

**SENIOR LAWYERS SECTION
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

December 20, 2023

This meeting was conducted via Zoom. The following Executive Committee members and WSBA personnel were present at this meeting: Interim Chair Carole Grayson, Brian Comstock, Jeanine Lutzenhiser, Al Armstrong, Jenny Rydberg, Steve DeForest, Bill Cameron, Jim Riehl, WSBA Sections Program Specialist Carolyn MacGregor, WSBA Education Programs Lead Rachel Matz, WSBA Sections Programs Coordinator Noah Baetge and WSBA Volunteer Engagement Advisor Paris Erickson. Not able to be present were BOG Liaison Jordan Couch, David Sprinkle and Joe Gordon.

CHAIR'S WELCOME

Carole welcomed the attendees, wishing all a happy holiday season and best wishes for the coming new year. She noted that this was her final meeting as Interim Chair, and would be succeeded by Jeanine in January.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Al's November 15 meeting minutes were approved by Motion.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Joe, due to a technical problem, could not be present for this meeting. It was noted that the WSBA had not submitted any financial information since last month's meeting, so the latest figures we have were presented at that November meeting.

NEWSLETTER

Jim said the content of our winter 2024 newsletter is 99.9% complete and is with Britt Sutherland. "She is formatting it as we speak." When it then goes through the WSBA protocol, the final product should be ready for publication by mid-January.

With respect to content, Jim is glad we are going to get the latest news from the world of Superior Court in a new column. It was mentioned that Jeff Tolman has contributed an article about former U.S. District Court Judge Robert Bryan.

Brian suggested that, instead of limiting the newsletter's circulation to our Section membership, we should see if we can get it out, electronically, to all age-eligible and years-of-practice-eligible members of the WSBA. Everyone thought that was a great idea.

Carolyn said she would see if we can do this, or perhaps we could just send the newsletter to individual section chairs and ask them to forward it to their respective members.

CLE PLANNING FOR 2024

Carole said that our next mini CLE would be held on May Day, a Wednesday. This would be a webinar for two or two-and-one-half CLE credits. The theme and possible speakers were discussed. Carole intends to give Lisa Mannheim a call. Ms. Mannheim teaches at the U.W. School of Law. The Theme of the CLE will be the legal aspects of the upcoming election year. Ms. Mannheim teaches election law. Carole wanted the speakers to be non-partisan. It was suggested that the folks at the International Practice Section may be able to suggest a suitable speaker. Rachel, who had worked in elections in Florida, stated someone from the Secretary of State's office in Olympia. Kim Wyman, the former Washington Secretary of State, was suggested as a possibility, as was her successor, Steve Hobbs. Julie Wise, the current Washington State Director of Elections, was also mentioned. Rachel mentioned that, in this age of remote viewing, we could tap anyone, anywhere in the world.

WSBACOMMUNITY PILOT PROJECT

The WSBA's Volunteer Engagement Advisor Paris Ericson spoke about the intricacies of reaching and navigating this pilot-project site. She explained that his site is not reached through the WSBA website, rather, one must visit www.WSBA-community.org, enter your Bar number and password, and proceed from there.

Paris went on to explain the salient aspects of the site. Addressed were: the Community Home Page (for Community members only), Member Home Page, Profile Page (visible to Community members only) in which you can enter your personal bio, including your picture, an All Communities site, which sets forth all groups participating in the pilot project, the Library site, which can include such things as E.C. meeting minutes and ideas for CLEs, discussion threads, and such aspects as signatures and default signatures. Much of the discussion involved specific instructions on where or what to "click," which were presented visually and thus can't be recounted as such within these Minutes. Paris offered the Committee members her help should anyone have any questions at a later time, when we would have had sufficient time to inspect the site.

Carole asked if Carolyn would post, on this site, the time and dates of our E.C. meetings, as well as the Zoom link, when that becomes known. Carolyn said she would do this, if possible.

And badges! Yes, cruisers of the *WSBACommunity* Pilot Project site will be recognized with digital badges for having tried to navigate the site, with the winner or winners being awarded a Gold Badge for the greatest amount of clicks.

Paris stated that there were two scheduled drop-ins for those who had questions about this site: noon the day of this meeting (December 20) and at 9:00 am on Friday, December 22.

She explained that, after logging in, one must accept the stated terms of use.

NEW PUBLIC SECTIONS WEBSITE

Noah Baetge, WSBA Sections Programs Coordinator, explained the new section websites that have recently been constructed. These sites are open to the public; they are not restricted to respective section members only. They are not accessed through the “my WSBA” portal. To reach these sites, click onto the general list of sections then select the section you wish to explore, and click on your selection. The page will then allow you to see, under different headings: past newsletters, meeting minutes, member benefits and so on. Carole wanted to assure that our reduced CLE tuition for Senior Lawyers Section members was displayed under the member benefits heading.

TASK FORCE ON INCREASING MEMBERSHIP

Al and Brian addressed the group about their ideas re increasing the membership of our Section. Al indicated he had done some internet research about other states’ respective senior lawyer divisions that have followed the ABA’s approach to its Senior Lawyers Division—namely, its policy of automatic admission of those member attorneys 62 years of age or older, on a dues-free basis. Those bar associations are as follows: Hawaii, New Mexico, Michigan (until 2019), Louisiana and North Carolina. All these bar associations designated their senior lawyer groups as divisions, not as sections. Al was disappointed that Michigan (by far the largest of these bar associations) had discontinued its Senior Lawyer Division in 2019, replacing it with a senior lawyers section, with members paying full section dues. Al had prepared a list of these bar associations, which included information gleaned from the various websites of these organizations. Al had left email and telephone messages with designated contact-persons, in an effort to discover the amount that the respective bar associations had paid to support the activities of their senior lawyers, but wasn’t favored with a reply from any of them. Al had contacted the Michigan Bar to find out if anyone could say why they had terminated their Senior Lawyers Division but, as of the date of our meeting, hadn’t heard back.

Brian advocated a different approach to all this. He said, instead of actually expecting our Bar to agree to cancel our dues and further, to provide us with a tidy stipend, we should concentrate more on providing services and CLEs that would be of interest to attorneys of a certain age. One example of this approach was Brian’s advocacy of sending our newsletter to all age-and-years-of-practice appropriate attorneys, not merely to our Senior Lawyers Section members alone. Brian said we should not just focus our attention on our Section members only, that’s far less than 1% of the population of the Washington

State Bar. “We should be expanding our horizons.” That’s what our mission should be.” Brian also said it isn’t necessary to attempt to admit all age-eligible attorneys to our Section.

Jim recalled that in his dealings with the ABA, he learned that the voice of the ABA’s older attorneys was greatly enhanced within the leadership of the organization as a whole, upon the wholesale automatic admission of the older set. He said that if we could admit all older lawyers to our Section, without budget implications, we should do it. We may want to consider different levels of membership, if budget considerations are an issue.

Carole noted that almost all of the attorneys who attended the recent Listening Tour were age-appropriate potential members of our Section. There is a keen interest on the part of older attorneys in matters our Section is in a position to address. We should keep in close contact with the BOG and Terra Nevitt and get the word out there about what we can offer. Carole also lauded the idea of sending our newsletter to all older lawyers in the WSBA. “The newsletter is a major tool in this regard.” She conceded that the methods of the five state bars cited “may not be importable.”

Rachel noted that sponsoring mini-CLEs is a great way to increase membership and revenue. She reminded us that the Bar’s “CLE Team” doesn’t get any cut from the various sections’ mini-CLEs, all the proceeds go to the section-sponsors. She stated that there are a couple of sections that offer mini CLEs once a month, and that has both raised money and increased membership to boot, for both sections.

ADJOURNMENT

Carole adjourned the meeting, which ran a few minutes overtime.

NEXT MEETING

Our next meeting will take place on a remote-attendance basis on January 17, 2024 at 10:30 am.