

**Vermont Bar Association
Board of Bar Managers
Friday, November 10, 2023
1:00 PM - Via zoom**

Present: Rich Cassidy, Josh Diamond, Judith Dillon, Pam Eaton, Kate Lamson, Jordana Levine, Jim Rodgers, Ted Tyler, Matt Valerio, Alfonso Villegas,

Staff: Bob Paolini, Lisa Maxfield, Mary Ashcroft.

1. Call to Order: President Dillon called the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.

2. Minutes: Upon motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved, minutes of the October 20, 2023 Board meeting were accepted as printed.

3. Treasurer's Report: Lisa Maxfield shared the financial report for the month ending 10-31-23. Membership dues revenue collection is ahead of last year, but there are still non-renewing folks. Lisa will prepare a list for Board members to contact after November 15. Lisa also provided an income and expense statement for the annual meeting at the Hilton. Facility expenses have increased significantly, and we will need to examine how to price registration fees to cover expenses and make a profit. There was a brief discussion of other possible venues.

4. Emerging Issues:

Judith said that Judge Novotny reported a real shortage of people willing to be guardians ad litem, and the shortage is expected to worsen. Many GALs have been retired folks, and they are now retiring from GAL work. Judith wants us to look at this issue, and perhaps recruit attorneys who are leaving the practice. Discussion ensued about what groups might be interested in doing this volunteer work.

Judith said that Teri Corsones had shared recommendations for court security. Matt said that the DG's office is involved in these discussions. There are more incidents in court in Vermont these days. The Legislature worries about money for security in court. Sheriffs get paid more being out on the road than providing court security. Sheriffs have problems hiring people. Private security won't suffice as courts need officers with the ability to do hands-on work and make arrests as needed. Discussion ensued about sheriffs and about lawyers being issued ID cards so they can avoid going through court security.

5. Reports

A. Board Committee Reports: There have been no committee meetings since the last Board meeting.

B. President's report: President Dillon reported on the following:

--She attended the Boys and Girls Club event in Burlington which was well attended. She was pleased with lawyers interested in reaching out to our community and would like to see more programs linking young people with lawyers and the courts.

--Judith attended NEBA in in Salem with other VBA reps. The panels were great, and included discussion of AI, restorative justice, innocence project, wellness, etc. The VBA will host next year's NEBA event at the Trapp Family lodge October 24 through 26.

--Judith and Bob met with the Judiciary. The Chief was concerned about the low passage rate of VLGS students on the bar exam. He was interested in outreach to high schools and community organizations. The Supreme Court is back on the road, with a visit to Hartford HS, where they had lunch with students.

--Teri Corsones has been involved in legislators day in various court houses.

--Judith noted that she chairs monthly meetings of section and division chairs and county bar presidents and invites participants to air concerns. She also discussed LRAP with them. The deadline for applying has been extended, and the income cap has been raised to \$75,000 for legal service work. November 17 is the new deadline.

C. Executive Director's Report: Bob Palini reported on the following activities:

--He is working on ideas for panels at the NEBA conference here in Vermont.

--He has had 2 meetings with the student bar association at VLGS, particularly to discuss the VBA mentor project. The VBA has 27 lawyers willing to mentor law students. Law students want a panel presentation with those lawyers, then match 3Ls with mentors. They want to increase ties to VBA and have asked the VBA to fund a couple of \$1,000 scholarships. Leaders of the student bar association will provide details next month.

--Bob has been working with the Access to Justice Coalition on its legislative ask for funding of legal services programs. The present proposal is for a \$500,000 request for funds to go to the Bar Foundation to be distributed as grants. Bob has reached out to key legislators and has met with 5 already. There is a morning reception and presentation on Monday 11-27-23 at VLGS. Members of House and Senate Appropriations, Human Services and Judiciary Committees have been invited. House Judiciary is also working on funding on the prosecution and criminal defense side, as well as the judiciary.

--During the monthly meeting with the Supreme Court, there was conversation about finances and their budget request. They are asking for more judges and more support positions. The Supreme Court also approved a grant of \$50,000 to the VBA to fund our low bono representation of respondents in adult involuntary guardianships and for defendants in civil contempt matters.

D. Division & Section Reports:

--YLD: Pam Eaton reported on events around the state, including 2 mixers, a race, and a trivia contest. Planning is underway for the Mid-Winter Thaw in January; they are making an attempt to get VLGS students to the Thaw.

--Women's Division: No report.

--Government and Non-Profit Division: No report.

E. Staff Reports:

--Mary Ashcroft said that the VBA had been invited to apply again for a CATIC grant to fund start-up costs for lawyers in the VBA/VLGS Incubator Project. We are asking for \$8,000. Two new attorneys have joined the project—one newly admitted attorney is in Burlington and will practice family law, and another is in the upper valley and is starting a law practice after several years as a stay-at-home dad. Two other attorneys are auditing rounds to meet their first-year requirements. Two other attorneys have expressed interest in joining the Project in 2024.

Mary asked that her projects find a home among VBA board committees—perhaps Low Bono Projects under Program and Planning, and the Incubator Project in Workforce Development.

Mary invited any VBA Board members to join in the Incubator rounds discussion any Tuesday morning at 11AM—she will provide a link to the zoom meeting.

Kim Velk: submitted her report in writing in advance of the meeting.

F. VBF Report: Rich Cassidy said that he is chair of the VBF's investment committee, and that the Foundation will be working to establish a permanent fund. They are looking for an investment advisor.

G. ATJ Coalition: See above under Executive Director Report.

6. Action:

A. Enrollments: Upon motion made, seconded and unanimous approved, the following were approved as VBA members: Legal Members: Lauren Adami, Alexandra Esposito, Christopher Gavrielidis, William Stenzel and Andrew Thibault; Law School Graduate: Nicholas Erly, George Gelzer and Christopher Hardy; Paralegal: Debra House.

B. Adopt Strategic Plan: Judith said she had sent a few small changes to Andrew as chair of the governance committee, but he did not yet have a chance to recirculate the plan, so Judith will defer action on the plan until the December Board meeting.

C. Change July Board Meeting: Because the proposed July Board meeting will conflict with the ALPS Bar Leadership conference in MT, Judith requested that the July meeting be changed to July 26th. Upon motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved, the July Board meeting date was set for July 26th, 2024.

D. Appoint Nominating Committee Members: on Dec 15, the nominating committee will meet before the board meeting to propose a slate of officers and candidates for board positions. Judith asked that the Board constitute the nominating committee as members of the Executive Committee, county bar presidents, representatives from the YLD, Women's and Government & Nonprofit section. Upon motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved, the Board agreed to constitute the nominating committee, to meet at 10AM on 12-15-23.

7. Discussion: None

8. Executive Session: None needed.

9. New business: Alfonso reported that Senator Hashim was working to fund legal internships in the defender general and state government offices. Alfonso will provide details on this proposal.

10. Old business:

It was noted that the ABA resolution to be proposed by Tom Lyons has been postponed until next year, so no action is needed at this time.

The Committee to advise on the selection of Judge Crawford's replacement has been constituted, and Bob Paolini has been designated as staff to that committee.

11. Adjourn:

Upon motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55PM.

Respectfully submitted: VBA Staff