

**Vermont Bar Association**  
**Board of Managers Meeting**  
**Wednesday, October 23, 2024 at 1PM**  
**VBA Conference Room and Zoom**

Present: Jessica Bullock, Lisa Champion, Josh Diamond, Judith Dillon, Pam Eaton, Kate Lamson, Ryan Long, Tim Tomasi, Ted Tyler, Matt Valerio, Alfonso Villegas, Breanna Weaver.

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

- 1. Call to Order:** President Josh Diamond called the meeting to order at 1:03PM.
- 2. Minutes:** The draft minutes of the September Board meeting were amended to reflect that Justin gave the YLD report. Upon motion made by Kate Lamson, seconded by Judith Dillon and unanimously approved, the minutes were accepted as amended.
- 3. Treasurer's Report:** Lisa Maxfield reported that dues collections are going well, with \$32,000 in revenue during Oct. Reminder notices were sent out at the beginning of the week. Tom has been making phone calls. Our CLE income is also doing well because of the notary public training. Close to 1800 have registered for the three programs. We made a net profit of about \$22,000 for our annual meeting.
- 4. Emerging Issues:** None.
- 5. Reports:**
  - A. Board Committee Reports
    - i. Member Services: Did not meet
    - ii. Operations: Did not meet.
    - iii. Workforce Development: Alfonso reported that the VBA will be a vendor at the Social Studies Teachers' Conference on December 6. We will offer to have lawyers visit classrooms. The Clear Listening Conference hosted by NH Supreme Court Justice McDonald will be held at Suffolk Law School on November 13. The goal is to attract and retain attorneys to practice in New England. VBA Board members are invited to attend, and can attend by zoom. Outreach continues to UVM, VLGS and the Boys and Girls Club of Chittenden County.
    - iv. Access to Justice: Did not meet.
    - v. Executive Committee: Did not meet.
  - B. Presidents Report: Josh Diamond reported on the following:
    - He wants to bring a presenter from the Vermont Futures Project to speak at a Board meeting. We should also consider bringing in speakers on other timely topics, including Xusana

Davis on DEI, and Bob and Senator Hashim on legislative matters, as well as decision makers for the next-gen bar exam.

--Josh made appointments for section and division chairs as well as Board committees. All are posted on the VBA website. TJ Donovan will serve as our rep to the Vermont Judiciary's Committee on Mental Health. Members are needed for the Court Users' Group.

-- Josh met with Chief Justice Reiber, who raised two matters. First, the court wants to bring back the pro se education classes in Family Division. In the past, bar members, mostly family practitioners, volunteered to teach these courses in each county, on a monthly or bi-monthly schedule. The Chief also wants to undertake a road show to talk about the independent judiciary and rule of law. He especially wants to engage young Vermonters

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

--He was involved in discussions about the Clear Listening Conference and the Social Studies conference mentioned by Josh above.

--He acknowledged the work of staff at the annual meeting and at the Pro Bono Conference, and thanks all for their work setting up the NEBA conference.

--The VBA's Nominating Committee will be meeting in December; he asked Board members to encourage VBA members to put in their names for board positions.

--There are no applicants yet for the LRAP grants; deadline to apply is 10-28-24. We should consider extending that deadline

D. Division & Section Reports:

i. YLD: Ryan reported that the YLD mixer in Burlington was well attended; this followed a panel discussion with VLGS. Race Judicata will be held on November 2; this will raise money to send law students to the Thaw in January. Planning for the Thaw is well underway.

ii. Women's Division: Breanna reported that the Women in the Judiciary panel discussion was well attended.

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

E. Staff Reports:

--Kim Velk said that the Annual Meeting, the Pro Bono Conference and the NEBA conference all within 3 weeks made for a busy time for staff. On November 22, the Bankruptcy Law Section is hoisting their annual meeting at VLGS. The VBA is assisting YLD with background work for the Thaw. The VBA Journal is at the printers. The MLK annual poster and essay contest will be held again this year. The training for Notaries Public will be held in 3 sessions in November.

--Mary reported that Pro Bono Conference went well; about 80 attorneys and judges attended. CATIC has invited us to again apply for a grant to fund our New Lawyer Incubator

Project. We have 3 candidates for the incoming group for the Project, and will interview them soon.

F. VBF Report: Hannah King is the new Executive Director of the Vermont Bar Foundation. She is starting her 4<sup>th</sup> week with the Foundation. Formerly she was with Congresswomen Balint's campaign and prior to that was Business Development Director at the Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce. She lives in Burlington. She hopes to increase the amount of fundraising done by the Foundation, and to increase communications with the VBA. The VBA's Pro Bono Conference raffle raised just over \$2,000 for the Foundation.

## **6. Action Items**

A. Enrollments: Upon motion made by Matt Valerio, second Jessica Bullock, and unanimously approved, the following were enrolled at VBA members: Legal members Kathryn Bobel, Michael Guerrero and Zachary Zuk; Law Student Association Member Anna Shelley.

B. Proposal to Create Petitioners' Counsel PUC Section: Bob Paolini shared with the Board an email from Joslyn Wilschek, who wants the Board to create a VBA Section for petitioners' counsel. Josh had talked with Joslyn to explain that historically the VBA does not create a section for just one side of a practice field. Joslyn is OK with that. Upon motion made by Judith, seconded by Judge Tomasi, the unanimously approved, the Board voted to create a Public Utilities Commission Section.

C. Set Board Meeting Dates: Bob and Josh will continue to work on the February through July schedule, noting that the Supreme Court wants to schedule regular meetings with the Board every other month.

D. Nominate 3 Judicial Conduct Board Members: The VBA Board nominated 3 members to serve on the Judicial Conduct Board. The list of those indicating interest was sent from Monica Bombard at the Court, but nominees don't need to come from this list. This matter will be tabled for now to allow the VBA to send out a notice to solicit statements of interest and background. The matter will be taken up at the November Board meeting. Judge Tomasi recused himself from this discussion.

E. Fill Open Board Seat: Bob explained that as Rich Cassidy is president elect and his Board term expires 9-30-25, his seat is now technically open. The Board has the authority to fill this temporary position until 9-30-25. Kate Lamson suggested the Board consider one of the candidates for Board who weren't elected in last round of elections: Linda Columb, Jim Rodgers, and Keith Roberts. Bob will reach out to this group to ask for a statement of interest from each. A decision will be made at the November Board meeting.

## **7. New business**

A. Extend Deadline for LRAP: Because there were no applications yet for LRAP, with a deadline approaching of 10-28-24, the Board considered extending the deadline for applications. Breana, who is a recipient of LRAP, won't vote on this matter. She explained that under the Biden SAVE plan, no repayments are due on student loans for 6 months. This has confused potential LRAP applicants who are unsure how the VBA will deal with this forbearance.

Much discussion ensued. It was agreed to extend the deadline for LRAP applications for 2 weeks, until November 11.

B. VBF Vacancy: Josh said that the Board may be asked to fill a vacancy on the VBF Board, but that will be discussed at the next meeting.

C. Judge Toor Honored with Donation: Bob noted that he did fundraising for Judge Toor's retirement party, which resulted in \$1200 not needed or spent on this event. The \$1200 was donated to the Vermont Bar Foundation in Judge Toor's name.

D. Membership Group Renewal: The States' Attorneys did not renew their membership in the VBA. Josh is in conversation with their Association to resolve some misinformation and encourage them to rejoin.

**8. Old Business:** None

**9. Adjourn:** Upon motion made by Judith, seconded by Jessica and unanimously voted, the meeting was adjourned at 2:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted: VBA Staff