

STATE OF WISCONSIN
IN THE SUPREME COURT

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINARY
PROCEEDINGS AGAINST PAUL A.
STROUSE, ATTORNEY AT LAW.

CASE CODE 30912

FILED

DEC 21 2023

CLERK OF SUPREME COURT
OF WISCONSIN

OFFICE OF LAWYER REGULATION,

Complainant,

CASE NO. 2023AP1032-D

PAUL A. STROUSE,

Respondent.

REFEREE'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION REGARDING COSTS

FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND


The Office of Law Regulation (“OLR”) filed a nine count complaint on June 12, 2023 alleging that Attorney Paul Strouse (“Strouse”) violated SCR 20:1.1; SCR 20:1.3; SCR 20:1.4(a)(3); SCR 20:1.4(a)(4); SCR20:1.16(a)(2); SCR 20:3.3(a)(1); SCR 20:CR 20:3.4(c); SCR 20:5.5(a)(2); SCR 20:8.4(a) via SCR 22.26(2) SCR 20:8.4(c), federal statutes and local bankruptcy rules. After proper service was obtained on the Respondent Strouse, he failed to answer.

The Referee obtained dates from the parties (including Strouse) for a default motion hearing date. Strouse failed to appear at the hearing or file a response to the motion and brief filed by OLR. The Referee then found Strouse in default and that the allegations in the OLR Complaint were proven by clear, satisfactory, and convincing evidence and ordered additional briefing on an appropriate sanction. Additional briefing by OLR regarding the appropriate sanction was not responded to by Strouse. The Referee then filed its 21-page report and recommendation with the

Supreme Court and ordered OLR to submit its Statement of Costs and Recommendation and allowed Strouse 21 days to object to the Statement of Costs and Recommendation.

Strouse failed to respond to OLR's Statement of Costs and Recommendations. Therefore, it is the recommendation of this Referee that the total costs and fees of \$2,456.45 be assessed against Strouse. These fees are reasonable under the circumstances, since Strouse initially indicated that he was available for the default motion hearing. His intended appearance resulted in additional costs by the Referee and OLR to prepare for what they believed would be a contested hearing. The Referee also provided every opportunity for Strouse to appear and explain his actions, including why he failed to file a timely answer, what an appropriate sanction would be, and whether the full assessment of costs and fees was appropriate. All of these efforts increased the time spent by OLR on this file. Therefore, the total costs and fees sought appear reasonable and the Referee recommends that the Supreme Court assess the fees and costs of \$2,456.45 against Strouse. However, it should be noted that the Supreme Court will independently review the Referee costs of \$749.45 to determine whether they are appropriate.

Dated this 21 day of December 2023.

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Supreme Court Referee V.L. Bailey-Rihn