

**Vermont Bar Association
Board of Managers Meeting
Friday, September 25, 2025 at 3:00PM
Hotel Champlain, Burlington and via Zoom**

Present: Justin Brown, Jessica Bullock, Lisa Campion, Josh Diamond, Judith Dillon, Kate Lamson, Ryan Long, Liz Miller, Amy Palmer-Ellis, Keith Roberts, Tim Tomasi, Matt Valerio, Alfonso Villegas, Kathy Zhou; guest Collette Schimdt, incoming board member.

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

1. Call to Order: President Josh Diamond called the meeting to order at 3:10PM.

2. Minutes: Upon motion made by Matt, seconded and unanimously approved, the minutes of the July 2025 Board meeting and of the August 21 Budget Meeting were accepted as printed. Abstaining: Kathy Zhou and Tim Tomasi.

3. Treasurer's Report: Lisa Maxfield reported year-end accounting as of 8-31-25 indicated a net surplus of \$24000, but this will be adjusted as there are still some accounts payable and receivable outstanding.

The Board went into executive session for approximately 15 minutes to discuss the Executive Director search.

4. Emerging Issue:

Matt Valerio noted that the White House has declared Vermont a sanctuary state, but we aren't. This makes us a target for possible cuts to federal funding. Matt's concern is public service loan forgiveness. Once the new administration took office, the public service loan website was taken down. When it returned, the guidance seemed to target those opposed to the current administration. For example, contract public defenders used to be covered, but not so now. Because of this administration's crackdown on immigration, certain types of cases which had been covered by PDs might not be now: some immigration cases, CHINS cases when ICE removes children from immigrant families, etc. Also jeopardized are PDs in juvenile justice cases. All these cases/clients are in jeopardy because we have been mistakenly labeled as a sanctuary state. Matt met with Senator Welch and Governor Scott with the request to get this target off Vermont's back. Josh said this matter will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

5. Reports:

A. Board Committee Reports:

- i. Member Services: Met but had no business to report to the Board.
- ii. Operations: Did not meet.

iii. Workforce Development: Alfonso reported that the Committee met, heard about progress in the Incubator Project, reviewed an article about incentives for rural law practitioners and talked about next steps to encourage and support those in the law office study program.

iv. Access to Justice: did not meet.

v. Executive Committee: Did not meet.

B. President's Report: Josh reported that he has been asked by Incoming President Jordana Levine that he serve an additional ½ year, and then she will take over for 1.5 years. This is necessary because Rich Cassidy was to be President, but his death moved Jordana up into Incoming President. Upon motion made by Matt, seconded and unanimously approved, the Board agreed to extend Josh's term to the Mid-Year Meeting in March of 2026, with Jordana then to take the presidency for the following 1.5 years. There were no abstentions, and no one opposed the motion.

C. Executive Director's Report: Bob Paolini reported he was increasing contact with the Vermont Bar Foundation and getting to work together a bit better. Bob worked with staff to set up the annual meeting tomorrow and the CLE programming.

D. Division & Section Reports:

i. YLD: Ryan Long reported that their fall mixer was well attended. There is an upcoming dinner with a judge, featuring Federal Judge Lanthier. Race Judicata will be held on October 25. The YLD is also deeply into planning for the Thaw in Montreal, which will be at the Westin instead of the Omni.

ii. Women's Division: No report.

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

E. Staff Reports:

Kim Velk said she and Laura have been busy getting tomorrow's annual meeting and CLE programs together. This will be followed by basic skills CLE programs next week. The electronic version of the VBA Journal will be available by Monday. Other CLE programs in progress are a bankruptcy program in South Burlington, and a social worker will discuss a possible project to work with lawyers and others in high stress professions such as DCF, social workers, and others.

Mary Ashcroft reported that she and Lisa have been working on the \$50,000 VOCA grant which funds legal help for crime victims. There have been several re-writes, but she is hopeful that the grant will finally be awarded through the Center for Crime Victims Services. The Incubator Project attorneys are digging into many low bono cases and doing very well with them.

F. VBF Report: Lisa Champion reported that she and Judge Tomasi have been working on the 250th anniversary committee, which will issue a report on planning work thus far. The

Bar Foundation is very active. Lisa stepped in to finish Bonnie Badgewick's term after the latter's appointment as judge. There is a VBF sponsored Justice Social at Halverson's this evening. The VBF will sponsor a Justice Gala on November 6 to raise funds for Vermont Legal Aid, Legal Services Vermont and the Foundation. The VBF is seeking 2 board members from southern Vermont. The Foundation hopes to get out to all counties for socials. After they finish the work on the budget, the VBF will open the competitive IOLTA grant process as usual. The Rich Cassidy grants of \$5,000 were awarded to 12 organizations to aid and support law related activities.

6. Action Items

A. Enrollments: Upon motion made by Matt, seconded and unanimously approved, with no abstentions, the following were enrolled as VBA members: Legal members Lindsey Bryant, David Burns, Richard Campbell, Sarah Christopherson, Edward Dimayuga, Samuel Doxzon, Danielle Fuschetti, Deanna Hartog, David Hindman, Tucker Kramer, Nicholas Matlach, Gabrielle Miller, Andrew Pelcher, Eva Rasho, Karen Schwabe, Emma Scott, Erika Soong, Michael Swain and Joseph Tremblay; Law School Graduate Members Naomi Bugorskii and Nicholas Glover; Licensed in Another State members Lisa Colbourn and Sarah Nathan; Law Student Associate Members James Major and Scott Scribi; Law Office Study Associate Member Kayla Zimmerman.

B. Update June 2026 Retreat Date: The Board inadvertently picked Juneteenth for the 2026 Board retreat, so will need to find a different date. The matter was tabled until the next meeting.

C. NEBA Member: Judith's 3-year term on the NEBA board expires, and the VBA Board needs either to reappoint Judith or appoint a new NEBA member. Judith is willing to serve another term. Upon motion made by Matt and seconded by Kate, the VBA Board unanimously elected Judith to a second 3-year term on the NEBA Board. There were no abstentions.

7. New business: None

8. Old Business: This is Judith's last board meeting, as her term as Past President ends tomorrow. She extended her thanks to the Board and to the VBA staff. Judith was thanked for her work.

9. Executive Session: See above.

9. Adjourn: There being no further business to discuss, on motion made, seconded and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned at 3:53PM.

Respectfully submitted: VBA Staff