

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA

NO. 2017-OB-1827

IN RE: CHARLES D. JONES

ON APPLICATION FOR READMISSION

PER CURIAM

This proceeding arises out of an application for readmission to the practice of law filed by petitioner, Charles D. Jones, a disbarred attorney.

UNDERLYING FACTS AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

In August 2010, petitioner was convicted of one felony count of tax evasion, a violation of 26 U.S.C. § 7201, and two felony counts of making and subscribing a false tax return, a violation of 26 U.S.C. § 7206(1). He was subsequently sentenced to serve 27 months in prison and was ordered to pay \$305,174.05 in restitution to the Internal Revenue Service (“IRS”). In September 2010, we interimly suspended petitioner based upon his conviction of a serious crime. *In re: Jones*, 10-2047 (La. 9/20/10), 44 So. 3d 262.

In the meantime, petitioner failed to provide competent representation to two clients, neglected their legal matters, and failed to adequately communicate with them. He also failed to fulfill his obligations to a federal court and failed to adequately supervise his non-lawyer staff. For this misconduct, as well as for petitioner’s criminal conviction, we imposed disbarment, retroactive to the date of his interim suspension. *In re: Jones*, 13-1112 (La. 9/13/13), 123 So. 3d 1202.

In September 2016, more than five years after the effective date of petitioner’s disbarment, petitioner filed an application for readmission with the disciplinary

board, alleging he has complied with the readmission criteria set forth in Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 24(E). The Office of Disciplinary Counsel (“ODC”) took no position regarding the application for readmission. Accordingly, the matter was referred for a formal hearing before a hearing committee. During the hearing, testimony and evidence was presented indicating petitioner was ordered to and is paying \$500 a month to the United States District Court Clerk toward the \$305,174.05 in restitution related to his criminal conviction, is paying \$1,578 a month to the IRS pursuant to an installment agreement related to his federal tax debt, and is paying \$1,080 a month to the Louisiana Department of Revenue (“LDR”) pursuant to an installment agreement related to his state tax debt.

Following the hearing, the hearing committee recommended that petitioner be readmitted to the practice of law, without conditions. Neither petitioner nor the ODC objected to the hearing committee’s recommendation.

DISCUSSION

After considering the record in its entirety, we find petitioner has met his burden of proving that he is entitled to be readmitted to the practice of law. Nevertheless, further precautions are warranted to insure that the public will be protected upon petitioner’s return to practice. See Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 24(J).

Accordingly, we will order that petitioner be conditionally readmitted to the practice of law, subject to a three-year period of probation governed by the following conditions:

1. During the probationary period, petitioner shall provide evidence to the ODC, on at least a quarterly basis, demonstrating that (a) he is making the court-ordered monthly restitution payments to the United States District Court Clerk; (b) he is making monthly payments to the IRS in accordance with the provisions of his

installment agreement; and (c) he is making monthly payments to the LDR in accordance with the provisions of his installment agreement; and

2. Petitioner shall cooperate with the ODC, and shall comply with any and all requirements imposed upon him by the ODC.

3. Should petitioner fail to comply with these conditions, or should he commit any misconduct during the period of probation, his conditional right to practice may be terminated immediately, or he may be subjected to other discipline pursuant to the Rules for Lawyer Disciplinary Enforcement, as appropriate.

DECREE

Upon review of the recommendation of the hearing committee, and considering the record, it is ordered that Charles D. Jones, Louisiana Bar Roll number 7476, be immediately readmitted to the practice of law in Louisiana, subject to a three-year period of unsupervised probation governed by the conditions set forth herein. The probationary period shall commence from the date petitioner and the ODC execute a formal probation plan. Should petitioner fail to comply with the conditions of probation, or should he commit any misconduct during the period of probation, his conditional right to practice may be terminated immediately, or he may be subjected to other discipline pursuant to the Rules for Lawyer Disciplinary Enforcement, as appropriate. All costs of these proceedings are assessed against petitioner.