, Connie</b>	<b>Marshall, Tracy</b>	<b>Taylor, Vickie</b>
<b>Collins Investigations</b>	<b>Hemphill, Carla</b>	<b>Martin, Melissa</b>	<b>Tekell, Amanda</b>
<b>Connor, Sarah</b>	<b>Henry, Sally</b>	<b>Martinez, Marieliza</b>	<b>Thedford, Kimberly</b>
<b>Coplan, Patricia</b>	<b>Hesse, Wendy</b>	<b>May, Tamara</b>	<b>Thomas, Deborah</b>
<b>Crawford, Melani</b>	<b>Jackson, Laura</b>	<b>Mayfield, Tammye</b>	<b>Toon, Kristine</b>
<b>Crim, Nancy</b>	<b>Johnson, Sandy</b>	<b>McLeod, Jacob</b>	<b>Torres, Magali</b>
<b>Deck, Mary</b>	<b>Jones, Christine</b>	<b>McMillan, Jocelyn</b>	<b>Turchi, Brandi</b>
<b>Deposition Resources</b>	<b>Jones, Gabby</b>	<b>Mendell, Melissa</b>	<b>Vallery, Jo</b>
<b>Dillon, Candice</b>	<b>Jones, Jordae</b>	<b>Miller, Susan</b>	<b>Vickers, Hailey</b>
<b>Discovery Records</b>		<b>Pilcher, Laney</b>	<b>Wallace, Melissa</b>
			<b>Watson, Christy</b>
			<b>Wharen, Marcia</b>
			<b>White, April</b>
			<b>Wich, Jodi</b>
			<b>Wilgus, Melissa</b>
			<b>Williams, Brandi</b>
			<b>Williams, Cayce Della</b>
			<b>Wootton, Magen</b>

**Our purpose of TAALP is:**

-  To establish good fellowship among association members, national and state legal associations, and members of the legal community.
-  To encourage a high order of ethical and professional attainment.
-  To advance high standards of integrity and professionalism for legal professionals to the end that the public and the legal profession may be better served.
-  To further education among members of the legal profession.
-  To cooperate with state and local bar associations.
-  To further the interests of legal support staff and professionals through this Association.
-  To support and carry out the programs, purposes, aims and goals of the National Association of Legal Assistants, Inc.

**The benefits you will have with TAALP are:**

-  CLE approved programs and seminars
-  Discounts to TAALP seminars
-  Access to job bank
-  Subscription to monthly newsletter - The Transcript
-  Great network to other legal professionals



# DECEMBER COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT

## Ringling of the Salvation Army Bell

The ringing of the Salvation Army Bell is an iconic sound of the season. "It's Christmas," Salvation Army Volunteer David Booth said. "My Christmas spirit starts when I get out here and start ringing the bell." With a jingle and a smile, David Booth, as many East Texans do, gives his time to the Salvation Army during the holidays.



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Michael J Collins  
Private Investigator

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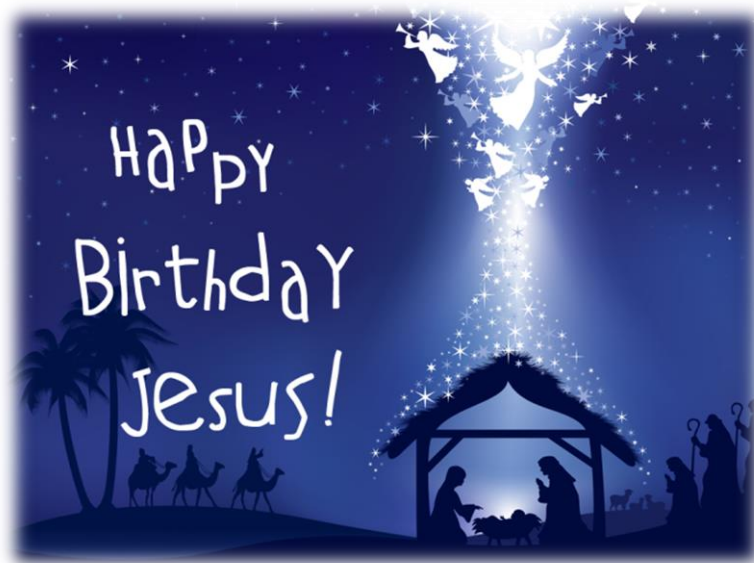
**THANK YOU TO OUR NEW VENDOR, EPIC OFFICE SOLUTIONS!**

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SCH4241  
Member TPSA, NAPPS and TAALP





### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Jocelyn McMillan	3
Melissa Wallace	5
Sarah Connor	6
Connie Hayati	12
Tina Sepmoree	13
Leatha Kopech	20
Tabitha Freeman	27



**TAALP**

**would like to extend a**

**BIG “THANK YOU”**

**to DAIRY QUEEN OF TYLER,  
for donating the nice TREATS**

**members are finding in their  
birthday cards!!**

**Be Sure To Frequent Your Local  
DAIRY QUEEN!**



# Update from the North Pole 2020

To say this year has been different is perhaps the biggest understatement of all time, ranking with "Hitler wasn't ALL bad." And trust me, the North Pole hasn't been left unscathed by the trials of 2020.

Things seemed to be off to a normal start, as normal as a start to an election year can be. However, tensions began running high almost immediately after Christmas 2019 when Jack Frost made his plans clear on a campaign run for the title of King Winter Wonderland (KWW) and to dethrone the current KWW, Frosty the Snowman. King Winter Wonderland is the title given to the winner of the yearly Winter Wonderland Competition. For those wondering, Santa doesn't compete in this contest because it interferes with his Christmas duties; besides, we all know who is tops at the North Pole.

Anyway, things took a quick turn and the North Pole heated up like the equator when the whole thing turned into a smear campaign. It began with rumors that Mr. Frost was bribing elves for votes with candy canes and spiced tea. Mr. Frost alleged that this was no different than Frosty padding his voter base by bussing in elves who had retired to the Scandinavian Mountain region. Though still on KK pensions (Kris Kringle pensions, retirement funds for elves), some of the retirees hadn't lived at the North Pole in quite some time, thus bringing their voter eligibility into question.

The actual smearing happened at the Pole Hall Meeting when the two contenders decided to debate the current issues. Mr. Frost made a comment that Frosty needed to "mellow", which Frosty misinterpreted as "yellow", and everyone knows a SNOWMAN NEVER wants to be accused of being YELLOW, and when Frosty slammed his mug of cocoa on the table some of it spilled down the back of Mr. Frost's white nickers prompting him to take a piece of Mrs. Clause's homemade fudge and smear it all over Frosty's face. Names were called and cookies thrown. It was quite the sticky situation.

To date, we still don't have a clear winner for 2020 King Winter Wonderland. We are having a recount because the Scandinavian elves began an "Every Elf Vote Counts" movement. They are demanding their votes be counted though they no longer reside in Santaland. We expect a ruling from Santa himself sometime after the 25th of December.

In other news, the elves were slightly behind schedule in toy making earlier this year due to an expansion project made necessary by new COVID-19 regulations. Santa, who has always considered the wellbeing of his elves to be a top priority, decided to expand the workshop so the elves could work with appropriate 6 feet social distancing. This turned out to be a needless delay and was shelved before ground broke on the expansion once everyone realized elves have a natural immunity to COVID-19, and, even if they didn't, elves are only 12 inches tall anyway. Six feet to an elf is simply excessive. However, the EHI (Elf Health Initiative) has asked all elves to stay two feet apart and avoid their natural compulsion to hug until the entire crisis is averted in a show of solidarity with the rest of the world.

The EHI, headed by Mrs. Clause, decided to implement masks in the workshop and other communal areas. There was some confusion at first regarding the masks. See, Mrs. Clause spent quite a bit of time picking out festive holiday material and sewing each and every little mask; but one of the elves who was at the post office during the meeting collecting early-wishing letters to Santa, mistakenly thought the mask was some sort of new elf underwear when he found it in his room. There is still quite a bit of teasing going on since elves don't wear "underwear", they wear long johns, and he had it on the OUTSIDE of his clothes. The video of him walking into the workroom actually went viral.

Also on the mask issue, many of the elves argued that masks were not appropriate for the North Pole as they are a Halloween item, not a Christmas item. Santa and Mrs. Clause conferred and calmed the disgruntled elves with aroma therapy. They spritzed the face masks with sugar cookie scented non-essential oil, and the elves went right back to work.

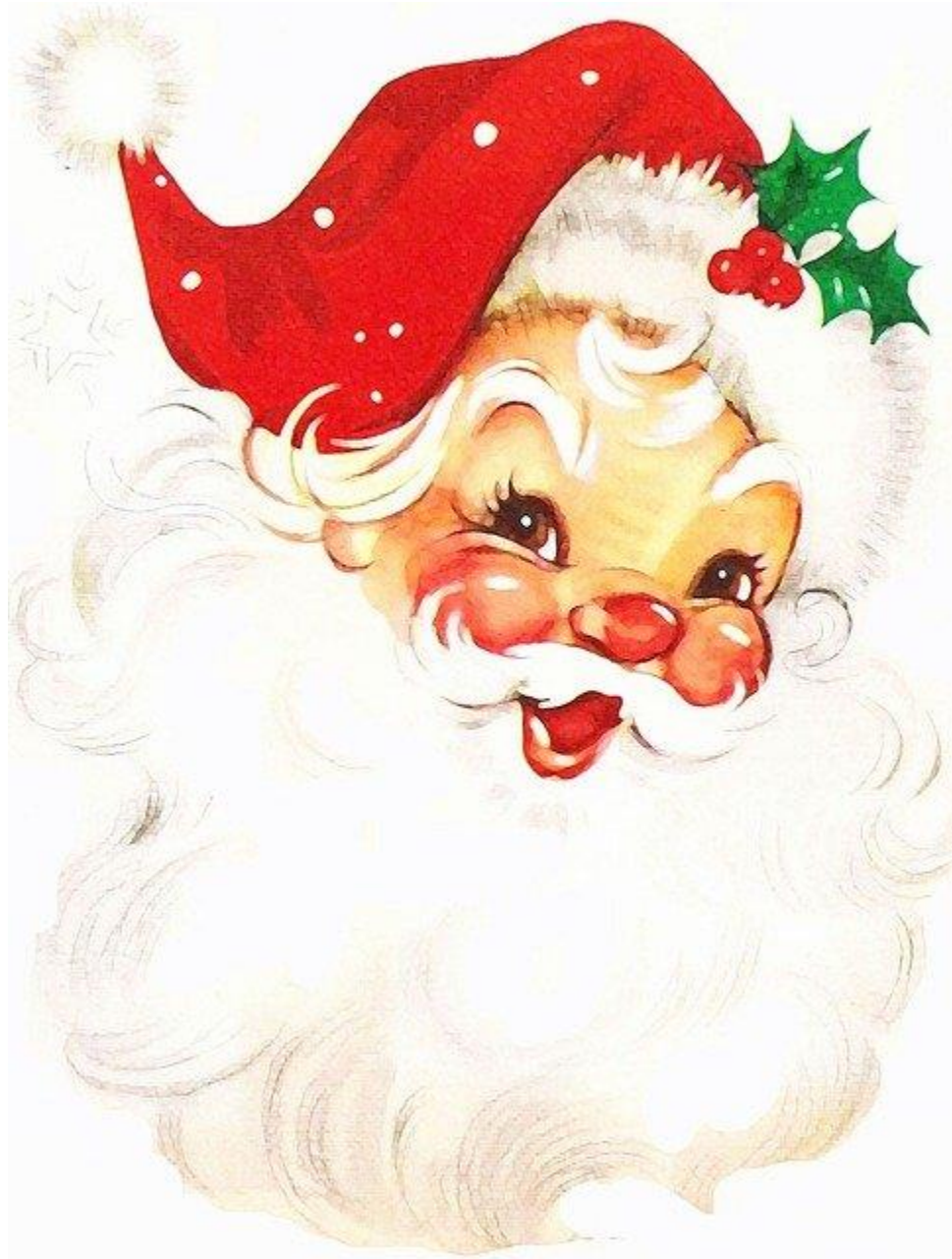
COVID-19 also affected the Reindeer Games this year. NPSN (North Pole Sports Network) is airing the games with no fans and Canned Christmas Cheer to make it seem okay, but Rudolph has admitted that it isn't quite the same to frolic and play under the *Northern Lights* with no one to cheer them on.

Santa also had to go high tech this year due to COVID-19. Instead of having his helpers (you know, the mall Santas that sit in for him) come to the North Pole for the yearly convention, they have had several mini Zoom meetings and updates instead. There was one minor mishap when one of the helpers attended the Zoom meeting without his trousers, and when he got up to get a fresh mug of cocoa Santa almost got a screen full of jingle bells! That's when Santa sent out the memo that even though the helpers were now working remotely and meeting via Zoom, trousers must be worn AT ALL TIMES.

At any rate, have no fear, Christmas is here and 2020 is drawing to an end. Santa and staff are all on track and ready for the big ride. And a special message from Santa himself: remember why we celebrate this time of year. The reason is a baby, born the King of Kings, but laid to sleep in a manger. Born to bring light and salvation to a dark world. Christmas is about giving of yourself without the expectation of receiving anything in return. When you feel the pressure of the grown-up world bearing down on you, and you feel hope slipping, let the magic and wonder of Christmas find you through the eyes of a child. Just take a minute to look and you will find it there.









## TAALP EXECUTIVE BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-2021

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