

**Vermont Bar Association**  
**Board of Managers Meeting**  
**Friday, December 13, 2024 at 1PM**  
**VBA Conference Room and via Zoom**

Present: Jessica Bullock, Lisa Champion, Rich Cassidy, Josh Diamond, Judith Dillon, Pam Eaton, Kate Lamson, Jordana Levine, Ryan Long, Keith Roberts, Tim Tomasi Matt Valerio Alfonso Villegas, Breanna Weaver.

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

Guests: Sarah Buxton, Kevin Chu, ED of VT Futures Project and Tino Rutanhira—VT Professionals of Color.

**1. Call to Order:** President Josh Diamond called the meeting to order at 1:03PM. He introduced guest speakers Kevin Chu who is Executive Director of the Vermont Futures project, and Tino Rutanhira of the Vermont Professionals of Color.

Kevin Chu's parents immigrated from China to Vermont. Tino immigrated from Zimbabwe to Vermont. It took Tino 3 years to get job, first working in a deli, then starting the Vermont Professionals of Color.

Kevin Chu reviewed Vermont demographics to explore what is happening and to show the scale of action needed. The goal is to grow Vermont's population from 647,464 currently to 802,000 by 2035. Concurrently, we need to increase Vermont's housing stock to 350,000 units by 2035.

Some population statistics are instructive. From 2000 to 2023 there was an increase in the aging (over 65) while the middle-aged population was shrinking. For every 12 job seekers, there are now 2 open jobs today; this is a reverse of 10 years ago. Vermont's labor force has shrunk as our population ages.

Vermont has the lowest fertility rate in the country. We have fewer high school graduates each year. Vermont attracts college age student to the state, but can't retain them. This creates a new workforce gap: we supply 8,200 people per year, but the demand is 21,700 per year. That's an annual gap of 13,500. Vermont needs to increase the population as well as the labor force numbers.

Because we are the "oldest" state, we are a leading indicator for studies. Affordability is the topmost topic for Vermonters. Older Vermonters think we should grow our population, while younger Vermonters don't want growth. Younger Vermonters are worried about scarcity of housing and schools. Vermont elders have homes so are less concerned about housing, but do know we need to supply workers for services. Sixty percent of Vermonters say we should grow our population to provide diversity; Vermont is now 92% white.

Tino Rutanhira explained that the BIPOC sector of the population by 112% in VT. This is the biggest growing demographic sector. Vermont Professionals of Color have a job board on its

website. VT employers need to advertise on this website. Also on the website are civil engagement opportunities to serve on boards of trustees.

The VPOC's Newcomer nexus program provides ambassadors and social tours of Vermont for those considering moving to Vermont and those newly settled here. The Concierge connection program ensures that new professionals of color are invited to community events so they can develop a social life and connection with the community. The program draws on newer residents who have been here 2-3 year and who remember their early challenges to settle here. VPOC also offers a GROW Grant to assist with relocation, recruitment, and retention activities.

Professionals move to Vermont because it is a safe place, a good place to raise kids, has progressive values, and demonstrates acceptance of diversity.

Sarah Buxton suggested that we avoid talking about how long we have been in Vermont, as that fosters an us versus them attitude. She noted that mentoring really works as it actively helps new Vermonters find what they need, from winter tires, to child care, to emergency prep.

We need to think more about young people with children, and grandparents providing after school care. Less emphasis on college is a must. Some people now need to get some advanced education after work. We need to think about collaborative solutions. For example, providing university housing for seasonal employees when students not at school. Another example was the idea to recruit at the job fair at Fort Drum—2200 people exit the National Guard each year looking for jobs. We can tap that resource.

After some discussion, Josh thanked our guests for their information and work.

**2. Minutes:** Upon motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved, the minutes of the November 22 Board meeting were approved. Jordana and Keith abstained from voting as they were not at that meeting.

**3. Treasurer's Report:** Lisa Maxfield reported that staff had sent a third and final email to lapsing members, and Board members and staff made phone calls as well. As a result, an additional \$7,000 was collected in dues renewals. The Lawyer Referral Service received a large \$26,000 check as the LRS fee share for referral of a paying client in a medical malpractice case.

**4. Emerging Issues:** None.

**5. Reports:**

A. Board Committee Reports:

i. Member Services: Did not meet.

ii. Operations: Did not meet.

iii. Workforce Development: Judith Dillon said that the committee had met and had discussed Law Day 2025 and recruiting which had occurred at the social studies teachers' conference.

iv. Access to Justice: Meeting next week.

v. Executive Committee: Did not meet.

B. Presidents Report: Josh Diamond passed over his report.

C. Executive Director's Report: Bob Paolini passed over his report.

D. Division & Section Reports:

i. YLD: Pam Eaton reported that everything is now ready for the Thaw in Montreal in January. Registration for the conference is open, and Omni reservations are open too. Josh thanked the YLD for their work.

ii. Women's Division: No report.

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

E. Staff Reports: Passed over.

F. VBF Report: Passed over.

## 6. Action Items

A. Enrollments: Upon motion made by Matt Valerio, seconded by Pam Eaton and unanimously approved, the following were enrolled as VBA members: Legal Members: Andrew Bacharach, Rory Butler, Elizabeth Frye, and Marcus Pratt; Law School Graduate: Cameron Briggs Ramos; Licensed in another state: Eloy LaBrada.

B. Adopt Nominating Committee Report: Judith reported on the slate and circulated the list of nominees. For Seats on the VBA Board: [Sorry, folks I missed who was lined up to run against whom; can Bob fill this in, please?] For Officers: for Secretary Collette Schmidt; for Treasurer Matt Valerio, for President Elect Jordana Levine. This slate will be presented at the membership meeting; the Board does not need to act.

C. Ted Tyler has resigned as secretary effective immediately. Under Vermont corporate law, we must have a secretary. The Board can appoint an interim secretary, then the full membership will vote at the March meeting. Upon motion made by Kate Lamson, seconded by Matt Valerio and unanimously approved, Kate Lamson was appointed as Secretary.

Upon motion duly made, seconded, and approved, the Board voted to go into executive session at 2:45PM.

**7. New business:** None

**8. Old Business:** None

**9. Adjourn:**

Respectfully submitted: VBA Staff