

WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
September 23, 2017

Columbia University School of Law
New York, New York

A quorum being present, the Board of Directors meeting was called to order at approximately 1:05 p.m.

President Littman welcomed all to the first board meeting of the year, and thanked all who reached out to her family during her recent loss.

Approval of Minutes

After a few typographical corrections were made to the minutes, a motion was made by Irene Villacci, seconded by Deborah Rosenthal to approve the Board of Directors minutes of May 19, 2017. The motion passed.

President's Report

President Littman welcomed the first time attendees and had them introduce themselves. She reported on the many activities of the Summer, including our submission of the litigation team in the Matter of Brooke B. case to NYLJ award for outstanding lawyers and that the finalists and winner will be announced at a dinner in the Fall. President Littman thanked Elizabeth Bryson and her team for getting that packet done.

President Littman reported that the judicial screening committee met in June to review nominees to fill Justice Abdus-Salam's seat. The Committee did a remarkable job screening and publicizing the results to the Governor. Justice Feinman, who was the Governor's ultimate appointee, was recommended and highly commended.

President Littman reported that last month Vice President Kiosse and she attended the Summit of the National Women's Bar Associations, where WBASNY received a public service award honorable mention.

President Littman reported that the Legislative committee has been busy as well. A version of Laverne's Law, which WBASNY supported, was passed by both Houses of the legislature this summer. WBASNY was invited to take part in the Governor's Counsel on Women and Girls where Jaqueline Flug represented us.

President Littman reported that the November Board Meeting will be at Syracuse Law School. We are thrilled WBASNY is going back to that part of the State after many years. We hope that many members who don't usually attend from that area will come to the meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Reid-Green reported that since June 1, we've had income of \$45,000 and expenses of \$94,000, leaving us with a deficit of \$49,000. She further reported that the budget for this year, which assumes an increase of 150 members, unfortunately will still be running at a deficit. Treasurer Reid-Green reported, however, that the Convention budget for 2017 shows \$57,000 in income, which is a great success.

Professional Ethics Committee

President Littman reported that she has asked Deborah Scalise and Meghan Brown to continue as co-chairs this year of the Professional Ethics Committee. A motion was made by Elizabeth Bryson, seconded by Anne Joynt to approve the selection of the Ethics Co-Chairs. The motion passed.

Presentations

Malcom Smith from LEAP software presented to the Board about their practice management software and Susan Sajiun-Fitzharris and her team presented to the Board about the insurance products they have available for our members.

Convention 2018 Committee

Co-chairs Catherine Courtney and Linda Johnson reported that the Committee has started doing a lot of the planning this morning. There will be excursions, CLEs and networking opportunities at our Convention to be held at the Otesaga Resort in Cooperstown, NY on May 31 through June 3, 2018. There are in the process of staffing the subcommittees and the called for every chapter to give one person to the committee.

Collaborative Law Committee

Co-Chair Kathleen Donelli reported on the goals of the Committee, including to have a state wide collaborative organization

Family & Matrimonial Law Committee

Co-Chairs Dolores Gebhardt and Amy Saltzman reported many chapters haven't sent them members and they need full chapter participation. They reported that the Committee has a large task this year – brought to their attention by Susan Bender – Issues regarding Rule 22 NYCRR 70.2. There is inconsistency in appointment, utilizations, payment, and the role of Attorneys for the Children in family and matrimonial matters. The Committee will form a task force, together with the Children's Rights Committee with a representative from every chapter to gather evidence how AFC's work in their communities and submit the report to Hon. Janet DiFiore. They will contact Judge DiFiore in advance to let her know what they are planning to do. They further reported that the bill regarding access to forensic reports and unrepresented parties is still on the horizon, and that it will require a road trip to Albany to lobby the legislature about our position regarding that bill.

International Women's Rights Committee

Co-Chair Fay Parris reported that as a continuance of their work during the UN Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee wishes to host a side event during the 2018 CSW, relative to Rural Women as this will be the theme. The Committee also wishes to continue in its co-advocacy with the Croatian Association of Women in Legal Profession as they have applied for ECOSOC Status.

Ms. Parris reported that during the 61st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, WBASNY Co-Sponsored a side event with Human Rights Now, a Japanese based NGO with ECOSOC status, pertaining to the plight of women who are exploited in Japan's film industry and the Best Practices of the Swedish government in addressing this very same issue in Sweden. The title of this event was "Exploitation of Women in the Entertainment Industry" and among those in attendance was the Swedish Ambassador at Large for Combating Trafficking in Persons." The International Women's Rights Committee (IWRC) wishes to sponsor an event with the Swedish Ambassador and Human Rights now and will follow up with pertinent information.

Ms. Parris reported that on August 1st, the Committee's Intern and she attended the Inter-generational Dialogues on the Sustainable Development Goals at the UN Headquarters. The Committee will be having other events that pertain to the Sustainable development goals.

Equal Opportunity in the Profession Committee

Co-chairs Deirdre Hay and Elizabeth Kraengel reported that this Summer the Governor's office invited WBASNY to present at a Commission on the gender wage gap. Ms. Hay worked on the testimony which was approved by Executive Committee. We submitted written testimony and then Ms. Kraengel gave a shorter oral testimony.

The Committee approved a position statement for WBASNY regarding the gender wage gap, which they read to the Board and asked for the Board to approve. The purpose of which is to have a formal position statement to be sent to legislature, the governor, etc., and to have on hand when we lobby. Kim Berg added that these types of laws should have remedies that are both fines and damages, otherwise there's no incentive to adhere to them.

A motion was made by Andrea Composto, seconded by Jacqueline Flug to adopt the Equal Opportunity in the Profession position statement on the gender wage gap. Kim Berg made a friendly amendment to add to the last paragraph a provision for damages as well as fines. The friendly amendment was accepted.

A motion to call the question was made by Deborah Rosenthal, seconded by Amy Saltzman. A vote was held and the motion to call the question was passed. A vote was held on the motion to adopt the draft of the Equal Opportunity in the Profession position statement, as amended by the friendly amendment proposed by Ms. Berg, and the motion passed with the usual abstentions.

Health & Reproductive Rights Committee

Co-chairs Shari Gordon and Patricia Hennessey requested that each chapter send the Committee a representative. They reported that the Committee has been having meetings in between the board meetings by conference call, so people who can't come to board meetings can participate. Ms. Gordon also reported that on October 4th the New York City Bar is co-sponsoring with the Center for Reproductive Rights a talk with Eric Schneiderman on the status of reproductive rights in the State.

WBASNY Abroad

Co-chairs Amy Saltzman and Patricia Hennessey reported that a group will be traveling to Iceland and have been graciously welcomed by the Iceland Women's Bar Association. There will be a visit to Ministry of Welfare, Dinner at the American Embassy, a visit with the Icelandic Police Commissioner and lunch with her, a visit to Reykjavik City Hall and discussion on women's rights, a meeting with Mayor's office, and a possible meeting with President of Iceland.

Non-WBASNY Awards

President Littman reported that there was a great response to the call for the Non-WBASNY awards.

The Westchester chapter presented Kim Berg and Central New York presented Sally Curran as the nominee for the Haywood Burns Memorial Award. A motion was made by Myra Freed, seconded by Andrea Composto to consider both nominees. A vote was held with 32 votes for Kim Berg and 36 votes for Sally Curran. The motion passed in favor of Sally Curran receiving the nomination.

Maureen Crush was nominated by the Orange-Sullivan chapter, Janet Callahan was nominated by the Central New York chapter, and Deborah Scalise was nominated by the Westchester chapter for the American Inns of Court Award. Following the presentations, the nominations of Maureen Crush and Janet Callahan were withdrawn by their respective chapters. A motion was made by Heather Neu, seconded by Joanne Quinones, to nominate Deborah Scalise for the American Inns of Court Award. A vote was held and passed unanimously, with the usual abstentions.

The Orange-Sullivan Chapter nominated Kelly O'Brien for the Governor's Award, but since the award will not be given this year, the nomination was withdrawn.

The Central New York chapter nominated Emily Lawson Hatch for the Root Stimson Award. A motion was made by Anne LaBarbara, seconded by Dana Salazar, to nominate Emily Lawson Hatch for the Root Stimson Award. A vote was held and the motion passed unanimously with the usual abstentions.

The Central New York chapter nominated Janet Callahan for the Margaret Brent Award. A motion was made by Dana Salazar, seconded by Dierdre Hay, to nominate Janet Callahan for the Margaret Brent Award. A vote was held and the motion passed unanimously with the usual abstentions.

The New York chapter nominated Hon. Rosalyn Richter for the Ruth Schapiro Award. A motion was made by Jennifer Brown, seconded by Elaine Avery, to nominate Hon. Rosalyn Richter for the Ruth Schapiro Award. A vote was held and the motion passed unanimously with the usual abstentions.

President Littman thanked all the chapters for their submissions, and reminded them that that the chapters that put forth nominees are responsible for preparing the full packet and timely submission to WBASNY.

Legislation Committee

Co-Chairs Kelly Damm, Marea Wachsman, and Christine Wienberg reported that September is the “gather the troops” meeting. They asked for each chapter to send a member to the committee. They will be holding conference calls every two weeks.

They reported that Laverne’s Law passed both Houses of the legislature, and is up for signature by the Governor. WBASNY wrote a letter in support of the previous version to go to the Governor. The previous version of the law was more expansive. They also reported that as a follow up to the Board vote in May to oppose the adoption registration disclosure bill, the committee prepared a letter to the Governor.

They reported that, based on suggestion by Heather Neu, they will start using Twitter to put out our position statements. They reminded the Board that a submission checklist must be filled out for anything to be considered by the Committed. The form can be found on the WBASNY website.

Long Range Planning

Andrea Composto, Janet Cord and Irene Villacci reported that every three years the Committee has to put into place a sustainability plan. The last one was adopted in 2015 and it expires in 2018. The Committee met to take a look and come up with an updated, new long range plan to be voted on later in the year. They will be reaching out to various groups of WBASNY and chapter presidents for information. They need representation from all chapters. Their next conference call will be October 12th at 4:00 pm.

Ms. Littman reported to the Board that sustainability is a great concern, which will require a dues increase. Ms. Littman reported that we have not had one in 8 years. A proposal will be presented to the Board at the November meeting. Ms. Composto reported that in 2015, in the last long range plan, it was noted that we’d soon need a dues increase, even though we weren’t doing it at that time.

Janet Cord from the Fund Raising Committee reported that she’ll be reaching to chapter presidents to submit members to participate on fund raising calls. Ms. Cord thanked Linda Chiaverini’s company for all their work, and for not seeking an increase in their contract fee this year, as well as Sandra Rivera.

Ms. Littman reported that she plans to have firm numbers between now and November. The purpose for raising the issue of a dues increase now is for transparency and so that each Chapter can discuss the matter with its Board. She also reported that we anticipate growing by one more chapter this year.

A motion to adjourn was made by Hon. Lisa Sokoloff, seconded by Bryn Lovejoy-Grinnell. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer P. Brown
Recording Secretary