

Vermont Bar Association
Friday, May 15, 2026, 1PM
VBA Conference Room Montpelier and via Zoom

Present: Jessica Bullock, Alex Cyr, Zach Dayno, Josh Diamond, Kate Lamson, Jordana Levine, Ryan Long, Liz Miller, Collette Schmidt, Timothy Tomasi, Matt Valerio, Alfonso Villegas, Breanna Weaver.

Guests: Victoria Richardson, Kira Botting.

VBA Staff: Mary Ashcroft, Laura Welcome

1. Call to Order: President Jordana Levine called the meeting to order at 1:04PM.

2. Minutes: Upon motion made, seconded and unanimously agreed to, the minutes of the April 17, 2026 VBA Board meeting were approved as printed. Abstaining were Breanna Weaver and Alex Cyr.

3. Treasurer's Report: Lisa Maxfield sent a financial report in the Board packet. See attached. No discussion.

4. Emerging Issues: Liz Miller, a member of the Supreme Court Rules committee, said that the committee was talking about possible changes to rules of evidence around AI, especially on use of demonstrative evidence and exhibits. There may be a rule for the VBA in the future. Judge Tomasi also referenced federal rule discussions on the same topic.

5. Reports:

A. Board Committee Reports:

- i. Member Services: Did not meet.
- ii. Operations: Did not meet.
- iii. Workforce Development: Did not meet.
- iv. A2J Committee: Kate Lamson said that the committee had met and discussed next steps to take for limited licensing for paralegals. This is proposed to be a pilot for 3 years. This needs to mesh with the Legal Deserts

discussion lead by the Supreme Court. It might also be a topic for the VBA's Pro Bono Conference in October.

v. Executive Committee: Did not meet.

B. President's Report: Jordana Levine said that she was slowly easing into role, and she is looking forward to the retreat and discussion there.

C. Executive Director's Report: Kim Velk sent a printed report in the Board packet; see attached.

D. Legislative Report: Bob Paolini sent in a written report; see attached.

E. Division & Section Reports:

i. YLD: Ryan Long said that YLD had been working Laura and Lisa on sorting through back files. YLD wants to better publicize their board meetings. Upcoming events include the Burlington Marathan, dinner with Judge Schoonover, dinner with a bankruptcy judge, and attendance at law school commencement. Contract negotiations are underway for a hotel for the Thaw in 2027.

ii. Women's Division: Breanna said there is growing interest in the division. They are considering doing another women in the judiciary panel, perhaps in the fall.

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

F. Staff Reports:

Mary Ashcroft, Legal Access Coordinator, said that there is no word yet on the other two VBF grants for which Mary has applied—county low bono for \$75,000 and legal access coordinator for \$40,000.

The Incubator Project now has 9 Incubees—one will graduate on June 1, bringing the number down to 8. The Supreme Court's Legal Deserts had a joint meeting of the VBA and VLGS subgroups. Discussed were expansions of the Incubator Project, support for LOS participants, continued support for low bono projects including the small business low bono project with VLGS.

Mary said that Nicole Killoran at VLGS just got word from Bernie's Sander's office, confirmed by the SBA, that the SBA has the funds for the FY 2025 awards, including the VLGS small business award, and we should see some movement toward the end of May. This has NOT been stuck in the political

headwind, its more of a bureaucratic slow process. This grant funds the VBA's low bono small business project.

Mary suggested that the VBA Board consider hiring a grants writer as they discuss VBA positions at the retreat.

G. VBF Report: No report.

6. Action Items

A. Enrollments: Upon motion made by Matt Valerio, seconded by Tim Tomasi, and unanimously approved, the following were admitted as VBA members: Legal Members Andrew Fabian, Mark Knoll, Jenna McLane, Jan Myskowski; Law Student Association Member Marek Chorobski; Interest in the Law Members Natalie Mazzuca and Elizabeth Vaughn.

B. Retreat Planning: The date for the retreat is Thursday, June 18 from 9 to 3 at Becky Cassidy's home in Burlington. Jordana and Kim will meet again to firm up the topics to be discussed. Included so far is a discussion of position responsibilities for VBA staff. Information will be coming a couple of weeks before the retreat.

C. LOS Section: Victoria Richardson and Kira Botig presented their proposal create a LOS study section of the VBA, and proposed both a student chair and an attorney chair. The idea of the section would be to connect and support LOS participants and their mentors, both past and present. A total of 117 attorneys have followed this path to admission to the Vermont Bar. There are presently 47 participants in LOS now. Richardson and Botig said that a dedicated community would help with isolation by connecting those who are currently in the program and those who have gone through it. It will also be a support and assistance to mentors, too. This is a unique way of growing the bar with less financial burden than that faced by law school graduates. They also said the section could help the bar with presentation of CLE programs, journal articles, ideas about sponsoring, education for supervising attorneys, and networking among the broader bar. The last bar exam rate had a 50% pass rate for those who had gone through the LOS program. This rate was similar to the rate of law school grads. Richardson and Botig also spoke of the need to spread the word about the LOS option. Without law school debt, a LOS attorney can afford to serve low bono and pro bono clients. Upon motion by Kate, seconded by Jessica, the VBA Board voted unanimously to create the LOS section.

D. Leslie Black's request: There was brief discussion of the letter of support for Leslie Black's client re: re changes to licensing rules. Leslie was to have drafted a proposed letter for the Board to consider, adopt and sign. Leslie did send her brief to the Board last evening, but there was no letter. Matt Valerio said that the legal deserts subcommittee on lawyer licensing is aware of this issue and is discussing licensing in depth. The Court is moving toward fixing this problem, but it will take time. Jordana will add this issue to the agenda for the retreat meeting in June.

7. New business:

Legislative update on data privacy—Josh Diamond, who represents VT Chamber of Commerce said that there is an omnibus bill moving through the legislature that would put comprehensive data privacy policies in place, with audits, set of rights for consumers, etc. Josh considers this an onerous bill. Several states have similar laws, but with a threshold to exclude sensitive data such as tax returns, racial ID. Most law firms, including solo practitioners, would be subject to this very onerous bill. Several states have, but with a threshold—VT House Comm on Commerce—very low thresholds for sensitive data such as tax returns, racial ID, etc. The bill as written would include most law firms, including solo firms. Liz suggested that lawyers could argue to be exempt from this bill as our ethics rules on confidentiality already protect consumers of legal services.

Jessica Bullock suggested that with the increase in requests for statements, comments and letters from the Board on issues, we should put in place a process for dealing with such requests.

8. Old Business: Letter in support of grant funding to train ASL Interpreters. Jordana spoke to the draft that was in the Board packet. This letter does not commit the VBA to any financial commitment; it just states our position that this group should receive a grant, as there is a need. Matt Valerio moved to approved the letter as drafted, seconded by Josh. When Alfonso pointed out typos, Matt and Josh agreed to a friendly amendment that whoever signed the letter can make corrections that do not change the substance of the draft letter. The motion, as amended, was unanimously approved by the VBA Board.

9. Executive Session: None

9. Adjourn: There being no further business to conduct, on motion made by Alfonso, seconded by Kate and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 2:01PM.

Respectfully submitted: VBA Staff