

Vermont Bar Association
Board of Managers Meeting
Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 3 PM
Equinox Resort, Manchester, VT and via Zoom

Present: Justin Brown, Jessica Bullock, Lisa Campion, Judith Dillon, Pam Eaton, Kate Lamson, Jordana Levine, Ryan Long, Amy Palmer-Ellis, Keith Roberts, Tim Tomasi, Alfonso Villegas, Breanna Weaver.

VBA Staff: Bob Paolini, Kim Velk, Mary Ashcroft, Lisa Maxfield.

1. Call to Order: President Josh Diamond called the meeting to order at 3:14 PM.

The Board went immediately into executive session, but staff was welcome to stay.
The Board came out of executive session 3:20PM.

2. Minutes: Upon motion made by Matt Valerio, seconded by Lisa Campion, and unanimously approved, the minutes of the February 2025 Board meeting were accepted as printed.

3. Treasurer's Report: Lisa Maxfield reported that there was nothing out of line with our finances, other than a slight increase in CLE income due to notary public training. We have given the Equinox most of the money for this mid-year meeting. An expense we have incurred but not yet paid is for electrical work which was done at the VBA office. It will be \$6,400 with some additional expense for inside wiring left to do. We also have a sinkhole in our driveway which will need to be repaired in the spring. This will involve excavating to fix the hole and repaving. This is a shared drive. Matt moved to accept the Treasurer's report, which motion was seconded by Kate Lamson and unanimously approved.

4. Emerging Issues:

Josh reported that Chief Justice Reiber will speak at lunch on the duty of lawyers to advocate for their clients in this changed climate. There will be a request for lawyers to join in a protest in favor of the rule of law in Burlington on May 3rd.

5. Reports:

A. Board Committee Reports:

i. Member Services: No report.

ii. Operations: Did not meet.

iii. Workforce Development: Alfonso said the committee had met to receive an update on the Incubator Project. A new attorney has joined, bringing the total up to 6, with one on leave until May. Other attorneys have inquired about joining. Mary reported that VOCA federal funding issues had been brought to the VBA Board's attention and that the

Board will guarantee payment to attorneys participating. The letter to the Supreme Court concerning collecting attorney demographic information has been drafted and Josh will send it out. The VBA's retirement survey report is being worked on by Pam and Judith. The committee also discussed producing a potential podcast, with Judith to take the lead. The committee also discussed upcoming events in the schools. Alfonso urged all to go to the VBA website and volunteer to speak about the rule of law at Law Day events around the state. Please also get the word out to local schools. Josh is talking with his contact at the Department of Education to connect with social studies teachers. Josh will share program materials from the ABA.

iv. Access to Justice: Kate Lamson reported that the committee had met earlier that day and discussed the legal needs assessment done by Legal Services Vermont. The committee discussed how it can assist to fill the legal gaps identified. There was also discussion of limited legal licenses for paralegals.

v. Executive Committee: Did not meet.

B. President's Report: Josh reported that he attended the MLK poster and essay contest presentation at the state house with the Governor. He thanked Kim for her work on this. He noted that all of the participants were from one school, so we should get the word more widely next year.

Josh noted that the VBA got ahead of the rule of law issues with our Board's statement, which we need to publicize.

C. Executive Director's Report: Bob Paolini has mostly been working on legislative matters. He is trying to get the VBA's priorities done, and to stop bad ideas from becoming law. Bob thanked the Governor for his work with the kids. Bills are moving, including the property bill and the bill on tenants by entirety. A rewrite of the UCC has moved from the House to Senate. The miscellaneous judiciary bill has passed Senate, and is in the House. This includes corrections to the uniform power of attorney bill. This bill would also fix a problem with missing powers of attorney—if 15 years have elapsed with no challenges, then the missing POA won't cause a title problem. Bob also noted that electronic case records will be available to all attorneys. The budget bill is on the House floor this afternoon. The budget adjustment act was vetoed for the second time.

D. Division & Section Reports:

i. YLD: Justin reported on the prelaw meeting held at UVM; 5-6 lawyers spoke to a packed house of pre-law students. There was a discussion of over an hour, with many individual discussion following. Many students expressed the desire to stay in VT after law school. There were also questions about our mentorship program. We need to re-recruit and update the mentor list. This could be added to the annual meeting as a presentation and discussion. The YLD is planning a mixer in May or June. Elections for YLD officers will be held tomorrow. Pam will be leaving the Board as she will be leaving YLD. Ryan Long will be the new chair.

ii. Women's Division: Breanna Weaver said that the Division had not yet held their elections.

iii. Government and Non-Profit Section: No report.

E. Staff Reports:

Kim Velk welcomed everyone to the mid-year meeting. We have 181 signed up to attend. She ran through the upcoming CLE programs. The MKL poster/essay contest presentation was very good with the Governor, and Justice Eaton was excellent at the Supreme Court presentation. The students all enjoyed themselves. Kim and Laura are now planning for spring CLE programs.

Mary Ashcroft said that she had applied for two IOLTA grants—one to retain any rollover excess funds for our county low bono project, and one for \$25,000 to help fund the legal access coordinator position. Mary spoke to an out of state law student who was working on a report on legal needs in rural areas; the student is a Vermonter and wants to come home to practice. Mary was also contacted by a recent law graduate who wants to start a second career as a lawyer in Vermont, her home.

F. VBF Report: Lisa Campion said that the Bar Foundation has put together its committees, and the grants committee is working to screen applications for IOLTA grants. The committee will meet and make recommendations to the full board so final decisions will be made in May. The VBF will host a May 1st mixer at Foam Brewers in Burlington, and a fundraiser at the Lake Monsters game in Chittenden Co. They are also working on a possible mixer in Bennington Co, and will do outreach in Franklin County.

6. Action Items

A. Enrollments: Upon motion made by Matt Valerio, seconded by Jessica Bullock and unanimously approved, the following were enrolled as new members of the VBA: Legal Members Madeleine Aroner, Star Kashman, Clint Lee, Eleanor Moody, Eric Nickel, Meghan Reen, Charles Rostow and John White; Licensed in Another State Regina Cocco; Law Student Associate Member Brendan McGrail; Law School Graduate John White.

D. Gambrell Professionalism Award: The Board discuss nominating an individual for this ABA award, then realized that the award was for a project. Upon motion by Kate, seconded by Alfonso, and unanimously approved, the Board voted to nominate the VBA/VLGS Lawyer Incubator Project for the Gambrell Award.

At 4:14PM the Board with staff went into executive session. The Board came out of executive session at 4:23PM.

7. New business:

Josh announced that there would be a lawyers' march for the rule of law on May 3rd in Burlington. Upon motion made by Alfonso, seconded by Jordana and unanimously approved, the Board agreed that this event would be publicized through the VBA on its

website and social media, etc. Judge Tomasi abstained from the vote. Bob and Josh will be the contacts for information on this. The VBA will put a notice in a banner on our website.

8. Old Business: None. .

9. Adjourn: Upon motion duly made, seconded and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30PM.

Respectfully submitted: VBA Staff