

WOMEN'S BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
Board of Directors Meeting
November 19, 2016
Albany Law School
Albany, NY

A quorum being present, the Board of Directors meeting was called to order at approximately 1:10pm.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Elizabeth Bryson, seconded by Betsey Jean-Jacques to approve the Board of Directors minutes from September 24, 2016. The motion passed.

President's Report

President Flug welcomed all of the first time attendees and then congratulated all of our members who ran for office this past election. She commended the efforts and determination of all of the candidates. President Flug reported to the Board of the many events she attended in the past month. To wit: an event with our newly formed Del-Chen-O chapter, Judge DiFiore's wrongful conviction taskforce, the WBASNY/NYSBA Domestic Violence Initiative and the 125th Anniversary event for the Second Circuit. President Flug reminded the chapters to provide our treasurer with all quarterly reports in a timely fashion as WBASNY has strict deadlines for our tax filings. In conclusion, President Flug reminded the Board of the great work that the Legislation committee put forth thus far. WBASNY has supported bills pertaining to Infertility and Indigent Criminal Defense. We have supported the Mandatory Diversity CLE and we have drafted a position letter in opposition to the bill for restrictions on reproductive rights.

Treasurer's Report

In addition to answering specific chapter questions, Treasurer Lourdes Ventura reported that WBASNY is doing well at this time. Most of the Chapters have submitted their finance and membership reports and dues but there are a few delinquent chapters. Some chapters still owe for Leadership Training, board meeting assessment and membership dues. Reminders have gone out to Chapter treasurers and presidents. Treasurer Ventura explained the travel reimbursement to the Board.

Constitutional Convention

Vice President Greta Kolcon addressed the Board on the upcoming referendum regarding the state constitution. The NYS Constitutional convention referendum will be placed on the November 7, 2017 ballot as specified in our state's constitution and New Yorkers will vote either in favor or in opposition to convening a convention. If the state votes in favor of convening a convention, then on November 6, 2018, New Yorkers will elect delegates to the convention. On April 2, 2019, the Convention will convene and propose amendments to the constitution. In November 2019, New York State will vote to approve or reject each amendment that is proposed by the convention. Please keep this on your radar as WBASNY members may want to secure positions as delegates.

Northwestern Mutual

Shaun Miller and Scott McCauley from Northwestern Mutual presented to the board about a member benefit regarding 529 College Savings plans.

WBASNY Cuba Trip

Elizabeth Bryson, Mindy Zlotogura, Kathleen Donelli and Kimberly Morell presented to the Board their experiences from the October WBASNY trip to Cuba. It was a very rewarding and insightful trip and it was wonderful that WBASNY was able to organize this for its members.

WBASNY Voter Registration Drive

Committee Co-Chairs Susan Taylor and Dawn Reid-Green informed the Board that WBASNY's voter registration drive resulted in 1,356 newly registered voters for the state of New York. The prize for the chapter that registered the most voters went to the New York Chapter. Coming in second and third were the Queens and Westchester Chapters, respectively. This was a very successful event for WBASNY and President Flug thanked the chairs and all of the chapters that were involved.

Chapter Membership

Co-Chair Heather Neu advised the board that we have 2,763 members to date. Our goal is to have 4,500 members by year's end. A task force was created to focus on large firm membership which is a largely untapped area for WBANSY. Deidre Hay, Beth Jacobs, Jocelyn Jacobson and Meghan McGuire will work on the task force.

WBASNY/NYSBA Domestic Violence Initiative

President Flug advised that the first meeting has been held and participants have been selected. WBASNY's DV co-chairs were instrumental in this first meeting. Three areas were discussed: Pro Bono work; training and a legislative platform. It was very clear from this first meeting that WBASNY is paramount in this area and NYSBA is happy to be partnering with us. The next meeting will be held in January.

Convention 2017

Co-Chairs, Susan Yellen and Dawn Reid-Green addressed the Board on the status of convention. Convention 2017 will be held at the Water's Edge Resort and Spa in Westbury, CT from May 18 to May 21. The theme for Convention 2017 will be "One State; Many Voices" The committee is working hard to solidify our key note speaker and they are hoping to engage Senator Kirsten Gillibrand or Vision 20/20. The deadline for CLE presentations is January 6, 2017. The committee has been working on several convention events and excursions. They include as trip to Mohegan Sun with transport, a golf outing, an event for first time attendees, a trip to Mystic, CT and a possible winery trip. We will also have a Clean the World event. They are hoping to have a special section in the journal that commemorates the '100 years of women's suffrage' and will be looking for volunteers to assist with this.

Children's Rights Committee

Fay Paris addressed the board on the 9th Circuit's decision that addressed Due Process for Minors. OCA has proposed legislation that will address the needs of a Child being represented so that their rights are protected. This matter was tabled so that the committees can further vet this legislation and further discussion and vote can take place.

Legislation

Co-Chair Kelly Damm advised the board that the Legislative priorities for this year will be Reproductive Rights and Comprehensive Health Rights for Women. In January the committee will discuss other priorities as necessary.

There is a NYC Bill regarding access to counsel for addiction proceedings. Discussion on this bill was tabled with questions on the funding source and reciprocity issues. Legislation will have a call to further discuss and report.

The committee voted to in favor of WBASNY drafting a letter in support of the 100 year anniversary of the women's suffrage movement. A motion was made by Eileen Malunowicz, seconded by Hon. Rachel Kretser to send a letter of support of the 100 year anniversary of the women's suffrage movement. Upon discussion, it was surmised that the board supports this notion and recognizes and acknowledges this huge advancement for women, however WBASNY also recognizes that this was not a complete victory for all women, as it failed to enfranchise women of color. Further WBASNY recognizes and celebrates the work of the women who continued this fight to obtain suffrage for women of all races. This friendly amendment was accepted and the motion passed with two abstentions.

Diversity Committee

Co-Chair Betsey Jean-Jacques advised the board that they drafted a letter pertaining to WBASNY's support of the ABA Resolution regarding a mandatory Diversity CLE. WBANSY is in support of this and a letter will go out to this effect. In light of the recent election WBASNY needs to maintain open dialogue regarding diversity and inclusion. WBASNY needs to be open to the effects of our communities and the committee is hopeful to put together a CLE on Diversity inclusion at convention. The CLE would center on unintentional and implicit bias.

International Women's Rights

Co-Chair Fay Parris addressed the Board on her trip to Croatia and thanked the Board for their support. She is hopeful WBASNY can plan a trip to Croatia, much like the trip we had in Cuba. The focus of the events in Croatia centered on Gender parity. Ms. Paris also advised the Board on the Safe Passages Project with New York Law School. Many questions arose regarding the status and plight of undocumented minors and the help needed with legal representation for them. The Committee will provide WBASNY with information on what this project will do and what their mission will be. It is important for us to establish a way for kids to enter the system. There will be a CLE on this topic at NY Law School on February 10, 2017. Deirdre Hay attended the UN events with the League of Women Voters. It was an excellent opportunity for WBASNY especially with President Flug's voting initiative. The Committee is compiling their quad-annual report so as to maintain our ECOSOC status. This report is due in 2017.

Environmental Law

Co-Chair, Susan Brock addressed the board and gave an impassioned speech about how WBASNY can address climate control. There is a need to be more active and create change in this area of law. Ms. Tina Clark from western Massachusetts came to address the WBASNY Environmental Committee on how we can lower the barrier of fossil fuel emissions. They discussed how women attorneys can promote the widespread adoption of solar and wind energy. The committee will look into information for Webinars and CLEs.

Nominations

Co -chair Hon. Marguerite Gray stated that the Nominations Committee is missing chapter representation for the Nominations Committee. Every chapter must have a delegate and alternate attend the January Nominations Committee meeting. The deadline to submit applications is January 9, 2017 and the interviews will take place at the January 28, 2017 Board Meeting. The voting Meeting will take place on March 4, 2017.

New Business

Members of the Board were interested in discussing the Women's March on Washington and whether WBASNY will partake in the March. A motion was made by Beth Krause, seconded by Deirdre Hay for WBASNY to organize buses to bring WBASNY members and guests to the Women's March on Washington on January 21, 2017. After a thorough discussion a vote was taken and the motion carried with 30 members in support and 15 members in opposition. The WBASNY Executive Committee shall hold a meeting to discuss financing the buses.

A motion was made by Heather Neu, seconded by Beth Krause for WBASNY to issue a resolution to President-Elect Donald J. Trump and Vice President-Elect Mike Pence. The letter would also be cc'd to Senators Gillibrand and Schumer. The resolutions would address as follows:

“Whereas the Women's Bar Association is the second-largest state-wide bar association in New York State, and

Whereas the mission of the Women's Bar is to promote the advancement of the status of women in society and of women in the legal profession; to promote the fair and equal administration of justice; and to act as a unified voice for its members with respect to issues of statewide, national and international significance to women generally and to women attorneys in particular; and

Whereas, as an organization of attorneys we are committed to the rule of law and equal protection as guaranteed by the United States Constitution; and

Whereas since November 9, 2016 there has been a rise in the number of acts of violence and hate speech directed at people of a wide variety of ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and race both in New York and throughout the country;

It is hereby Resolved that WBASNY strongly opposes any hate speech or conduct directed at others based on race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or national origin, and it is further

Resolved that the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York requests that President Elect Donald J Trump make a public statement condemning all such conduct and speech.”

After thorough discussion the motion passed unanimously.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made by Kara Cavallo, seconded by Kelly Damm, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:11 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea F. Composto
Immediate Past President for the Recording Secretary