

WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Board of Directors Meeting

November 18, 2017

Syracuse University College of Law

Syracuse, New York

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

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Joanne Quinones, seconded by Shari Gordon to approve the Board of Directors meeting minutes of September 23, 2017. The motion passed.

President's Report

President Littman welcomed everyone to Syracuse, and gave special recognition to Shannon O'Conner for organizing the previous night's dinner. President Littman welcomed the first time attendees to the meeting.

President Littman reported the soon to be 20th chapter, Thousand Islands, is in its final stages of organization and we hope to vote on their ratification at the January Board meeting.

President Littman reported that we held a lot of breast cancer events in October, and reminded the Committee that the chapters can still hold a JALBCA event, even though Breast Cancer Awareness Month has passed. President Littman reported that our chapters were involved in many charitable events, including GRAWA's program for hurricane relief in Puerto Rico and the NYWBA's MS bike ride.

President Littman reported that our last *amicus* brief in the Zenda matter was heard in the Supreme Court in September, so we can look forward to seeing that decision. And the Executive Committee also voted to join in the *amicus* effort in the Masterpiece Cake Shop matter.

President Littman reported that our Justice Task Force received a letter from Chief Judge DiFiore thanking us for our input. Justice DiFiore announced this week an initiative for legislative improvements to the court system in the wake of the vote against the convening of a constitutional convention. This is the same commission she appointed to assess the validity of the constitutional convention. Unfortunately, there are too few women on the committee and no one from this organization. We are reaching out to her to be included.

President Littman congratulated Lenore Kramer for her award by the Women Trial Lawyers, as well as the appointment of Assemblyman Weinstein to chair the weights and means committee and Assemblyman Dinowitz to chair of judiciary committee.

President Littman reported that, in honor of the 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage in New York State, there have been numerous events throughout the State and President Littman attended an event in New York City hosted by Cathy Hogel this past month.

President Littman reported that our online domestic violence programs are up and running, and are free to our members on the website.

President Littman reported that there will be 25 WBASNY members admitted to the United States Supreme Court on December 11th. As it is not an argument day, the group will get a tour and lecture of the Court.

President Littman reported that the night before the January Board Meeting in Manhattan, we will hold a CLE program at Sullivan and Cromwell's downtown office. The program will be a panel discussion moderated by Sandra Rivera about how we can work with the legislators to advance our issues of interest. Panelists will include State Senator Liz Kruger, Assemblywoman Monica Wallace, and Sandy Toll from the governor's task force for women's issues.

Following the Saturday Board Meeting in January at Columbia Law School there will be a family friendly trip to Alladin the Musical. We obtained a limited number of group tickets, so act fast when you hear about them.

President Littman reported that Convention 2019 is in place for the Westin Resort in Savannah, GA, and the Convention Committee will be putting together an array of activities.

Past-President Maureen Maney thanked everyone for coming to Syracuse. On behalf of the Central New York chapter they presented a thank you basket of goodies to President Littman.

Treasurer's Report

Dawn Reid-Green reported we have income of \$151,800, and expenses of \$144,300, resulting in a current profit of approximately \$7,000.

State of the Judiciary

Hon. Rosemary S. Pooler, Second Circuit Court of Appeals Judge presented a state of the judiciary report. Judge Pooler is proudly the first female elected to the 5th judicial district, first female appointed to northern district federal court, and the second woman appointed to the 2nd circuit court of appeals. Judge Pooler discussed several articles demonstrating the backward steps this Presidential administration is taking in the diversity of the Judiciary, and gave words of encouragement to the Board.

Convention 2018 Committee

Katherine Courtney reported to the Board that the convention will be in Cooperstown, New York. It's still not too late to volunteer. There are lots of ideas for events. A call will come shortly for CLE presentations. If you have programs, please respond to the convention committee.

International Women's Rights Committee

Fay Parris reported that the Committee wishes for WBASNY to Co-Sponsor a Parallel Event for CSW 62 (2018) from March 12-23, 2018. The theme of that CSW Session will be: Empowering Rural Women and Girls: Challenges & Opportunities in Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls. The Committee was able to identify the common thread of "Isolation" that all women in rural communities, both locally and globally face. In NY we view as critical for discussion, Isolation of women in rural communities to legal, health care and other social services.

Ms. Parris further reported that Amanda Norejko from the New York Chapter is engaged in a project pertaining to CEDAW-The Convention of Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. The name of the initiative is "NYC 4 CEDAW" and the Committee will be preparing a statement for circulation and WBASNY approval at the appropriate time.

Equal Opportunity in the Profession Committee

Micheala Azemi reported to the Board about a pattern of inappropriate comments by court officers that were gender biased. She posted on Facebook about an incident which happened to her. She reported that the judge called an hour later apologizing and then a week later she got a call from the head of the sheriff's department that they would be instituting a change in their sexual harassment policies. She

received comments from many female attorneys that this is a common practice. She was glad to have instituted change, and encouraged other women to speak out, so we can think about solutions to help one another.

Ms. Hay reported that her committee has created a survey that will be coming out soon that added questions regarding inequality and harassment. The plan is to send it out in early December with a deadline to respond by January 4th. This is timely in light of the current climate – explore the legal field the way issues in the movie industry have come out. Ms. Hay also reported that the committee is looking to get court rules that allow young women attorneys who do the work on a brief be the attorney to argue the issue before the Court.

Ms. Hay Thanked the Board for passing the Wage Equality Position Statement last time and reported they are working on revising the position statement to not just be about the specific bills that it references.

Nominations

Hon. Marilyn Hoffman O'Connor reported that the nominations committee had a really good meeting. However, they are still missing representatives from Adirondack and Mid-York. Judge O'Conner reported that the deadline for applications for officer applications is January 5, 2018. The interviews will take place at the January 27th Board meeting. The voting meeting will be March 10. The place for the voting meeting will be announced. There are no hard and fast rules about campaigning, but she encourages limiting campaigning to members of the committee and presidents of the chapters.

Press and Public Relations Committee

Heather Neu reported the goal for this year is promoting WBASNY and the chapters' profiles. Ms. Neu reminded the Board in an effort to raise social media profiles tag us, hashtag us, note us. Ms. Neu reported that most chapters have not sent a chapter representative to her committee and she asks that all chapters do so.

Legislation Committee

Kelly Damm, Sandra Rivera and Christine Wienberg reported to the Board that today's meeting was about setting legislative priorities and the only one will be reproductive health rights. Given the state of the government, it was felt good to leave the others open. Ms. Weinberg reported that it is important to work on getting the bills passed that we lobbied for last year that we were not able to get passed. We need to work comprehensively on achieving this goal. We will ask Sandra Rivera to send us alerts when bills that are important to us are coming up to be heard. We are in a hostile political time and we need to address these issues. We don't want to wait until lobby day to act. A motion was made by Heidi Schult Gregory, seconded by Mindy Zlotogura to approve the legislative priorities. The motion passed.

Yafat Shaltiel presented to the Board on the Child Parent Security Act ("CPSA"). A motion was made by Shari Gordon, seconded by Cara Cavallo, for WBASNY to support the Bill. Discussion was held. The legislation committee reported that it received input from the relevant substantive committees. Legislation did not get a consensus from the Children's Rights committee, the Health Law Committee supported it and the Legislation Committee supported it. A friendly amendment was made by Anne LaBarbara, seconded by Heather Neu, that spouses of potential surrogates must have separate legal counsel. Further discussion was held. The friendly amendment was not accepted by Ms. Gordon. A motion to call the question was made by Kelly Pressler, seconded by Dana Salazar. A vote was held on the motion to support the CPSA. With 45 in favor of supporting the CPSA, 15 opposed, and 4 abstentions plus usual abstentions, the motion passed.

Sandra Rivera reported on the state of the legislature and reminded the Board that this is an election year, so the Governor will want to accomplish a lot.

New Business

Phaedra Britt Co-chair of the Membership Committee reported that the committee had an in-depth discussion about the upcoming January 18th admission date for the 3rd Department, and are considering getting a table to solicit membership, as NYSBA will have a table. She will be reaching out to volunteers to help staff the table. Ms. Britt noted that this Board meeting was the first meeting that WBASNY reached out to the law school to have volunteers come to the meeting. She believes the poor turn-out is due to the meeting falling during the school's Thanksgiving Break. She thanked the volunteers who escorted the students.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made by Susan Yellen, seconded by Kelly Damm to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer P. Brown
Recording Secretary