

**Vermont Bar Association**  
Board of Managers Meeting  
Friday, May 20, 2022  
11AM—via zoom

Present: Jessica Bullock, Rich Cassidy, Bob Fletcher, Elizabeth Kruska, Kate Lamson, Jordana Levine (PM only), Andrew Manitsky, James Rodgers, Ted Tyler, James Valente (AM only), Alfonso Villegas.

Staff: Mary Ashcroft, Tom Barrett, Teri Corsones, Lisa Maxfield, Kim Velk, Laura Welcome.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by President Bob Fletcher at 11:07AM.

2. **Emerging Issues:**

Elizabeth Kruska expressed her surprise that AO 49 keeps getting extended, and asked if it will become standard operating procedure. Bob Fletcher will ask Justice Eaton this question during the VBA meeting with the Supreme Court today at noon.

3. **Acceptance of Consent Agenda**

A. Minutes: A small typo was corrected in the Executive Director's Report; then, upon motion by James Rodgers and seconded by Kate Lamson, the minutes of the April 15, 2022 Board meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

B. Treasurer's Report: Lisa Maxfield reported that our client security fund has seen a downturn due to a bad month on the stock market. Lawyer Referral Service has done well this year, making more than \$50,000 over last year's revenue at this same time. Reminders about LRS panel fees have gone out; 125 attorneys have renewed to date. Tom is reaching out to those who have not yet renewed, and will also be recruiting new lawyers for the panel. Employment law is a special area of need. Lisa reminded the Board to promote the Lawyer Referral Services among friends and colleagues. We have received our final adjusted bill from the Hilton for the Mid-Year Meeting; the cost was just under \$25,000. We have netted about \$30,000 for our two meetings this fiscal year; we had budgeted event income of \$45,000 but that was difficult to anticipate due to the pandemic. There are good registration numbers for our upcoming CLE seminars. We published the VBA Directory this year, which we had not done last year, so that will show in the income and expense lines. Lisa has finished the annual audit review and all looks good. The auditors will likely have a report to the Board by early June.

C. Report of Executive Committee: Bob Fletcher said that the Executive Committee met on May 12 to discuss recruiting a new Executive Director given Teri's recent appointment as State Court Administrator, effective July 1. The Executive Committee with Pam Eaton and Jessica Bullock will serve as a screening and hiring committee for the search, and Andrew will spearhead the process. A job description and notice of recruitment have been posted on the VBA website and will be sent to the ABA, NEBA and to 7 Days. Letters of interest are being requested by June 15. Bob Paolini, former ED of the VBA, has been asked to provide interim coverage and he has agreed to help for whatever period is needed, hopefully to overlap with Teri and with the new incoming ED. Bob also offered to help in the Legislature if the new ED is not well versed there.

D. Board Committee Reports

i. **Operations:** Andrew reported that the committee met on April 18 and discussed the client security fund issue as directed at the VBA Mid-Year Meeting. The committee identified items to research and they have begun the process. They will report their findings at a later date.

ii. **Membership:** Alfonso reported that the committee met and discussed whether to create a new tier for membership for those attorneys who are retired but have not entered emeritus status. The committee agreed not to recommend this new tier of membership.

iii. **Program and Planning:** Jim Rodgers said that the committee had met briefly that morning. They heard Kim Velk's report on CLE programs coming up in May-June-July. She is also planning for the annual meeting in the fall. Teri reported to the committee that the VBA is re-instituting the Trial Academy and judges and practitioners were already being lined up for the event on Friday, July 29. Teri will share a template for a letter thanking court staff. Kate Lamson asked about promoting a training to promote the Veterans Justice Outreach Program in White River. Kim will explore this with Kate. Jim Rodgers said the committee had discussed the YLD Thaw; the fact that it was held in the spring and not January this year was popular. The committee hopes the YLD will remain open to dates other than in January. It was noted that scheduling the Thaw immediately after the VBA Mid-Year meeting put a lot of stress on the VBA's staff. Teri also reported that the Program and Planning committee was interested in hosting political debates among candidates for Attorney General, US Senate, Secretary of State and possibly in states' attorneys races, although the latter may be left to the county bars to coordinate. The Board agreed that the VBA should host debates as this was good exposure and would enhance civics education.

iv. **Pro Bono Committee:** Did not meet.

v. **Governance:** Did not meet.

vi. **Workforce Development:** Did not meet.

vii. **COVID-19:** Did not meet.

E. President's Report: Bob Fletcher reported that they had completed ABA Day contacts, concluding with a zoom meeting with Congressman Peter Welch, who supports the ABA initiatives. Bob attended the Martin Luther King poster and essay contest award presentation and said that the young award winners were impressive and not shy. Chief Justice Paul Reiber and Justice Nancy Waples hosted the youth and families at the Supreme Court following the presentations. Bob participated in a zoom call on May 4 regarding complaints from lawyers that the court call center is ineffective. Bob was surprised by the AO 49 extension, finding it disheartening. Bob participated in the call among chairs and county board presidents where Mike Kennedy spoke of wellbeing week, as well as the proposed rule amendment regarding malpractice insurance disclosure.

F. Executive Director's Report: Teri Corsones congratulated the Young Lawyers Division on the success of the Thaw in Montreal. She noted that the Commission on the Well Being of the Legal Profession Third Annual Report is due on July 1. The Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators is hosting a New England Regional Summit in Burlington on "Improving the Court and Community Response to those with Mental Illness" next week. She presented Paul Gillies with marble bookends inscribed with his mantra "Keep Re-Telling the Old Stories" to honor his many years of "Ruminations" articles for the VBA Journal. The new Poverty Law Fellow has been selected and will concentrate on immigration issues; she will be housed at the Vermont Law School's South Royalton Legal Clinic. Teri attended the retirement party for Judge Colleen Brown and presented her with a

marble clock. The Court Users Group wants to set up a regular schedule to provide structure for raising issues. Teri commended Kim for her first edition of the VBA Journal.

G. Vermont Bar Foundation Report: Andrew Manitsky introduced José Herrera, the new Executive Director of the Vermont Bar Foundation. José is an Arizona native who has worked extensively with non-profit organizations. The Board welcomed him.

The VBA Board recessed at 11:56AM in order to meet remotely with the Vermont Supreme Court and others in Judiciary leadership.

The VBA Board reconvened at 1:02 PM to resume the Board of Bar Managers Meeting.

H. Staff Reports:

**Kim Velk** reported that the VBA Journal is at the printers and that the electronic edition is available on line. She has been busy planning Procrastinators Week in June. Jim Knapp has been doing webinars on real estate which are well received. There will be a conflict resolution CLE as well as one on mental health law. She is also setting up the Basic Skills program for the fall. The annual meeting will be a combination of in-person followed by a week of on-line CLE programs. Kim is exploring with VLS the idea of having law students write Journal articles.

**Mary Ashcroft** reported that two candidates had applied for the VBA/VLS Incubator Project. They will be interviewed, and if accepted will join the Project and overlap for 6 months with the present group of three Incubator attorneys. Mary reminded that Board that the Incubator Project is now in its 9<sup>th</sup> year and has provided continuing work force development for young lawyers. Mary also noted that the new low bono small business initiative was going well, having received twelve business owner-clients to date. She asked Board members to sign up to take low bono cases: this is part of the VBA's on-going access to justice initiative.

4. Action

A. Enrollments: Upon motion made by Andrew Manitsky, seconded by James Rodger and unanimously approved, the following were admitted as new VBA members:

Legal members: William Appleby, Sandra Bailey, Nicholas Battey, Robert Bennett, Brittany Besler, Marcie Clarke, Joseph Frumin, William Keehn, Eric Lister, Zachary Martin, Julie McKenzie, Jack Penca, Matthew Staab and Ronald Steinvurzel;

Law Student Associate member Leslie Lawson; Law Office Study Associate Ashley Pedoty; and licensed in another jurisdiction member Paul Quackenbush.

B. Executive Director Hiring Committee: President Bob Fletcher requested approval for the formation of the ED hiring committee to include the Executive Committee members as well as Pam Eaton and Jessica Bullock.; Bob also requested that the Board approve the engagement of Bob Paolini as interim ED at the rate of \$7500 per month plus expenses. Rich Cassidy moved to approved the motion, seconded by Andrew Manitsky, which was unanimously approved by the Board.

C. Retreat Planning: Andrew Manitsky announced that the annual Board retreat will be held on June 17<sup>th</sup> at the Middlebury Inn from 9Am to noon. Lunch will follow at noon, with the afternoon left for wellness activities in the area. Casual attire is suggested. The retreat will be in person but with remote zoom capability.

5. **Discussion**: None.

6. **New Business:** None.

7. **Old Business:** James Rodgers reported that the quarterly meeting of NEBA will be held next week and that he will attend.

8. **Executive Session:** The Board voted to move into Executive Session at 1:30PM. The Executive Session ended at approximately 2:35PM.

9. **Adjourn:** There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35PM.

Respectfully submitted:

VBA Staff